

The Optimist Monthly

Friend of Youth

June 30, 2023



June

06/07: Optimist Scholarships and Oratorical Contest Winners!! Richard Knight invited all five of our Club's Oratorical Contest winners to the luncheon, as well as Leah McFarlane, the Arlington Community High School coordinator for the contest. See photo, below, by Mark Whitenton.



From left to right: Cody Finnegan (first-place scholarship award); Anna Litwiller (second-place); Luisa Velasquez (third place); Shangwen Cheng (fourth place); Maggie Odar (fifth place); Leah McFarlane (Arlington Community High School coordinator) and Richard Knight.

Erica Burson, chair of the Optimist Club's Scholarship Committee, invited the five winners of the Club's 2023 College Scholarships. Again, this year, the Optimist Club is proud to offer five \$5,000 scholarships to worthy high school seniors bound for a four-year college. The scholarships are awarded on the basis of scholastic achievement, financial need and civic or school involvement.

Three of these deserving winners attended the June 7 Luncheon at the WGCC to introduce themselves. They are, from left to right: Erica Burson, Michael Newman of Washington-Liberty High School who will be attending Virginia Tech), Warnakulasuriya Lowe of Yorktown High School (who will be attending Fordham University) and Mary Anay Gonzalez of Wakefield High School who will be attending Virginia Tech this fall). Photo below by **Mark Whitenton**.



06/21: Paralyzed Veterans: The price they pay for their service by Susan Prokop.

She told us that, the dominant issues that the Advocacy team is working on include a very heavy emphasis on getting the Air Carrier Access Amendments Act passed, which has been a high priority for PVA for many years now. On both the regulatory and the legislation side, we have been working to improve the way people with disabilities are being treated by airlines by pushing a couple of bills to improve the Air Carrier Access Act, as well as working with the Department of Transportation to improve existing legislation. Thank you, Frank O'Leary, for inviting her. In addition, in attendance was the fourth of the five 2023 Optimist Scholarship winners, Sora Spencer of Wakefield High School. She will be attending Marymount University this fall.



06/28: Meet & Greet at Texas Jack's. Andreas Baltatzis used this Meet & Greet, in his words, to make a "one-time grant to the Acorns Rifle Club to purchase two



advanced SCATT training devices to help their athletes achieve their goals." In the photo by JB Whitlow, left, present to receive the grant were Steve Tinter, President of the Optimist-Acorns Rifle Club (third from left), Brian Leppert, the head coach of the Acorns (second from left) and Victoria Leppert. According to Steve Tinter, Victoria "is an Acorns Alumnus and just finished her first year at the Air Force Academy, where she shoots for their

team. She did compete at, and actually won the 2023 National Junior Olympic Championship for Women's Air Rifle, which earned her a spot on the National Junior Developmental team (basically will allow her to compete in international competitions representing the United States!) Steve Tinter gave Sandy Bushue a packet of hand-written "thank-you notes" from the current Acorns. Sandy has scanned them and they are included in the Appendix to this newsletter.

July and August Schedule

07/05: No luncheon due to the July 4 Holiday.

07/19: Missing Middle by Libby Garvey. WGCC at 12:15.

07/26: Meet & Greet at Texas Jack's. 5:30 to 7:00.

08/02: Speaker TBA. WGCC at 12:15.

08/16: No luncheon due to August vacations.

08/23: No Meet & Greet due to August vacations.

President's Message by **Andreas Baltatzis**

Dear Optimists,

Summer is here and I hope everyone is enjoying the sunshine. The Optimist Club is still hard at work to bring out the best in youth. For those who missed our last meeting, we announced that the Optimist Club is making a one-time grant to the Acorns Rifle Club to purchase two advanced SCATT training devices to help their athletes achieve their goals. This grant will help them replace their non-functional machines. We got to meet one of the Acorn alumni at our June Meet & Greet. She just finished her first year at the Air Force academy and recently was a winner at the Junior Olympics. Our funding helps support these amazing kids.



The Tree Lot committee also met to plan for the upcoming tree lot season. A lot of work goes on behind the scenes to make the tree lot a success. Kudos to Sandy Bushue for her leadership.

Note that there is no meeting on July 5th. I hope you all enjoy the holiday. Don't forget to send Mark Whitenton pictures of your celebrations.

Optimistically yours, Andreas.

Elections for 2023-2024

The Nomination Committee (Andreas Baltatis, Debbie Whitenton and chaired by Brian Kellenberger as Past-President) has proposed the following slate of candidates for the Club's 2022-2023 fiscal year, which begins this October 1. The Optimist's current Board of Directors has approved these nominations. The election will take place at the Optimist luncheon on July 19. Additional candidates may be offered from the Floor during the luncheon, so long as they agree to serve.

Officers:

President: Debbie Whitenton (automatic)
President-Elect: Brian Kellenberger
Vice President: Sandy Bushue
Vice President: Richard Knight
Treasurer: Gerry Marosek
Secretary: Mark Whitenton
Past-President: Andreas Baltatzis (automatic)

Board of Directors:

One Year Left:

Erica Burson (automatic)
Clayton Depue (appointed to replace Shawn Harris, who has resigned)

New Board Members with two-year terms:

JB Whitlow
Eric Turner

Speaking of exercising your right to vote, here is wishing everyone a:



Happy 4th of July



mw: 149

Optimist Club of Arlington 16-005;
Mid-Atlantic Region 3;
Capital- Virginia District 16;
Northern Virginia Zone 4;

www.optimistclubofarlingtonva.org

Appendix

Here are the “thank you” notes presented to Sandy Bushue by Steve Tinter for the Optimist Club’s one-time grant to the Optimist-Acorn Rifle Club for new training devices at the Meet & Greet on June 28. Thank you, Sandy, for scanning them for this newsletter.



Thank you for the generous scholarship money!! I'm honored to represent the Acorns in local & national matches and appreciate all of the support your organization provides to the rifle team. Once an Acorn

always an Acorn! ☺

Thank you!
Grace Corbett

DEAR ARLINGTON OPTIMISTS,

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE DONATION
FOR JUNIOR OLYMPICS AND ALL THE
SUPPORT YOU'VE GIVEN THE ACORNS OVER THE
YEARS. I GREATLY APPRECIATE ALL YOU HAVE
DONE FOR OUR TEAM.

-ALYSON SNOWDALE, CLASS OF '25

thank
you

Dear Optimist,

I would like to express my deepest
gratitude for all the support you all
have given to the Acorns Rifle Team.

The financial help you gave to all
of the kids who attended the Junior
Olympics is greatly appreciated by
myself as well as my teammates.

Thank you for all that you do.

-Diana Leppert - Arlington Optimist Acorns

Just a
little note
to say...

To the Arlington Optimists,
Thank you for the generous gift to offset the
expenses for my first Junior Olympics. I hope to
continue with improving myself both on and
off the competition line, and continue to
represent the Acorns by being the best
person I can be.

- Ella Derrick