



OPTIMIST CLUB OF DES PLAINES, IL

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Oratorical Underway

Along with our Tree Lot the Oratorical is one of our club's oldest activities. It is no wonder that it also happens to be our International's activity with the most longevity, celebrating 75 years of helping youth to learn how to organize their thoughts around a central topic and then deliver these thoughts to an audience in a prescribed time limit. This annual project will now occupy many of our members' Friday evenings from now until April.

This year's topic is "United We Stand in Optimism." One of this year's new participants raised his hand and asked, "Just what does this mean, anyway?" The answer to this question is, "Exactly." In other words, think about what this statement means in regards to you, your family and community, nation, and even the world. This is quite a lot to think about and I, for one, am very excited about the personal incites and interpretations with which we will be treated in the next several weeks.

Another aspect of the Oratorical is the many youth that continue to come back each year. For some of us this is an added treat as we get to see the progression that is made from a nervous beginner to one that projects confidence.

This year, Zack Ladner, one of our winners from last year, has returned for the fifth year. He will be rooting for his younger sister, Adrianna, who will be competing this year for the first time.

Our first session was a very low key beginning as we simply registered those present and asked them to individually come forward to introduce themselves and tell us about their school, and interests, or hobbies. Our first critiques began by the stressing of good projection and diction.

This first Friday also saw the return of several club members who have many years of experience with this activity. It was especially good to see Del Johnson again. We

are so fortunate to have members such as Del, Bob Roller, Stan Walgreen, Al Bayer and Don Moran who are able to provide our youth with the benefits of so many years experience working with this project.

There is no doubt that this one activity provides our youth with an opportunity for self expression that for most has a far-reaching impact on their lives. Stop by and enjoy what happens at these sessions. This year we are meeting in Room "A" at 6:30 PM in the Des Plaines Public Library.



Zack and Adrianna

In Memoriam

Lee Hoelscher

September 29, 1930 – January 16, 2003



We mourn the passing of a good friend and club member, Lee Hoelscher. Lee was born in Estancia, New Mexico, where he grew up on a farm. Prior to joining the army for the Korean War he worked on a ranch in Missouri. After this he moved to the Chicago area and, as he had been a driver in the army, found work driving for a contractor. He was so well liked by his employer that he was sent to school to learn to be a pipe fitter. This was a profession that he pursued for about ten years.

At that time he was asked by the Chicago Board of Education to teach at the Washburne

Trade School where he taught shop classes such as pipefitting and welding. Lee had attended Park College and in order for him to continue teaching at Washburne he attended Northeastern College. It was a very proud day as he graduated, with his wife and children in attendance at the ceremony. Lee taught at Washburne for twenty-five years before retiring.

An interesting highlight of his career as a pipe fitter occurred when he took part in an annual contest that was held at Purdue University. Pipe fitters from across the country attended this annual event, which at the time was in its fifth year. Lee was awarded first place in this competition and the plaque commemorating this accomplishment was hung for years in the union hall in Chicago.

It was in 1966 that he married his wife, Joan. Both were members of a group at Trinity Lutheran called “the fifth-wheelers”. Joan remarked that her mother thought that Lee was “crazy to take on her four children along with his two.” We all, as club members, know that he was definitely not crazy, but just had a very big heart.

I found it so very interesting to learn about Lee from his wife, Joan. It was interesting to realize how little I knew about the man that I was proud to call friend. I guess the reason that I knew so little was that he was quiet and always interested in others and their accomplishments.

He will be greatly missed.

January Meetings

The **January 2nd** meeting started the year off on the right foot with a great turnout and lots of fun. The best news of the evening was that our tree lot had done even better than last year, assuring us that we will be able to do all and then some for the youth of Des Plaines. There was lots of opportunity to recognize some of Santa's elves (Steve Kozak, Lennie Lang, Norm Voss, Ed Welther, Jim Woods, and Ray Kopecky) for their extra time and effort that helped to ensure the success of the lot. Stacey and Paul had some special smiles for their Wednesday night work partner, Al Bayer, and special recognition was given to Glenn Swanson who was always there no matter what had to be done. Paul Magnusson remarked very sincerely, "Glenn is my hero!"

January 16th had two guests in attendance. Vern Luebbers was the guest of Paul Magnusson and was welcomed by all. Seems that Paul bowls in the same league as Vern does and that Vern was a good friend of Ray McNeal. Vern will be joining us in membership in March.

John Winke was our guest speaker. He works for Orchard Village, a non-for-profit organization that provides respite care for families with special needs children. He was very impressed with our club and plans to return with his wife for our February 20th spouses' night.



Prez Stacey and Tom Winke

Congratulations to Tom Swanson for being appointed by the Board to fill the vacancy created by Lee Hoelscher's passing. Tom will serve on the board until October 1st.

February Birthdays



Several of our members are older this month than they were. They are:

**Al Cote,
Ray Fiddelke,
Don Moran,
John Tomasello,
Norm Voss, and
Mary Alice Wenzl**

Many happy returns!
We hope we didn't miss anyone.

The Optimist Creed

Promise Yourself –

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.
To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.
To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Christian D. Larson



Friend of Youth

Coming Events

- Feb. 6 **Meeting** at the Elk's Club, 7 PM
- Feb. 9 Nominating Committee, 2:00
PM at Stacey Magnusson's
- Feb. 13 Budget Committee, 7:00 PM at
Stacey Magnusson's
- Feb. 20 **Meeting** at the Elk's Club, 7 PM
In honor of Valentine's Day,
this meeting will be a spouse's
or significant other's night!
- Feb. 27 Board Meeting at Stacey
Magnusson's, 7 PM

**Oratorical meets every Friday at 6:30 PM
in Room A of the Des Plaines Public
Library**



The Prez Sez



"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times". So writes the famous author. Lately I have felt the same way. Although we are moving ahead in our Optimist year, enjoying a very successful

tree lot, and making headway with new programs, we mourn the loss of yet another member, Lee Hoelscher. Lee was not only a fellow Optimist and board member, but was also a longtime neighbor of my parents and me. Although I called him Mr. Hoelscher for over thirty years, it was so easy, as a club member and friend, to call him Lee.

This really made me think a lot about our club. Look at the range in ages, occupations, interests and abilities. What better way is there than to take a bunch of strangers from all walks of life, combine them with good food, fellowship (and fun and frolics), and then work towards the common good of serving the youth of our community. ***To make all your FRIENDS feel there is something in them.*** We do that at every meeting by encouraging, cheering and sharing with one another. We find the **GOOD** in each other and I am proud to call all of you my friends!

As we begin our first project of the new year, the Oratorical, and as we segue into the spring with the chess tournament, the kite fly, our fishing derby, 8th grade scholarships, and we look ahead to our outdoor meetings, the Fourth of July Parade and our youth golf outing, lets make this the **best** of times. We must ***think only of the best, work only for the best and expect only the best.***

Those who have gone before us would want us to carry on the Optimistic spirit as we serve the youth of our fair city.

"Have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts."

-Charles Dickens