



OPTIMIST CLUB OF DES PLAINES, IL

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PROMISE YOURSELF!

The Monday before Christmas we stopped by the lot to see how things were going. We had heard that some of the racks were down and we only had 25 trees left.

That afternoon when we visited, we were surprised to see that all of the racks and lights were down and wood piled, and that the trailer was in the beginning stages of also being “put-to-bed” for another year.

If you showed up on Saturday to help clean up the lot and do all of this, you would have found that it had already been done. Mike Schimka came on Friday to tow the trailer in to storage as did Paul Just, loading the wood for our racks and dumping it at Public Works.

There were only eleven trees left, and these were also disposed of as our friends from Public Works came by to grind them up for us, as they do so nicely every year.

Although the figures will still have to be crunched by our treasurer as the last of the bills for phone and electric are paid, we can count this year a successful one as just about every tree on the lot was sold.

We really need to give a huge “Thank You” to all who helped this project to be a success. Of course, Steve Kozak is the man who was in charge of this committee. He once again has helped to see it through to completion.

It has been reported to us that last year’s total wreath output was 201. This year it was 202! Our optimistic elves that are there, every morning making all of these wreaths are Ray Kopecky, Lenny Lang, Norm Voss and Jim Woods.

The profit from wreath sales is always about half of the total. And, these guys do so much more than make wreaths, as they are also pricing them, replenishing the racks with fresh trees, and selling them as well.

We can thank them, and Steve, for their time and talent and we know that they appreciate how their efforts help our club do more for the youth of Des Plaines.

We can’t, and should not, forget all of the members who signed up and worked the lot. The Tree Lot is such a big project and it could not get done without everyone who can, helping as much as they can.

In particular, we saw the faces of new members at the lot. This help was so invaluable. As we mention names and thank them, we must also think about what it would have meant if they were not there to work these hours. Andy Piscitello, Vern Luebbers, Mandy Valenza, and Bob Kraft were there on a regular basis. Maggie Croft and Steve Meinecke were also in attendance, helping out whenever they were needed, in particular on those afternoons when we have always had problems finding folk to work.

And so, another tree lot is history, and we know that we will be relocated by the city to a new location for next year. As we reflect upon all that has transpired this past year that is so very good, we would hope to “promise ourselves” to do all that we can to help to make the New Year even better.

This coming November our club will be 50 years old. A reason to celebrate and reflect. Let’s all help to make it the best ever. Happy New Year!

December Meetings

Although it is a bit cramped, there is nothing like our meetings in December at the Tree Lot. Thanks to Bob Bochat, one of our grills is brought out of hibernation and fired up to provide us with delicacies of which the Elk's Club has never dreamed.

From a business standpoint, there is not much that happens as it is all about kicking back, chowing down, and enjoying. The Bochat brothers provided us with bean soup and pork chop sandwiches and it was very good. The night was cold and damp and we signed up to work and we were all commenting on how the weather was not conducive to selling trees.

Jim Woods reminded us all as to the original intent of these Tree Lot meetings. The idea was to have them at the lot so that trees could be replenished on the racks and the lot cleaned up. The more the merrier to get this job done.

Well, since we have had our JOOI clubbers from Algonquin at the lot the first two Saturdays in December, the lot has never been cleaner. While we were "meeting", Al Bayer and Chris Ladner sold a few trees to customers who stopped by.

Our second meeting saw Chef Welther at the grill treating us with hot soup and sandwiches, cooked on the grill. Prez Stacey was ill so Glenn ran a quick board and general meeting. We actually had some important business to attend to, and that was the official "I do's" by two members that joined the club this summer. The first of these was Jon Cohen, our first college student, fresh from finals at SIU.



Jon and Maggie

We also officially welcomed Maggie Croft into our ranks. She had to work when her fiancé, Steve was inducted, so we were finally able to catch up with her at this meeting.

We welcome them both! New members are so important to the continued growth of our club and what we can do for our youth. Think about which of your friends or neighbors you can bring into the club.

January Meetings

Please be aware that, as New Years Day is on the first Thursday of the month (and New Year), we will be meeting on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, with the Board Meeting being on the last Thursday, January 29th. We will be back in the Elk's Club for our general meetings and the first one (January 8th) will be full of Tree Lot fun for all. Be sure to be in attendance so you won't miss what will be a great meeting.

See you then!!

Oratorical



January means a lot of things to our club, and one of these is the continuation of one of our longest standing programs, the Oratorical. Paul Magnusson will be chairing this committee and would like to have a meeting of all that are interested in helping on Sunday, January 11th, at 3 PM at his house, 175 N. Wolf Road.

This meeting will be important, as there will be some proposed changes in scheduling and format. Anyone who wants to be involved should be in attendance so that your opinions can be heard before changes are made.

Any questions, prior to the meeting, can be directed toward Paul at (847) 294-0568. We need lots of help with this project, so plan to attend this important meeting.

This year's topic is "Thinking Working and Expecting the Best"

January

Birthdays



The following members were born in January and they are:

**Al Bayer,
Ray Bochat,
Jim Buscemi,
Dianna Edwards,
Dick Hissong,
Ray Kopecky,
and
Mike Schmika.**

We wish them all the very best of wishes and hope that we haven't missed anyone.

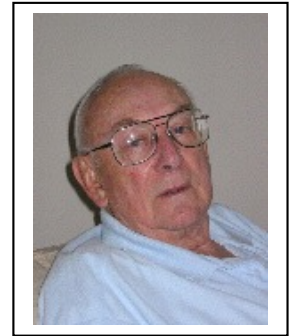
No one has come forward to tell us if their anniversary is in January, so we guess none were married then.

It's all about the JOOI

Besides their help at the Tree Lot, our JOOI club at Algonquin has been busy learning how to conduct weekly meetings with all of the protocol that goes along with this. Prez Stacey has reported that they have already begun to show initiative by having their first fund raiser. They had a sale and sold cookies and baked goods to faculty and students after school. It was a great success and is sure to be repeated.

The club's faculty sponsor is Pedro Soriano. We hope to have him visit us soon as he will be joining our club. His main project with our club will be the JOOI Club at Algonquin.

Ray Fiddelke



It's always a matter of pride when a club as old as ours can brag that it still has members on its roster that were there at the very beginning.

We call them Charter Members, and we happen to have two of them, Ray Fiddelke and Del Johnson.

Ray has had a lot of changes in his life lately, of which all of our members should be aware. But first, a little bit of a history lesson. Ray is not only a Charter Member, but happens to have been present when the very first idea of forming an Optimist Club in Des Plaines was proposed. The gentlemen present were Ed Probst, John Abbott, Arvid Casler, Dwight Byram, Woody Weaver and Ray. Woody was a member of the Austin Optimists in Chicago, the club that actually sponsored ours. The very first meetings in Des Plaines were held at a place called "The Lighthouse," located at River and Touhy.

Ray worked for Centel after WW II. (He served for two years in the Navy and then four years in the CB Reserves). He began by digging holes for them and recalls that he installed the first dial tone phone in Park Ridge. When he retired, he was the Personnel Coordinator for the whole state.

Ray moved to an assisted living facility at the beginning of December. Only two weeks later his wife of almost 42 years, Mary Ann, passed away. We hope, as does he, to see him at our 50th Anniversary Celebration in November. For those of you that would like to contact him, his address is: The Devonshire, 1515 Barrington Road, Unit 231, Hoffman Estates, IL 60194. His phone number is: (847) 519-1175.

Friend of Youth



Coming Events

Please Note that our January meetings are on the second and fourth weeks of the month due to New Years Day being on the first Thursday of 2004.

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| January 8 | Meeting at the Elk's Club, 7 PM |
| January 11 | Oratorical Meeting , 3 PM, 175 N. Wolf Road |
| January 22 | Meeting at the Elk's Club, 7 PM |
| January 29 | Board Meeting at Stacey Magnusson's, 7 PM |



Thanks to Ed Welther, we all had a chance to win special last minute gifts at our last meeting. Here's a happy winner, Don Moran, with his.

The Prez Sez



An Optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in, a Pessimist stays up to make sure the Old Year leaves. – Bill Vaughn.

It is 3:00 on New Year's Eve and I am sitting here reflecting on 2003. Did I keep my resolutions? I couldn't tell you as I don't remember any of them.

Sure, I've gained and lost a few pounds, exercised when I remembered, tried to be nice to others shared my optimism etc. etc. Maybe the resolutions I made weren't that memorable to keep.

I guess I've learned through the years that the part of the Creed that states, "To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to greater achievement of the future" is all I need to start the New Year. Through the highs and lows of 2003, I know that no matter what has happened in the past I am given a new beginning with each new day.

I think Maya Angelou sums it up by saying, "I've learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow."

Here's to a great 2004!

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