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Pipeline Newsletter



Optimist Club of Des Plaines

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Happiness is...

Happiness is..., begins one of the final songs from the musical, “You’re a Good Man, Charlie Brown.” It is highly appropriate, as the New Year begins, that we reflect upon these lyrics. The song starts simply enough, “Happiness is, finding a pencil, pizza with sausage, telling the time.” These are Schultz’s characters, Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and Linus, reflecting upon some things that bring them joy. So what words could you substitute as you think back on this past year?

For me it is easy. First, and foremost, at this time of year, are Ray Kopecky and Ed Welther, our Tree Lot chairs. These guys can’t be thanked enough for all that they have done this year to see to it that the lot was a success. In a year when we had to move to a new location, and have new leaders, we could not have been more fortunate than to have these two men step forward.

If our gratitude rested only in their organizational skills, that would be enough. They not only organized and directed the lot, but practically lived there, making wreaths and selling trees. They were joined by Lenny Lang and Norm Voss, who spent many hours making the wreaths that have come to be a large part of our profit. They were joined by some members like Vern Luebbers and Tom Swanson, who spent many additional hours helping out during the afternoon shifts and on weekends.

When asked about the weekend

sales, Vern commented that the trees were “flying out of the lot.” Well, they just didn’t do that on their own. So, happiness is not just another year of successful tree sales, but leadership and club members who stepped up and were there to “man (and woman) the lot.”

We also should not forget past years of success and leadership. Many may not recall that Steve Kozak chaired our lot for 15 years, a very long time. We are sure that he must be as proud of this accomplishment as we are of him, for his efforts enabled us to fund our youth projects all of these years.



Now we have Ray and Ed to thank. Some may wonder how to do that. Well, start by just shaking their hand and saying, “Thanks,” the next time you see them. If you can afford it, buy them a drink, as well.

Thanks to all who were able to spend time at the lot this year. In particular, and most recently, thanks to the souls who showed up to pull the nails and take down the lot: Vern Luebbers, Ed Welther, Ed Welther, Jr., Lenny Lang, Ray Kopecky, Ray Bochat, Bob Bochat, Dianna Edwards, Jerry O’Leary, Chris Ladner, Glenn Swanson, Norm Voss, and Paul Magnusson.

So the song finishes, “Happiness is everything and anything that’s loved by you.” There’s lots to love, and near the top of my list is this club, its members, and all that we try to do for youth.

Happy New Year!

Meetings

Meetings in December were held at the Tree Lot and helped to fulfill our By Laws obligation. There are many who love these meetings for their brevity and for the good food that is prepared by our very own chefs. So, as we think back, it is of Bob Bochat's fabulous chicken soup, and Ed Welther's Steak sandwiches. Thanks, guys, for once again amazing us at what can be prepared at the lot.

Business that was conducted was primarily concerning the lot and scheduling of workers. In other business, the board approved that a donation be made to a special fund that has been set up for a needy student at Maine West who has Leukemia. Her treatment will require a bone marrow transplant and the family is very needy. We hope to be able to budget more in the new year for this Childhood Cancer patient.

Our next meeting will be in the friendly confines of the Elk's Club on January 6th and we hope to see all in attendance. Remember, dinners will now be \$12.

Tree Lot Stories

Each year that we sell trees in Des Plaines result in all types of stories that need to be shared with all. Here are just a few.

We have all had couples that take forever to make their choice of that special tree that will decorate their tree for the holidays. Some are even interested in whether or not they have set a new record for the longest time spent with this deliberation. Ed and Ray told of one such couple. The husband, however, added a new twist to an old story. It seems that his wife would reject a tree and wander on. He would then manage to re-present the very same tree to her for approval. She would decide, once again, that she needed to look further. This went on for some time, with the husband continuing to

present her with the same tree until she finally decided that it was the "perfect tree" for their home.

Then there was the evening that Chris Ladner's son, Zack, kept us all company and was actually quite helpful. But his naivete was just too precious and some of us had to take advantage of the situation. He was asked by Al Bayer if he would be so kind to go up and down the aisles and shake the loose needles off the trees. It took just a little time for him to realize that this was not a necessary job for him to do.

As we were closing up, Stacey asked him to turn off the light in the port-a-potty. He was really having trouble finding the switch. His dad suggested that he look for it "down the hole." It's no wonder that some of our youth, today, are distrustful of adults.

We couldn't help but remember Jim Woods as we worked the tree lot. In some cases, would say, "If Jim was here, he wouldn't like this." One day, as Ray and Ed were cleaning up, they were thinking of Jim and decided that he must be missing the lot down in Arizona. So, they swept up a bunch of pine needles from the lot floor, put them in a bag, and mailed them to Jim. Just to add a little fun, they made sure that the bag had a hole in it. We sure hope that it was Jim, and not Linda, that pulled that bag out of the box

And finally, the warmest story of the year is about our very own, Vern Luebbers. Spending lots of time, this year, at the lot, Vern decided that he would purchase and decorate a small tree for his abode. Now, this is not too unusual, except for the fact that he did not have a stand to put it in. So, he devised a new process, which, as others find out, may become a new way of doing things.

Vern filled up a tub with some dirt, added water to create mud, and literally stuck (or planted) his tree right in the middle. He then added some yard waste material and

additional water. He reports that the tree is supple and alive as can be. Some of us think that it may take root and he will be able to use it next year, as well.

Vern's tree is pictured on the first page of this issue. In order to get all of the lights, it was shot by your editor without a flash or benefit of a tri-pod, which is why it is slightly blurred. But then, some of the best remembrances of Christmas may be those that are blurred in our memories, leaving only a warm glow.

Guest Speaker

Our second meeting in January will have a guest speaker, Jill Morgenthaler, who is a colonel in the Army Reserve. She is a public affairs officer and will speak to us on her experiences serving our country in Bosnia, and most recently in Iraq.

Colonel Morgenthaler lives in Des Plaines with her husband, Kerry and their two children Jamie, an 8th grader at Chippewa, and Neil, a sophomore at Maine West.

She is a talented and powerful public speaker, with fascinating insights gained by her first hand experience in the Army. You will not want to miss this meeting.

Oratorical

With the beginning of the New Year our Oratorical committee will begin its sessions with our youth in public speaking. Paul Magnusson, the chair for this project will be holding a meeting of his committee at his home on Sunday, January 16th, at 2:00 PM. The meeting should last no longer than an hour, dealing with schedule and some new procedures that he would like to see implemented.

The first orientation meeting for the youth will be held at the Library on January 21st

and will begin at 6:30 PM. Members are encouraged to attend.

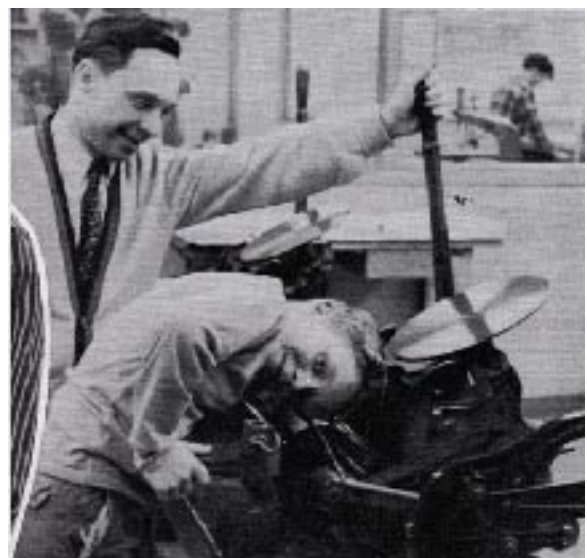
January Birthdays



Several of our members are older this month. They are:

Al Bayer
Ray Bochat
Dianna Edwards
Dick Hissong
Ray Kopecky
and
Mike Schmika

We wish them the very best!



Anyone recognize this "Friend of Youth"?

First Tree



This is a picture of the first tree that was purchased at our lot this year, decorated by its proud owners, the Viso's of Mt. Prospect, who have been, like so many others, buying their tree at our lot for the past 21 years.

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



We don't seem to have any anniversaries this month. Please let us know if you tied the knot in January so that we can recognize your anniversary and correct our records.



We hope that all our members and their extended families have been able to experience a holiday season full of warmth and joy. May the New Year be one of health and prosperity for us all!

“Take time to laugh, it's the music of the soul.” - Anonymous

Friend of Youth



Coming Events

- Jan. 6 - **Meeting** - Elk's Club, 7 PM
- Jan. 16 - **Oratorical Meeting** at Paul Magnusson's, 2 PM
- Jan. 21 - **Oratorical** - First meeting at the Library, 6:30 PM. There will be sessions each Friday at the Library throughout the month.
- Jan. 20 - **Meeting** - Elk's Club, 7 PM
- Jan. 27 - **Board Meeting** - St. Martin's Parish House, 7 PM

Prez Sez



The New Year is a mere two weeks away as I write this. What in the world happened to 2004? It's always amazing how quickly 365 days can pass. It was a year filled with a joyous celebration as our club celebrated it's 50th anniversary at the mother of all parties. We also felt deep sadness as we marked the passing of our dear friends Jim Buscemi and Megan Atherton, bid a fond farewell to the inimitable Jim Woods, and welcomed new members Judy Ladner and Ellen Ehlert into the club.

The first time bowling event was a huge success and will be a part of our event schedule for a long time. Ed Welther's time and talent at float building made our 4th of July parade entry memorable, the fishing derby and kite were successes once again, and our golf event attracted a record number of participants. All in all, a very good year for our club.

But since this is being written close to New Year's Eve, I feel I have to make a few resolutions:

1. Attrition has diminished our club's numbers. I'd like every member to think of just one person who would make a valuable addition to our club and have a no pressure, join us for dinner. Remember, every member has joined because they were asked.
2. A convention in New Orleans sounds like a road trip to be remembered. By mid January, I will see a committee formed to investigate the possibility of a group train or bus trip to the Big Easy .
3. Increased costs and the desire to expand our service to youth require additional funds. I will investigate additional fund raising opportunities by mid February.
4. Although we may be successful in raising money through various means, the bulk of our finances depend on a successful Christmas tree sales season. I resolve to get every member to commit to volunteering in some way to help with this event. An old business adage is that 20% of the people do 100% of the work. Can we make it 100% of the people doing 100% of the work?
5. Finally, I resolve to learn all there is to know about our club, O.I. International, and to be motivated, enthusiastic, and accessible, and to invite every member to come along with me on this journey.

May 2005 be our best year yet!