

May 1, 2005  
Vol. 51, Issue 8

# Pipeline Newsletter



## Optimist Club of Des Plaines

President – Chris Ladner  
Vice President – Tom Swanson  
Vice President – Paul Magnusson  
Secretary – Dianna Edwards  
Treasurer – Ray Kopecky

Optimist Board  
Al Bayer  
Ray Bochat  
Don Moran  
Stacey Magnusson  
Mary Alice Wenzl

Sergeant-at-Arms  
Steve Meinecke

Pipeline editor and webmaster  
Paul Magnusson

P.O. Box 1551  
Des Plaines, IL 60017  
Phone: (847) 827-1444  
Fax: (847) 296-5624  
E-mail: ladnercj@yahoo.com

On the Web:  
<http://www.dpoptimists.org>

## We Have a Winner!

You may recall that our last issue recounted our longest running program, the Oratorical, and the impending Regional Contest that was soon to occur. Usually, the word “impending” usually as the word “doom” following it. Having only experienced two Regionals, I still would want to use that word because the “slick” kids who are high school speech-team-prepared seem to always be the winning entries.

We are always proud of our youth, and last year their speeches improved, but not to the extent that caused them to be recognized for this increased effort. This year was no different and it was the kids from Oak Park, who were excellent as always. There was also a really tall, good looking lad with shiny black hair, wearing a business suit, from Sterling, who was just dominating with his presentation.

But this year was also different in that one of our entries had been there the previous year. He had seen and heard the other speeches. He was not standing in unfamiliar territory. And, for better or worse, he had just finished a grueling production week of his school’s musical, having done three performances on Thursday, and an evening one on Friday.

His parents, in their wisdom, reserved a room nearby the contest so that they could drive there in the evening, allowing James to have a bit more chance to be fresh for his performance. This is really great support from them. In fact, their engine warning light had just started to go on before they left, so they rented a car so that there would be no chance that their vehicle would somehow create a disaster for their son.



Parents of both students were there to support their children, as was Stacey and Paul Magnusson, Andy Piscitello and Don Moran from our club.

The speeches are always good at the Regionals. Even though we don’t have a Zone Contest, due to the fact that

we are the only club in our zone that is presently offering the Oratorical to our youth, many of these students had already participated and won such a contest. All of these students were champions.

The judges, all very competent, left the room after the last speech to deliberate and the Master of Ceremonies began a little bit of “tap dancing” while they tallied their scores. But then, the judges did not return. They did not return for a

half hour. We later found out that they had never been out so long and had to employ all of the various tie breaking procedures that are in place by the rules governing this contest.

Finally, they did return to the room, and the announcement was given. Our young lady, Shabana Ysufishag, had so improved her speech. It was truly excellent and stood out among the presentations. But it was five seconds too short, causing her to lose 3 points. We never see the judging sheets, but we really felt that we would have heard her name being read if it had been a bit longer. The girl from Oak Park was declared the winner.

Then, the announcement was made. The boy winner is, James Vernola! Yes, James Vernola, our boy! We have a winner!!!! James will now, for the first time for our club in at least ten years, go on to the District Contest, which is part of the District Conference to be held in Bloomington on May 13-15. The contest will be held in the morning of the 14th. There will be two other boys from Region Two and Three who will also speak. The prize will be a \$1500 scholarship.

Chris, Judy, Stacey and I will be in attendance. We certainly hope that some of you might want to attend, just to support James. We are so proud of him. His presentation at Regionals was, as you can imagine, outstanding. We look forward to his performance in Bloomington!

### *Meetings*

Our first meeting of the month was well attended as it was an election meeting and our members wanted to be sure that they were there to have their vote counted. There was also a free meal. We were glad to see Al Cote as he isn't always able to attend. The slate of officers, as published in the past two issues, was approved for next year. Thanks, by the way, to all elected for your willingness to serve the club in this way.

For the first time that we can remember we even had a prospective Director who did some electioneering prior to the vote. Guess there was nothing in the by-laws to prevent this from

happening.

In further business, it was approved by the membership that we move our funds from the Vanguard account to an OI Foundation one which will not only give us access to these funds, but also guarantee us 4% interest. We will also have the good feeling of knowing that they are still helping youth even though we are not directly using them.

Additional funds were approved to help Girls' Softball and Central Little League. These are organizations we usually support, but we had not received their letters in time for them to be included in our budget.

Everyone present enjoyed Ed and Ray's Bingo game and the top prize of \$25 was kept in the family as Stacey and Stan split the winnings. Stacey said that she owes her luck to the mantra that she repeated, over and over, between each draw: "Berkowitz, Berkowitz, Berkowitz."

We are also proud to welcome a new member, Eric Suevel, into our midst. Please take note of his bio later on in this issue and also introduce yourself to him the next time there is an opportunity.

Our second meeting of the month was our B.A.F.F.L.E. Night, or Bring a Friend for Laughs and Eats. We had five guests in attendance at our first effort at holding one of these events whose primary purpose was to increase our membership.



( meetings, cont.)

We were able to view a DVD of our Gold Medalists that Paul had made from our Oratorical Contest. In addition he also had a power point presentation covering what Optimist International and our club is all about.

At present time, we have two of our guests who have indicated a willingness to join our ranks. We hope that there will be more. You know, it isn't necessary for the club to hold a special night for new members. Remember, all you have to do is, "Ask!"

We also had another fabulous raffle for, of all things, cold, hard cash. Although the draw was not fixed, it was nice that all of our guests won something.

We hope to see all of you at our May meetings.

### *May Birthdays*



We only have one member who is celebrating a birthday this month:

**Lee Piekarz**

We wish him the very best!  
Many Happy Returns of the Day!

### *Belated Thanks*

Thanks to all of you that helped with the Bowling for Youth Program that was held in March. Special thanks goes out to co-chair, Vern Luebbbers, and all of our fellow club members who came out to lend a hand. We are sure that the smile on the face of each young bowler, as well as those of their grateful parents, is the true expression of gratitude for our service to youth.

### *New Member*

Meet our newest member, Eric Suevel. Eric has been a Des Plaines resident for almost 46 years and will be celebrating his marriage of 20 years this July to his wife, Markay, who is a minister for the United Church of Christ in Park Ridge. They have four children ranging in ages between 12 and 18 years.



Eric graduated from Northwest Community Hospital in 1979 as a paramedic and has served in this capacity in Des Plaines for the past 26 years. Additionally, Eric and Markay have started a stained glass business called Eric Suevel Studios.

He also holds a Black Belt in Chung Moo Quan, is a Black Belt candidate in Tae Kwon Do and has a Red Belt in Akido. He indicates that he has "dabbled" in Tai Chi, Wing Chun and Kung Fu, none of which are Mandarin Cuisine.

Additionally he enjoys watching his kids grow up, reading, gardening, soccer and music. Eric was a member of the Maine West Warrior Band, and still enjoys playing his saxophone as well as listening to many different kinds of music.

We all look forward to Eric's participation in our club!





Three of our members are celebrating their anniversaries this month.

They are:

Ray Bochat (36 years)

Peggy Higgins (20 years)

and Chris and Judy Ladner  
(11 years)

We wish them the happiest of happys on their special day!

### ***Bundle of Joy***

**W**eighing in at 7 lbs, 7 ozs, Allison Rita Swanson was born on April 21, 2005 at 3:22 PM. She measured in at 20 inches long and has already distinguished herself by sleeping for six hours the other night! We are so happy for Colleen and Tom. Tom reports that he is helping to build the club, one member at a time.

Since she isn't in pre school yet, will she have to pay the full dues? We will have to check the by-laws.



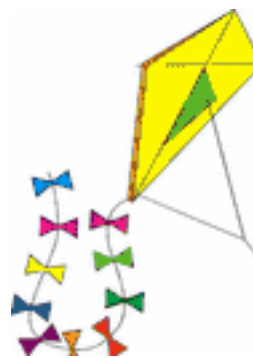
### **The Optimist Creed**

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

### ***Let's Go Fly a Kite!***



**M**ay 21 (rain date is May 28) will find our club hoping for clear skies and a nice breeze as we provide kites, prizes and lunch for our youth. This is a long standing program for our club and is chaired, this year, by Al Bayer.

Al will need lots of help and hopes that club members will be able to come out and assist with registraion, kite assembly and everything else that will make the day fun for all.

The hours for the event are 9 AM - 1 PM at Lake Opeka.

## *Friend of Youth*



### Coming Events

- May 1 - **Spring Celebration** - 11 AM-2 PM West Park
- May 5 - **Meeting** - Elk's Club, 6:45 PM
- May 13-15 - **District Conference**,  
Bloomington, IL
- May 19 - **Meeting** - Elk's Club, 6:45 PM
- May 21 - **Kite Fly** - Lake Opeka, 10 AM  
- 1 PM
- May 26 - **Board Meeting** - St. Martin's  
Parish House, 7 PM
- May 28 - **Kite Fly** - Rain Date



## *Prez Sez*

*...Noah's Ark was built by volunteers. The Titanic was built by professionals*

I found the above quote while looking at a website for volunteerism. Putting aside the humor of it, it tells volumes about just how important volunteer work is. When you think of what it would cost for "professionals" to coach our Oratorical contestants, run a golf, bowling, or fishing tournament, or do many of the things we do, you quickly realize that these events would be cost prohibitive. Dropping them

would mean that the hundreds of kids who participate would have lives that are far less enjoyable as a result.

Fortunately for them, we are a strong club with a dedicated membership, and while that membership may rise and fall, we are numerous enough to make a positive impact in our town.

It's a modern tragedy that so many service clubs ultimately fold for lack of membership. The Daily Herald recently told of the Arlington Heights Elks Club disbanding after many years of service to the community. The tone of the article was like an obituary, with statistics provided that showed that virtually all service clubs have suffered continuing declines in membership since the 1970's. This prompted me to write my first ever letter to the editor, in which I asked people to turn away from the distraction of television, the internet, and video games for a while, join a service club, (preferably the Optimists!) and discover the unique experience of giving back to the community. I stated that those who do will not regret it. I certainly haven't.

Our club is made up of people who have made that decision and enriched their lives as a result. If the BAFFLE night is any indication, we are not alone. It was encouraging to see potential new members show up and consider the possibility of becoming an Optimist. Welcoming five guests at one time was a delightful experience, and I hope the first step toward five inductions.

## *Spring Celebration*

Our Spring Celebration will be held this coming Sunday, May 1st, from 11AM - 2PM at West Park. This is a wonderful time to celebrate May Day with your family and friends. If you don't have any kids and can't "adopt" some from your neighbors, just come to hang out and have a good time.

This year there will be lots of fun activities and projects for the kids to do. So, bring a snack to pass and plan to be part of this special time.

Any questions, please contact Kay Welther at (847)985-1336, kmwelther@aol.com or Dianna Edwards at (847)296-6573, dedwardsboc@aol.com.