

OPTIMISTICALLY SPEAKING

The Newsletter of the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna

February 2016

Calendar

February 3 — Regular Meeting

Speaker: Travel Planner Donna Manz
6:45: Social Time; 7:30 Dinner
Fairfax American Legion Hall

February 10 — Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

February 14—Valentine's Day



February 17 — Essay Contest Meeting

6:45 p.m. — Social Time; 7:30 Dinner
8:00 — Program begins
Fairfax American Legion Hall

February 24 — Fourth Wednesday

Dinner at Culmore Teen Center—Team B

February 29 — Leap Year Day!



Special March Preview:

March 2 — Oratorical Contest

6:15 p.m.*— Social Time; 7:00 Dinner*

Fairfax American Legion Hall

*Note special times for this event!

Spotlight on Upcoming Events

We have the cure for cabin fever! Our **meeting on February 3** will have us shaking off the cobwebs and raring to go on new adventures. Our agenda includes the formal presentation of **our donation to Growing Hope**, from last year's Family Fun Day and follow-up events. Several more **new members will be inducted** to the Optimist Club. And our guest speaker, **travel planner Donna Manz**, will give us the expert's scoop on **"Where to Go and What to Pack."** Our Social Time begins at 6:45 p.m. (a great time to chat with some of our new members...) and dinner starts at 7:30, at the Fairfax American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax, VA.



We are welcoming new members on Feb. 3. Be there and get to know our newest Optimists!



Our annual **Essay Contest** for high school students culminates on **February 17**, when three finalists present their essays to the Club and we announce the contest's winner. We award \$500, \$300, and \$200 prizes to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place; the 1st place winner of our contest has the opportunity to compete for a \$2500 scholarship at the District level. This year's topic, "Lead by Example: Reality of Fiction", is bound to generate some interesting writing—come hear what our finalists have to say!

Editor's Note: Just a reminder that the events and cash prizes we award for the Essay Contest and our other programs (e.g., Carol Waite Brennan Awards; TR Cook Youth of Excellence Awards; Helping Hands Awards) are possible because of your hard work at the Christmas Tree sales and the Farmers Market. You have a big investment here! Come to programs to meet the kids who are being recognized through your efforts—and meet their parents and teachers, who are cognizant of and truly grateful for the work we do on behalf of kids. Now, back to our regular Newsletter...



Membership VP **Kathy Cutri** and Director **Angelique Ayala** announced a Club **goal of 25 new members** this program year (October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016). We are well on our way, but they are not letting up! Several incentives are being planned. Look for further announcements and progress reports from this dynamic duo.



Serving the Youth of Greater Vienna
for 60 Years!

Visit us at www.OptimistClubofGreaterVienna.org
We're on Facebook! [Facebook.com/ViennaOptimistClub](https://www.facebook.com/ViennaOptimistClub)



From the President—

Dear Vienna Optimists,

I've taken a month to think about the new year and I have decided that this year will be another magnificent year for optimism. Last month we had a great social event at the bowling alley and on January 20th we celebrated the evening by listening to three wonderful speeches during the Communication Contest for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. **Rob DiRocco** did a masterful job of organizing and moderating the event. We also installed 7 new members into the club. This is a very exciting time for membership. **Kathy Cutri and Angelique Ayala** have laid out a plan to recruit 25 new members this year. With the addition of young and older members we have an exciting mix of talented individuals in the club that will help us to a very successful year. About this time last year, president **Dick Gongaware** provided a list of things that we can do as active club members to better serve our community and uphold our motto, "Friend of Youth". It takes a lot our work by our whole membership to do the job! So I say " Promise Yourself" that you will commit to many of the following:

- Join a committee to better serve the club's needs. Talk to me about our needs.
- Come to our meetings on a regular basic. If you haven't joined the club in the last 2 years, it will give you a chance to meet the 22 new members that have. It also shows support for our many youth programs.
- "Like" us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ViennaOptimistClub/>.
- Join the Meet-Up group at <http://www.meetup.com/Vienna-Optimist-Club/>
- Volunteer to help at the Farmers Market, which serves a great need for the community—and is a great fund raiser for us.
- Volunteer to help with one of our many activities. We don't want to stay with the norm where 5% do 80% of the work. This is really unfair to the 5%, so get involved!
- Know the Optimist creed and live by Your Promise!
- Get to know all the members of the club. We hope to publish a picture directory this year so you can recognize people that you don't know.
- Help with the Christmas Tree sales. It is our biggest fund raiser and it helps us fund many community and youth activities.
- Bring a new member to one of our meetings. Ask your next door neighbor!
- Stay in touch by reading our Newsletter. It is an amazing source of information about the club.

Keep our club active by staying involved!!

President Joe Miller



February Birthday Wishes to:

Jim Radja – February 9

Jerry Covell – February 21

Lena Shrestha – February 25

Optimist Anniversaries in February

Jim Pammel - 35 years

Steve Schuneman – 33 years

Richard Plocica – 23 years

Sam Sindoni – 23 years

Pat Hackerson – 14 years

Bob Thompson – 4 years

Mercury Payton – 3 years



Our **Oratorical Contest** will be held on **Wednesday, March 2**. Social time will start at 6:15 and dinner will be served at 7:00. *Note both the earlier start time and the new date.* We are conducting our contest two weeks earlier than usual to accommodate the schedule for the new international contest. This year's topic is: "How My Best Brings Out the Best in Others."



Catching Up With Our New Members

The backlog of new member bios is stacking up here at Newsletter HQ! Here are a few of the fine folks who have joined the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna in the past year.

Sherry Levitt



Sherry Levitt was appointed executive director of Teaching with Primary Sources, Virginia in 2010. Teaching with Primary Sources is a national program of the Library of Congress providing professional development and unparalleled digital resources for K-12 teachers. Prior to her current work, Sherry was an English Language Arts curriculum specialist for Fairfax County Public Schools. She served as department chair and English teacher at James Madison High School for many years. She is a great admirer of the Vienna Optimist Club and its members and hopes to contribute to the goal of supporting children in our area and beyond.

Ed Wonder joined the Vienna Optimist chapter in March 2015. Following graduate school at UVa, and a few years as a wandering savant in academe, he settled in the Washington, DC area in August 1978, and moved to Vienna in January 1985. He and Elizabeth have been married for almost 32 years, and have resided in the same house for 31. They have three grown children. Ed retired, sort of, in October 2014, and continues to work as a part-time consultant on nuclear proliferation issues.

Ed Wonder



Jeff Bechtle



As a native Vienna resident, Jeff graduated from James Madison High School and then went on to West Virginia Wesleyan to get a degree in Physical Education. After realizing his dream to teach in the classroom, he received his Masters in Education from Marymount University. Currently, and for the past 11 years, Jeff teaches 2nd grade at Flint Hill Elementary. Prior to that he taught for three years at Louise Archer Elementary and completed his student teaching there. Both of his sons, Ross now 15 at Madison and Tyler now 12 at Thoreau, went to Flint Hill Elementary.

Walking to work is fun as he loves what he does and believes in making learning fun so

that all kids want to go to school. Part of making learning fun is providing hands-on learning experiences, like raising three hens in the school's courtyard coop. In addition, compassion is learned from having classroom pets. Jeff also believes in being an active teacher at Flint Hill events to support the school's wonderful PTA.

Besides Jeff's family his other love is playing basketball--and staying in shape so he can continue to do so. Jeff currently coaches his son Tyler's lacrosse and basketball teams, and has coached teams over the years from T-ball to football.

Finally, Jeff has taken three mission trips to Africa through his church, Fairfax Circle Church. He's made relationships in Kenya and Uganda while teaching teachers to teach in different ways for different types of learning styles. He hopes to take a family mission trip to Alaska next!



COMMUNICATION CONTEST for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

We assembled on a snowy evening for our 2016 CCDHH presentations, and were well-rewarded for the effort. Three students enthralled and inspired us with their words and spirit on the topic, "How My Best Brings Out the Best in Others." Program coordinator (and past CCDHH parent) Rob DiRocco spoke movingly to the kids and to us about the value of this program—the challenge it presents, the courage needed to meet that challenge, and the confidence gained through the process. Luis Pinto won first place and advances to the Zone competition. Our congratulations to all three contestants!



Far Left: Luis Pinto, Yana Bugby, and Aracely Velasquez Martinez pose with their teachers from Canterbury Woods Elementary School.

Left: First place winner Luis Pinto speaks forcefully about giving his best.

Jonathan Lyons



Jonathan Lyons has worked in the mortgage industry for over three decades. After graduating from Vanderbilt University, Jon worked for several mortgage companies before he founded The Lyons Group, Inc., in 1991. Since that time, Jonathan has closed loans for over 1,200 satisfied clients. Born and raised in Arlington, Virginia, Jon has lived in Vienna for the past 20 years. Jonathan is an avid golfer and also enjoys traveling (to Italy, in particular), cooking, working out, and spending time with his family.

Randolph Sawyer, CFE, CCEP, retired from the USAF as a Major in 2006 and then the Department of Homeland Security in 2014. He accumulated almost 35 years of combined experience in suspension and debarment; acquisition; contract management; financial planning, and auditing. He started Carpe Discrimen, LLC in 2014 to provide independent consulting to firms in the areas of suspension, debarment, ethics and corporate compliance.

Randy Sawyer



Randy holds both a Masters of Arts in Economics and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, cum laude, from the University of Texas in Austin. He obtained his Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) designation in 2015; Certified Compliance and Ethics Professional (CCEP) designation in 2014; and Certified Financial Planner (CFP) designation in 1991. Randy is Federal Acquisition Certification-Contracting (FAC-C) Level 3 and Federal Acquisition Certification-Program and Project Manager (FAC-P/PM) Level 1. He is a member of the American Bar Association; Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics; Association of Certified Fraud Examiners; National Contract Management Association and the Greater Vienna Optimist Club.

January 2016 Board of Directors Highlights

The Board of Directors met on January 13, 2016, with 9 members present. Highlights of the meeting are as follows:

- VP of Youth Mike Fitzella discussed plans for the Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) held at the January 20 dinner meeting. Rob DiRocco has worked diligently to reestablish this program for the club.
- VP of Finance Dick Lippert reported that Christmas tree sales were successful and after covering the cost of the trees and expenses and paying sales tax, the club netted approximately \$30,000 for the Youth Fund.
- VP of Media Relations Tom Bauer reported that he has submitted an article on Veronica Day to the *Connection*.
- Discussed initial planning for the 2016 Farmers Market.
- Agreed to stop offering PayPal as an option for paying dues. PayPal will continue to be available for making donations to the club.
- Discussed possible dues alternatives for young members.
- Approved donations to the Vienna Little League to sponsor a team and to Flint Hill Elementary School to support their 5K and Fun Run.

Spring Means the Caboose is OPEN!

From Dan Mulville, Caboose Coordinator



Vienna Caboose openings start on Saturday, March 12th from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. The Northern Virginia Model Railroaders will open the train station at the same time.

We need a few **Caboose Volunteers** for opening day, as well as the following dates this spring and summer. Except for *ViVa! Vienna*, May 28 through May 30, the opening are on Saturday with the first shift from 1:00 to 3:00 and the second shift from 3:00 to 5:00. We plan to open the caboose from 1:00 to 5:00 all three days, Saturday through Monday, during *ViVa! Vienna*.

Two volunteers for each shift make for an easier caboose opening, particularly during *ViVa! Vienna*. No experience necessary. All Optimists are eligible!

Volunteer Opportunities: Saturday, March 12th
 Saturday April 16th
ViVa! Vienna Saturday, May 28th
ViVa! Vienna Sunday, May 29th
ViVa! Vienna Monday, May 30th
 Saturday, July 16th

Please contact Dan if you are able to volunteer for any of these dates.

OPTIMIST CLUB OF GREATER VIENNA Board of Directors 2015-16

President	Joe Miller
Secretary	Jim Houston
Treasurer	Tom Fraim
Immediate Past President	Dick Gongaware
President Elect	Michele Wright
Vice President of Community	Anna Ryjik
Vice President of Finance	Dick Lippert
Vice President of Media Relations	Tom Bauer
Vice President of Membership	Kathy Cutri
Vice President of Youth	Mike Fitzella
Director of Community	Susan Bauer
Director of Social Media	Nicole Pham
Director of Membership	Angelique Ayala
Director of Youth	Jim Stivison
Webmaster	Gary Moonan

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 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. Larsen