

OPTIMISTICALLY SPEAKING

The Newsletter of the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna

April 2017

Calendar

April 5 — NOW Meeting

6:30 — Social Time, Hors d'oeuvres
Amphora Restaurant
377 Maple Avenue West, Vienna

April 12 — Board Meeting

7:30 Emmanuel Lutheran Church

April 19 — TR Cook Youth Awards of Excellence

6:30 — Dinner; 7:30 Program
James Madison High School
2500 James Madison Dr., Vienna

April 22 — Caboose Open

1:00 — 5:00 **Volunteers Needed!**

April 26 — Fourth Wednesday Dinner

Culmore Teen Center — Team C

April 29 — Special Olympics Track Meet

8:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.
Episcopal High School
1200 N. Quaker Lane, Alexandria

May Preview

May 3 — Helping Hands Awards

RSVPs required!
6:30 — Westwood Country Club
800 Maple Avenue East, Vienna

May 6 — Farmers Market Opening Day!

8:00 a.m. to noon
Volunteer sign-ups open soon!

News and Notes

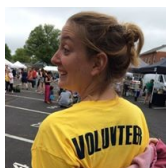


According to the Optimist International [website](#), “NOW” is a term of immediacy that is an acronym for “New Optimists Welcome.” Well, then! It is also the theme for our **April 3 meeting**, when we will gather at the **venerable Amphora Restaurant** in Vienna. The program depends on **you**—invite a community-minded friend who might be interested in Optimists! You can also provide a welcoming handshake, friendly smile and engaging conversation to prospective members. All this while enjoying hors d'oeuvres and good company **starting at 6:30 p.m.** For more information, or encouragement to bring a guest, [contact Membership VP Kathy Cutri](#).



We are back in Vienna for our second meeting in April, as well. On **April 19** we will have our **TR Cook Youth Awards of Excellence** program at **James Madison High School**. These awards honor outstanding juniors from Madison, Marshall and Oakton for excellence in Academics, Citizenship, Fine & Performing Arts, Science, Sports, and Technology. Our own fellow-Optimist and Member of the Virginia House of Delegates **Mark Keam** will speak. **Dinner will be served in the teacher work rooms at the front of the school at 6:30. The program begins at 7:30 in Warhawk Hall.** We need *every* member to be an ambassador for our Club that night, so please attend and greet everyone you meet with a smile!

What will be in store for shoppers at the **Vienna Saturday Farmers Market** this season? Our wait to find out is almost over—the Market opens in one month on **May 6!** So pull out your calendar (or open your calendar app) and set the dates when you will be a Market volunteer. As always, signing up for shifts is easy at our [Club website](#). And while you are there, sign up for a shift on the Caboose, too!



Please keep in mind that the Farmers Market is one of our **most visible activities** in the Vienna community. It also raises a healthy chunk of **funds to support our youth programs**. Every member can play a part in making the Market a success. And as your mother said, “Many hands make light work!”



Serving the Youth of Greater Vienna
for over 60 Years!
Visit us at www.OptimistClubofGreaterVienna.org
We're on Facebook! [Facebook.com/ViennaOptimistClub](https://www.facebook.com/ViennaOptimistClub)



This month we have a letter from a special correspondent, Olympic-hopeful and friend of the Club, skeleton racer Veronica Day. Here is Veronica's report on her road to the Olympics (edited for length).

Hi there!

I just concluded my season last week and am back in Colorado for a bit! This season has some really high-highs and some pretty low-lows. I raced in our Team Trials in the fall and did well enough (6th place) to be placed onto the National Team. So, this season I raced on the Intercontinental Cup (ICC) in Igls, Austria; Konigssee, Germany; Calgary; and Lake Placid.

I ended the season ranked 36th in the world (out of 200 or so women), which is my best international ranking yet. I'll need to be 30th or better next year (which is more than do-able, seeing as I under-performed in 2 of my 8 races). I also got my first podium on the ICC circuit with a 5th place finish in Lake Placid and set massive personal best downtimes in Lake Placid and Konigssee, and tied a 4-year-old personal best start time in Park City.

I learned 3 new tracks this year: Igls; St. Moritz, Switzerland; and La Plagne, France. Igls is fun and frustrating all at the same time. All the steers are very nuanced and it can be a bit boring. But it's always on circuit and I made huge improvements over 2 weeks of training.

St. Moritz is the birthplace of skeleton. The track there is well over a mile long and built entirely by hand every year. It has the honor of being the world's largest ice sculpture. They take chunks of ice out of the lake, drag them up a hill and carve the track out of it. This is the closest humans will ever be to flying. The ice is incredibly smooth. I gelled really well with the first 2/3rds of the track but had a bit of trouble during the last few corners. Regardless, I was consistently beating a German Olympian (top 8 in the world) to the bottom of the hill all week in training.

The last new track I learned was La Plagne. La Plagne may be the most beautiful place in Europe to do skeleton. If there are any big skiers in the Optimist Club, I'd recommend going to La Plagne over St. Moritz. It DUMPED snow (3+ feet) and I put chains on a car for the first time in my life. Usually snow is a death sentence for good skeleton runs, but the track is fully covered and thus our training was great. There are 16 tracks in the world and Lake Placid, Whistler, La Plagne, Sigulda (Latvia) and Altenberg (Germany) all have pretty nasty reputations. Having slid on most of these tracks, I would liken La Plagne to Mike Tyson and Whistler to Manny Pacquiao. Anyway, my first run I flipped onto my back out of corner 6 and remained there for 3 more corners! Luckily a Bulgarian athlete was there, he corrected my steers and I didn't have any trouble the rest of the week. Corner 15 and 16 each have 6 G's which is really... intense. Most tracks only have 1 or 2 big, high pressure corners like that and they are typically spread out along the track. Having 2 corners with 6 Gs back-to-back is unique to La Plagne. I ended up posting downtimes that were about half a second off of times they ran in the last World Cup, which is awesome considering I only had 6 runs!

Anyway, **I want to thank everyone at the Optimist Club for continually supporting me on my Olympic journey.** I seriously would not be able to do it without you all. Next fall is the first big step in naming the



April Birthday Wishes to:

Jim Stivison – April 2

Optimist Anniversaries in April

Mike Byard – 26 years

Anna Ryjik – 9 years

Dick Gongaware – 9 years

Michele Wright – 9 years

Tom Bauer – 8 years



Olympic team. Having done this sport for 7 years, I don't think I have learned as much during a single season of skeleton since my first year when I was starting from scratch.

I'll be back in Vienna periodically this spring (April/May). Please let me know if there are any events that I could help out at.

Veronica Day
USA Skeleton



Optimists in Action

Just a few of the things our members are doing out-and-about in the community

Optimist Support for Kilmer Center

An Update from John Andrews and Mike Fitzella

Since July of 2014, the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna expanded its partnership with The Kilmer Center. Our club provides support for Kilmer Center with an annual financial donation and by taking on the repair of the various “Somatosensory” devices that the teachers and students use every day. Everything from “Big MAC” touch paddles, recording & playback speech boxes, and various “sensory” communications tools and soft toys have been carefully repaired and brought back for use again. Over the past many months John Andrews has brought all sorts of very specialized equipment back to working order, and is a regular presence at the Center for severely disabled students.



John Andrews was a guest reader at Kilmer Center's celebration of Dr. Seuss during "Read Across America Week".

Just recently, the Optimist Club provided a check for \$500 to Kilmer Center to support their programs, such as creating a “Maker Space” in their library. The money is used to buy the materials needed for the maker space. This will engage the students’ creativity by having hands-on material to solve problems in small groups and completing learning

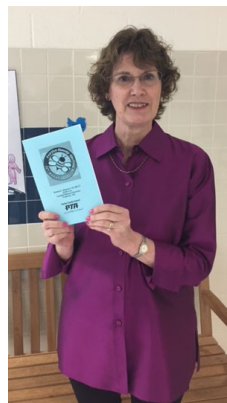
tasks that foster good social and communication skills.

In early March, John Andrews participated with Kilmer Center during “Read Across America Week”. John read “Green Eggs and Ham” as well as “Tacky The Penguin” to a class. The week was very successful for Kilmer, whereupon an offer was made to our Club for a continuation of the classroom reading on a once per week basis. (Most recently, “Caps for Sale” was read on March 17). John Andrews and Mike Fitzella are now planning to have a once-per-week presence at Kilmer, for about a 30 minute period to read to a class.

The teachers and staff Kilmer Center are grateful for the continued presence of the Optimist Club and for our annual contribution for Kilmer Center.

O-P-T-I-M-I-S-T

From Susan Bauer, Director of Community



Sunday March 12, 2017 the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna was one of sponsors of the Fairfax County Council PTA's 11th Annual Spelling Bee. Sixty-five 2nd through 8th grade students took part in the event. Susan Bauer reports she “was honored to represent our club and to say few words about what we do for youth and our community.”

Susan Bauer, Director of Community and President-Elect, represented Vienna Optimists at the Fairfax County Spelling Bee.

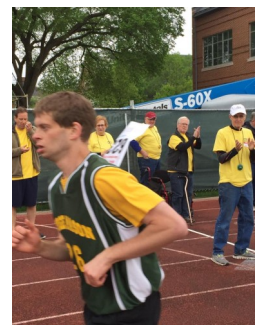
Be An Optimist in Action at Special Olympics! *From Mike Battaglia*

The annual Special Olympics Track and Field Event will take place at Episcopal High School on Saturday, April 29, 2017 (rain or shine). You can sign up for the entire day (8:30 AM to 3 PM) , or choose the Morning Session (8:30 AM to 12 noon) or Afternoon Session (12 noon to 3 PM). Lunch is provided.

All volunteers are required to fill out a Class B Volunteer form and must have a Class A Volunteer signature (Jim Houston or Mike B.). The form will be available at the registration desk at the event.

To sign up, contact Mike Battaglia and specify your choice of shift.

Please wear your yellow “Optimist Club of Greater Vienna” Volunteer T-shirt! If you don't have a shirt Jim H. can set you up with one.



Position Available - Junior Optimist Octagon International Coordinator

Rich Ordeman has served as our JOOI Club Coordinator for over twelve years, helping the clubs at Madison, Marshall, and Oakton high schools and Louise Archer elementary school. Rich would like to pass this responsibility on to another member of the club. The primary duties for this position are:

- * Maintain contact with school advisors;
- * Obtain and submit club membership rosters, including officer information/election;
- * Produce report to accompany our dues payment to Optimist International;
- * Request Club presence at our May meeting to detail their service projects.

The ideal candidate would have a flexible schedule that would allow occasional attendance at club meetings.

We need to identify someone by the end of June so Rich can transition the responsibilities before the new school year starts. Please contact Rich Ordeman or Mike Fitzella if you are interested in this position.



For the entire 3rd quarter (April 1 - June 30), Optimist Clubs are encouraged to recruit teachers from their local schools. Optimist International is waiving the \$15.00 membership fee and offering a year's dues for only \$30!

Why Teachers?

Optimist Members of all professions are important to Clubs, so why the emphasis on teachers?

- A strong connection with local schools is extremely beneficial for your Optimist Club. More teachers on your roster strengthens this connection.
- They can open doors for attracting more students to our youth projects - including Oratorical, Essay, Sports and other programs.
- Teachers are able to provide first hand insight into the needs of the children of your community.
- Provides the foundation for new Junior Optimist Clubs.
- Your Optimist Club will serve more children!

Who Qualifies? Active or retired: Teachers, Administrators, College professors, Coaches employed by the school, Aides, School library staff, or Counselors,

Contact [Kathy Cutri](#) for more information!

OPTIMIST CLUB OF GREATER VIENNA

Board of Directors 2016-17

President	Michele Wright
Secretary	Jim Houston
Treasurer	Tom Bauer
Immediate Past President	Joe Miller
President Elect	Susan Bauer
Vice President of Community	Anna Ryjik
Vice President of Finance	Dick Lippert
Vice President of Media Relations	Gary Moonan
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	Lauren Wagner
Director of Youth	Jeff Bechtle
Webmaster	Gary Moonan

March Board Meeting Highlights

The Board of Directors met on March 8 with 7 members present. Highlights of the meeting are as follows:

- VP of Youth Mike Fitzella:
 - Reported that the club's representative, a fifth grader, won the District Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) edging out a high school student.
 - Reported on the T.R. Cook Youth Awards of Excellence scheduled for April 19.
 - Reported on the Partners in Education program scheduled for June 7.
 - Reported on planning for the Helping Hands program scheduled for May 3.
- Discussed plans and vendors for the Farmers Market.
- Reviewed thank you notes for our donations to Alternative House and the Kilmer Center.