

# The Optimist Monthly

Friend of Youth

January 2021



## January

During January, our President, Jeff Englander, cancelled all Optimist events planned for January in order to be consistent with the restrictions the Virginia Governor put in place on December 10, which include prohibiting gatherings of more than ten people through January 31 (Executive Order #72). The Governor's order did not only prohibit our two planned luncheons, but also our desire to restart our monthly Meet & Greets at Texas Jack's.

## UPCOMING EVENTS for February are Cancelled

Our Governor has extended the meeting limitation through February.

Accordingly, the two February luncheons and the Meet and Greet for February are Cancelled.

## President's Message by Jeff Englander

Dear fellow Optimists,

The Virginia Governor extended his Executive Order restricting the number of participants for an indoor event until February 28. The two speakers asked us to reschedule for a later date. Hence, we will see them later this year.

I still remain very optimistic that we are on the recovery side of this pandemic and

that the Club will be back together again in March.

The Essay and Oratorical contests are in full swing.

Let Richard know if you can help him on the Oratorical competitions.

I am looking for judges for the essay contest.

Membership is a huge challenge for us. There are seven people who are in various stages of onboarding. However, we can always use additional nominations. Please look to those work colleagues or neighbors who would be interested in joining us. The online application on our web portal is easy to use. Direct them to our site for more information.

Looking forward to seeing all of you very soon.

Optimistically yours,

Jeff

## **Arlington Board Recognizes the Optimist Club**

Thanks to the initiative of Tricia O'Hara, on January 26 the Arlington Board issued a proclamation establishing an annual Optimist Day in Arlington on the first Thursday in February each year and recognizing the Arlington Optimist Club for its contributions to the county. Thank you Tricia! Tricia also submitted a press release to the Gazette, which is expected to appear shortly. Way to go! The proclamation is provided in the Appendix at the end of this newsletter.

## **2020 Scholarship Update:**

Our Treasurer, Gerry Marosek, has sent out the four Optimist scholarships to the universities attended by our four 2020 winners. Of course, all four easily achieved the pre-requisite first semester grade threshold of at least a C+ average.

All four of them sent us short descriptions of their experiences over their first (crazy) semester, which are printed below. Thank you, Mark Whitenton, for serving as last year's Chair of the Scholarship Committee and volunteering to serve once more for 2021.

### **Ailis Brown (Wakefield)**

As for my fall semester, it has definitely been bizarre to say the least. I actually spent the past four months in Dallas living with my grandmother. It's been great to spend such a large chunk of time with her that I normally would have never gotten the chance to do. I also connected with other Georgetown freshmen in the area, and we were able to get together pretty frequently throughout the semester, with all the necessary precautions, of course. But it was so wonderful to be able to build up my own little Georgetown community even though I was over 1,000 miles away from campus.



Zoom has been quite an adjustment as well, although not nearly as bad as I predicted in the beginning. All my professors have been very understanding, and the courses themselves have been so engaging and interesting that it made the online learning environment more than tolerable. Breakout rooms, interestingly enough, were also such a great way to meet new people, and I'm so excited to eventually go on campus and be able to recognize people from my classes. I'm planning on spending next semester in D.C., and while everything will still be online, I think there will be a lot of opportunities for engagement outside of Zoom. However, I am so glad to be back in Arlington and able to spend the holidays with my family!

Hope you and your family are doing well this holiday season,  
Ailis

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### **Ethan Hemmings (Wakefield)**

Semester Reflection: The pandemic has forced everyone at my school, including myself, to re-evaluate what our priorities are. I'm grateful that the cases have been really low at SU, but I've never in my life had to be vigilant for my safety and the safety of others. As a musician, Covid-19 affected how accessible practice rooms are, what rehearsals would look like, and whether each class would be in-person or virtual.



I persisted, we all did. I was not only thriving with socially-distanced live performances, but also the fact I was able to help organize a 300-student-and-faculty march supporting Black lives that was not only successful safety-wise, but also in the message. I'm grateful to wake up every day and surround myself by a bunch of down-to-earth, talented, and inspiring people within my social circles. Everyday brought a new set of challenges. The first month was hard with adjusting to new people, and the last month was hard because of finals; however, I was getting a bit better every day in some way. I am really grateful that socially-distanced performances still occurred within the conservatory, and the fact that I still felt like I was in my element as much as I could be. I feel connected to the people around me although it's harder to reach out to people because of the pandemic, and those connections will serve me well and far as I head into these subsequent semesters.

Take care,  
Ethan

### **Jade Taylor (W-L)**



Thank you for the check up! I've definitely enjoyed my time here at UVA and the overall college experience--it has been nice not having to do the typical chores... I was lucky enough to be able to go on campus, as UVA had put in COVID guidelines and safety measures so that students could come on grounds if they desired to. So I have been here on grounds since September and we are set to go back home before Thanksgiving. I applied to the school as a Biology major on a pre-med track and so far I've been sticking with it, though I must say the library is quickly becoming a place I'm seen at a lot. I'll make sure to have everything ready at the end of the semester.

Hope all is well with you, stay safe! Jade

### **Genny Maiden (Bishop O'Connell)**



Historically this program has been centered around intense interactions with like-minded artists from many surrounding countries, individuals who embrace the art of acting as a way of communicating the love, issues, and actions that affect the world around us.

The impact of COVID-19 and the resulting quarantine has placed me and my freshmen class in a position to be extremely agile in how we learn and practice our craft. That being said, being a freshman at NYU is still an enormous opportunity because of the unparalleled exposure, intense learning's from the best cinema, television and interactive media artist in the world. I have adjusted to using technology to meet and learn from famous and influential actors and actresses who are alumni of the NYU family. NYU Tisch has worked hard to make sure that their students feel the same collaboration and teamwork as they would in person and for that I am grateful to be a part of such an exceptional university.

## STAY CALM AND MASK ON!



***mw: 121***  
***Optimist Club of Arlington 16-005;***  
***Mid-Atlantic Region 3;***  
***Capital- Virginia District 16;***  
***Northern Virginia Zone 4;***  
***[www.optimistclubofarlingtonva.org](http://www.optimistclubofarlingtonva.org)***

## Appendix: Arlington Board Proclamation



### PROCLAMATION

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### OPTIMIST DAY

**WHEREAS**, volunteers working with young people who are our joy of today and our hope for tomorrow, are exuberant representatives of the potential for the future and dreams to come true and are also unbounded in their enthusiasm to use their talents, skills, and hard work to make a difference in others' lives; and

**WHEREAS**, members of Optimist International celebrates Optimist Day throughout the world the first Thursday of every February to promote their efforts in helping and recognizing the young people who make a difference in their communities and who will encourage a greater exchange of ideas between young people and adults; and

**WHEREAS**, there are 2,400 Optimist Clubs, with more than 70,000 Members throughout the world that carry out more than 6,500 service projects that serve six million young people a year; and

**WHEREAS**, the Optimist Club of Arlington has been providing Arlington students with annual college scholarships and financial awards for its Oratorical and Essay Contest winners; and

**WHEREAS**, the Optimist Club of Arlington has been providing annual grants to help support numerous Arlington student intramural sports teams;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I**, Matt de Ferranti, Chair of the County Board of Arlington, Virginia, proclaim February 4, 2021 as

### OPTIMIST DAY

in Arlington County and may this day instill pride in our County's Optimists for their accomplishments and for the impact they make in the lives of Arlington's youth.

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Matt de Ferranti