

# The Optimist Monthly

Friend of Youth  
September 26, 2022



## September

**9/07: Sgt. Robert Bauer (Ret) MA, Warriors Heart USA.** Bob Bauer is the National



Director of the Stronger Alliance. Also, he is the Founder and President of Robert Bauer Associates, PLLC, which operates Warriors Heart USA and the author of *Power to Change Workshops*. Since retiring as a career law enforcement officer, he has answered a heart-calling to serve the men and women who are or have worn the uniform of our country and communities that may have brought the battlefield home with

them. <https://www.strongeralliance.com/first-responders-national> Thank you, Tricia O'Hara, for inviting him.

**9/21: Global Co Lab Network.** Linda Staheli, Founding Director of the organization, described how her volunteers engage teens across the globe to become empowered. The Global Co Lab (as in “Collaboration”) Network has created “hubs” of youth ages 13-35 with a focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “It does this with an annual global video contest, [Teens Dream](#), and virtual teen-led weekly gatherings, [SDG Hubs](#) that now number seventeen,



addressing racial justice, gender equality, mental health, quality education, climate,



change, hunger, plastic pollution, wildlife conservation, Spanish speakers for the SDGs, Turkish speakers for the SDGs, artists for the SDGs, and a Hub for recent Afghan teen refugees.” The annual video contest awards the best a teen video (maximum time is two minutes) supporting one of the 17 UN SDG’s. Thank you, Erin Mendenhall, for inviting Linda to speak to us.

**9/28: Meet & Greet.** At Texas Jack’s (2761 Washington Blvd) from 5:30 to 7:00. Hope to see you there with a potential Optimist member!

## **October**

**10/05: Respect for Law.** Erin Mendenhall is organizing our annual Respect for Law luncheon again this year. Thank you, Erin, for taking this very important Optimist opportunity to thank Arlington’s police, firemen and court administration. Also, there will be an induction of the 2022-2023 leadership team:  
Officers: President - Andreas Baltatzis; President-Elect - Debbie Whitenton; Vice President - Sandy Bushue; Vice President - Richard Knight; Treasurer - Gerry Marosek; Secretary - Mark Whitenton; Past-President - Brian Kellenberger. Board of Directors: One Year Left: Mark Zetlin and Parker Rist. New Board Members with two-year terms: Erica Burson and Shawn Harris.

This luncheon will have an upscale lunch in the wood-paneled room at no extra charge to attendees. Please RSVP to Brian Kellenberger if you plan to attend. WGCC at 12:15.

**10/19: Paul Ferguson, Clerk of the Court of Arlington.** WGCC at 12:15.

**10 /26: Meet & Greet.** Once again at Texas Jack's (2761 Washington Blvd) from 5:30 to 7:00. This is the last Meet & Greet until January 25, so please bring a colleague who might be a potential Optimist member!

## **November**

**11/02: Elizabeth Jones Valderrama Executive Director of OAR.** WGCC at 12:15.

**11/16- ISCC Lunch Man/Women of the Year.** Members who attend will not be charged the extra cost for this meal – our Optimist Club will pay the difference from our normal luncheon price. WGCC at 12:15.

## **President's Message** by **Brian Kellenberger**

Dear Fellow Optimists,

This is my last message as President of our great club. It has been a fun ride and I want to thank all of you for making it a great year! I especially want to thank the Board: JB, Sandy, Richard Knight, Mark Whitenton, Debbie Whitenton, Gerry Marosek, Parker Rist, Jeff Englander, Mark Zetlin and Andreas Baltatzis their dedication and hard work make this job easy and make things happen for our club and Arlington.



We have a lot to be thankful for in the past year. Our best year ever on the tree lot. We gave out five college scholarships to local students. Thank you to Mark Whitenton for running a great program once again. For the first time in a long time, we awarded two Harrow fund recipients. One training to be an electrician and the other a dental hygienist. Thanks to Erica and Sandy for running that program and hopefully we can continue to use that fund and grow the program. Another successful Oratorical Contest run by Richard Knight. We had a fun and well-attended Happy Hour at the club in June. We overcame getting

**kicked off the Wells Fargo lot and found a new home for our tree sale at the Knights of Columbus.**

**I want to welcome our new President Andreas Baltatzis and the new incoming Board:**

**Adreas Baltatzis- President  
Brian Kellenberger- Past President  
Debbie Whitenton- President Elect  
Gerry Morsek- Treasurer  
Mark Whitenton - Secretary  
Richard Knight- VP  
Sandy Bushue- VP  
Parker Rist- Board Member  
Shawn Harris- Board Member  
Mark Zetlin- Board Member  
Erica Burson- Board Member**

**Please try and attend the October 5th meeting to witness their being sworn in.**

**Speaking of the Oct 5th meeting. Erin Mendenhall has been working hard on the Respect for Law luncheon on October 5th. It will be a special day as we award those that work hard to protect our community. Please make sure you RSVP when the invite goes out so we have an accurate headcount.**

**Here is a list of the upcoming lunch program:**

**10/5 - Respect for Law, Erin Mendenhall Chairman. Induct new Leadership team and BOD.  
10/19- Paul Ferguson- County Clerk of Arlington  
11/2- Elizabeth Jones Valderrama Executive Director of OAR.  
11/16- ISCC Lunch Man/Women of the Year  
12/7- Charlie Clark- historian**

## **12/14- Annual Christmas Breakfast**

**Have an Optimist Day!**

### **Christmas Tree Lot Update by Sandy Bushue**

**Optimists,**

**It is that time of year!! Since we have had to deal with Wells Fargo all year, it seems that the 2021 tree season never ended.**

**A big shout out to those who endeavored to keep our location and met with ABC7. Frank O'Leary submitted a compelling letter to the Arlington Sun Gazette. Letter is published in this newsletter. Big thanks to Frank and Conley Ricker who sent an excellent letter to the CEO of Wells Fargo.**

**The tree lot committee has had two meetings and is getting ready for 2022. We have a lot of work to do to prepare for the new location. Much of the focus will be on communications to ensure our long-time customers can find us. We can use your help so I will keep you informed how that might look.**

**Tree prices are going to be high like everything else! Not only are the wholesale costs of trees are up but I dread receiving the transportation bill. Writing this in September, I have read that diesel price can be as high as \$11.00 a gallon in November. I so hope that is not true!**

**I think this past year has been tough for many so I hope our customers will be ready to celebrate in December and the "spirit of Christmas" will continue to prevail.**

**We are sponsoring a new event on Langston Boulevard in front of Dominion Lighting being organized by the Langston Corridor Initiative. This title is**

incorrect but I will get you the full details as the date nears. Our Optimist President will be participating and it sounds like a nice event. Hope you can make it. Again, more details are forthcoming.

The tree lot update emails will begin to hit your In Box. This is your warning!! Please be thinking of your schedule to work the lot. I will be sending the schedule out soon!

Ho, Ho, Ho - Optimist tree season is around the corner.

Optimistically,  
Sandy Bushue  
202.352.4922

## **Please Thank Your 2021-2022 Officers and Board of the Optimist Club**

Although only two members of the 2021-2022 Board are cycling off, Brian



Kellenberger will move to the position of Past President. Thank you, Brian, for your service over the past year, which has been your second time as President of this Optimist Club. Here at left, shown in his iconic casual style at this past luncheon – his last as President.



And, please remember to thank the two Optimists who are leaving the Board after years of service: 1) Jeff Englander, (photo at right) who did a terrific job (during Covid) as President two years ago and has been serving as Essay Contest chair for the past two years. He says that he will continue to manage this important Optimist function next year.



And 2) JB Whitlow, a Board member these past two years, who served as President three consecutive years, during the first decade of this century and has managed the construction and breakdown of the annual Christmas Tree lot for many years. He is also the Optimist Club's main contact with the Washington Golf and Country Club, where he has been a member for 40 years. For those of you who do not know, the Optimist Club was founded in 1946, mostly by members of the WGCC, so golf, which JB excels in, was a big deal at the time.



mw: 140

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

To The Editor,

As a member of the Arlington Optimist Club, I write regarding our fund-raising program for local children. Over the past 75 years, we have funded approximately \$3,000,000 in programs for young people in our area.

These programs have a significant impact on the lives of our recipients. In fact, in 2016, one of our program participants, a young lady fifteen years old, was the first American to win a gold medal at the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. We are proud of all our program participants, but obviously especially proud in her case.

We raise these funds by the annual sale of Christmas trees. Last year, for example, we sold 2,400 trees in a twelve-day period. Success like this is truly a community effort and involves more than one hundred unpaid volunteers. Many of our volunteers are drawn from part of the population we directly serve - high school students and their parents.

Unfortunately, this year we are facing a major impediment for continued success. **Wells Fargo** is denying us the use (for about three weeks) of a small portion of their parking lot at N. Glebe Road and Langston Boulevard where we have successfully operated the program, without incident, since 1947. **There is simply no better spot for this operation, within our county, and moving elsewhere will result in thousands of dollars in losses for local youth programs.**

**Wells Fargo's** initial argument was that they feared legal liability in case of accidental injury - despite our unblemished safety record and our willingness to sign any form assuming full legal responsibility on our part. That argument then morphed into: *"If we do it for you, we'll have to do it for everyone."* - despite the fact that, so far as I know, no other organization in the last seventy-five years has made such a request. They ended on the pathetic note that they had contributed \$10,000 to a local softball team and that should serve as proof of their support of the Arlington community. Given the scope and scale of **Wells Fargo** and the massive level of federal fines recently imposed upon them for willful misconduct, you would think they might do much more to refurbish their image and demonstrate their support for the communities within which they operate.

In closing, let me note that the Arlington Optimists Club deposits all funds received from all its activities into a bank account at **Wells Fargo**. If their position remains unchanged, that shall no longer occur. Perhaps, the government, businesses, and citizens of Arlington should consider similar action.

Frank O'Leary, Former Treasurer  
Arlington County