

“Everything is doable with a little heart, dedication and effort!”

Governor Russ Thomas



Because bringing out the best in kids is only part of it

Bits ‘n Peaches

www.georgiaoptimists.org

April 2015

April Fools’!



Young pranksters mark April Fools’ Day by tying a kite to old man’s wig in a circa-1770 illustration.

Today is April 1st - April Fools’ Day. There’s no real proof of when and where April Fools’ Day came from. It is a day when the pranksters come out of the woods and play simple and funny tricks on friends, neighbors and colleagues. To the light hearted it is a day to surprise your loved ones or some unsuspecting person in your life with a little fun and playfulness! People who love pranks really love the day and refuse to give up the tradition. They’re the ones who keep it alive.

I have been the prey many times and, yes, I have played my fair share of pranks. Who would have thought that about me!

On a more profound note, no fooling around, let’s talk about where we are and where we need to be to continue the legacy of “your” Optimist Club.

The Georgia District has committed to 500 new members and 10 new clubs. Some may think this is an April Fools’ joke - I promise you that it is not. Some say this is unattainable; that it just can’t be done. But those persons have forgotten that we are Optimists - everything is doable with a little heart, dedication and effort! In order for us to ensure the future of being the Premier Children’s Service Organization in the world, we must grow, we must accept this opportunity, this challenge! It is up to each one of us to get that new member, to look for a place that we can start a new club.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

Mini Me!



Notice the bow tie! Governor Russ cheers on Charlie Dougal as he moves on to the elementary oratorical finals in Sawnee Cumming Georgia.

*Could Charlie be a mini me?
5th grade Pinecrest Elementary*

I am asking every one of us to commit today to team up with four other Optimists and bring in a new member, while staying strong and united as clubs. Let's make serving more Children in the Georgia and Tennessee Districts a priority. Between Tennessee and Georgia we have 2,677 members, we are a power house of energy and motivation. We serve over 100,000 Children a year!

We are ordinary people doing extraordinary things for Children! If every 4 members bring in 1 new member we can serve over 25,000 more Children! Imagine if every member brings in 1, that's over 100 thousand more, we can do it!

We are "Optimist Strong" we can do this - every four optimists bring in 1 new member. Team up and enrich our lives while changing a child's life forever. We must encourage the development of youth, and truly "Believe" that the giving of one's self in service to the Children will change the world!

"I BELIEVE¹⁰ that Past Distinguished Governor Hal Sewell says it right, "The Smile of a Child Makes it all Worthwhile!"

I GOT MINE! HAVE YOU GOT YOURS?

Governor Russ Thomas

In Memory of Al Venable

Let's remember: Al Venable who was a charter member of the Lithonia East DeKalb Optimist Club. He was the first black mayor elected in DeKalb County and was a mild-mannered man with impeccable character and a big heart, willing to give a helping hand.



"He was one of the unsung heroes of the civil rights movement," said his pastor and friend James Ward.

"He was willing to stand up and represent the community when asked to," said current Lithonia Mayor Deborah Jackson.

As all Optimists make a difference in their communities, let's honor Al Venable by serving more Children this year!

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Club News - McIntosh County

Local Boys and Girls make it BIG!

I have always believed that being an Optimist helps build strength, character and success. I can't tell you that these Optimists are successful only because they are Optimists, but I can tell you that there is a close relationship to personal, business and community success that follows Optimists!



Dr Diane J Richardson named Interim Superintendent for the McIntosh County Schools

The mission of the McIntosh County School System is to provide a high quality education for all of our students.



Mandy Harrison Named President of Darien-McIntosh County Chamber of Commerce

The Darien-McIntosh County Chamber mission is to promote economic growth, represent the business community and enhance the quality of life while protecting our cultural and natural resources.



Mayor Bubba Hodge of Darien Georgia

2nd place in the MLK parade!
Think he had a float or just his good looks won 2nd place?



McIntosh County School's Retired Teacher/Administrator, Marsha Hodge, still finds time in her busy schedule to come back and conduct the Substitute Teacher Training Program

Mrs. Hodge transforms back into the days when she was in the classroom and shares her expertise with the participants about the high expectations of the system, the schools, and the individual classrooms. Once the prospective substitute teacher completes Mrs. Hodge's personal training, use of "The Master Teacher Series", in addition to completing all of the background check requirements, they are ready to be called by the schools to serve in the absence of the classroom teacher.

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Georgia Statistics at a Glance

(as of 3/17/2015)

Total Clubs	68
Total Membership	1787
Georgia District New Club Since October 1, 2014	+1
Net Membership Since October 1, 2014	+43
Ranking in Optimist International	6

“Bringing Out the Best in Kids since 1939”

Because bringing out the best in kids is only part of it

Athens, TN Club News



Abraham Lincoln visits Athens Tennessee Club Meeting! He came a long way!

Optimist Club meetings bring out the best in every one! They are fun, informative and exciting. You never know who may be a guest at your club meeting, be sure to be there, you just never know!

A particular day in February even President Abraham Lincoln stopped by to visit.

It must have been a pretty complex subject as President Lincoln, scratches his head in wonderment seeing all the great things that the Athens Tennessee Club does for the Children!

Kennesaw has theirs! Have you got yours?



The Kennesaw Optimist Club, walks the talk! The members of this club have already recruited 10 new members. They are definitely leading by example. The Kennesaw Club believes spreading Optimism to bring out the best in themselves and the children they serve is job 1! How about you? Have you asked someone to join your club today, or started that new club you've been talking about. Kennesaw has theirs, have you got yours?

The Kennesaw Optimist Club had a NOW low country boil that netted a bountiful harvest of 14 new members! Leading by example they believe spreading Optimism brings out the best in themselves and the children they serve!

Atlanta Buckhead Optimists shares love of knitting

Does Knitting serve a purpose? I do KNOT know??

There is something about seeing a child's face light up when he or she learns something new.

That "something" is what inspires Susan Frierson President of the Atlanta Buckhead Optimist Club. The inspiration keeps Susan and her friends returning each week to three different sites in Atlanta to teach children the art of knitting.

"It is so rewarding because you see the recognition in their eyes when they realize that it is simple, but it does require concentration," Susan said. "We are paid back tenfold with their enthusiasm."

My hope is that that what I have done inspires others to teach children something they will have as a skill all their lives-- to enjoy the peace and quiet that needlework lends itself to. Susan surprised Governor Russ when she exclaimed that: "Men were the first knitters--back when they were making fishing nets in biblical days." "I have quite a few boys who are as enthused as the girls about creating something with yarn."

For almost 50 years, Susan built her business, raised her daughter and forgot about knitting. Three years ago, she began knitting prayer shawls for relatives and friends who were having health problems or lost a loved one. To date, she has given 26 shawls to special people in her life.



One day, Susan decided to take her knitting supplies with her to the Boys and Girls Club, where she was volunteering with the Atlanta Buckhead Optimist Club to help children with their homework.

That decision transformed Susan's service path. Today, she and her knitting friends regularly teach knitting weekly at the Boys and Girls Club; the Scottish Rite Children's Hospital; and an after-school program at a local Presbyterian church.

The volunteers work with the students one-on-one, guiding their stitches for at least an hour at a time. Once a child learns the stitch, he or she helps teach the new or younger students, most of whom are ages 6 to 12. Students learn a new skill that requires face-to-face communication while taking a break from popular digital devices.

"What I have gotten from this experience has been so much more than what the kids have gotten from their learning experience," Susan said. "It is just wonderful to be with them and see their enthusiasm and how their self-esteem is nurtured by completing a project and receiving recognition from all of us."

Thank you Susan for leading the Atlanta Buckhead Optimist Club and for changing the lives of the Children of your community!

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David Jordan continues to walk the trails of Optimism!



Past Distinguished Optimist Governor David Jordan who doubles as the Sweetwater Park Manager; is an animal, “Sorry!” He’s standing by an animal. It’s a GOPHER named Scout.

In the picture is Park Director – Becky Kelley, Park Manager David Jordan, The Mascot – Scout and Mrs. Deal, also others with the Georgia Reading Initiative program.

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Towne Lake makes positive “CHOICES”



Picture: left to right

Members: Roger Carter, Mark McCarthy, Scott Adams, Randy and Mark Mero, Charlice Byrd and Kathleen McGillick

*Back: members Ron Debranski, Chris Bouchard, John West, Marvin Glanzer and Matt Halloran
Far back: member Terry Morrison*

Mark Mero, founder of Champion of Choices and former World Wrestling Federation and World Champion Wrestling was a guest speaker at Towne Lake Optimist Club. Champion of Choices is an anti-bullying program that empowers students to make positive choices and has presented the popular “Choices” production at more than half-a-million people. Champion of Choices’ compelling message evokes personal reflection, laughter and tears, and also instills Hope. Students and faculty describe “Choices” presentation as life-changing. The non-profit program has been in middle and high schools in Cherokee County several times reaching over thousands of students. The Towne Lake Optimist Club proudly supports and sponsors Champion of Choices. Contact: Charlice Byrd, President TLOC; 404-557-2218.

So you think you’re an optimist?



Dr. Suzanne Rivchun will explain how some people are positive and optimistic by nature and why some people are not. Research has shown that having positive thoughts and living life in an optimistic way contributes to a longer life span and a higher quality of life. Find out how the team at Collier Chiropractic promotes better health and wellness to Atlanta individuals and their families!

Learn how to continue thinking positive and take better care of yourself, so in turn you can take better care of others in your community!

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Wrens-North Jefferson Optimist Club reaps bounty of NOW Banquet!



Congratulations to the Wrens-North Jefferson Optimist Club as they prove that NOW Banquets do work.

Their recent NOW Banquet reaped 5 new members.

Please welcome: Angela Brown, Judie McCall, Femandias McCoy, Robert Rhoney and Herman Wright as our newest Optimist members. Welcome to our family!

Morris Hannah and Michael Brown are the proud sponsors. Gov Russ says, "Way to go!"

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West Knoxville Club Teaches Lawn Mower Safety



Ever Thought of Lawn Mower Safety? You might, if you've cut a toe off like Governor Russ did!

The Optimist Club of West Knoxville has a unique way of helping the Children of their communities! They have developed a Lawnmower Safety Clinic for Kids and have hosted it every year since 1999.



It started with the Breakfast Optimist Club of Manhattan, KS while Chris Albrecht was a member there for 14 years. When Chris moved to TN in 1996 he joined the Optimist Club of West Knoxville where he brought the concept and has chaired it ever since.



Sawnee-Cumming to hold 4th Annual Golf Tournament



Please come out and support the Sawnee-Cumming Optimist Club at their annual Charity Golf Tournament at Windermere Golf Club on Monday, April 20, 2015. This largest fundraiser will support Children's Healthcare of Atlanta Forsyth for the fight against childhood cancer, along with the Optimist children's programs. The format will be a 4 person scramble with a Noon shotgun start with prizes for the 1st and 2nd place teams. Dinner with awards, raffle prizes and silent auction will follow. Individual entry is \$125, Gold Package (4 golfers and corporate sponsorship) is \$600 and corporate sponsorships are \$300. The club is also accepting donations for raffle prizes and silent auction. We also have a hole-in-one sponsor that will donate a \$30,000 Home Theatre System and installation to the winner of the hole-in-one. For more information, please contact Jodi Smith at 770-313-3804. Sawnee-Cumming looks forward to seeing our fellow optimists at Windermere.

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Atlanta Optimist welcomes Atlanta Dream

Atlanta Optimist Club welcomes Christopher Stephens, Senior Account Executive with the WNBA Atlanta Dream (Women's National Basketball Association). Christopher shared information on the power of sport fundraising and Atlanta Dream community outreach.



*Left: Christopher Stephens,
Right President Harry Hackett*

*Below: GA District Governor
Russ Thomas inducts new members
Tina Jaya, John Schafer, and
Kent Wormley*



Plan now to attend the 97th Optimist International Convention

Thursday - Saturday, July 9-11, 2015
Hilton New Orleans Riverside

Bits ‘n Peaches

Do it NOW!

By Harry Hackett

It was Friday, November 27, 1936 when Optimist International Field Director, Charles E. Berg, visited Atlanta to organize a new Optimist Club.

Almost two months later on Friday, January 8, 1937 Dr. Ralph H. Monger of Knoxville, Tennessee and Optimist international Vice President held an organizational meeting with more than 40 Atlantans. Mr. G. Frank Garrison was elected Club President at that meeting.

Another two months passed until on Tuesday, March 2, 1937 Optimist International President, Earl G. Stanza of St. Louis, traveled to Atlanta to meet with signed club members and Mayor Hartsfield of Atlanta. They toured the city and where presented with “The Key to the City.”

Finally, on Friday, April 23, 1937 a Charter Banquet was held in the Georgian Hall of the Atlanta-Biltmore Hotel with more than 300 people in attendance. The ceremony was carried live on Radio Station WSB followed by an address from His Honor, Mayor William B. Hartsfield.

Thus began a movement, of concerned citizens, in Georgia that now includes seventy Optimist Clubs with over 1,800 members.

Today, as Optimist International approaches its own anniversary of 100 years, the Georgia District, as a leading force, has the challenge of continuing, with passion, the mission and purposes of this proud and vital organization.

As enjoy spring, we are reminded of the coming vigorous growth potential of our outside living rooms. They will only prosper and reward us with satisfaction if we take the necessary time to nourish them. So too our clubs must be nourished and strengthened if we are to enjoy the expansion of our purposes and mission! True leaders well understand this necessity! Therefore, it is wise to be prepared to help others when they are in need.



One way to prepare for the future is to hold new NOW (New Optimists Welcomed!) type events. Many clubs across this country, like Kennesaw, Atlanta, Sawnee-Cumming and Jasper, IN., have recruited anywhere from four to twenty-eight new members as a result of their individualized program.

Successful programs included a Low Country Boil, The Lost City Night, Spirit of Optimism and, even, a simple house party.

The Georgia District of Optimist International is designating the third quarter, consisting of April, May, and June, as a **Do it NOW Quarter!**

This year the Georgia District will conduct its Third Quarter Conference in Peachtree City from May 1 through May 3. On that same weekend the Kentucky Derby will have another “Run for the Roses.” In 1937, War Admiral won the 63rd run. A Derby theme will be the theme of this conference and offers much potential for club NOW programs.

Here are some ideas to consider for a NOW event: Horse-shoe pitch, Derby Pool, Stick Horse Races for Kids, etc.

Have fun while spreading Optimism and creating your own history. **Do it NOW!**

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Need a Fund Raising Idea? This is a “GOT to READ” article!



“Thank you for the idea and how-to information for our Club’s new fundraising project” is the message from President Charlice Byrd of the Towne Lake Optimist Club in Cherokee County, Georgia. That’s a shout-out to the Forsyth-Cumming Optimist Club (the Morning Club, as known locally). The Forsyth Club taught the Cherokee Club the basics of its Avenue of Flags subscription service about three years ago. And the program, renamed Flag for Kids, now provides the Towne Lake Optimist Club a net revenue of over \$20,000 a year, after expenses. “The children of Cherokee County are thankful as well,” Byrd added. “They’re the ones that receive the financial benefit.”

So what is the Flags for Kids program? It’s a flag subscription service. For an annual fee of \$40, Club members place a flag in front of a home or business or other facility, for six “flag holidays”. Six times in 2015 the skies over members’ neighborhoods will ripple with the Club’s 650 red, white and blue flags, atop white 10-foot-tall poles. Flags measure three feet by five feet.

To save on costs, members assemble flags from component parts, usually on a weekend at the home of the member who stores the parts. 50 to 75 flags are assembled in 60 to 90 minutes. Typically two-person

teams place flags a couple of days before flag days, retrieve them a couple of days after flag days, and then place them in storage until the next flag day. Members use their SUV vehicles or pickup trucks to transport flags. Placing or retrieving flags usually takes 45 to 90 minutes, depending on the number involved per team and travel distances between subscribers.

“Word of our Club’s success with the Flags for Kids program is spreading. And now it’s our turn to assist other interested Clubs,” reports Byrd. “We’ve already had discussions with Cherokee County’s Optimist Club.”

See Program Benefits Next

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Flag Observance Days

Presidents Day
Memorial Day
Flag Day
Independence Day
Labor Day • Veterans Day

Program Benefits

- Funds, for children of Cherokee Co.
- Subscribers and Optimists beautify neighborhoods, together.
- Subscribers and Optimists express Patriotism, together.
- Community at large is more aware of Optimists in general and club in particular.
- Team-building among Club members.
- All of the above: Increases membership.
- Personal gratification of members: Nothing succeeds like success.

Member Team Work

- Small teams place and retrieve flags, six times a year.
- A large team of members assemble flags from component parts, when needed.
- For each new subscription a small team or individual will drive a 1-foot-long plastic support-tube in the ground at the subscriber's location.

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Jasper Club Does 25th Year for STAR Program!

The Student Teacher Achievement Recognition (STAR) program was created to focus public attention on Georgia's outstanding students and teachers who have been most instrumental in their academic development. Since 1958, the STAR Program has honored more than 24,000 high school seniors who have in turn chosen their STAR teacher to share in this recognition.



10 STAR Students and Teachers with Larry Starr and Cathy Cox



Larry Starr, Andrew Haygood & Michael Oubre



Reeder Burch, Michael Oubre, Andrew Haygood, Cathy Cox, Larry Starr



Reeder Burch, Russell Thomas, Larry Starr, Paul Ghanouni

Elect Nick **PRILLAMAN**

President of Optimist International 2016-2017

Contact me at: hnickp@bellsouth.net • 404.262.7832 • www.nickforoptimists.com



Experience

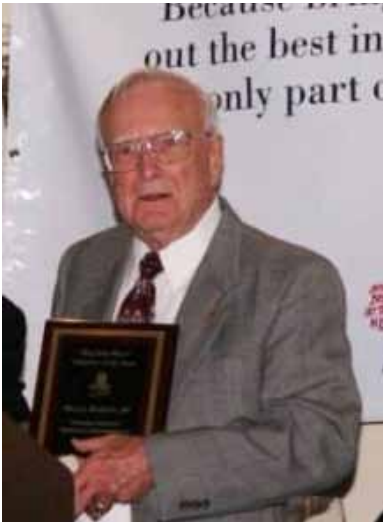
Nick Prillaman, candidate for the Office of President of Optimist International has experience. With over 30 years of service as an Optimist, Nick has achieved a noteworthy list of accomplishments, such as: Governor of a Distinguished District, International Vice President and Board Member, Vice President of the Number 1 Region, Certified International Trainer, Certified International Club Builder, appointed to the International Leadership Development Committee six times and Membership Committee five times, and he has trained hundreds of Optimist Leaders at every level. Each of these experiences has taught Nick how to be a better leader and helped him form a plan to meet the needs of our member/volunteers.

Elect Nick and he will work to implement this plan. He will be your voice. He will listen to you, fight for you, and do everything he can to maintain and increase the value of your membership in our organization.

hnickp@bellsouth.net www.nickforoptimists.com

Bits 'n Peaches

Harry Hackett hits milestone!



Harry Hackett hits milestone of Bringing Out the Best in Children by bringing in 20 new members!

*It only took him 38 years to do it!
Is he the hare or the tortoise!*

*Thank you Harry Hackett.
Congrats from the Governor and all
the Georgia District.*

International President's Message



Did you realize that at the end of this month, we will be halfway through the 2014-15 Optimist year? This is the time each and every year that leaders and Members alike begin moving into what I call "Mañana Mode". "We will do that next year." "Next year when I am _____, then we'll _____."

Frank Sinatra pointed out the problem with "mañana," which is Spanish for "tomorrow," is that "tomorrow never comes." Whatever we kick down the road, has most likely been kicked down the road already and will most likely be kicked down the road some more.

We, meaning every Member of the organization, have a goal of 100,000 volunteer Members by the time of our 100th Convention. Georgia's Goal is 500 new members net by the end of the year! I know Georgia can do it! They just have to turn their focus towards recruitment and retention right now. We are moving into the spring growth season when new life, new Members, and new projects kick into full gear.

Georgia! NOW is the TIME to get your Club ready for the Optimists In Action Month of May.

Georgia! NOW is the TIME for N.O.W. parties to recruit more Members to assist in making our plans a reality.

Georgia! NOW is the TIME to work with your Club's JOOI Club(s) and/or set one up to work directly with children.

Georgia! NOW is the TIME to fire up the grills of Optimism and get cooking to Bring Out the Best in our Kids, our Communities and Ourselves.

Georgia! NOW is the TIME to wake up from "Mañana Mode" and make history today.

Because bringing
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Bits ‘n Peaches

Awards Banquet Kudos

By Hal Sewell

I want to extend a big THANK YOU to all Georgia Optimists for your help in making our 2013-2014 Optimist year such a great success! It was a joy to celebrate our District's accomplishments through our Awards Banquet at the recently completed 2nd Quarter Conference at Lake Blackshear. The many awards that were presented reflected not only hours of dedicated efforts by Optimists throughout the state, but – more importantly – tremendous levels of service to the youth and the communities in our District and beyond.

Included among the awards presented at the banquet were the following:

- 4 Clubs earned the 'Bringing Out the Best' banner patch
- 22 Clubs earned 'Honor Club' status
- 6 Clubs earned 'Distinguished Club' status
- 3 Zones earned the status of 'Distinguished' therefore making the following Lt. Governors also Distinguished:
 - Dianna Johnson, Zone 6
 - Albert Still, Zone 9
 - Tony Bell, Zone 10
- Outstanding Lt. Governor award (tie) went to both Albert Still and Tony Bell

Through our growth in New Clubs and new members in existing clubs, we ended the Optimist year with a net increase in total membership of +75. If 1 Optimist on average can serve 30 youth, we increased our scope of service to 2,250 youth!

That growth of + 75 resulted in the Georgia District being in 3rd place among the 49 Districts in Optimist International. Together we also earned the honor of being a Distinguished District! Consequently Mary Still was present-



ed with the 'Distinguished Secretary-Treasurer' award, and I received the 'Distinguished Governor' award.

The final award presented at the banquet was the 'Hall of Fame' award. This recognizes those Georgia Optimists who have "served the Georgia District with honor and distinction". It was a true highlight of my Optimist career to receive

the 'Hall of Fame' award, and I want to thank everyone who helped me during the past year as well as those who have given me encouragement, advice, and support throughout my years as an Optimist.

I want to also thank the following:

- Sam Kohler for the excellent job he did as our announcer for the Awards Banquet.
- Lois Philbrick, the 2013-2014 Vice-President of the Southeast Region (of which the Georgia District is a part), for voluntarily attending our conference and presenting the 'Distinguished Secretary-Treasurer' and the 'Distinguished Governor' awards.
- Nick Prillaman, past recipient of the Georgia District Hall of Fame award, for presenting this year's recognition.

It was truly an honor and privilege to serve as your Governor last year. I will always appreciate this opportunity.

Speaking on behalf of all of the recipients at our Awards Banquet, I sincerely thank every Georgia Optimist for your role in the achievements of the past (2013-2014) and encourage you to continue your great support of our current Gov. Russ Thomas as we "press on to the greater achievements of the future."

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Bits 'n Peaches

Notes from the Secretary...

Happy Spring!

Coming in May 2015! Before you know it – Club Officer Elect Reports (COER) will be due! That's right, May 20th is just around the corner. Do you have your slate of Officers ready to complete your Club's COER? If not, now is the time to gather your team for the coming Optimist Year! Club Presidents and their leadership team may choose to designate a Nominating Committee to prepare a qualified slate of candidates. Candidates can then be presented to your Club's voting members for approval. Once approved, Club Presidents must complete the COER and send it to Optimist International – and don't forget to send a copy to yours truly, Gwen Gable, GA District Secretary at gwen.gable@harrynorman.com and your Lieutenant Governor. Timely submission of this form is a requirement for Honor and Distinguished Club designations. (A copy of the Club Officer Elect Report (COER) can be found at www.optimistleaders.org and www.Optimist.org (Members-Forms-Forms-COER). This form may be completed on-line or by paper/mail to OI in St Louis.)

The image shows a 'Club Officer-Elect Report' form from Optimist International. It is dated May 20. The form is for clubs that will be voting on October 1, 2015. It includes sections for Club Officers who will be voting, and sections for the Club Officers who will be elected. The sections include: President-Elect, Secretary-Elect, Treasurer-Elect, and Club Foundation Representative. Each section has fields for Name, Address, City, State, Zip Code, Home Phone, Work Phone, and Cell. There are also checkboxes for 'See later' and 'None'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Club Officer' with fields for Name, Date, and Signature. The form is titled 'Club Officer-Elect Report' and has a subtitle 'This information may be completed and submitted online at www.optimistleaders.org'.

Help us keep in touch! One goal of the GA District is to provide you with up-to-date information about activities, functions, conferences, contests, and so much more! Did you know that your correct email address helps us keep in touch with you? We need your help to make sure your correct email address is available to us. Be sure to give your Club Secretary or Treasurer your correct email address – and ask them to make sure it is correct in the Optimistleaders.org website.

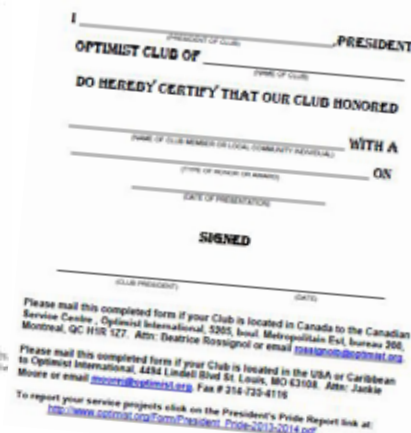
President's Citation and President's Pride! It is never too early to recognize an outstanding member of your Club or of your community. Club Presidents can complete a President's Citation to honor a special Club Member at any time during the year (but no later than August 31, 2015). Clubs may also recognize a community member. If you have Honor or Distinguished Club as a goal (as I am sure each of you do!), one requirement is that your Club President complete a President's Pride report by September 30th. Reports must be turned into Optimist International. (A copy of the President's Citation and President's Pride report can be found at www.Optimistleaders.org under Reports.)

President's Citation

RECOGNITION BY CLUBS
President's Citation to recognize outstanding Member achievement



AWARD CERTIFICATION DOCUMENT

The image shows an 'Award Certification Document' form. It is a white form with a gold border. The text on the form reads: 'I, [blank], President of the [blank] Optimist Club of [blank], DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT OUR CLUB HONORED [blank] WITH A [blank] ON [blank] DATE OF PRESENTATION [blank]'. The form is signed by the Club President and the Club Secretary. At the bottom, there is a section for 'Please mail this completed form if your Club is located in Canada to the Canadian Service Center, Optimist International, 5205, boul. Metropolitain Est, bureau 200, Montreal, QC H1H 1Z7. Attn: Deatrice Rossignol or email deatrice.rossignol@optimist.org'. There is also a section for 'Please mail this completed form if your Club is located in the USA or Caribbean to Optimist International, 4484 Lindell Blvd St. Louis, MO 63108. Attn: Jackie Moore or email moorej@optimist.org. Fax # 314-720-4119'. At the bottom, there is a section for 'To report your service projects click on the President's Pride Report link at: http://www.optimist.org/Form/President_Pride-2013-2014.pdf'.

Gwen L. Gable, GA District Secretary 2014-2015 • Gwen.gable@harrynorman.com
Cell: 678-576-0546

Bits 'n Peaches

JOOI Club Update

January 10th, the Georgia JOOI held their 2nd quarter district board meeting at the Manchester Court Club House in Cumming GA. The meeting was sponsored and attended by members of the Sawnee-Cumming Optimist Club and The West Forsyth High School Octagon Club. Also in attendance were friends and family of the Georgia JOOI Clubs. Lunch (the great American staple, pizza) was served before the meeting and everyone had a chance to meet and greet the new JOOI Board. The guest speaker was Christine Roberts - Leadership Consultant, Motivational Speaker and Author. Christine gave a wonderful talk about how belief drives behavior and why it is so important to "feed" your mind positive "stuff".



Christine Roberts speaking at the board meeting.

Following the the guest speaker, the meeting opened with the induction of two new JOOI officers; Chloe Sparwath a freshmen at West Forsyth High School and Kerrington Witherspoon also a freshmen at WFHS. Both Chloe and Kerrington will serve as Lt. Gov./ Project Managers on the 2014-15 Georgia District JOOI Board. The other board members are Denika Nickeo a senior at Starr's Mill High School, Governor, and Sarah Dismukes a senior at Harrison High School, Secretary.



JOOI Board- left to right: Kerrington Witherspoon, Chloe Sparwath, Denika Nickeo, Sarah Dismukes

After the induction ceremony, Denika, as Governor, led the meeting and called on Kerrington to give a presentation on improving communications between the clubs and the district. One of the ideas that came out of this presentation was to set up a twitter account for the JOOI district. Chloe and Kerrington were tasked to make it happen. You can now follow the Georgia JOOI on twitter at @Georgia JOOI or, if you do not have a twitter account, you can text "follow GeorgiaJOOI" to 40404.

By the way, we are looking for sponsors. So, if your club is interested in a service project in April think about sponsoring this event and working with JOOI. For more information contact John McGowan at jmm731@gmail.com or call 770-364-3617.



Meet and greet.

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Bits 'n Pictures

Cancer is a Tough Opponent

Addi Bales, kindergartner at Lakeview Academy (Gainesville GA) knows that all too well. Just after Addi started kindergarten in the fall, her parents started noticing she was fatigued throughout the day and had a slight limp. "There were never sharp pains or anything like that, but it was just kind of a nagging thing" says mother Holly. After about 3 weeks they took her for X-rays. The X-ray showed Addi had a large tumor in her femur and she was diagnosed with osteosarcoma.

Addi received an immediate 10-week chemotherapy treatment at Scottish Rite in Atlanta. January 5th she underwent surgery at Vanderbilt to remove the large tumor. They took seven inches of her femur. Mother Holly said "You can pretty much imagine how much that is on a 6 year old. It was pretty much her entire femur, but we were just blessed that she was able to keep her leg." After some time for recovery she began her last round of treatment - 18 weeks of chemotherapy that began on January 30, 2015.

This round of chemo is called "special ops," because its purpose is to go in and kill any last traces of the cancer in Addi's body. Holly Bales said she is optimistic about the treatment. When doctors tested the tumor after it had been removed, it showed 99 percent necrosis, meaning the first round of chemotherapy had been 99 percent effective.

The family of Addi Bales is looking forward to hopefully finishing treatment this summer and when everyone's celebrating school being out, they will be celebrating Addi being cancer-free!

From Governor-Elect Tony Bell

Catch A Rising Star

Over the past two conferences, I have conducted "Catch a Rising Star" sessions so members of the Tennessee and Georgia Districts have had an opportunity to talk and discuss the needs for the upcoming year. It has allowed me an opportunity to meet great Optimists from both districts and to ask them what their passions are.

I still am looking for passionate and dedicated Optimists from Tennessee and Georgia to say they are willing and able to participate as a member of the various committees. With more volunteers, the workload becomes lighter.

If you have any interest or passion in any of the committees, please contact me via email at bell1t@aol.com, or by cell (302)981-4794 or at the next conference in Peachtree City on May 1-3, 2015.

District Dues

The next dues invoice is to be sent to your Club President and Club Treasurer in mid to late April. If you have not seen this statement by the End of April, or you have any questions, please contact me at bell1t@aol.com or via cell (302)981-4794.

Name Our District Contest

The end of this contest is April 30, 2015.

The winning name will be chosen by a selection panel and submitted to Optimist International for approval. The winner will have the choice of receiving a free registration to the Georgia District Convention in Savannah, Georgia, August 7-9, 2015 or a \$100 gift card. Information and form can be found on the Georgia District web site: <http://georgiaoptimists.org/>

May Conference Golf Outing

With the running of the Horses and the Kentucky Derby, we have secured an opportunity to play golf at the Planterra Ridge Golf Club in Peachtree City, overlooking beautiful Lake McIntosh. Tee times will start around 12:30 on May 1, 2015.

There will be much fellowship, fun and relaxation, and well worth the visit.

The cost for the outing is \$35 per person and for \$60 per person you can leave your clubs at home and use the demo clubs available at the club.

We might have to do some type of "handicapping" for all those that play as we run for the finish, maybe "Roses" for the winners.

If you wanting to play, please contact me via email, bell1t@aol.com or cell (302)981-4794.

Bits ‘n Peaches

It's All About Serving More Kids

By David Jordan, Marketing Chair

Share your story as an Optimist, each of us have a story to tell to others. The greatest opportunity for marketing is for you to take a moment and share that story with someone that needs to hear it. Imagine this...you had a phone call from a family member and a long childhood friend just lost his life. You think back of each and every moment that you spent going fishing, playing in the rain, going to school, riding bikes or just spending a Saturday afternoon at your favorite swimming hole. You pause and think back of those fond childhood memories. What if you had never met that person that you two had never shared those moments? "Friends come and go, but an Optimist who sees the glass as half full will be part of your life for years to come." Throughout the years as an Optimist, I have met people from



all walks of life, football stars, baseball stars, hockey stars, basketball stars, professional fisherman and women, folks that lived in shelters, came through a food pantry line, but you know what, they all shared a deep passion for life. If we all woke up one day and were "Thankful" for everything, no matter how bad the day has been, that's what we do as Optimists. It's time to really grow Tennessee and Georgia. How you ask? By sharing Optimism with others, not just one or two people, but several. Why don't we all strive to live the Optimist Creed? We can all market our Clubs, but let's market Optimism as a way of life! For the next 30 days, let's all see how many we can share our Optimist story with, you might find out that you inspire someone to join our awesome group of life long members that truly live the Optimist Creed. Use social media to your advantage, when you post something on FaceBook, Instagram, a flyer, a sign, please use the following to add to your post or tag your photo, #iamanoptimist. Please let's grow our friendship Tennessee and Georgia by growing our lifelong friendship the way we know how, sharing Optimism with the world. Do you remember the catchy phrase, "Have a Coke and a Smile" Imagine sharing your lifelong Optimism by using the #iamanoptimist

Remember, each day YOU are given the opportunity to positively impact the life of someone else. Be the change you want to see #iamanoptimist (copied from a current post on FaceBook).

Who knows where your path of Optimism will lead you next...

...And They're Off!



It's going to be a heart thumping, hooves stomping event at the Georgia District's Third Quarter Conference at the Wyndham Hotel & Conference Center in Peachtree City, Georgia, May 1-3, 2015! Governor Russ and his team have planned a "Triple Crown" event. Just look what's in store for you!

- The District's annual Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- The District's Oratorical Contest
- Leadership Development Training Classes
- A special "Club President's" meeting with Governor Russ and his team
- Optimist International Foundation President's March
- Childhood Cancer Campaign
- Election of our lieutenant governors for the 2015-2016 year
- Golf tournament on Friday, May 1, 2015 at Planterra Ridge Golf Club

So ladies and gentlemen put on your Derby attire, bring your floppy hats and fedoras we're going to have the time of our lives as we celebrate and make our run for the roses! Don't wait! Register now! We're off and running for Peachtree City!



Because bringing
out the best in kids
is only part of it

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Register online at www.georgiaoptimists.org or send registration to Marnie Copeland, 20 Mount Moriah Dr., Senoia, GA 30276 no later than Friday, April 17, 2015. Wyndham Peachtree Hotel & Conference Center rate of \$109.00, plus 11% tax, is guaranteed through April 10, 2015; after that date, rates may increase. To ensure the best rate, register now! Hotel telephone number is 770.486.3314 or 770.486.3318. Be sure to indicate that you are with the Georgia District of Optimist International. For golf tournament contact Governor-Elect Tony Bell at bell1t@aol.com or call him at 302.981.4794.

New and Updated Online Officer Training Debuts



Optimist International's Leadership Development Committee is happy to announce the debut of a new and updated Club President online training course and a brand new, first time ever, Lieutenant Governor online training course. Both are available in English and French. These user-friendly courses feature interactive quizzes and pop-up resource materials. Each user will be guided, step-by-step, through the basic skills and actions needed to be a successful Club President or District Lieutenant Governor.

These training courses are not a replacement for the on-site training offered at District Conferences, District Conventions, and the Optimist International Convention. They were developed to augment this training in an effort to help participants better prepare themselves for these important leadership positions. To access these courses go to www.optimist-training.org, create a profile and click on the appropriate course and follow the easy to follow instructions.

It's All About Serving More Kids

By Gene Valde

If you've read at least one communication from the Georgia District or Optimist International, I suspect 'increasing membership' has been mentioned. You probably know that every year, an average of 30 children are served for every Optimist member. While new members are fantastic to increase outreach resources and give new views and ideas to the club, it is so important to also retain our current members. We all produce more and receive greater satisfaction when we are involved, appreciated and develop strong relationships with co-workers and fellow volunteers. Know your members...some contribute financially but don't participate in projects or meetings, others do both – make sure the former are personally contacted and thanked for their support, include them in newsletter distributions so they are aware of club activities. As for the later, ensure they are engaged in the activities they prefer and are offered opportunities to lead and share their expertise. This is the responsibility of all club members. Every member has unique qualifications and abilities – the trick is to figure out how to blend this among the membership so that no one gets burned out, feels excluded, or worse, not appreciated. Even at times when a member is inactive due to their hectic schedule, encourage them to participate if only for 30 minutes – we never know, or can anyone predict, the impact our efforts have on the kids we serve.

If you thought I would end this article without encouraging a growth in membership, you are so wrong! Have you ever shared the name of a great restaurant, reliable handyman, or great sale with someone? Are you doing the same in sharing your positive experiences of what Optimists do for kids? Just think of how much easier club projects would be with just 5 new members per club and thereby serving ~150 more kids. Please take advantage of social media, email and your personal contact with others to share your optimism and encourage others to join our efforts.

I would like to personally challenge each of you to the following:

- Once a week: Share your story of Optimism with a non-member
- Monthly: Follow-up with a club member who hasn't been involved in recent club activities or meetings
- Twice a year: Enroll and mentor a new Optimist or Friend of Optimist
- Once: Share this challenge with your club and encourage members to accept the challenge

Remember, *I BELIEVE*¹⁰ and it is that belief that enables us to help more children in Georgia.



Optimist Day at The Braves!

Come join us at Turner Field for “Georgia Optimist Day” on Sunday, June, 21st. The Braves take on Division rival New York Mets - game time is 5:00 pm. What a great way to not only support the Optimist International Foundation, but a great way to celebrate Father’s Day. Bring the kids and Dad’s too! Also, clubs can help sponsor youth groups in their area (Little League, Boys & Girls club, etc) to a Major League Baseball game. Join in the pre-game parade around the field and see what it’s like to be where all the players are.

Tickets are only \$10 each - which includes a \$2 donation to the Optimist International Foundation. For more information and to order your club’s tickets, contact John Haley at haleycrow@gmail.com. Deadline for ordering tickets is Monday, June 15th. Advance parking passes are also available: cars - \$10 (on game day it’s \$15) and Busses - \$40 (on game day it’s \$50).

Hope to see you at the stadium for “Georgia Optimist Day at Turner Field” !!!!



Because bringing
out the best in kids
is only part of it

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Bits 'n Peaches

Caught In Action Around the State...



Governor: Russ Thomas
Secretary: Gwen Gable
Treasurer: Tony Bell
Governor-Elect: Tony Bell

Editor: Deanna Morrow
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Do It NOW!

The Georgia District is committed to serving children and spreading Optimism as a philosophy of life. The challenge is to “Do It NOW”! Take the leap and move forward with a sense of urgency! There are thousands of children throughout Georgia that need to be served, and thousands of adults that desire to volunteer. We want those volunteers to join us and help to “Bring Out The Best In Kids”. Conducting a NOW program will give your club the opportunity to showcase itself and share the gift of Optimism with those who live and work within your community. As the leadership team that believes¹⁰ that we can make a difference, let’s seize the day and “Do It NOW”!

Governor Russ and Membership Chair Harry have designated the Third Quarter as the “Do It NOW” quarter. So go ahead and take the leap and start planning your NOW event right now! Why not sponsor a NOW Barbecue, Low Contry Boil, wine and cheese party, or a NOW banquet. Governor Russ, Governor-Elect Tony, and Membership Chair Harry are donning their aprons, sharpening their knives, and grabbing their spattulas! They will cook for you, present for your, and do just about anything else to help you grow your club and the Georgia District. Don’t wait until tomorrow or next week, “Do It NOW”.



706.426.1954
www.georgiaoptimists.org

I am a 
**Georgia
Optimist**

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Sawnee-Cumming Optimist Club

Fourth Annual Golf Tournament

Monday, April 20, 2015

Windermere Golf Club



Children's
Healthcare of Atlanta

Hole-In-One Sponsor!

Hit a hole-in-one and win a \$30,000 Home Theatre & Installation!

Also a chance to win other Hole-In-One Prizes!!

- *Luxurious 4-Day/3-Night Golf Vacation to French Lick Resort*
- *Set of Taylormade Rocketbladez Irons*
- *Travis Mathew Head to Toe Signature Outfit plus \$500 online shopping spree*

Sponsored by:



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Home Theaters Automation Systems Custom Acoustical Treatments & More!

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