

Sun, Sand and Sage

March 1, 2021

NM-WT District of Optimist

Volume 75, Issue 4



Friend of Youth

District Officers

Governor

John Cowart

Secretary/Treasurer

Lynne Martin

Governor-elect

Fred Trussell

Immediate Past Governor

Joe Loya

Lt. Governor Zone 1 & 2

Suzann Owings

Lt. Governor Zone 3

Sallie Rizzo

Lt. Governor Zone 4

Roger Burnett

Lt. Governor Zone 5

Jack Barclay

Lt. Governor Zone 6

Greg Siewert

Lt. Governor Zone 7

Pat Siewert

Lt. Governor Zone 8

Jack Sturgis

Wallstreet Journal

The Optimist International club hasn't survived 110 years, two world wars, a Great Depression and untold other miseries and disasters by dwelling on the dark side of life.

Even so, the past year has been a trying one for the pre-eminent glass-half-full organization. There has been a deadly global pandemic, deep political discord and, perhaps most vexing for the club itself, a membership that is "aging out," or, as a pessimist might put it, "dying off."

The club's president, 63-year-old retired banker Mark Weinsoff, still found reason for some optimism when reached a few days after last month's deadly riot at the U.S. Capitol. "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger," he said.

Mr. Weinsoff sees it as his club's mission to keep optimism alive and thriving in the face of the litany of bad news. "When bad things happen," he said, "a pessimist reasons that 'this always happens to me and it will happen again.' An optimist says, 'OK, now what do I do to move forward?'"

Optimist International was founded with a mission to guide "delinquent boys" to the right side of the tracks. Women were first admitted in 1987. The umbrella organization, based in St. Louis, oversees some 2,500 individual chapters around the world.

Over the years, though, as local chapters focused on events such as golf tournaments and fishing trips, interest among young people has declined. Individual chapters have been closing at a steady clip.

"Many of our clubs die because they fail to stay fresh, allowing themselves to become stale in membership," said Benny Ellerbe, executive director of Optimist International.

"Peak membership was in the 1990s, and since then it's been a slow but steady decline," said Mr. Weinsoff. "We went from like 190,000 members to about 60,000 in the past decade."

According to Jim Boyd, 63, the Optimists' director of strategic growth, "1,088 clubs were lost in the past decade and 13 since October—the latter due to the pandemic."

Club leaders, not surprisingly, remain optimistic. Over the past 10 years, 640 new clubs have opened, 17 of them in the past year, said Mr. Boyd, who lives in Urbandale, Iowa.

In interviews, a dozen club members from Minnesota to Montego Bay displayed their signature positive attitudes, filling their emails with exclamation points.

Les Lowery, 62, an Optimist official whose local chapter is in Gretna, La., boasted: "We have 10 new members in our club since October 1!!!! In Louisiana, we started two new clubs this year—one is a college club!!!!"

He said the club's future feels secure. "We may cycle down a few years, but we will cycle back up the next," he said. "We're not going anywhere!" "I have no choice but to be an Optimist after a year like 2020," he noted.

A few members, displaying signature good cheer, even recalled some positive points to living through a pandemic. "I cooked more and really got into Cajun-style cooking," said Mr. Ellerbe. "I'm a sci-fi freak so I caught up on lots of old 'Star Trek'-type series."

And there were family benefits. "The best thing that happened from the pandemic is my two adult children got in touch with us more often, because they were concerned about us being at-risk," said Mr. Weinsoff.

Mekayla Jenkins, 21, is president of the Optimist club based at Northwestern State University in Louisiana. When a friend asked her last summer to kick-start the chapter, she said, "I nearly declined because I was drained from everything. But when you hit rock bottom, the only direction you can go is up. So I thought, 'What can it hurt?'" "The first initiative was surviving 2020, and getting my optimistic groove back," she said.

While the picture in the U.S. remains challenging—in November the 42-year-old Waco, Texas, chapter closed due to Covid social-distancing strictures—group leaders say there is reason for hope internationally. There are 17 Optimist clubs in Nepal alone, and others in Bangladesh, Kenya, Uganda, Jamaica, Sri Lanka and Ghana.

In other countries, the membership skews younger. The worse-off the country, the more interest in opening a club, said Mr. Boyd. (con't page 2)

Inside this issue:

Wallstreet Journal (con't) 2

Rio Communities Water 2

Optimist Day in Roswell 2

Charles "Tony" Sayre 3

Ronald E. "Scotty" Scott 3

Sunrise Optimist Club Donuts 3

Rio Communities Socks for Kids 4

District Meetings 20-21

- November 6-8 on Zoom
- February 26-27 on Zoom
- April 23-25 In Belen, NM
- Optimist International Convention June 30—July 3
- August 6-8 In Albuquerque, NM

Wallstreet Journal (con't)



Mr. Weinsoff, the president, believes the club needs to return to its roots to thrive in such uncertain times. “We’ve started a campaign to put optimism first, ahead of community and civil service,” he said. “Promote optimism as a way of life again. And it’s been proven in studies that optimists live longer.” Medical researchers have found that individuals with greater optimism are more likely to live longer lives.

To that end, many chapters now practice meditation and yoga, and virtual communication is taught in most of them.

“Our membership tends to be on the 50-plus side,” said Mr. Ellerbe. “But, miraculously, they have taken to the Zoom format like ducks to water.”

A few days after the Capitol insurrection, 113 members of the Roseville, Minn., chapter joined a Zoom call to hear a political author discuss “Lessons of the 2020 Election and the Future of American Politics.” Mr. Weinsoff said one of the group’s rules made for a conflict-free evening: “We avoid partisan politics and religion.”

The club’s international theme for 2021 is “Choose Optimism.” Many members say they have overcome serious setbacks at some point in their lives.

“It’s not how many times that you get down in life, but how many times you get up,” said Mr. Ellerbe. “Coming from a single mother, poor side of a small Louisiana town, first in family to go to college, first to ‘get out.’...I believe my personal motto is, ‘I’ve done so much with so little I can do anything with nothing at all.’”

Mr. Boyd says the club’s mission has never been more relevant.

“I believe we will survive because we live in a time when people are searching for optimism right now,” he said. “It is needed.”

Rio Communities Optimist Club

Rio Communities Optimist Club has been helping with a community south of them that has had a problem water supplies. It seems the elementary schools cannot use their drinking fountains.

Rio Communities Optimist have been taking bottled water to that community elementary schools from people who have donated it.

Just recently Phil Martinez a member of the



club got a commercial donation of 2850 bottles of water from Niagra

Water. Great, great job Phil

Optimist Day in Roswell



Charles "Tony" Sayre

Deming Headlight by Bill Aremdariz

Charles "Tony" Sayre was someone who brought back my childhood, growing up in Los Angeles.

Through a common interest in professional sports teams, we built a friendship I can hold dearly in my mind.

Tony always made a point to peek into my workstation at the Headlight whenever he came in to pick up his missed paper delivery or to make a payment. I always made time for Tony because I knew our conversations would lead to sports on the local and professional level.

To say Tony bled Dodger Blue was an understatement. That blue also

turned to a darker shade of Wildcat navy, as he and Shirley were fixtures at Deming High Wildcat sporting events.

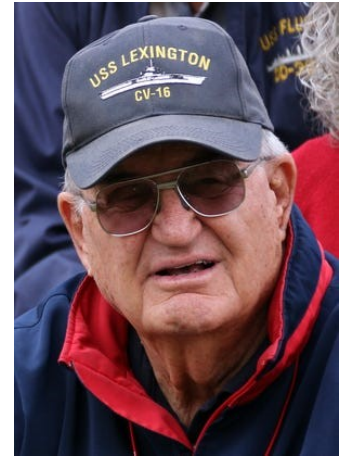
I was one year old when the Dodgers moved from Brooklyn to L.A. Tony followed the team from Brooklyn and never let go.

The Sayre family was one of the first Wildcat families I befriended when I became the Headlight Sports Editor. Susan was a stellar Lady 'Cat volleyball player at DHS and Jimmy played on a diamond for the Wildcat baseball team. Michael was a fixture in city softball leagues and always up for a game basketball or touch football.

Tony and his wife Shirley were charter members of the Deming Optimist Club and operated the concession stand at Hooten Park during the summer baseball and softball leagues. They were considered mom and pop to many families that frequented the ballpark.

Tony was right and he was fair. That is a testimony to the life he lived. Giving more testimony is the fact that his kids; Patti, Kathy, Karen, Mike, Susan and Jimmy, all followed Tony and Shirley in community services here in Deming.

I am left with fond memories of growing up within walking distance to Chavez Ravine and play-



ing baseball at Echo Park and the L.A. Police Academy. He helped me keep them fresh.

Thanks, Tony.

Ronald E. "Scotty" Scott

Las Cruces - Ronald E. Scott "Scotty" passed away on February 2, 2021 surrounded by his loving family. He was a wonderful, loving, and caring husband. He was a fantastic, honored father, grandfather, and great grandfather. He was a hardworking family man who was a diligent man of integrity.

He was born in Spring-

field, MO on September 26, 1941 to Norman E. and Sarah (Lusk) Scott. The family moved to Albuquerque in 1947, where in graduated from Highland High School in 1960. He accepted Christ in his heart at 9 years of age. He met his high school sweetheart Susan Elliot at church. They were married in December of 1961. Scotty worked at Jill's Bakery, ACF and

Morton Foods in Albuquerque. He was then transferred to Santa FE with Morton Foods. He then moved his family to El Paso where he worked for H & R Wholesale Foods. Then later to Las Cruces, where he worked at Business Products Center as Vice President of outside sales. He retired in 2008 after more than 25 years.

He was a deacon and hard worker at New Covenant Fellowship. He was past president in the Optimist Club and member for many years. He took up cake decorating after he retired and made birthday cakes for the family.

Scotty and Susan shared 59 blessed years of marriage and have 3 wonderful sons Todd, Brian, and Ronald Jr.

Sunrise Optimist Club Donuts

The Sunrise Optimist Club of Roswell delivered and passed out dozens of Krispy Kreme doughnuts last Friday, February 12 at the Civic and Convention Center. There was a pre-order drive starting February 1. Not only did individuals purchased dozens and dozens of donuts for themselves, they purchased 50 dozen to be donated to our first responders and essential workers in our community. The Sunrise Optimist Club delivered donuts to the police department, the fire departments, New Mexico health department, The hospitals, Sheriffs Department, and others.



NM-WT District of Optimist International

Sun Sand and Sage
c/o Fred Trussell
1804 Cam Fella St. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123
Phone: 505-280-4509
Email: fgtruss@comcast.net
http://www.nmwtoptimists.org

We're on the Web!!!

<http://nmwtoptimists.org>

Friend of Youth

Optimist International is an association of more than 2,900 Optimist Clubs around the world dedicated to "Bringing Out the Best in Kids." Adult volunteers join Optimist Clubs to conduct positive service projects in their communities aimed at providing a helping hand to youth. With their upbeat attitude, Optimist Club members help empower young people to be the best that they can be.

New Mexico / West Texas District is just one of approximately 50 Districts in the US, Canada and Jamaica. There are currently 26 clubs in the district and approximately 330 members.

This district includes the State of New Mexico as well as the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Loving, Reeves, Jeff Davis, Presidio, Pecos, Brewster and Terrell in Texas.

Each Optimist Club determines the needs of the young people in its community and conducts programs to meet those needs. Every year, Optimists conduct 65,000 service projects and serve well over six million young people.

Rio Communities Socks for Kids



The Rio Communities Optimist club recently held a "Socks for Kids" program for elementary school students of the Belen, NM School district. Just over 2,000 pairs of socks were collected.

The socks were separated according to boy or girl and size, and then bagged for delivery to elementary schools in the

district.

A special "thanks" to Deborah Benavidez for chairing this project.

Optimist Creed

In 1922 the Optimist Creed was adopted as the official Creed of the Organization.

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 opti-

mism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to 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 eve-

ry 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.

Sun, Sand & Sage Editor
c/o Fred Trussell
1804 Cam Fella St. SE
Albuquerque, NM 87123

Place Stamp
Here