



THE ORACLE

Optimist Club of Plant City
PO Box 1755, Plant City FL 33564-1755
www.plantcityoptimistclub.org
Early December, 2009



NEXT MEETING IS MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

Our next meeting is **Monday, December 7 - 6:30 pm at the Tree Lot**. We have a lot to discuss concerning the Tree Lot, our Steppin' Stone Farm visit and upcoming events in January. Bring a guest—new member apps are available!

TREE LOT TIME!

We still have a lot to do at the Tree Lot! To understand the importance of the Tree Lot, please read page 2 of this Oracle! **Tree Lot Chairman Dave R (drobbins11@tampabay.rr.com or 813-754-2257)** has done a great job getting the trees ordered and coordinating the lot, now it's your turn. Get on line and go to the Tree Lot Calendar, located at <http://my.calendars.net/pcoptimist> and start signing up for work time. Any questions on the calendar, contact **Prez Mike (michaellwilliamson@gmail.com or 813-757-6570)** or **1st VP Jeff O (jogden01@tampabay.rr.com or 813-651-3787)** for help.

Dates/times that are critical to fill are:

12/3 - 5-9 pm	12/9 - 5-9 pm	12/12 - 5-9 pm	12/18 - 5-9 pm	12/20 - 1-5 pm (if open)
12/5 - 1-5 pm	12/10 - 5-9 pm	12/13 - 5-9 pm	12/19 - 1-5 pm (if open)	12/20 - 5-9 pm (if open)
12/5 - 5-9 pm	12/11 - 5-9 pm	12/14** - 5-9 pm**	12/19 - 5-9 pm (if open)	
12/6 - 5-9 pm	12/12 - 1-5 pm	12/16 - 5-9 pm		

** parade night—need a couple people with Susan Williamson to cover the lot during the parade

Remember, this is our largest fundraiser and we need all members to work several shifts to cover the lot or the story on page 2 may become true...

CHRISTMAS PARADE THIS FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4

The annual Christmas Parade is not far behind. **Parade Chair Alaina E (aedgemon@gmail.com or 813-956-3453)** needs your help on **Parade Day, Friday December 4**. We need **walker and riders for the float!** We will have pizza and drinks for the parade walkers/riders at 4:00 pm. Members, be sure to wear your Optimist Club polo shirt and everyone else wear an Optimist sport tee shirt. We'll leave the lot at 5:00 pm to join the parade line-up. Come out and be a part of this fun family event which helps us promote our Club and what we do!

STEPPIN' STONE EVENT SET FOR MONDAY DECEMBER 14

Be sure to read page 3 of this Oracle for information about the **Steppin' Stone Christmas Party!** We plan to head to the country on **Monday evening, December 14** with **arrival time set at 6:30 pm**. A convoy will leave the tree lot at 6:00 pm sharp. **Coordinator Walt A (walt34@gmail.com or 813-752-1602)** has provided a list of the resident girls and staff for gift purchasing. Remember, it's also a covered dish affair and we need each member to bring a large batch of their favorite finger foods or dessert for the crowd. This is a great family event and we need to have a good turnout of members and their families! Read over page 3 of this Oracle for your gift assignment and confirm with Walt A that you will be participating!

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- √ **Now through mid-December:** Tree Lot sales under way—get on the schedule!
- √ **Friday, December 4:** Parade Night—float set-up at 1:00 at the Tree Lot, pizza & drinks at 4:00, line-up at 5:00.
- √ **Monday, December 14:** Steppin' Stone Farm Christmas Party, 6:30 pm arrival, bring gift and lots of finger food.
- √ **Saturday, December 19:** Tentative...Break down tree lot... More later.
- √ **Monday, December 21:** No meeting due to the holidays—Have a great Christmas!
- √ **Monday, January 4:** Regular meeting, 6:30 pm, site to be announced.

2009-2010 OFFICERS

Mike Williamson, President (813-757-6570)
Jeff Ogden, 1st Vice President (813-651-3787)
Alaina Edgemon, 2nd Vice President (813-956-3453)
Paul Woods, Secretary/Treasurer (813-752-0356)
Walt Arnold, Sergeant at Arms (813-752-1602)



2009-2010 BOARD MEMBERS

Jeb Hicks, Past President (813-754-8804)
2009-2010:
Jeff Arnold - Cal Calhoun - Dave Robbins
2009-2011:
Bernie Reynolds

From: Michael Williamson <michaellwilliamson@gmail.com>
Subject: A True Story?
Date: Sunday, November 29, 2009 5:40:07 PM

It was Christmas time again and the people in the community noticed something was a little different this year. The sun still rose and set just like always but there were signs that things just were not the same. For one thing, the girls down at Steppin Stone Farm were missing something that usually made this time of year a joy. There was no Christmas tree for them to decorate. In past years they had always been given a tree from the Plant City Optimist Club, but this year there was no tree, in fact there was no tree lot and no Optimist trailer announcing that that Christmas trees were here. There was no friendly Santa Claus coming, bringing presents for each girl and no Optimist members bringing their families and food to share a good time and encourage them for another year - there were just a lot of girls wondering why things had to be this way. Yes, it's true, there was no float in the parade and all in all things just were not the same in our town.

Many wondered what had happened and how this could be. As time went on it became more obvious that things were not returning to normal. There were no hot dogs at the Easter Egg Hunt that year and down at the police station the Captain kept waiting on his phone to ring. He had an excellent officer who had really served the community well and was ready to give his name for the Law Enforcement Banquet that year...but his phone never rang and a banquet was never held. It was very similar later when it came time for Youth Appreciation - there were numerous students who had really given back to their communities and excelled at being good citizens but the Optimist Club, who had done so much to encourage this behavior, was no where to be found. No banquet, no awards, no names in the paper...just no notice at all of their outstanding achievements. Four less kids every year got a start on their college career because there were also no scholarship dollars to be offered. It seemed that being a good young man or woman in this community didn't really matter as much anymore.

Participation in basketball, soccer and flag football all dropped off significantly. The city was forced to raise the cost of the programs since they were no longer receiving support from the Optimist Club. Many just couldn't afford it and without the volunteers needed to keep these programs running they just became too costly. It was a sad affair indeed to see so many kids without the opportunity to go play a sport and learn valuable life lessons on a Saturday morning or a few hours during the week but that was state of the world we were faced with.

There were many other small signs as well, such as the lack of contributions to the high school for awards banquets, booster club activities, support for the YMCA and the Parks and Recreation Department. All in all it was the signs of a community going the wrong way. A community where people had become tired of giving back and were so focused on their own that those who were struggling and needed a hand couldn't find one. A community where the negative seemed to be emphasized and the good while still present no longer had a voice, it no longer had a champion and it was simply over looked. Many were afraid that in the years to come crime would increase and that the neighborly feeling that had been a part of this community for years was simply a thing of the past that would be talked about like the good old days.

It seemed that the many contributions of this Plant City Optimist Club had been taken for granted. They had gone on year after year and somehow just seemed to get done and somewhere along the way it became a forgotten point that what made the Optimist Club successful was not money and it was not a float in the parade or a banner on the side of a trailer. What made it successful and what made it such a valuable part of the community was the people who were involved with it and the time they gave to their community.

Yes, friends it was a sad time in the history of Plant City. As I sit here tonight by the light of my own Christmas tree I wonder if this story will eventually come true. I see the same small group of members trying to keep up the wonderful legacy that has been set before them. The same small group trying to keep up with all the programs and trying to find enough hours to meet the commitments that life presents, but still trying. Still finding a way to give some time, still finding a way to make a difference in the community, giving back to a community that has given so much to them. I see the same small group but know that this cannot continue forever. The life of this community and the life of the Plant City Optimist Club depends on the donations of time from it's members. Our success or failure in large part will be determined by how much or how little of ourselves we are willing to give.

Who is willing to give of yourself so that this community we live in can thrive?

<http://my.calendars.net/pcoptimist>

1. Click the number of the day you can work
2. Click Edit beside the shift you can work
3. Type your name in the Calendar Text box replacing "Person 1", etc.
4. Click Submit
5. OR...email me when you can work.

Thanks for taking the time to read the story....I'll see you at the tree lot!

**CHRISTMAS PARTY
PLANT CITY OPTIMIST CLUB STEPPIN' STONE FARM**

WHEN: MONDAY Dec. 14, 2009 @ 6:30 (may car pool from tree lot @ 6:00 SHARP)
 WHERE: STEPPIN' STONE FARM
 WHO: OPTIMIST MEMBERS and FAMILY
 DRESS: CASUAL, except for Santa
 FOOD: BRING TWO (2) selections of finger food or ONE (1) large selection
 GIFTS: Up to \$25.00. Sweaters, sweatshirts, etc. Please print girl's name
 in **LARGE LETTERS** for Santa and put your name on the package.
 Put family gifts together in a separate bag.

GIFTS MUST BE TO WALT ARNOLD OR AT TREE LOT BY 6:00 P.M. MONDAY the 14th.

NAME:	GIRLS:	SIZE:
Tony Almon	Mary	Small
Jeff Arnold	Marissa A.	Medium
Jeff Batley	Chelsea C.	Medium
Cal Calhoun	Carly	Medium
Dan Coton	Cayla	Small
Rob Dusse	Shanel	Medium
Alaina Edgemon	Amber	Small
Terry Harnage	Melissa F.	Large
Jeb Hicks	Sarah	Medium
Doug Hippler	Brianna	Large
Jack Holland	Erica	Large
Deanna Jackson	Devon	Small
Billy Keel	Cydney	Small
John Knight	Lisa	Small
Ben Knox	Chelsea M.	Large
Scott Lawson	Katie	Medium
Jeff Ogden	Isabel	Small
Mike Palestrini	Lisa Marie	Medium
Dave Robbins	Jennifer	Large
Steve Rossiter	Megan	Small
Tim Shuff	Jordan	Medium
Pat-Darcy Stottlemeyer	Ashley	Small
Mike Williamson	Courtney	Medium
Paul Woods	Jacqueline	Large

Steppin' Stone Staff Ideas: Restaurant or Department Store gift certificates

Walt Arnold	Staff	Dave Coffee	Staff
Tony Azorin	Staff	Stan Hobby	Staff
Gene Bowman	Staff	Steve Kennedy	Staff
Larry Bradshaw	Staff	Roger Mitchell	Staff
David Byars	Staff		