Happy November! This month we’re reminded to give thanks for many things in life and that includes you, the wonderful Optimist volunteers who donate your time, talent, and skills to organize and staff special events that raise funds to support Vienna youth. Special thanks to Treasurer Michele Wright for her incredible year-round dedication to leading our successful and beloved Farmers Market. The Market wrapped up its 2022 season on October 29 and Michele thanks everyone who worked at it, rallied volunteers, and jumped in to help. Plans already are underway for next year, she says.

Our club also is grateful for Elizabeth Isaac, daughter of fellow Optimists Brian Isaac and Monica Gomez Isaac, and a junior at James Madison High School. For the second year in a row, Elizabeth sold homegrown perennials such as lilies and irises as well as tomato, pumpkin, cucumber and strawberry plants at the Farmers Market through Lucy’s Charity Plant Sale, named after her faithful dog. Over 11 weeks, Elizabeth sold out her family’s entire inventory of plants (more than 200) and nearly doubled sales from the year before. Recently Elizabeth presented a check for $1,800 to Optimists Tom and Susan Bauer, President and Director of Community. Two organizations will benefit from Elizabeth’s big heart, hard work, and entrepreneurial and botanical skills: the Culmore Center and World Central Kitchen’s efforts in Ukraine.

Ayr Hill Garden Club also presented a donation to our club recently at the Farmers Market to Mickey Williams, Optimist of the Year. Many thanks to all of our generous gardeners-- maybe they know the secret to growing money on trees?!

Please RSVP (hopefully with a resounding “yes”) for the Carol Waite Brennan Youth Appreciation Awards when you receive the email invite from Gary Moonan, says Mike Fitzella, VP Youth. Mike encourages us to turn out for this important event to remember Carol’s contributions to our club and witness the presentation of $2,500 scholarships to six outstanding seniors from James Madison, George C. Marshall and Oakton High Schools. See sidebar for details.
From President Tom Bauer

Greetings Fellow Optimists!

Another successful Farmer's Market season in the books! Many hours of work went into our success this year but we cleared almost $18,000 for our efforts. Thanks again to Michele for her continued leadership, Roger for his timely and humorous reminders, and our wonderful roadies -- Dan, Mickey, John, Brian, Carl, and Rob -- who keep the hits coming with our new, improved sound system. Oh yes, let's not forget Dick Gongaware who somehow manages to line up musical talent for every week.

Once again, the Optimists were in the middle of the action at Vienna's annual Halloween Parade. We didn't ride this year but we kept up the pace nonetheless, pulling our little red wagon behind us. Thanks to Susan for her last minute caboose construction and Pat Solan for pulling it the entire way. We had a pretty good showing of Optimists and four girls from Louise Archer marched and represented the future of Optimism.

On a sadder note, Rich Ordeman and I attended the service for former member Bruce Lauther's wife, Connie. Bruce gave a very touching eulogy, highlighting how they met and fell in love. Connie has been honored several times by the city of Fairfax for being the volunteer of the year.

Christmas tree sales are coming soon. I have divided up the teams and will be publishing them soon. Don't forget to sign up quickly. Since it looks like the Lions will not be selling, we should sell out in record time this year.

See you at the Carol Waite Brennan awards November 16th at the Community Center.

Optimistically,

Tom

Fun times at the Town of Vienna's Halloween Parade with your fellow Optimists!

What Can Gratitude Do for You?

Practicing daily gratitude may improve your happiness and health, according to an increasing body of scientific research.

Martin Seligman, PhD., best-selling author, researcher, and renowned Psychology professor at the University of Pennsylvania, speaks about an exercise called Three Good Things or Three Blessings. When subjects write down three things they are grateful for before they go to sleep each night as well as why those things happened, they report feeling happier and less depressed in as little as one week. Many gratitude exercises exist, but if you'd like to cultivate more gratefulness in your life and try this Three Blessings exercise at home, it needed involve a huge win.

(continued on page 3)
For example, I am grateful for publishing this newsletter on time. This happened because I can count on my Optimist friends Mike Fitzella, Gary Moonan, Susan Bauer, Tom Bauer, and Dan Gropper to send information regularly to me, and because I blocked time to do it. Meeting a deadline doesn’t randomly happen; it happened because I have personal resources, such as people who help me and time management skills.

Separately, when you think about what’s going well in your life, you develop your capacity to experience more of what’s positive. Psychologist and author Rick Hanson says our brains are wired to remember negative events like Velcro but like Teflon when we experience something good. That’s because our negativity bias keeps us safe by remembering where danger might lie. But to remember the good, we need to work harder to install those experiences in our brains to help them stick. Psychologists call this “savoring” and it means really making a conscious effort to soak in the details of a positive experience -- who was with you, what was happening around you, how you felt, etc. Focusing on and internalizing the good helps you experience more positive emotions in the future. Barbara Fredrickson, PhD., renowned positive emotions researcher at UNC and author of several books, refers to this as an upward spiral. When you experience positive emotions, you “broaden and build” your personal resources, such as creativity and problem-solving, which can help bring more positive experiences to your life, she’s found. I also am grateful for all of you because you impact the world for good.

https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOGAp9dw8Ac (Martin Seligman, PhD., on the Three Good Things exercise)