

## **Lake Arrowhead Retreat Report October 16-17, 2014**

**Present:** R. Brown, Butler, Conway, E. Dieterich, G. Dieterich, Ducey, Easter, Handzel, Hokana, Huston, Jury, Kohlmeier, Lazar, Pennington, Shelffo, Tilson

### **Opening and Overview**

A short Board Meeting was held at 3:00, and the budget for 2014-15 was approved. Most of the other business was deferred to the retreat, which began shortly before 3:30. President Dieterich briefly went over the agenda and discussed the retreat format, which allows for extensive discussion of the main items selected for analysis, and stresses the development of improved procedures and activities in the club that are deemed deficient.

### **Strategies for Recruiting and Retaining New Members**

The pass the frisbee game introduced by Membership Chair Dave Dangermond near the end of last term was felt to be a good idea and is yielding an increased number of guests. A member is passed the frisbee by the previous owner and must either bring a guest to the next meeting or pay a \$5 fine.

Retreat attendees felt strongly that more could be done to make visitors to our noon meeting feel welcome. It was agreed that every invited guest should stand up and say a bit about himself, and that club members should learn his name and talk with him more at the table and after the meeting. The person bringing the guest should also follow up with a call in a few weeks to urge membership.

We also felt that the club should have written material for the guest to receive that tells about the club and its accomplishments. It was agreed that a brochure highlighting all that the Redlands Optimists do in the community should be constructed as soon as possible. Bill Jury agreed to develop a draft and share it with the board members.

Since acquiring more young people in the 30-50 age range for membership has long been a club goal, there was substantial discussion of ways to do this. ESRI was viewed as a potential source of young members, and Jim Ducey agreed to ask his friend there to come to a meeting.

President Dieterich announced that Ted Mendoza had expressed an interest in participating in membership by concentrating on getting inactive members to return to club participation. Ted will join Dave Dangermond on the membership committee this year.

### **Club Leadership**

President Dieterich announced the new membership chair positions he had filled for the coming year. They include:

- Car Show: Brad Easter
- Membership: Ted Mendoza and Dave Dangermond
- Oktoberfest: Rod Shelffo
- Publicity: Richard Pennington and Bill Jury
- Redlands Bowl Concessions: Dan Shefchik and Dave Dangermond
- Social Events: Rod Shelffo and Greg Dieterich

The rest of the important committee assignments will be filled by incumbents, although it was pointed out that if Paul Barich were to be elected, he would probably be unable to serve on the Board or as chair of the Track Meet.

Greg announced that Dick Conway and Rod Shelffo will be stepping down as Secretary and Treasurer after this year, and replacements should be sought and trained this year. Jack Kohlmeier volunteered for Secretary and Bill Jury for Treasurer.

A lengthy discussion was held on the difficulty in filling the VP and Presidential slots. There was general agreement that the club still had a number of qualified individuals, but that they were reluctant to agree to the three-year commitment. A committee of experienced past presidents was formed to take prospective candidates to lunch to acquaint them with the positions and allay their fears. It was thought that amending the club bylaws to allow past presidents to serve a second term was not a good idea and should be looked at only as a last resort if no new candidates step forward.

### **What's Not Working in the Club**

This session consisted of a general discussion about areas of the club needing improvement. Although we had good turnout of volunteer Optimists at Oktoberfest once again there were only a few people who remained for cleanup and teardown. We concluded that the job of procuring people to volunteer for labor-intensive events needs to be better organized. We recommended that in the future people get assigned specific jobs and commit to being where they are supposed to be at specified times.

Jack Kohlmeier reported on a new strategy employed by the Moreno Valley Optimists for encouraging people to become more active in the club. They use play money throughout the year to reward people for everything they do in the club, with remuneration at a level commensurate with the scope of work involved. For example, attending a noon meeting might be worth \$10, while working at the car show might be \$25 and chairing Oktoberfest \$200. At the end of the year a meeting is devoted to an auction of various things acquired by the club, where only play money may be used to make bids. Jack says it is great fun and the most popular meeting of the year at Moreno Valley. The general consensus among the participants at the retreat was that the idea is worth pursuing. A committee made up of Greg Dieterich, Bill Jury, Jack Kohlmeier, and Rod Shelffo was appointed to work out the details.

The Optimist Booklet is a valuable asset for educating new members, and helping to guide everyone assuming a new leadership position. However, the booklet is out of date, and needs to be amended by the most recent chairs in the positions of responsibility in the club. Bill Jury agreed to coordinate the rewrite.

The club would like to increase the number and variety of its social events. Rod and Greg have agreed to run the committee this year, and to try out some new activities. The first will be the Zack Brown concert in Devore, held the Saturday after the retreat. By all accounts it was great fun and there was a good turnout. Other suggestions for the year are: Santa Anita racetrack outing; trip to the Reagan Library; theater, hockey or baseball games; a Temecula wine tasting; and a

progressive dinner. The goal is to have an activity every couple of months. A survey will be developed by Rod and Greg and circulated to the members to determine interest and availability for proposed activities.

There was agreement to resume the search for a professional web designer who will be able to construct a site that we can use not only for publicity, but for a number of essential functions that will facilitate club operations. These include: online car show and chili cookoff registration; credit card online payment of dues; online membership applications; and a repository for essential club documents like the club calendar, roster, and bylaws. Bill Jury agreed to go back to his two contacts and obtain a new quote.

After the last retreat we agreed to create an investment committee to oversee our foundation portfolio and to report to the board. This was not followed up. We decided to have our investment manager give a seminar at the noon meeting this year.

A discussion was held about ways to strengthen ties with the Redlands high schools. We agreed to add a student reporter from Orangewood, and set the process of appointment into motion. We also will get the schools to provide a contact person we can go to for any information on students. Individual Optimists volunteered to contact the four schools to obtain the name of the contact.

Collegiality at the noon meeting was discussed, and several new procedures will be implemented immediately.

- Two greeters will be assigned each week to welcome members as they arrive
- The President was encouraged include as many different members as possible in the fining exercise, with more use of the relatively innocuous \$1 fine.
- Retreat attendees will take the lead in changing their seating each week at the noon meeting to interact with more members

### **Leadership Training and Mentorship Strategies**

This topic was addressed at the last retreat, but had not been adequately followed up. It continues to be true that most members who haven't served on the Optimist Board don't know how the club works. As a result, people get put in charge of things without knowing how to run them, and the quality of our programs varies greatly from year to year. The following strategies were suggested for improving the situation:

- Every major activity should have a senior and junior member, with the understanding that the junior member will eventually run the activity in the future
- The leader of every major activity should give a report to the membership after it is concluded
- All major events should have a follow-up meeting immediately afterward that goes over what worked and what needs to be improved
- The Optimist Booklet should be updated yearly by the most recent person in charge of the activity. It should include contacts, deadlines, etc. as well as a

thorough description of the duties of the chair. Bill Jury is charged with maintaining this policy.

- New members should have a regular member assigned to them to help them learn about the club and to make them feel welcome

### **Publicity**

Publicity remains a major deficiency in the club, and must improve in the future if we are to increase membership and have adequate attendance at our car show and Oktoberfest. A number of strategies were discussed and will be implemented in the future. These include:

- Creation of a professional web site that has sections documenting everything we do and which is updated regularly
- Development of a brochure documenting our achievements in the community. This will be handed out at all fundraisers and youth activities and will be given to guests at the luncheon
- Maintain an Optimist Booth at our major fundraisers and events
- Founders day will feature a presentation of the history of the club
- Find someone willing to be the club historian and find a way to document the club history from 1969 on.
- Send out press releases for every event
- Make publicity a committee with a writer (Jury), bulletin editor (Kohlmeier), and photographer (Pennington) coordinating the recording of an event

### **The Future of Fundraising**

*Car Show:* Brad Easter, who will chair this year's Car Show, presented an analysis of our most recent show. It was viewed as a success, with a few things that went wrong and some areas that need improvement. Brad provided an outline of the major steps to be taken in preparation for the next show on May 30, 2015, which met with approval in the following form:

- We will utilize a comprehensive marketing strategy, including social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc), print media (Press Enterprise/Redlands Daily Facts), and radio (KCAL/KOLA)
- Anheuser-Busch will be the exclusive beer at the event.
- A sponsorship committee will handle all aspects of sponsorship, including follow-up after the event.
- We will have a kid's area on the ball field.
- The food court will move adjacent to the picnic area. We will not seek out food trucks, and if they apply they will be treated the same as other vendors
- The Chili Cook-off was a huge success and can be developed even more in the future. We should limit participation to 12 vendors and charge a refundable \$100 deposit to discourage no-shows
- The band and sound choices from last year will be invited back. Kelly McGuire & the Yard Dogs are good and McGuire does a great job with the sound.

- People attending the event should be able to identify an Optimist. This year we will all wear identical outfits that set us apart
- Our raffles were very successful last year, and we can increase their visibility even more this year.
- Trophy Plaques will be built before the end of January this coming year to avoid last-minute rush.
- We will begin the process of obtaining permits and fee waivers no later than 90 days prior to the show to avoid any delay.
- Judging at the last show was improved from previous years but the judges added additional classes and we didn't have enough trophy plaques. We will correct this in the future. As a reward, judges will be offered a sandwich and several beers after judging is complete.
- We will make every effort to have a functioning web site before registration begins that will allow online payment and contain downloadable forms

**Oktoberfest:** Rod Shelffo has agreed to run Oktoberfest in the coming year. Last year's event was viewed as an experiment which produced a successful and very enjoyable show but which failed to publicize itself adequately. Most of the problem was due to a mix-up with Anheuser Busch because of a change in management. As a result, we had no posters and no 2 for 1 coupons to hand out at Stater Brothers. In addition, we decided last year not to buy an ad in the Press Enterprise, which in retrospect was probably not wise. These deficiencies will be remedied this year. The band and German deli will both be invited back, and the wine booth will be continued.

**Redlands Bowl:** Dan Shefchik and Dave Dangermond will co-chair the concessions operation this coming year. Last summer's profits were down, partly because of weather. We also had to replace some equipment and had other maintenance expenses. Because we streamlined the operation, manpower needs were considerably less and sufficient volunteers were found. We will meet with the RCMA committee in the near future to discuss our contributions and future needs.

**Named Sponsor:** We held a lengthy discussion on ways of seeking monetary support from donors. Anheuser Busch is seeking to be our exclusive sponsor for the Car Show and Oktoberfest, and we can expect substantial support from them in return. Negotiations are proceeding to this effect. Several other named sponsor candidates were identified and we agreed to have members who know them to contact and meet with them.

### **New Project Ideas**

**Loma Linda Children's Hospital:** We received a gift of \$10,000 to the club this year from the Dieterich Family Trust, which encouraged us to consider creating a new project to serve the parents of children admitted to the Loma Linda Children's hospital. The parents, many of whom stay in the Ronald McDonald home, are often in the area for an extended period of time and would benefit greatly from an interaction with the club. Members will tour the facility on November 30, after which we will develop a proposal for the Board.

## **Follow-Up Actions**

To ensure that action is taken on the items that met with group approval at the retreat, the following will occur:

- The publicity committee will photograph and write up every significant event and submit to area papers
- A brochure will be created that highlights Optimist achievements in the community
- We will establish and maintain an Optimist booth at all of our major events
- A regular Optimist member will be appointed to assist each new member in integrating with the club
- A welcoming committee will greet each member at weekly luncheons
- A committee (Dieterich, Kohlmeier, Shelffo, Jury) will design our own version of Moreno Valley's club currency and auction program to enhance participation
- The Optimist Booklet will be updated and maintained
- The social committee will identify potential new social events and dates
- A survey for upcoming potential social activities and dates will be sent to the members
- We will request a seminar from our investment committee giving us an update on our investment strategy
- School contact persons will be solicited at each high school
- A student reporter from Orangewood will be requested
- A professional web site proposal will be solicited
- Founders Day will have a club history presentation
- We will identify and contact potential candidates to be named sponsors
- We will meet with Bowl association to discuss summer 2015