



Pathways

Sauk Trails Optimist Club
Madison, Wisconsin

December 2021



Sauk Trails – Madison Optimists:

Happy Holidays and an Optimistic New Year to the members and families of the Sauk Trails Optimist Club. Here we are, celebrating again the gifts and love we have enjoyed throughout the year as we strive to "think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best."

Do you have a memory of "the best" or a hope for the future you'd like to share with the club? Please take a moment to write it down and send it by email for a special December edition of the Sauk Trails Newsletter.

Santa and his elves are waiting impatiently for your reply. Rudolph too.

John Fons, STOC Newsletter Editor

The Optimist Creed

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 you friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and 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 every 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.

Following are the articles received for this December 2021 Newsletter



I put a star in the yard for every day of December from the first to the twenty-fifth. They're made of wood. I use light lumber and a bolt to fashion an upright with cross bars of various lengths for each star. Then I attach white lights that gleam and sparkle, about one hundred and fifty lights per star which is a lot, but stars need to be bright.

The stars are various heights, so when placed in the yard they give a sense of perspective and I surround the house, filling in all the blank and dark spaces that occur in the yard. The last star is the biggest and brightest, a framework covered with hundreds and hundreds of lights of every color, followed by a streaming tail of white lights to the ground, making the Christmas Eve star look something like a comet or meteor, streaming its glow to the waiting earth.

People have taken exception to my stars.

"I'm not a Christian," said one lady.

"That's alright," I replied. "They're stars," implying of course the truth that light is not denominational.

Mostly people enjoy them and appreciate them, and I am glad.

I need them.

The stars are a pilgrimage for me. Each one is a landmark at the end of the year and I often dedicate the stars to people in my life, remembering them quietly as I place a star and make it glow, as those people have placed a glow in my life. And there's another aspect.

The stars are a defiance and assertion. You wouldn't think of stars as being rebellious, but mine often need to be. I get very tired of worldly wisdom and circumstances that resemble darkness, very tired indeed. Weighed down by discouragement, anger or resignation to whatever else has filled the air, I rebel. I want to say something about my own life, my own soul even if I say it with lumber, lights and wire.

Stars are a nice signature to leave in the dark and cold of night. If it snows or the day is cloudy, I leave the stars lit. Some people walk by and never notice. They don't look right or left, but that's their business. My business is connecting all the stars to a single switch so I can turn them on or off with ease as an amateur electrician in Santa's workshop. It's my contribution to life in winter when life has turned cold and solid.

They say the light from every star takes years to reach our world. What that means is the light from far away has made it no matter what the distance and our world has remained right here spinning along to receive it. What better argument could there be for **Optimism to endure through the years to come?**

It traveled all this way to reach us.

John Fons



We all grew up with Lifesavers candy. Remember them? They're still sold in the same roll of 14 round fruit flavored candies with a hole in the center – like a lifesaver on a boat. Years ago in a popular magazine, there was a small column in every issue titled "Lifesavers".. It was a list of fourteen things that offered something to make you smile – a quote, a short poem, a joke – all sorts of small, ordinary offerings. I loved it.

As an Optimist I am going to challenge myself – and you – to find 14 common, ordinary things each week to smile about. **To take joy** from. not the big things – the small joys. Like a beautiful sunset or a full moon, or geese flying overhead, a hot shower, a cup of cocoa, a cat purring or a child's laughter. You get the idea. 14. Every week. That's 2 per day. I'm going to write them down and at the end of a year, I can look back at my list and see that there were 728 things that made me smile – that gave me a little bit of sweet joy – just like a lifesaver. And don't forget, they were made to share.

Jane Meyers

RESPECT

My hope for the future is that we '**Respect only the Best**' in each person that we meet. Instead of basing our opinion of people on the worst thing they have done, we should instead base it on the best thing that they have done. So many people do so many great things and we should celebrate them.

The more we celebrate the good in people, the more good there will be in people. Optimism is contagious and it is our job to pass it on to everybody we meet.

Rick Thomas

STRONG For the FUTURE



The 2021 pandemic has made us more creative in our interactions with each other. We've enjoyed each other on-line, and also at distances, with friend and family get-togethers. The excitement of this season is currently stretching into 2022. As Optimists, we have the creed to continue to remind each of us to **'Promise Ourselves', to be so strong that nothing can disturb our peace of mind'** and how precious life will be for 'each of us' in the future.

As we continue to 'talk health, happiness and prosperity to friends and make them each feel there is something in them', we can make our own personal optimism come true. Expecting only the best of ourselves and being enthusiastic about the success of others will help us with our own personal life challenges.

Each of us has many memories of the past and hopes for the future. Our hope for the immediate future is to be able to handle life challenges. **None of us know what life has in store, but we have continued 'day-by-day' with hope for our future, and continued support.**

Bonnie and Gene Spindler

Have a wonderful holiday season with your families and friends.

Looking forward to more Sauk Trails Optimist Club lunches and activities in 2022.