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,,The Optimist Club of Treynor, Treynor, IA
Iowa District, Zone 2 Club Number 40-109
Iowa District Governor: Jane Schmidt

Lt Governor: George Volz

NEWSLETTER

Treynor Optimist Club President:
Dale Willenborg

Sept 19, 2026 Vol. 42, No.37

Council Bluffs History – Dr. Warner



Dr. Richard Warner of the Pottawattamie County Historical Society shared fascinating stories and lesser-known facts about Council Bluffs history, from famous monuments and early settlers to the railroad that transformed the region.

One of the most intriguing stories involved the Ruth Ann Dodge Memorial, better known as the Black Angel. The memorial was created by renowned sculptor Daniel Chester French, who also sculpted the monumental Abraham Lincoln statue at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The sculpture was inspired by a recurring dream Ruth Ann Dodge experienced shortly before her death. In the dream, an angel offered her a drink from a Grecian urn, which she twice declined. On the third night, she drank, felt uplifted and heard angels singing. She died a few days later. General Grenville Dodge had died two years earlier and had tens of thousands attend his funeral, including many national dignitaries. Their daughters wanted the same for their mother and commissioned Daniel Chester French to create the memorial in her honor.

Warner also revealed a long-hidden secret surrounding its dedication. The model for the sculpture was Audrey Munson, a well-known artist's model whose life became the subject of a sensational scandal. The Dodge family subsequently abandoned plans for a grand public funeral and dedication with national dignitaries, opting instead for a solemn ceremony.

Fairview Cemetery is home to the Kinsman Monument, honoring Col. William Kinsman, a Council Bluffs teacher and newspaperman who commanded Iowa soldiers during the Civil War and was mortally wounded at age 30. The monument was dedicated in 1902 through the efforts of Gen. Grenville Dodge and fellow veterans.

Warner noted that Council Bluffs' history extends earlier than the Pottawattamie tribe. The first humans were predated and in 1972 an excavation was done around the Titan Hill School area. Bones were found and an archeological team was called to come. Discoveries show that nomads and other Indian tribes lived in the region much earlier. Members of the Latter-day Saints established the Mormon Trail and settled at Kanesville, the early name for Council Bluffs.

In 1869 you could travel by rail coast to coast, but not at Council Bluffs/Omaha until a bridge was finally built. President Lincoln pushed for Union Pacific to start in Council Bluffs, but it started in Omaha anyway. Decisions about building the bridge between the two cities even went to the U.S. Court.

The arrival of the railroad brought rapid growth and new opportunities. Council Bluffs became a vital rail center and eastern terminus of the transcontinental railroad, connecting Iowa farmers and businesses with larger markets and helping shape the region's future.

Warner also touched on the county's first courthouse, Western Iowa College, Boyles Business College, WPA projects and the historic Squirrel Cage Jail. Council Bluffs has played a very important role in history.

You can spend some time in the past with podcasts and videos – all free. Tune in anytime at CouncilBluffsRevealed.com.

Next week’s speaker:
Chad Vorthmann
Lockheed Martin, Aerospace Division

Positive Quote:
"There is hope, even when your brain tells you there isn't." John Green

Meeting Minutes

President Dale Willenborg called the meeting to order at the Treynor Community Center. Fifteen members were present. Our guest was Dr. Richard Warner.

Prayer: Kirk Vorthmann

Jokes: Keith Denton, Judy Guttau

50/50: Bill Vorthmann

Attendance: Josh Guttau, not in attendance

Football Contest: Jim Clausen

Birthdays/Anniversaries: John Klein's birthday was Sept. 16, and Glenrose Meier's was the 15th.

Bragging Rights: (Dollars are contributed to benefit local youth programs.)

- Glenrose Meier: She traveled to Mississippi to visit her daughter and husband who built a home there. She went swimming in the Gulf of America.
- Gary Guttau: He had a nose operation this week and thinks this is the last operation for cancer.
- John Klein: ISU football had a good showing against Iowa last week and lost in the last minute by a field goal.

Business:

- Kirk Vorthmann will have the float for Homecoming on Oct. 9. The theme is "Children's Books – One Team, One Story, One Goal". Glenrose suggested an idea which we all liked: "The Little Train..I **Can**."
- Bret McVey indicated he would contact JOI Club to assist with putting up flags for homecoming Oct. 9, through Columbus Day and Indigenous Day, both on Oct. 12.
- Sept. 26th is the Can Kennel sorting date to help the Music Boosters after the meeting. Dale indicated the Can Kennel trailer is being picked up soon so we should have the money next weekend.
- Our meeting next week on Sept. 25 will be at Zion Congregational Church.
- Business from last week: Optimist International dues next year are $93.85. Chad Guttau recommended we keep dues at $75. Gary Guttau indicated we receive a lot of bragging rights money to help cover this. The group voted to charge $75 beginning Oct. 1. Pay Gary. Life members will pay $40 versus $46.92 charged internationally.
- Dale Willenborg will turn in our club's projects and activities to the state. He also indicated he has turned in the names of next year's officers. New officers are: Kirk Vorthmann, President and Bret McVey, Vice President.

Community Events:

- **Fri. Sept. 25**: St. Paul Lutheran **free** tail gate before Underwood football game.
- **Sun**. **Sept. 27:** Treynor Fall Farmers Market 10-2
- **Sun**. **Sept 27**: Mt. Hope Soup Supper 5-7 PM at McClelland Town Hall.
- **Sat**. **Oct. 3:** Treynor City-Wide Garage Sales
- **Fri., Oct. 9:** Treynor City-Wide Cleanup
- **Fri., Oct. 9:** St. Paul Pre-school tail gate (**A fundraiser**) before Red Oak football game.

School Events in Treynor:

- **Tues. Sept. 22:** 7-8th grade VB tournament vs. Mo Valley, starts 4:00 PM
- **Wed. Sept. 23**: School out at 2 PM.
- **Sat. Sept. 26:** Parent Teacher Conference 4-8 PM
- **Fri., Oct. 9:** Homecoming

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

HUMOR



OPTIMIST CALENDAR

Events:

Sept. 26	Meeting 8-9 AM, Zion Congregational Church
Sept. 26	9:15 AM Can Kennel sorting Music Boosters

Birthdays:

Anniversaries:

Sept. 24	Phil and Jan Waggoner
Sept. 26	Bill and Ann Vorthmann

Programs:

September	Bill Vorthmann (3rd, 4th Sat)
October	Judy Guttau
November	Jerry Hempel (1st, 2nd Sat) Josh Guttau (3rd, 4th Sat)
December	Mick & Judy Guttau

Speakers:

Sept 26	Chad Vorthmann, Lockheed Martin
October	A series of talks this month by members to get to know them better:
Oct. 3	Ken Graham, personal story
Oct. 10	Steve Chambers, personal story
Oct. 17	Dennis White, personal story
Oct. 24	John Klein, personal story
Oct. 31	Judy Guttau, personal story
Nov. 7	TBA
Nov. 14	TBA
Nov. 21	Ashleigh Croushorn, Chief Technology Officer, TS Bank – topic: learn about AI
Nov. 28	Joel Beyenhof, Treynor Superintendent, (school related topic)

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Dues/Donations/Flag Money: Mail to Optimist Club of Treynor, PO Box 354, Treynor