



President's Message

“Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most.”

— Ruth Carter Stapleton

We as Altrusans, make a genuine difference in people's lives and that is both the greatest gift to give and receive. Thank you for all that you do, not only through these special holiday celebrations, but all year round.

2023 has been another great year filled with blessings and accomplishments for our club. Yes, there have been challenges to overcome, but more importantly there were many new bonds, successes, and growth celebrated this year.

We are very proud of all efforts and progress made in the last 12 months where we have come together as one unit to continue serving our community and District Five projects, while still building a stronger foundation for expanded growth in 2024 and beyond.

As we reflect on the year, we hope everyone realizes that all of these moments also prepare us for an even better 2024. We look forward to all of the new memories and accomplishments that are ahead of us!

In your service,

Lisa Bennett and Lisa Duckworth

Co-Presidents Altrusa Club of Mansfield

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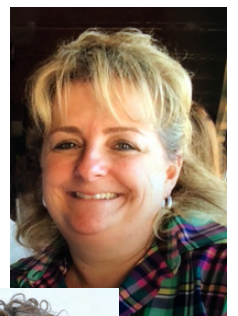
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CLUB MEETING UPDATES

December is a short month for business meetings and a great time to visit and share holiday cheer with our members and guests. We want to thank Leslie Lancy, our Honorary Altrusan who visited our luncheon meeting on December 6th to celebrate the holidays and another great year of service to our community. We appreciate Leslie's friendship and support of our community service and literacy projects.

BOARD MEETING UPDATES

There was an update to the Board schedule and the Board called a special meeting in December to cover a future need for our Tools for Schools and First Read to Succeed Programs. Everyone has hopefully been informed now that Staffing Partners has closed the business and we may need to look for a new facility to house our supplies and work room space sometime within the 1st quarter of 2024.

We may also have the opportunity to stay in the current building, but won't know until mid or late January what options are available. First, we want to thank Linda Bender for everything she has done and is doing through this transition to support our club's largest community service projects. We are grateful for the many years that she and Staffing Partners have housed our program needs. We look forward to discussing options where we could possibly stay at the current location.

Second, if the club does need to find an alternative place in the future, we want to be pro-active and have a back up plan available if needed. We would like for all members to have the opportunity to share possible locations for consideration before we need to make any final decisions.

We will cover all details at the January membership meetings, but if any members have access or know of any access to possible locations that can house these programs, Please send your ideas or questions to Lisa Bennett or Lisa Duckworth. Thank you!

We do have a check-list available for members that may have opportunities for us to research. We will gather all information to share with the Board during our next meeting on January 25th.

2023-2024 District Five Updates

Don't forget to mark your calendars for April 24-27, 2024 for the **District Five Conference** in Grand Rapids, MI with their theme of **Altrusans At Work**. Your District Team is working to make this a fun, informative event! Friday night will be an all-member session you won't want to miss. Each club will be asked to bring a tri-fold poster displaying your service projects to share with other District Five members.

2023-2024 International Club Challenges

KINDNESS CHALLENGE

Create one intentional act of kindness each week. Together, we will achieve more than 300,000 acts of kindness each year.

LITERACY CHALLENGE

Enhance the lives of others **ONE BOOK AT A TIME!** The challenge is for all Altrusans to collectively distribute one million books or devote 500,000 literacy service hours to our communities.

Committee Reports

Membership

Welcome to our new members!

**We officially have
71 active club members!**

Peggy Harrison, Membership Chair, initiated new members Lori Stephenson, Patti Kleshinski, and Darlene Schmidt at the December 6th membership meeting. They are shown here with their sponsors.



Communications

December's Community Speaker at Membership Meeting

Sonja Pluck, Director of Madison Adult Career Center, was our speaker at the December lunch meeting. She thanked those who voted to pass the levy and explained the motto for the career center:

Bring your "A" Game to work:

**Attitude, Attendance, Appearance,
Ambition, Accountability, Acceptance,
Appreciation.**

Sonja went on to share with the group some other details on their programs and how Altrusa's scholarship donations help students complete their career goals. Here are the highlights of those programs:

- Workforce and Personal Interest classes ranging from computer use to herb gardening.
- Adult Diploma Program – students can earn GED and other certifications. There are over 8,000 people in Richland County who are without a GED or a high school diploma.
- Training for Employers, i.e., welding at their location
- Financial Aid programs are available, including Altrusa's scholarships.
- A Student Advocate and Community Health worker is available for the students.

Classes are held at Madison Comprehensive High School at night. Last year, 115 students graduated from their programs. The student Cosmetology School can be reached at 419-589-6363. Let them practice on you! Scholarships are awarded to students by our Club based on the Altrusa Principles.

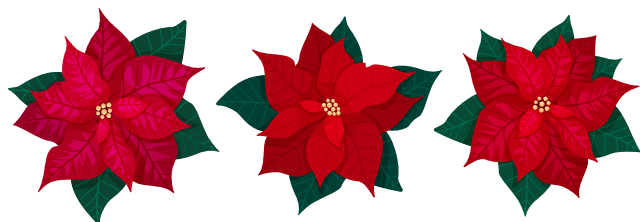
A book will be donated to the Dewald Center in Sonja's honor. Sonja is pictured below with Angie Snook, our clubs Communications Committee Chair.





Finance & Ways and Means

Poinsettia Sale



The poinsettias were delivered at the beginning of December and we have had another successful sales year for this annual holiday fundraiser. The committee is preparing the final sales report to deliver to the membership at the January evening membership meeting. Thanks to all who participated!



Kelly Holder reported that 300 of the available 500 coupon sheets have been sold. She confirmed that you CAN use more than one at a time. We will need to have all money and unsold coupons returned to Kelly by or before the January evening meeting, since most of the coupons expire at the end of January.

"Lucky 13" Spring Bash



The annual Bash theme and plans are set, but January is a big month for executing the plan. Here is the line up for events:

Saturday, January 13 is our community donation day where we will divide up in teams and ask for community donations to support our mystery gifts, silent auction baskets, and sponsorships. Please contact Kathy Shambre for more details on where everyone is meeting, etc.

The next 2024 Bash committee meeting is set to discuss next steps in the process and to discuss advertising needs. We meet **Monday, January 15th** at the old DRS building, 157 S, Main St. at 5:30 pm.

Please bring your silent auction baskets to the evening membership meeting on **Wednesday, January 17th.**

For more information on how you can contribute to this 100% participation club event, please contact Kathy Shambre or Kelly Holder.

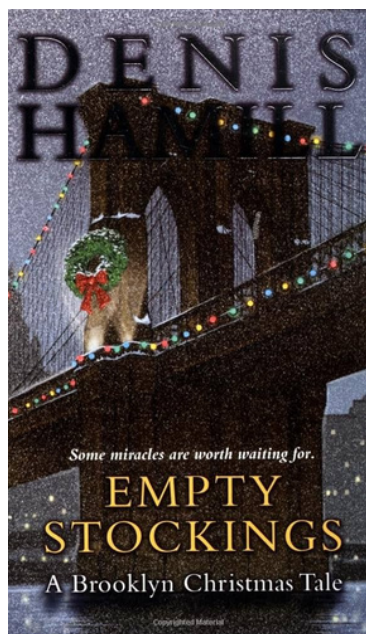
Community Service

Our community service projects are running smoothly and we are ready to start off 2024 with the next batch of First Read To Succeed books. All books are sorted and ready to pick up at Staffing Partners. Readers, please call Linda Bender to arrange a pick up time for your class needs.

We will begin projects with the "New Store" in February and Connie Beckett will have more updates at the January evening membership meeting!

Bobby's Bookshelf:

Empty Stockings: A Brooklyn Christmas Tale

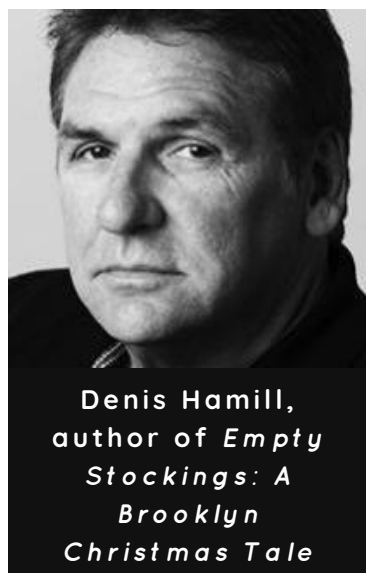


Several years ago, I started a tradition of picking up Christmas novels during the holiday season. It soon became such a tradition that my mother and sister would gift me such books as birthday gifts in early December.

That tradition all started with one book - *Empty Stockings: A Brooklyn Christmas Tale*, written by Denis Hamill. My collection of Christmas novels has grown considerably over the years, however, I make sure to always read this particular story. It's filled with all of the emotions and feelings that the holiday season inevitably offers us - joy, hope, peace, but also sadness, frustration, and disappointment. Such is the human experience! If you're looking for a great read during the holiday season, I recommend you find a copy of *Empty Stockings: A Brooklyn Christmas Tale*, by Denis Hamill.

A summary from Amazon.com:

"Christmas 1963. A nation mourns the loss of its president. A young boy mourns the life his Irish-Catholic, working-class father never had.



Rory Maguire is a fourteen-year-old boy looking for a better life for himself and his family in Brooklyn, New York. His father, Harry, had a terrible accident that cost him his job, his ability to walk, and his dignity. His brother, Dermot, is hanging out with a local gang called the Shamrocks, and his two little sisters are growing hungry in the Maguires' frigid tenement apartment. Rory's dreams of becoming a writer seem hopelessly out of reach, as does winning the heart of Carol, the daughter of a prominent Brooklyn lawyer. What Rory needs most this Christmas is a miracle -- and even though he can't bring his hero John F. Kennedy back to life, he might be able to give his father, an ex-merchant marine, the recognition he deserves...and offer his family the gift of hope, health, and happiness for years to come.

In *Empty Stockings*, Denis Hamill captures the romance, strife, and spirit of the urban Irish-American experience. A heartwarming tale for all seasons, it is a gift to treasure and behold."

Altrusans Having FUN!

In late December, I headed to Columbus to see Trans Siberian Orchestra perform.

During the first or second song, I heard someone shout my name, and in the row in front of me and a couple of seats down was none other than Lori Sjostedt! What are the odds? Needless to say, we HAD to get a picture together.

One thing is for certain, Altrusans know how to have fun!

-Bobby Rhea



Christmas Party - December 20, 2023



Member Spotlight - Jenni Paramore

Mansfield native, Jenni Paramore, was born and raised here and she graduated from Mansfield Senior High in 1967.

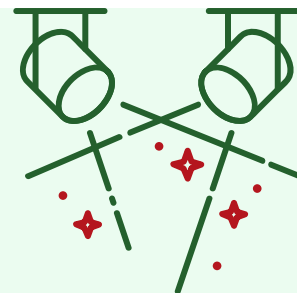
She is one of five children, although she and her sister Judy are the only two still living. Her younger sister died quite young due to leukemia and a heart issue, and her younger brother passed away in his late 20s due to a hereditary heart disease. Although she lost some of her siblings at young ages, her parents lived a good long life. Jenni's mother passed away at 88 and her father at 93. Jenni said that "my mother was the kindest person I have ever known, and my father was a hard worker and a jokester."

Jenni has two rescue dogs - Zoey, a labradoodle, and Ziggy who is a rescue from a puppy mill. They were brought home 20 days apart in July 2018. They also have two rescue cats - Archie, a long haired tuxedo, and his brother Jughead, a short haired 'almost' tuxedo - he has a white spot on his chest and the tip of his tail. Jenni said, "I discovered them on the bike trail along with four of their siblings. They had been dumped there and were very domesticated, not feral. Their siblings now live in Mansfield, Galion, Shelby and Tennessee. They are seven years old."

For work, Jenni is the Community Outreach Manager for Directions Credit Union, with no current plans to retire.

When asked about what she does in our community, Jenni said, "my job at the Credit Union allows me the opportunity to support many community projects. We also have several well-established Financial Literacy programs - in person and virtual. In 2022 we reached a combined 22,000 adults and children with our literacy endeavors."

As a hobby, Jenni loves to quilt, and she even belongs to a local quilt group.



Jenni joined Altrusa because of the Tools for Schools program. She has a strong belief in supporting teachers in the schools in our community.

She joined our club in 2022 with Peggy Harrison and Lisa Duckworth as her sponsors.

When asked what is one thing that you'd like your fellow Altrusans to know about you, Jenni responded, "I am not a particularly social person and not good at large social gatherings. I am at my best when I am in charge of a gathering/presentation, or at least have an assigned task."

Member Spotlight - Marilyn McFarland

Marilyn McFarland was born in Dover, Ohio but grew up in the North Canton area, where she graduated from Massillon Jackson High School. Her father was an employee of Lumberman's Insurance Company and was transferred to their home office here in Mansfield, between her Freshman and Sophomore years of college. That's how she ended up in Mansfield. Marilyn spent her freshman year at the Kent State Branch in Canton, her sophomore year at OSU-Mansfield (the year her family moved to Mansfield), and her junior and senior years were at the Kent State main campus. After graduation, she moved back in with her parents until securing a full-time teaching job.

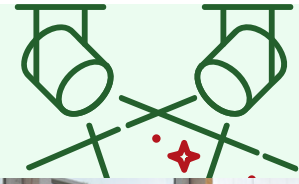
Marilyn was an only child growing up. She married her husband Bill (Lucas native) in 1985 and they have a son Brandon who is married to Jessie (who live in McKinney, Texas) and a daughter Emily who is married to Matt (who live in Cincinnati). They have 4 grandchildren: her Texas grands are Will who is nine and Ensley who is seven, and her Buckeye grands are Mia who is four and Casey who is two.

Marilyn and Bill had a family dog for 13 years whose name was Lacy Lu. They rescued her from a shopping cart in downtown Toledo. Marilyn also said, "our young children had pulled all of their piggy bank money together and handed us a bag of money for an anniversary gift so WE could buy THEM a dog!" Marilyn and Bill presently have no pets, however, they do have "critters" that are a result of living in the country! Marilyn said, "I love seeing all of my deer babies, wild turkeys, beautiful birds (including eagles), but I'm not too thrilled about seeing the raccoons, groundhogs and coyotes! Our neighbors at Tucker Creek Farm (my husband's homestead) have quite a few animals that we visit regularly, especially when the grandchildren are around."

Marilyn has been happily retired from Education/Teaching for 10 years. Her teaching career began in this area, in the Ontario School System, and ended in the Woodmore School District in Northwest Ohio. Over the 35+ in education, she taught Kindergarten through 4th grade with the last 22 years of her career in Kindergarten.

Besides being an active member of Altrusa for the past seven years, Marilyn volunteers at The New Store, manages The United Way Big Red Bookshelf at the Lucas Community Center, volunteers as a "personal shopper" at the Lucas Food Pantry, helps organize fundraisers for the Lucas Lions, oversees the Care and Share Program at Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church in addition to singing in the church choir, volunteers as needed at Lucas Elementary, is a substitute teacher for LifeWise Academy, and has been a summer VBS preschool teacher for several years.

Marilyn enjoys community involvement, traveling, interior design, shopping and dining out, playing games, putting together 1000 piece jigsaw puzzles, reading children's literature, Musicals, and singing. (and of course...chocolate and coffee!)



Marilyn joined Altrusa because of the community service projects that were presented at the time and the passion exhibited from it's members. She said, "they seemed like a fun group of ladies! Being a retired educator and relocating back to the Mansfield area, this organization seemed to be a perfect fit. Plus...Kathy Shambre can be pretty convincing!"

Marilyn joined our club in 2016 with Barb Huston and Kathy Shambre as her Sponsors.

When asked about something that she'd like her fellow Altrusans to know about her, Marilyn responded, "Music has always been a big part of my life. At a very young age I was singing in church, playing records in my room and singing along with the musical hits. During the Christmas holiday, my family would all be assigned vocal parts, and we would sing Handel's Messiah cover to cover (just for fun). In High School I played Ermengarde in the musical Hello Dolly, was in Acapella Choir and the select ensemble, the Jacks 'n Jills. In college I sang with the Kent State Madrigal Singers and The Ohio State University Singers of which we had the opportunity to tour Europe for 3 weeks in a Youth Choral Festival. Locally, I have sung with the Mansfield Choral Society. I found music to be an asset throughout my teaching career. Kids learn through singing! I now sing in my very small church choir. We have a total of four; myself, another member, the organist and the pastor! I recently acquired a piano and who knows... playing 'Chopsticks,' (definitely no concerts), may be in my musical future!"

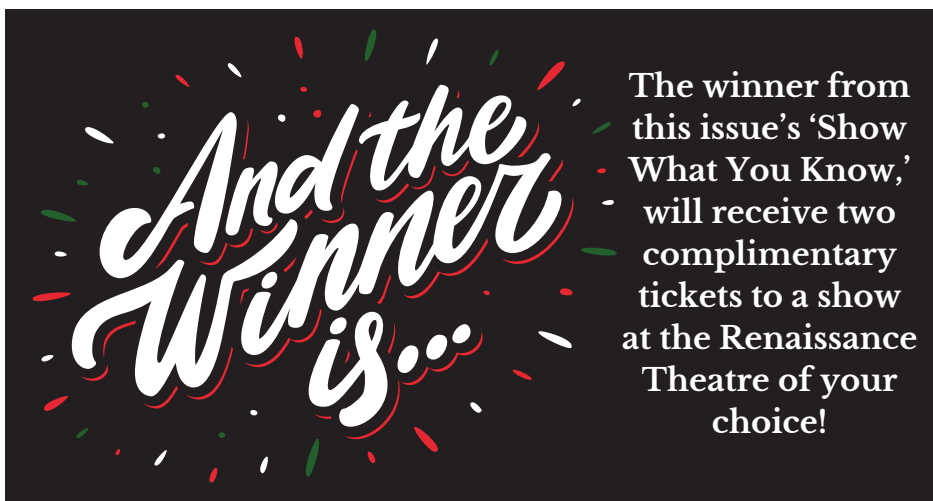
SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW!

RULES:

- Submit your answers to Bobby Rhea in person, via phone call, or via email - rbrhea88@yahoo.com - **no later than the second Friday of the month (the Friday before our evening meeting)** to be entered into a random drawing to win a prize!
- Answers **MUST be correct** to be included in the random prize drawing at the evening meeting that month.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:

1. Who visited our club at our December 6th luncheon meeting? _____
2. The 2024 District Five Conference is being held between the dates of _____. It will be held in "that state up north," in what city? _____
3. Our club currently has _____ active members.
4. Sonja Pluck, Director of _____, was our guest speaker at our December lunch meeting.
5. Our 2024 Spring Bash theme is _____.
6. Bobby Rhea reads _____, by author Denis Hamill each December.
7. Fellow Altrusan, _____, sat in front of Bobby Rhea at a Trans Siberian Orchestra Concert in December.
8. Jenni Paramore is the _____ for Directions Credit Union.
9. Marilyn McFarland spent the last _____ years of her teaching career teaching which grade? _____



UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



January

5- Norma Hiner
12- Marian Benjamin
19- Lori Stephenson
20- Carrie Clever
22- Sandie Baxter
28- Jeanne Bishop

February

1- Melissa Fittante
6- Angela Ward
9- Laura Collins
14- Jonelle White
16- Erich Schroeder
23- Connie Beckett
23- Peggy Harrison
25- Kathleene Wurth
25- Kelly Blankenship

Altrusa Custom Shirts

Available!

You will shine at Altrusa events wearing these custom-made Sweatshirts! Demi Huss is modeling the latest new design. If you are interested in ordering, please see **Kathy Shambre** at the next meeting or send her an email with ordering details!

Altrusa T-Shirts

T shirts or sweatshirts are nice to have when we perform community service. Contact **Sandie Baxter** directly if you would like to order an Altrusa t-shirt. Excellent grade of Cotton/Poly (Dry Blend) shirts, so they are true to size.

Sizes: Small, Medium, Large and XLarge are \$12.00.
Sizes: 2x are \$14.00
Sizes: 3x are \$15.00
Sizes: 4x are \$16.00

Anyone wanting to order, we need: Name, size and number of color. They can pay when Sandie brings them to the meeting.

BULLETIN BOARD

Upcoming Meetings and Events:

**January 2024**

3- Lunch Meeting, DLX 11:30 am

13 - Spring Bash Donation Day 9:00 am

15- Spring Bash Planning Committee Meeting 5:15pm old DRS building on S. Main St.

17- Evening Meeting, DLX 5:30pm

25- Board Meeting, Richland County Foundation 11:45am

February 2024

7 - Lunch Meeting, DLX 11:30 am

21- Evening Meeting, DLX 5:30pm

29- Board Meeting, Richland Chamber 11:45am

Links to Additional Altrusa Information**Altrusa International**www.altrusa.org<https://www.facebook.com/altrusainternationalinc/>

If you have forgotten your password to the site please send an e-mail to Altrusa@altrusa.org

Altrusa District Five<https://districtfive.altrusa.org><https://www.facebook.com/D5Altrusa/>**Altrusa Club of Mansfield**<https://districtfive.altrusa.org/mansfield/><https://www.facebook.com/AltrusaMansfield/>

**Altrusa International, Inc. Of
Mansfield, OH U.S.A
P.O. Box 1324
Mansfield, Ohio 44901
Organized April 6, 1952
Chartered October 12, 1951**

Vision - The Altrusa Club of Mansfield will be a known leader with an absolute mission for "hands on" volunteerism in our local community.

Mission - To improve our community by providing service, developing leadership, fostering understanding of our purpose, and encouraging fellowship through a network of dedicated individuals interested in volunteering.

Officers 2023-24

Co-President – Lisa Bennett
allisab@me.com

Co-President – Lisa Duckworth
lduckworth@richlandareachamber.com

Vice-President - Jennifer Morran

Treasurer - Linda Bender

Secretary – Peggy Harrison

Director – Bobby Rhea

Director - Donna Gilmore

Director - McKenzie Them

Foundation Board

President - Sheryl Weber

sweber7@neo.rr.com

Vice President - Deanne Morell

Secretary - Kathy Perry

Treasurer - Rita Etzwiler

Director – Sally Gesouras

Director - Marilyn McFarland

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