

# The Buc Shot

December 2015

## Calendar

**Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016** – Bar Stool Golf Fundraiser  
**Mar. 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016** – 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Dinner  
**Apr. 29-30, 2016** – Central Region Conference  
**June 20, 2016** – Charity Golf Outing at Stone Creek



## Rest in Peace John Opolka

John Carl “Junior” Opolka of Mahomet passed peacefully in the arms of his beloved wife at 1:40am Friday, Dec. 11, 2015. John was a member of GCC AMBUCS and was always full of stories about his life.



John was born June 3, 1928, at Womac, a small mining town near Centralia, IL. He married Gladys Saathoff on Easter Sunday, March 25, 1951. John graduated from Urbana High School in 1947. He not only attended classes but taught the art class at the high school for two months when the art teacher resigned. And he loved it!



He attended the Univ. of Illinois for one year then went to the Korean War. As a veteran, John recently took the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. with his grandson as his helper and was extremely moved by the experience.

When he was discharged he returned to the U of I where he worked for 39 years in the Printing Division. Within a week of retiring from there, John went to work at Crouse Printing in Champaign where he served three years as vice president. From 1957-1959 John was president of the Champaign-Urbana Printing Pressman and Assistant Union Local 219.

John was a Life Member of AMBUCS. He received the Project Manager Award, Superior Club President Award, Region 4-A “Mr. AMBUCS” Award, District 4-A Secretary-Treasurer Award, Distinguished Governor 4-A Award, Superior Region 4-A Award, and the Distinguished Regional Director for Region 4-A Award. John loved AMBUCS and involved his wife and children in AMBUCS activities.



He had a playful side as well. John acted in plays through the Community Theater Group of Mahomet. At right John is dressed as a “Ding-a-Ling”, a male dancing group that performed at a benefit for the Mahomet Summer Recreation Program. He loved walking, playing golf, and could fix almost anything that was broken, even if Gladys said it could not be fixed.



We’ll miss John and send our good thoughts to his family. It’s on to the next chapter for you, John!

## AMBUCS Park Christmas Lights

The annual decorating of AMBUCS Park in Urbana came off even better than usual! Mary Lou and Wayne Younger led the project by designing the layout of the decorations in the park and working, working, working. Wayne always ends up building new displays for the park and this year one was a huge wooden Christmas tree. The tree contained pictures of the children who play in the Challenger League at the park, (at right). He also created a giant star for one of the pavilions. Following in the "AMBUCS Stars" theme, Roger Adams created a beautiful wooden star wishing everyone a Merry Christmas from AMBUCS, (visible on the left side of the shot below).



The weather was the only big problem this year. The temperature was warm, in the 40-60s, but then came the rains...and more rain...and more rain. The worst problem was near the shed on the west side of the park. Water pooled at the end of the shed covering all the electrical connections for a big part of the west side. The wind and blowing rain also repeatedly took out the electrical connections in other parts of the park despite our best efforts. Just the same, the lights were on most of the time and we've received lots of compliments on how pretty it looked. During the take-in of the electrical cords and some lights on Saturday, a woman who drives by the park on her way to work every day, stopped by to help. After working for a while, she noted that she would appreciate the display more now that she experienced first-hand how much work it takes.

Big thanks to Mary Lou and Wayne for all they do and to everyone who came out to the park to work!

## Ramps

On Sunday, Dec. 6, fifteen AMBUCS and friends, built a rather large ramp at a trailer in south west Champaign. The owner is a triple amputee who had to pull himself down the stairs with his one good arm. Due to the warm weather we were able to build this ramp long after our usual season end. There were two extra helpers at this build, Martinez Johnson and his friend and driver, Joey. (Martinez is the first person on the upper level at the right and Joey is on the right on the lower level.) Martinez is president of the disabilities organization on the UofI campus, Delta Sigma Omicron, DSO. Each Christmas DSO hosts a party for disabled children and their parents and GCC AMBUCS monetary support for the party and helps wrap the presents for the children. Martinez picked up our annual check at a lunch meeting, heard about the ramp build, and wanted to help. He and Joey learned to run the saw, use a nail gun, and among other things how to "crown" the decking boards. The build took a little longer than usual because the power required by the equipment kept blowing the circuit breakers in the trailer. The gas generator was pulled from the ramp trailer and even after sitting unused for over a year, started on the second pull. After that the build progressed at a steadier pace. The stairs were carried around to the back door to act as a second exit from the trailer and to allow the owner to more easily tie-out his dogs. He was very grateful for our help and greatly surprised that we were able to finish the job in one day. We wish him all the best!



## Lucky Buck



Mary Jane Jenkins was the holder of the Lucky Buck on Dec. 1. Mary Jane is Joe Dart's daughter, one of five, and he recruited her to help AMBUCS. Joe's wife's name was also Mary so this Mary is called "Mary Jane". Joe taught his daughters basic car maintenance, basic carpentry, and even archery. Mary Jane was good enough to win a prize Bow and a trophy for her skills. She also helped skin deer, rabbit, and fish while at the same time sewing clothes for her younger sisters. Mary Jane graduated from Uni High in 1966, got married, and got a new job at the National Council of Teachers of English. Mary Jane started as a key punch operator and quickly learned to operate their IBM mainframes. She also trained other employees on their technology software, documented all the training and operations manuals and worked with Web site quality assurance. Mary Jane says, "Taking this job turned out to be the best choice I could have made with a wonderful staff and being able to work with teachers all around the world." She retired from there in 2007 after 40 years of service. Now Mary Jane works "as needed" at the Developmental Services Center in Champaign. She likes working there because she feels appreciated and her bosses like being able to call on her whenever they need someone to fill in. Mary Jane also tries to get involved in the DSC projects whenever she can. She has two children and two step children from her second marriage to her late husband Paul. She also has 14 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. After she lost her husband in 2003, she decided to slow down and spend more time with the children and to start doing volunteer work. Mary Jane volunteered for three years at A Woman's Place Domestic Violence Shelter, then volunteered to be a trustee for Eastlawn Cemetery in Urbana where she served for six years. Over the years she helped with decorating AMBUCS Park and decided about 3 years ago that she wanted to be a part of an organized, caring group and joined GCC AMBUCS, and we're glad she did!

The next member with the Lucky Buck was Priscilla Jean Cecilia Boucher Huffman Dorsett. Whew! Yep, her initials are PJCBDH. When she started kindergarten in Manchester New Hampshire she only spoke French. Luckily at her school, St. Anthony, they taught half the day in English and half the day in French. Her family came to Illinois when her father took a job at the Uofl printing text books at University Press where he worked for 42 years. He worked with John Opolka at the Press. Priscilla finished learning English at St. Mary's School in Champaign and then moved on to Urbana High School until she graduated in 1964. Even then Priscilla's father thought she was too young to date so she spend her Saturday nights entertaining the troops at Chanute Air Force Base in Rantoul. She perfected her singing skills and even got second place in a singing contest. She went on to do productions at the Villa Grove Theater, Parkland College Theater, and the Virginia Theater. She was finally allowed to date and even get married and had two children Linda and Richard. She lost her first husband in a tornado that hit Tolono. Priscilla took a job at the Uofl where she worked for 40 years. During that time she reconnected with a friend from high school in Urbana, Roger Dorsett. He was there to help her with recovering from the tornado and eventually they married and blended their two families. Roger had two children, David and Jack, and they became a busy family camping, being active in scouts, bowling, and little league. The family also traveled extensively since Roger was a Ruger representative and attended many gun shows for his job.



Priscilla also traveled a lot since she was a part-time travel agent for two years. She visited Ireland, France, and Jamaica to name a few. She plans on taking her great granddaughter to Disney World next summer. She has 10 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.



The Lucky Buck next traveled to the pocket of Keith Ewerks. Keith is 49 years old, lives in Philo and has been married to his wife Krista for 23 years. They have 3 children; one is a junior at the Uofl in Ag Crop Science. The second, Courtney, is 17 and going to Unity High in Tolono. She plays softball and goes to traveling tournaments. Their youngest son Carson goes to Unity High as well. He plays football and is as tall as Keith at just age 14. He even has stretch marks from growing so fast. All the children have red hair. Keith is from a small town and has one brother in Denver, Colorado and used to work for Fed-Ex but now is in

the landscaping business. Keith has an associates degree in Applied Science from Parkland College. He did his internship at the Urbana Park District and decided to stay here for a couple of years. Those years turned into

30, nineteen of which he spent in the maintenance department keeping the parks in repair. After that he moved to the construction department which does the small projects in the park that the big construction companies won't do. Keith likes to remodel things and work outside. He is very active in his church and has helped them to grow. Keith also likes to help at charity events and has been instrumental in a golf outing to help the Peoria Children's Hospital raise \$80,000-\$100,000.

Andrea Betzler next pocketed the Lucky Buck. Andrea has been very active in different charitable organizations. She was the head of local chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, was the chair of the MDA fundraising committee, is active in the American Cancer Society, has been a C-U One-to-One Mentor since 2011, and recently helped form the Prairie Dragon Paddlers, a support group for people recovering from cancer. Andrea had cancer at age 34 and is still dealing with the side effects of the treatment. She was a stay-at-home mom for six and a half years to take care of daughter Brianna and son Matthew. When they went off to school she decided to work outside the home and started her own insurance business. She worked at Illiana Insurance but recently moved to Northwest Mutual and loves it. There, she is an assistant to two great guys who are the ones who have to beat the pavement selling the insurance. Andrea's daughter is now 15 and has her driving permit. (Look out!) Son Matthew is doing well in school and almost made the honor roll. This is a special achievement because Matt has Autism and doesn't sleep well. Andrea just celebrated her one-year anniversary with husband Jason who is also a member of GCC AMBUCS.

## December Thanks

On December 22<sup>nd</sup> we had a visit from our scholarship recipient Katelyn Lark and her mother Diane. Katelyn had a Tuesday off from school and wanted to stop by to thank us for the scholarship. She is a second year student in Occupational Therapy at Parkland College. She is doing her internship at Early Childhood and really likes the pre-school children, the younger the better. She hopes to stay here in Champaign when she graduates. We wish her all the best.



Our second visitor this month was Hazel Malekin who stopped by our lunch meeting to give us a hand-made thank you card for her AmTryke. She actually received two from us; the first one she outgrew so we replaced it with a larger model. She hasn't had a lot of opportunity to ride it yet but her mom says she may take it to her therapy room so Hazel can ride it there until the weather warms up. Hazel is one of the many reasons GCC AMBUCS work hard to raise funds to provide AmTrykes to people who need them.

## AmTrykes

On Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> several AMBUCS members met at the Griest Man Shed to put together three AmTrykes for our next giveaways. Students at the UofI who support the sports teams have given us grants to purchase and the members of the Orange Krush had expressed an interest in seeing how the AmTrykes were assembled. They were invited to join us that night but unfortunately could not come. The trikes were assembled in about two hours and were ready to be delivered. Thanks to all who came and helped!



We also gave newest GCC AMBUCS member, Jim Wahl, his AmTryke during a lunch meeting. Jim can't wait to ride when the weather is warm enough. He also gave a moving thank you to the club for giving him more of his mobility back.

## Christmas Bucks

While technically not a Lucky Buck, our awesome waitress at our lunch meetings, Dee Dee, was probably feeling pretty lucky after Laura Gibbs gave Dee our club's Christmas gift of an envelope of tips from our members. Dee Dee does a great job every week keeping our changing orders straight and remembering exactly what we like. When she takes a day off we really miss her! Thanks, Dee Dee, for all that you do!



## Barstool Golf

The plans for the event are moving forward and co-leader Larry Windingland will try to visit each of the bars and encourage them to start signing up teams now. A volunteer sheet will be ready closer to the January 30<sup>th</sup> date and everyone is asked to work again this year if at all possible. The volunteers will meet at Goldy's at 10:15 that day to receive all materials needed to work. Larry also asks that anyone who can help with getting door prizes start collecting them now.

## Board Action

Because the majority of the members could not be present on Dec. 30, the meeting was postponed until January 6, 2016. Please give any agenda items to Board Chair Keith Jamieson.

## Member News

Dylan Harnsberger son of member **Laura and Steve Gibbs**, has finished his time in the Marines and returned home. Dylan was in Iraq and other hot spots during his three year and eight month service. He's now ready to go to college and move on with this new part of his life. We gratefully thank Dylan for his service!

Member **Joe Dart** sold his house and moved into the Villas at Holly Brook. He is still settling in but likes it very much.

Big Hatter and Chapter President, **Andrea Betzler**, accidentally left her Big Hat in the room at the lunch meeting. The Hat was very glad to be "loose" and traveled to downtown Champaign where it perched for a while on the head of movie critic, Roger Ebert. The Hat was eventually corralled and returned to Andrea with just a \$20 fine. Hang on to your hats people!



## Winning Chances

December 1<sup>st</sup> – 50/50 drawing of \$9 went to Scott Price. The \$18 in attendance money was won by Mary Jane Jenkins.

December 8<sup>th</sup> – 50/50 drawing of \$10 went to Jim Wahl. The \$19 in attendance money could have been won by Cris Vowels but she was not present.

December 15<sup>th</sup> – 50/50 drawing of \$9 went to Arlie Saldeen. The \$38 in attendance money could have been won by Laura Gibbs but she was not present.

December 22<sup>nd</sup> – 50/50 drawing of \$13 went to Steve Gibbs. The \$59 in attendance money went to Sally Denhart.

December 29<sup>th</sup> – 50/50 drawing of \$8 went to guest Zack, grandson of Joe Dart who is visiting from Oklahoma. The \$14 in attendance money went to Ray Griest.