



Kiwaniis®

KISHWAUKEE DEKALB

Volume LV, Number 35 September 16th, 2026 Editor, Joe Gastiger www.kishkiwanis.org

LUNCH: Tacos: Shredded pork, black beans, Spanish rice, salsa, lettuce, shredded cheese, jalapenos; and, yes, cookies

Today's Meeting: Led by Caroline Collins **Invocation:** Jerry Smith

Officers for 2025-2026

President	Caroline Collins
President Elect	Sue Doubler
Vice President	
Treasurer	Bob Hoffman
Asst. Treasurer	Al Mueller
Secretary	Ken Doubler
Asst. Secretary	Jerry Wahlstrom
Imm Past President	Mike Mooney
Lt. Governor	Jean Erlenborn
District Governor	Mary Zeronas

Kishwaukee Kiwanis Meetings

2nd, 3rd, 4th, Wednesdays, 11:45 a.m.
Faranda's Banquet Center
302 Grove St.
DeKalb, IL

K-Family Events/Meetings

Circle K Every other Wednesday at
4:30 p.m. in HSC 506
(usually 1st and 3rd
Wednesday)

AKtion Club – 2nd Wednesday, 3:45 at
Opportunity House
357 N. California St
Sycamore, IL

Defining Statement

Kiwanis is a global organization of
volunteers dedicated to improving
the world, one child and one
community at a time.

Flag Salute

As our flag signifies purity, valor, and
justice, may we as true Kiwanians
exemplify these virtues as we serve
the children of the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remember, friends:

We won't be meeting next week — September 23rd — and two weeks ahead, on September 30th, we'll meet at the Hopkins Park Terrace Room. Faranda's will cater our lunch there.

Jerry Smith noted that our morning Prayer Breakfast will be held on Friday, September 18th, from 8:00 - 9:30 AM — in the Vista Room at Oak Crest. We'll have a full breakfast buffet (eggs, bacon, sausage, et cetera) for just \$10 a person. Jen Conley and Daniel Oziama will provide music, and yes, you're welcome to bring a guest. Our speakers that morning will be Fire Chief Luke Howieson, and Mike Giuliano, a retired fighter pilot who serves as chaplain for DeKalb's American Legion post. They'll be talking about ministering to veterans and fire fighters, who often struggle with the aftershocks of dealing with people in situations we'd rather not think about.

Gary Vander Meer thanked those of us who've signed up to deliver Meals on Wheels this month, and reminded us of upcoming assignments: John Smith and Bob Hoffman, Tony Chulick and Mike Mooney, are slated for Friday and Monday, respectively.

Gary also thanked our Peanut Days volunteers. Last week, we collected more than \$2,500 on Friday alone, and he'll have a full count for us at our next meeting.

Kathi Davis announced that the erstwhile Beanzie Committee — refashioned and renamed as our Biking for Kids planning group — will gather at Faranda's on Thursday at 1:00 to lay the groundwork for our April 25th ride. All who'd like to help are welcome to attend.

Toney Xidis and Mary Seymore will hold a meeting right after lunch today to get ready for our Mardi Gras night at Faranda's — Tuesday, February 9th. They'd like help so we can attract as big a crowd as we can. Now that we've put our Beanzie Ride to rest, we're hoping to make this banquet our main fundraiser. Toney announced that the Black Tie Jazz Trio will be back to perform, and we may have some young people as well from the DeKalb High School Jazz Band.

Jerry Wahlstrom asked us to note that our shifts at the Feed My Starving Children packing project, hosted at Suter's on Bethany Road, are slated for Thursday, November 12, from 6:00 – 8:00 pm, and Saturday, November 14, from 3:00 – 5:00 pm. We may want to go out to eat together after our Saturday round of scooping, bagging, weighing, sealing, and boxing while old pop songs speed us along.

PROGRAM

John Smith introduced Courtney Hanna-McNamara, General Manager of the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra, who spoke about the history of the ensemble and gave us a preview of the upcoming season.

The KSO is a community orchestra serving DeKalb County with a mission “to engage, educate, and enrich the community through music.” The group began informally in 1976 (as the “New Approach Music Makers”) and presented its first concerts in 1977. Today, it brings together community professional musicians, students—including musicians from NIU — and dedicated amateur performers. The KSO rehearses weekly and presents at least five public concerts each year, at the School of Music auditorium on campus.

The orchestra has grown considerably over its five decades. Arthur D. Montzka, its first official conductor, guided the KSO from 1980 through 2002, helping transform a small informal ensemble into what it describes as an “orchestra for the community.” Since 2003, Linc Smelser has served as conductor and music director; during his tenure, the orchestra has expanded in size, musical ability, and community presence. The KSO also places considerable emphasis on music education, awarding scholarships to local student musicians and supporting programs that help DeKalb County schools provide instruments to students who might otherwise be unable to afford them.

Perhaps what is most distinctive about the Kishwaukee Symphony is precisely that it belongs to the community that surrounds it. It is not simply an organization that comes to town to perform; it is made up of people who live, study, teach, work, and make music in the region. As the KSO enters its 50th concert season in 2026–27, its history is therefore also a story about the musical life of DeKalb County—and about what can happen when musicians and their neighbors sustain an artistic institution together over generations.

Each year, the KSO hosts a Children’s Concert in November at the Egyptian Theatre. This is by invitation only: kids from our local schools are able to see and hear instruments up close, and dream about what and if they’d like to play.

Through grants, donations, and sponsors, the KSO is able to loan instruments to children whose parents might not be able to rent them otherwise. They can be quite expensive; renting a tuba, for instance, can cost a low-income family about \$100 a month.

KSO musicians also visit classes in our elementary school to spark kids’ interest in playing music. A string quartet, a brass ensemble, or a trio of woodwind performers can have quite an impact on third and fourth graders. Grants also the KSO staff to collect unused instruments from parents, retool them, and donate them back to our schools.

KSO’s mission and outreach continues to expand. This year, for the first time, they’ll be performing at the Sandwich Opera House. They’re also planning to hold some chamber concerts out Blumen Gardens next spring.

For the past two summers, they have been able to offer a number of scholarships so that students can sign up for free lessons over the summer.

KSO holds a Concerto Competition — for young composers — in late winter, which gives young people the chance to see their own work performed by some top-notch musicians.

All in all, we are extraordinarily lucky to have such a gifted, dedicated, and well-supported orchestra in our relatively small city.

Here is their program for the new school year:

Fall Concert: Romantic Splendor

Oct 10, 2026 | 7:30 P.M.

Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, NIU Music Building

The KSO's 50th concert season opens with two powerful masterpieces: Sergei Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2, featuring acclaimed soloist Adam Neiman, and Camille Saint-Saëns' Symphony No. 3, the "Organ Symphony." A pre-concert talk begins at 6:30 P.M. This concert is sponsored in part by Ann and James Tucker.

- *FREE Halloween Concerts*
Oct 30, 2026 | 5:30 P.M. and 7:30 P.M.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, NIU Music Building

Join the KSO in Boo-tell Hall for a performance of Halloween favorites and enjoy seeing your favorite orchestra musicians in costume. No tickets are required for these free, family-friendly concerts! These concerts are sponsored in part by Bosma Dental.

- *Holiday Pops: Winter Wonderland*
Dec 11, 2026 | 7:00 P.M.
Dec 13, 2026 | 2:00 P.M.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, NIU Music Building

A beloved annual tradition! Ring in the holiday season with traditional favorites. The KSO will be joined by the DeKalb Festival Chorus. Local music ensembles will be featured in the lobby before the concerts, during intermission, and following the concerts.

- *Young Artists Concerto Competition*
Jan 9, 2027 | 10:00 A.M.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, NIU Music Building

Join us in Boutell Hall on Saturday, January 9, 2027 to hear the best young musicians in Illinois compete for the opportunity to perform with the KSO on February 27, 2027. The competition begins at 10 A.M. and will conclude at approximately 3:30 P.M. This competition is open to the public and free to attend; come when you wish and stay for as long as you'd like. The winner will be announced from the stage at the end of the competition day.

- *Arthur D. Montzka Young Artists Concert*
February 27, 2027 | 7:30 P.M.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, NIU Music Building

This concert will feature the winner of the 2027 Arthur D. Montzka Young Artists Concerto Competition. The concert also features *Appalachian Spring* by Aaron Copland and *Scheherazade* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. This concert is sponsored in part by Annette and Jerry Johns. All students will be admitted at no charge. Join our competition winner in a room near the concert hall for a pre-concert lecture at 6:30 P.M.

- *Spring Pops:*
The KSO Goes to Broadway
March 20, 2027 | 7:30 P.M.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, NIU Music Building

Join the KSO for an evening celebrating the beloved music from your favorite Broadway musical composers: Rodgers and Hammerstein, Leonard Bernstein, Gilbert and Sullivan, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and more!

- *50th Season Finale Concert*
April 25, 2027 | 3:00 P.M.
Boutell Memorial Concert Hall, NIU Music Building

Happy birthday, KSO! Our season finale concert will feature two choral masterworks: Antonio Vivaldi's Gloria and Carl Orff's Carmina Burana. The KSO will be joined by the NIU Concert Choir and the NIU University

Chorus, both under the direction of Eric Johnson. This concert is sponsored in part by JoAnn Smelser. Please note that this event will be held on a Sunday afternoon.

Need a ride to Kiwanis?

Several Kiwanis members have volunteered to give a ride to our meetings if needed.
(Please give them a couple of day’s notice if possible.)

Bob Gilmore 815-764-9010 Kathie Davis 815-751-9085 Bob Hadley 815-739-8869
Bob Hoffman 815-742-3765 Jerry Smith 815-751-6265

Thought for the day
Courtesy of Bob Hoffman

“God never said the journey would be easy, but He did say that the arrival would be worthwhile.”
- Max Lucado

UPCOMING PROGRAMS: (*Why not invite a guest?* – that could mean a prospective member!)

- Sept 23: **No meeting due to Faranda’s unavailability**
- Sept 30: Officer installation. OFF SITE! at Park District Community Room (our old meeting place)
- Oct 7: Board Meeting
- Oct 14: Horizon League Video
- Oct 21: TBD
- Oct 28: Tom Mataya, OH Open House

	Kish Kiwanians (in person) 23
	Guests:
	Outside Speakers: Courtney Hanna-McNamara
	Total 24