

Nebraska District Optimists

*By providing hope
and a positive vision,
Optimists bring out the best in kids.*



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Governor Mark Claussen

Governor's Message

Strive to be Great

I've heard it said that GOOD Optimists care about their own communities, but GREAT Optimists care about someone else's. There's nothing wrong with being a GOOD Optimist...we need lots of them, but what we really need right now are Optimists who strive to be GREAT!

There are many ways to be GREAT and I'm going to describe just a few. While I've had the opportunity to visit, observe, and/or read about many projects over the last year or two, I won't pretend to know (or remember) everything that goes on across the district!

The Minden Optimist Club has a variety of sports programs that reach out to surrounding communities, and the Wayne Optimist club does the same with an arts program. Not only does this provide an opportunity for youth in these communities they wouldn't otherwise have, but they're also a GREAT way to help us spread the word about Optimism and create potential new members. If your club is doing this as well, please share your stories with Betty for inclusion in upcoming bulletins!

(Governor's Message continued on pg. 2)

Fifteen New Fans of Optimism

During the past month 15 new members have joined the Nebraska District and six sponsors have been added to the "SuperStar" list. With the addition of the 15 new members, we have the potential to help 525 more young people.

Omaha

Merwyn Pearson, Sponsor
Bill Hunt

Gretna

Suzanne Jennings, SuperStar Sponsor (2)
Jeffrey Cumro
Gary Kay

Columbus

Mark Asmus, Sponsor
Ileana Jarecki

Lincoln

Mary Lou Andersen, SuperStar Sponsor (3)
Kathy Gregory
Addie Morrissey
Tom Morrissey

Douglas Andersen, SuperStar Sponsor (2)
Dennis Gregory
Erica Smith

Lexington

Rick Benjamin, SuperStar Sponsor (2)
Mike Winter

Minden

Michelle Malcom, SuperStar Sponsor(2)
Kerry Lempka

Rebecca Rhetus

Rob Hultquist

McCook

Jim Hamill, Sponsor
Neil Gohl

North Platte

David Thelen, SuperStar Sponsor (2)

Richard Bannister
Tamara Bannister

The Nebraska District welcomes the new club members and appreciates the efforts of the recruiters.

Important Deadline!!

To insure room availability and the convention rate of \$82, you must have your room reserved for the District Convention by **July 16**. The Convention site is the Marina Inn & Convention Center in South Sioux City, Nebraska. The telephone number for the Marina Inn is 402-412-4110. The convention registration and meal information will be in the July 1st District Bulletin.

A Message from Our Governor-Elect

Well, finally maybe it will warm up. I think spring has come and gone, and it will officially be summer. That means August is right around the corner for our Convention in South Sioux City so you need to start making plans.

We hope to have a good delegation traveling to the July Optimist International Convention in Denver, a close and perfect opportunity to attend. I know Ardis has train plans already in place, but I will be driving, as I have to be back Saturday night for an event at work. If anyone wants to ride along, we can meet along the interstate and we can ride together.

(Gov-Elect's Message continued on pg. 2)

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(Gov's Message continued from pg. 1)

A whole bunch of Optimists from the Omaha area and nearby communities helped out with the Nebraska and National Academic Decathlon Finals earlier this year. What a GREAT opportunity this was to help promote the importance of learning in many places where Optimism is needed. Another opportunity is coming up with the USA National Special Olympic Finals in Lincoln during July. I know some Lincoln Optimist Clubs have been promoting this GREAT opportunity to encourage this special group of individuals to achieve their best!

Last, but not least, there are a growing number of clubs who are looking to help us spread Optimism through New Community Growth. Think about it...you are empowering another community to provide positive healthy activities for their youth. It doesn't get any GREATER than that in the Optimist world. The seeds of Optimism are currently being planted and fertilized in such communities as Crete, Falls City, Grand Island, Hebron, Madison, Millard, and Ralston...with growth expected by the end of September in several of these. In fact, an organizational date has already been set for late June in Madison where the Norfolk Morning Club is helping empower two cultures to come together as one to help their children. You will soon be hearing about other GREAT Optimist Clubs involved in New Community Growth efforts!

Why settle for being GOOD when there are so many opportunities to be GREAT??!!

Governor Mark

† Memorial Service for † Our Departed

At the memorial service held in conjunction with the District Convention, members who have departed in the last year are remembered. Clubs are asked to email me names of members and former members who have died since the 2009 convention. Please attach a brief a summary of the deceased's Optimist service. The plan is to have the service on Saturday August 7.

Mark Nelson, Chaplin
mdnelson@conpoint.com

(Gov-elect's Message continued from pg. 1)

We still have openings for Lieutenant Governors in the following zones: Zone 3, the Fremont/Blair area; Zone 4, the Norfolk/Columbus area; Zone 7, the York/Aurora area; and Zone 9, the Ogallala/North Platte area. In addition, our dedicated and diligent editors for the monthly newsletter, Gale and Betty Totten, are entering their last stretch of publishing the newsletter. I would love to have a volunteer step forward to carry out the task for the next year. Betty and Gale have agreed to forward the email list to their successor.

Please have a safe summer in your travels and vacations. Enjoy the family and keep up the good work of the Nebraska Optimists.

Gov. Elect Russ Zeeb

Nebraska in the O.I. Convention Planner

The May Convention Planner that was emailed by O.I. on April 27th has a nice article "Riding the Rails to Denver." It tells of the Nebraska District's trip to the convention by Amtrak. The article encourages other Optimists to take advantage of the special fare and to join the Nebraskans as the Zephyr runs daily between Chicago and San Francisco.

The article also reminds everyone that the deadline for convention housing "...is June 1 and as long the hotel has rooms available....Please keep in mind, the hotel may fill up before our cutoff date."

Are You Ready for a Pie Baking Challenge?

*Governor Mark met a Pie-Man going to the Convention
On the way to prove (s)he's best...of that there's no contention.
We'll be helping those who cannot hear
Go off to college and be too strong for fear!*

Governor Mark

There is going to be a pie-baking contest and auction for the district funded CCDHH scholarship during the annual district convention in South Sioux City. (As a reminder, the O.I. Foundation funds one CCDHH scholarship and the Nebraska District funds the second scholarship. Both scholarships are \$2,500.)

The bakers should bring two pies; one for sampling and one for the auction. The winning baker will receive a trophy and more importantly, will have bragging rights.

The judges will be convention first-timers and our International President Mark Shriver and First Lady Pat. When the judging is finished and the winner is announced, the pies will be auctioned off and the dollars will go to the Nebraska District funded CCDHH scholarship.

May O.I. Foundation Report

The Nebraska District held on to the 19th position with total donations of \$5,741. We are \$139 ahead of the Kansas District at this point. Nebraskans provided a solid number of donations in May and we should keep our position for one more month.

Optimist International credits us with five President's Club members, 11 Century Circle members, and 71 Dime a Day members. While we have had great support for the first nine months, a concerted effort in each category would allow Nebraska a strong finish as we approach the final lap for the "Foundation Year."

Club President's were notified on the procedure for making donation in the name of an Optimist member. Again, it would be a tremendous gesture on Nebraska's part if all clubs made a donation and earned a Memorial patch for 2009-10.

Robert "Fritz" Kluge
District Foundation Rep

Nebraska's Loss

The district lost two members in May. Past Governor Ed Kujath passed away on May 2nd and Lt. Governor Mary Bisbee passed away on May 13th.

Ed served as the 1973-74 Governor and he served seven terms as Lt. Governor. Mary served as the 2007-08 Director of PGI and was a member of the 2008-09 Meeting and Convention Committee. She was serving as Lt. Governor for Zone 6 at the time of her death. Their Optimism and service to youth will be missed.

Membership Incentives & Challenge Updates

District Incentive - "Pay IT Forward"

The fund currently stands at \$239. Of that amount, \$82 is for growth and \$157 is for retention. The fund will be split between two lucky sponsors at the end of this Optimist year.

The fund grows by \$1 for each new member, another \$1 will be added for every member less than the 344 (20%) O.I. says we can expect to lose, and \$2 will be added for every member that puts us on the plus side of membership. Opportunities to win grow by sponsoring multiple members!

OI's "Recruit 4 and You're Free"

If you recruit four adults or Friend of Optimists between February 22, 2010 and September 30, 2010, your International dues for the 2010-2011 membership year are free! As of May, 60 members have qualified for their free membership. Unfortunately, none of the 60 are from Nebraska.

The Iowa vs. Nebraska Growth Challenge

Our district has been "up and down" in the race. We started with a lead, then we fell well behind, and recently we have overtaken Iowa by .07%. Governor Mark says that is a one member gained or lost difference. The challenge continues until the O.I. Convention.

Coming in the July issue:

Convention Registration

Convention Agenda

Convention Preview

**August 6-8
Marina Inn
South Sioux City**

OptiQuiz Answers

1. d 2. b 3. f 4. c 5. e

Important Dates in Our Optimist Lives

June

21st Nebraska District Optimist Junior Golf Tournament, Quail Run Golf Club, Columbus

24th Don Beals Memorial Golf Scramble, Omaha Breakfast Optimist Club, For information contact Steve Howard, Chairman, at slhoward@cox.net

July

7th Ride the Rails to Denver

8th - 10th 92nd Optimist International Convention, Denver at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel

16th Deadline for Nebraska District Convention room reservations at Marina Inn, South Sioux City

August

6th Duck Pluck, Lincoln Children's Zoo, Lincoln West Optimist Club, Contact Ardis Moody at amoody1@neb.rr.com

6th - 8th Annual District Convention, Marina Inn, South Sioux City

21st Summer Bash, Metro Area Youth Foundation, Tip Top Ballroom, Omaha, Contact a member of an Omaha Area Optimist Club for additional information

31st President's Citation Applications Due at O.I.

September

30th Deadline for CPA Books and President's Pride Report due

October

1st 2010-2011 Optimist Year Begins

November

5th - 7th Great Plains Regional Parallel District Conference, Holiday Inn & Suites, Bloomington, MN, Contact Governor-Elect Russ Zeeb at rzeeb@aol.com

TRx Gets an O.I. Foundation Grant

The Fairbury Club applied to the O.I. Foundation and the Club Grant Committee for a grant to help support their new TRx: Meds Disposal Educator Program, and they received good news. They were one of 20 clubs who received the \$500 matching grant from the Foundation. The club will receive the grant at the International Convention, during the 2nd business session.

Big Blue, the "Meds Disposal Educator" Dinosaur made his appearance at the Ground Water Festival at Camp Jefferson near Fairbury, in April. 387 students from area schools heard the message that flushing unused, unwanted or expired prescription and over-the-counter medications are harmful to the streams and lakes.



Big Blue, the Meds Disposal Educator TRx dinosaur

OptiQuiz

Who's Who

Match the name with the title/description.

- ___ 1. Mark Shriver
- ___ 2. Russ Zeeb
- ___ 3. Big Blue
- ___ 4. Mark Nelson
- ___ 5. Tonya Denton

- a. District Governor
- b. Governor Elect
- c. District Chaplin
- d. Pie Baking Judge
- e. Recipient of Appreciation Plaque
- f. Meds Disposal Educator

Answers at bottom of column 1



JOOI The Future of Optimism



Fairbury

The FYI JOOI members planted a tree in the city park in honor of their sponsor Ed Kujath, for all that he did for their club. (Editor's note: The tree planting was planned prior to Ed's recent death. It proceeded as scheduled to honor Ed for all the young lives that he touched.)

DeWitt Tri County

The club had a "COIN War" to raise money to help a child with cancer attend Camp Quality this summer. Jars were placed in Tri County classrooms and the room that collected the most money won a prize.

Norfolk

The Panther JOOI clubs have helped raise \$3,992.61 for the Childhood Cancer Campaign. The funds have been donated to Children's Hospital in Omaha or the Nebraska District CCC to help support Nebraska families that are battling childhood cancer.

Over 1700 "Dinners to Go" were provided to needy people in the Norfolk community from January thru April, with the support from the Salvation Army and a Disney Minnie Grant. The JOOI Clubs were recognized as the "Volunteer Group of the Year" by the Salvation Army for their efforts.

Optimist Night with the Omaha Royals

Over 150 Optimists and guests from 11 clubs enjoyed a night at the ballpark that ended with a fireworks display. The Optimist activities were spotlighted on the scoreboard and were mentioned on the radio broadcast.



The special guests were the Creighton Prep Academic Decathlon Team and Childhood Cancer ambassador Abbie Glanzer.

North Platte Optimists have a busy summer planned as they will host a Fishing Derby, a golf class and tournament for area youth, and they will be working at NebraskaLand Days parking cars. They are also finalizing plans for the 4th of July Fireworks. The club awarded scholarships to two graduating seniors. The two seniors were selected from 51 applicants.

To celebrate Respect for Law Month, **Norfolk Morning** is once again providing a scholarship to a second year criminal justice major at Northeast Community College.

Fairbury Optimists hosted a "Free for All" Fishing Day on May 22nd. The event coincided with the Nebraska Game and Parks day of no fishing license required. The Optimists provided fishing poles for those that didn't have one and they also provided a free hot dog lunch to the participants. The event ended with drawings for prizes.

Blair Optimists care about youth of all ages. They awarded scholarships to three graduating seniors and they also held a Bicycle and Wheel Safety program with the Blair Police Department for the younger set.

Lincoln Evening presented six Lincoln middle school students with Focus on Youth awards. The students were selected by school counselors to recognize those who have established themselves as role models and who have overcome significant obstacles in their lives. The keynote speaker was Chris Sander, a student at Nebraska Wesleyan who was able to play football in spite of having only one hand.

Norfolk Noon Optimists are working to bring the Harlem Ambassadors to Norfolk next September. Governor Mark posted on Facebook that "This Globetrotter-style program also has a positive, drug-free, stay in school message for youth."

The **Paxton Optimist Club** presented scholarships to worthy seniors of the Paxton graduating class.

The **Optimist Club of Lincoln** hosted a Respect for Law Day dinner. Attorney General Jon Bruning was presented the Respect for Law award. He also spoke on what his office is doing in regard to Internet safety for children.

Kearney Optimists will be providing a hot dog lunch to kids and parents who participate in the Yanney Park Heritage Days.

The **Ogallala Club** presented two scholarships to two graduating seniors from Ogallala High School.

Omaha Breakfast has three drivers lined up for their racecar...that is their Soapbox Derby racecar. The race is on June 19th and 20th and there are probably three very excited youth in Omaha anxiously waiting!

Holdrege Optimists have been busy with several projects. Besides the Pitch, Hit & Run competition, they presented \$600 scholarships to three graduating seniors. The club participated in the YMCA Kids Day. The Optimist booth was filled with games and prizes which the 200 plus kids enjoyed.



l to r: President Troy Melroy, Tonya Denton

They also presented a Law Enforcement Appreciation plaque to Tonya Denton for her involvement with youth and law enforcement. She is the office manager for the Holdrege Police Department and a member of the **Holdrege Optimist Club**.