

# Nebraska District Optimists

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



*Governor Mark Claussen*

## Governor's Message Bringing Out the Best in Kids (and Us)

Hey, Optimists... 'sup? Not much, you say? Don't believe it!

Over the course of the last 29 months (as a Lt. Governor, then your Governor-Elect and now Governor), I've had the opportunity to read a lot of club bulletins and attend a variety of club and district functions. If I've learned nothing else...it's that we're an active and dedicated bunch!

Nearly every day there's something going on across the Nebraska District that puts our vision into action. "By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in kids" are not merely words...they're a call to action. Kids need hope as well as someone to provide them with a positive vision of their future and an opportunity to demonstrate their "best." Who better to do this than a bunch of Optimists!

While some club activities may seem small in comparison to others, I believe they have a cumulative effect that serves to help "fill the glass" of the youth we're here to serve. You may recall that the Search Institute tells us most kids are walking around with glasses that are  
*(Governor's Message continued on pg. 2)*

## Six New Fans of Optimism

Since the last bulletin (January 27th) the district has welcomed six new members. However, so far in February, five members have been lost, but only three were added. Ogallala brought in the most new members this time with two, and JoAnn Lewis of Columbus sponsored her second member. The six new fans and their sponsors are:

### West Point

JoAnn Lewis, Superstar Sponsor (2)  
**Tony Mitzel**

### Columbus

Dale Rosendahl, Sponsor  
**Lisa Rosendahl**

### Lincoln

Helen Griffin, Sponsor  
**Joe Conway**

### North Bend

Troy Post, Sponsor  
**Mark Brower**

### Ogallala

Bruce Jensen, Sponsor  
**Jim Bischof**

Terry Johnson, Sponsor  
**Rodney Cochran**

Thus far, 31 members have sponsored 40 new members. To date, the district has gained a total of 43 new members (three new members did not have a sponsor listed on the form). Congratulations to the sponsors for "just asking" and thank you to the new members for just saying "yes."

### X85B-985

*Why is this code important?  
See page 9 to discover why!*

## Get Ready to Hear What the Youth Think

Youth will be featured at the 3rd Quarter Conference in Kearney. The conference is scheduled for April 10-11 at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center.

Saturday morning will feature the CCDHH (Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing). The afternoon will feature both the boys and girls Oratorical contests. The topic of both contests is "Cyber Communication: Progress or Problem?" The winner of the Essay Contest will be presented at the luncheon. The topic for the Essay Contest was "The Internet: Today's Evolution or Tomorrow's Menace?"

Danny Rodgers, OI President Elect, will be the special guest. The Texan has been an Optimist since 1986. He will be presenting a Saturday afternoon workshop on Leadership. He has said that the organization means two things to him, fellowship and service. He also said that he has a passion for providing service to kids.

A tentative agenda can be found on page 10. The registration form will be sent by separate email when it becomes available. Mark the conference on your calendars NOW!

### In This Issue

Foundation News	pg. 2
Incentive Programs	pg. 2
Club and JOOI News	pg. 3
Conference Report	pg. 4-8
Calendar	pg. 8
Update on Trip to Denver	pg. 9
Tentative Conference Agenda	pg. 10
"8 to Great" Registration	pg. 10

(Governor's Message continued from pg. 1)

"half full" at best. As much as we'd like to, we can't fill them all with one pour, but we can pour in a little at a time and keep pouring whenever we can. That's what our club projects and activities do!

While our vision may involve bringing out the best in kids, I also think our interaction with kids brings out the best in us. I've seen this when working with my local club as well as participating (albeit briefly) in larger district or community-wide activities such as Homer's Heroes in Lincoln, the Nebraska PP&K Competition and our recent Nebraska Academic Decathlon. In each case, I've seen Optimists coming together to have fun with, but also serve as role models as they engaged youth in something positive. Locally, I get an almost daily dose of "Optimism" when interacting with our Norfolk JOOI members and know many other JOOI advisors who'd say the same!

As Optimists, we know that we get back as much or more than what we give in our service to youth. I'll bet you know somebody who could benefit from a shot of "Optimism." Why not invite them to a club activity so they can experience this as well as help fill some glasses?

They say it takes a village to raise a child...so let's engage others in our service to all children in the village. While we're at it, let's get some more villages involved as well!

You had to know I'd fit membership and new community growth in here somewhere!

Governor Mark

### OptiQuiz

1. What is the total dollar amount of scholarships to be awarded at the 3rd Quarter Conference?
2. Who funds the second \$2,500 for the CCDHH scholarship?
3. What is the scholarship amount given to the District Essay winner?

(turn upside down for answers)

3. \$2,500  
 2. The Nebraska District  
 1. \$10,000 Two \$2,500 scholarships for the Oratorical contest and two \$2,500 for the CCDHH contest.

### OI Foundation Update

The district continues to speed through the Optimist year. At the 2nd Quarter conference, the raffle raised \$565 and nearly double that in commitments to the Dime A Day, the Century Circle, and the President's Club programs. When the conference ended Sunday morning, there were nine Dime a Day, four Century Circle, and three President's Club donations. The District moved from 24th position to the top twenty in both total donations and per member donations as of January 31, 2010.

For the record, in 2008-09, the Foundation loaned \$730,000 to O.I. for its pension plan, gave \$100,000 to O.I. for marketing, and paid out \$430,796 to clubs utilizing the Club Campaign program. Last year the Foundation gave each of the districts two \$1,500 scholarships for the District Oratorical Contest, a \$1,500 scholarship for the CCDHH winner, and a \$650 scholarship for the District Essay Contest winner.

This year the scholarships have been raised to \$2,500 for two Oratorical winners, \$2,500 for the CCDHH winner, and \$2,500 for the Essay winner. The top three International-level essay winners will receive scholarships in the amounts of \$6,000 for first place, \$3,750 for second place, and \$2,250 for third place. As Optimists, we need to recognize the support the OI Foundation gives to all of Optimist International.

We are coming out of that 2nd curve and hurtling down the backstretch of the Optimist year. Your enthusiasm for the goals of the district has kept the engine running hot and smooth on a hot track. If we are to hold on to the 20th position and stay right behind the leaders, we need all of your help. A Dime A Day or a commitment to the Century Circle or President's Club will keep the gas flowing as we head into our next curve.

Robert "Fritz" Kluge  
O.I. Foundation Representative

### Club Totals for Dime a Day

Lincoln 12 Dime a Days  
 Fairbury 6 Dime a Days  
 Lincoln West 6 Dime a Days



### "Paying It Forward" Growth Incentive

Governor Mark said that if the Optimist year were to end on February 21st, the growth incentive fund would be \$300. That is \$1 per new member (43) plus the difference in what OI tells us to expect to lose in membership (20%, or 340) and our actual loss (83). That's 43 + 257 for \$300. As of the 21st, there are 31 sponsors, including six Superstar sponsors, in the drawing to win one of two shares of the pot. This incentive continues until September 30th.

#### Incentive Review

- \$\$ \$1 will be put into the pot for each new adult member added
- \$\$ Another \$1 will be thrown in for every member less than the 340 (20%) OI expects us to lose
- \$\$ \$2 will be put into the pot for every member we're on the plus side of membership on September 30th

Each sponsor's name will be entered into the drawing for an opportunity to be one of two sponsors who will split the pot. Opportunities to win will grow for sponsoring multiple new members.

- 1 member = 1 opportunity (+1)
- 2 members = 4 opportunities (+3)
- 3 members = 9 opportunities (+5)
- 4 members = 16 opportunities (+7)
- 5 members = 25 opportunities (+9)
- 6 members = 36 opportunities (+11)
- 7 members = 49 opportunities (+13)
- 8 members = 64 opportunities (+15)

As of now, Jerome Skrdla of Gretna has the most opportunities with 16 and Lesa Phillips of Fairbury has 9 opportunities.

### Do You Want FREE O.I. Membership Next Year?

O.I. is sponsoring a new incentive plan. All you have to do is sponsor **four** new members between **February 22, 2010 and September 30, 2010**. Every Optimist who that recruits four new members during this time will automatically qualify. There are just a few conditions attached.

- > The free membership is non-transferable
- > Adult and Friend of Optimist Memberships only
- > The new member cannot have been deleted from 2/22/10 to 9/30/10



# JOOI The Future of Optimism

## Norfolk & Lincoln



Members from Norfolk JOOI Clubs and Lincoln Lighthouse JOOI Club are digging coins out from among the rocks at the river in the Atrium of Children’s Hospital. Governor Mark said that fourteen buckets of dirty coins were collected and that is literally thousands of dollars. The coins will be cleaned and donated back to Children’s Hospital. Suzy Shrier, from Children’s Hospital, said it was the first time in 10 years that all the coins had been collected.

### Norfolk

During the annual “Souper Bowl of Car-ing” at the Norfolk Middle School and Jr. High School, \$585 was raised to support the Haiti Relief efforts of the local Kids Against Hunger. The money paid for the packaging and delivery of 14,472 meals to those affected by the earthquake.



*I to r: Edie Noffke (Kids Against Hunger Director), Arria Lakha, Samantha Boettcher, Ashton Lindsay & Courtney Cowling*

Members have served lunch six times at the Norfolk Soup Kitchen as part of their “Semester of Service” and they have prepared 344 take-home meals as part of the “Dinners to Go” program. A Disney Minnie Grant made the funds for the “Dinners to Go” possible from Youth Service America.

Zig Ziglar once said, “You never know when one kind act, or one word of encouragement, can change a life forever.” The same holds true of an article in a local newspaper. A School Resource Officer from Sterling Kansas contacted Governor Mark about the “Don’t Drive InTEXTicated” program. She was passing through Norfolk and the article in the “Norfolk Daily News” caught her eye. She has plans to use the JOOI club’s ideas of a “Text-Off” and driving course with Sterling students during prom season. Maybe because of the article, a life may be saved in Kansas.

### DeWitt Tri County

Trojan Fields JOOI Club members collected 300 lbs. of warm clothing at a January basketball game. The clothing was donated to Blue Valley Community Action.

### Fairbury

The FYI club has been presenting a play adaptation of “Zink the Zebra” to various groups. The play teaches the acceptance and understanding of those who appear to be different. The members made their own costumes and the other members designed and painted the scenery.



*Cast and Narrator of “Zink of Zebra”*

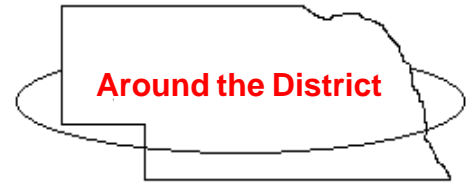
### Academic Decathlon Champs



*Large School Division - Creighton Prep*



*Small School Division - Nebraska City Lourdes*



## Around the District

The **Ogallala Optimist Club** newsletter

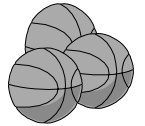


reported that the kids in the Ogallala area are getting antsy. Even though it has been cold, they are ready for the trap shooting program to start.

**Norfolk Morning** received some good news recently. The club received a \$500 grant from State Farm Insurance for specific club projects.

**Lincoln West** is planning a Foster Care Kids Movie Day on March 7th. The movie is an animated film, “Up.”

**Kearney Optimists** wrapped up their Youth Appreciation project. Last fall they gave away mini volleyballs at an UNK volleyball game and recently they gave away mini basketballs at an UNK basketball game. This is an annual project for the club.



Wrestling is on the minds of **Holdrege Optimists**. Their wrestling program for youth (4 year-olds thru 11th grade) is under way. The club also gave a \$3,000 donation to Holdrege Public Schools to help purchase another wrestling mat.

Members of **Lincoln Evening** spent an evening making crafts with kids who were staying at Friendship Home with their mothers. Friendship home is a safe place for abused women and their children. Periodically the club has activities for the youth while their mothers are attending group sessions.

The **Optimist Club of Lincoln** is giving ideas and examples, by way of the club newsletter, to help member’s with their “elevator speeches.” It is hoped that members share their other ideas for future publication.



**Paxton Optimists** have completed the annual youth Hunter Safety Course.

# 2nd Quarter Conference is History

## Friday Night Activity

The Omaha Optimist Clubs had a wonderful evening ready for the visiting Optimists. To help forget the cold outside, several hot soups and hors d'oeuvres were ready for their guests. There were games of chance available, followed by an auction. All profits (\$350) benefited the Nebraska Academic Decathlon. The evening was filled with good food, a lot of fun, and great fellowship. The planning committee (Corinne Wastell, Mike Lorenz, Al Penner, Betty Nelum, and Dick Raasch), deserves a heart-felt "Thank You" for a well-planned and fun evening.



Dealer Mike Lorenz wins again!

## Saturday Morning

The Mayor of Omaha, Jim Suttle, welcomed the Optimists to Omaha. He directed some of his comments to the JOOI members. Mayor Suttle told them to follow their dreams. Dreams require work, but with work and continued focus, the dream can be achieved. His personal appearance was much appreciated.

Ten "First-Timers" were in attendance. They were: Jeannie Mill, South Omaha; Brett Rosenberger, Lincoln Sunrise; Curtis Rainge, Papillion-LaVista; Shellie McGlade-Kent, Omaha Breakfast; Louise Hal-Mountain, Omaha, North; Sandra Allen, Omaha North; Kathy Klabunde, Norfolk Noon; Halie Hoehne, Norfolk JOOI; Breanna Hall, Norfolk JOOI; and Jerald Collins, Norfolk Noon. They were each given half of a playing card and had to match up the other half with a committee chairperson.



First timers listen as Rick Quinlan (far right) speaks.

## Reports

**OI Foundation:** During the first quarter, \$2,138 was collected for the Foundation. Past Governor Robert "Fritz" Kluge thanked everyone who has contributed to date. He said currently the Nebraska District is in 24th place and his goal is for the district to be in 20th place by the end of the 2nd Quarter.

**OI Convention, July 8th-10th:** Convention Ambassador Ardis Moody reported that at the present time, train tickets look to be the most economical for the group trip. If the group goes by train, there will be only two nights lodging at the convention site. That will help to make the overall cost of the trip more affordable. The deadline for Early Bird convention registration is midnight May 1st. She reminded everyone that there is still time to start saving for this unique opportunity.

**Oratorical Contest:** Chair Mike Avery stressed that the girl and boy district winners will each receive a \$2,500 scholarship from the Optimist International Foundation. He also announced that Pinnacle Bank is funding additional scholarships for second and third place winners. The district contest will take place during the 3rd Quarter Conference in Kearney on April 10th & 11th.

**JOOI Clubs:** JOOI Lt. Governors Courtney Pospisil of Norfolk and Nya Koang of Lincoln reported there are two pending clubs and 11 active JOOI clubs. At the present time there are 228 active JOOI members.

**Personal Growth and Involvement (PGI):** District Chair Cindy Von Fange announced the newest PGI achievers and their levels. They are:

### Level 1

Herb Johnson, McCook  
Ed Sheen, Minden  
Tina Oswald, Aurora  
Lesia Phillips, Fairbury

### Levels 1 & 2

Gary Nissen, South Sioux City  
Melissa Vanek, Papillion-LaVista  
Dick Raasch, Omaha Breakfast  
Al Penner, Omaha Miracle Hills  
Linda Wheeler, Blair  
Mike Avery, Gretna  
Cristal Menke, Columbus  
Gale Totten, Lincoln Evening  
Nancy Coffman, Lincoln West

Rhonda Wiebers, Gretna  
Larry Rippe, Gretna  
Diane Siefkes, Lincoln Sunrise

### Levels 1, 2, & 3

Russ Zeeb, Gretna  
Ron Schilling, Columbus

### Levels 1, 2, 3, & 4

Marvin Shimmel, Auburn

### Levels 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6

Bob "Fritz" Kluge, Fairbury  
Lora Kander, South Sioux City

### Levels 5 & 6

Ardis Moody, Lincoln West  
Marge Melroy, Holdrege

### Level 8

Del Salmen, Lincoln Evening

### Levels 8 & 9

Rick Quinlan, Bellevue  
Bob Wriedt, Wayne.

**GrowMasters:** Ron Schilling reminded everyone that if we don't grow, it is difficult to stay alive. We must grow our membership to keep the clubs alive and to continue fulfilling our mission.

Al Penner added that it is important for everyone to become involved. The committee is currently working on retention of members and revitalizing clubs where they once were, so they again can be serving the youth in those communities.

## Comments by Governor Elect Russ

He said the Regional Conference, that will take the place of the 1st Quarter Conference next fall, has been changed from Sioux Falls to Minneapolis. The reason given for the change in venue is airline availability. The dates are November 5th - 7th. The Great Plains Region includes the districts of Southern Wisconsin; Nebraska; Alberta-Montana-Saskatchewan, and Northern Wyoming; Winconsin North-Upper Michigan; Dakotas-Manitoba-Minnesota; and Iowa.

Governor Elect Russ said that if any clubs are interested in hosting the 2010-2011 2nd Quarter Conference, 3rd Quarter Conference, or the Annual Convention, they should contact him. His address is 9323 Valley View Dr, LaVista, NE 68128 and his home telephone number is 402-593-1243l.

(Conference Review continued on pg. 5)

## More 2nd Quarter Conference News

### Michael Angelo Caruso Was Just as He Promised

Mr. Caruso lived up to his billing. He was an entertaining and educational speaker. He told the group that he had been a member of the Bloomfield Hills, Michigan Optimist Club for over 13 years.

The topic of his morning presentation was "Your Optimist Elevator Speech." He said there are three characteristics to a "Killer Elevator Speech." It should be BRIEF (10 sec, 15 words); it should be UNIQUE; and it should be psychologically ATTRACTIVE. He elaborated by saying that when you send average signals, people will think of you as average, however when you send special or attractive signals, people will think of you as special.

He discussed "predictive dialogue." He defines it, as making a statement that he knows will create a predicted response. For example, in his biography, it states that he has delivered presentations and keynote speeches in 49 of the 50 states. He is always asked what state has he missed. Another example is when he is asked about his Optimist pin, he says, "Joining Optimists is the best thing I've ever done." People will always want to know why.

He talked about the importance of a good handshake. He said the most important part of a hand when shaking hands is the web to web contact. The web is the flesh between the thumb and index finger. He demonstrated how to shake hands with Lincoln Lighthouse member Jacob Pumel.



Jacob Pumel and Michael Angelo Caruso

When a visitor attends a club meeting, Caruso has "5 Cool Ideas." They are: 1. All members should greet all guests/visitors. He elaborated by adding that every member should physically greet every guest. 2. Be the first to reach out in any conversation. He said the person who reaches out first has influence and power of the conversation. 3. It is all about

THEM! 4. No one has enough self-esteem. Help people to feel better about themselves and treat other as though they are the most important and they will generally treat you the same. 5. Consistency = System.

The "closer" in any sales position is a special person and not everyone is a closer. When he asked if any of the clubs had closers, the consensus was that in nearly every club there is someone who can "close the deal." Michael Angelo Caruso suggested that whenever there is a visitor/potential member at a club meeting, a special seating arrangement should be used: Optimist member, the "Inviter", the Guest, the Closer, and an Optimist member. He said, to no one's surprise, that he is the closer in his club. He said it is important to let the closer know before hand where to sit!!

Some of his other hints were to always carry a business card, even if one is retired. When talking to a potential member, it is important to give them a card. He also said that when you ask a "yes" question, nod your head yes.



Bre'ana Marion drew names from a hat for Michael Angelo Caruso. They are looking to see who is the lucky winner!.



Corinne Wastell was the lucky winner!

### Traveling Banners

District Secretary/Treasurer Gaylea Sturgis announced the winners of the Traveling Banners. Norfolk Morning was the winner with 675 pre-registered miles. Fairbury was in second place with 630 pre-registered miles and Minden was in third place with 558 pre-registered miles.

The winning zone was Zone 4 with 990 pre-registered miles, Zone 6 came in second with 912 pre-registered miles followed by Zone 5 with 696 miles.

### Noon Awards Luncheon

#### 2nd Quarter Conference = Awards

Past OI Vice President Dale Robertson was the featured speaker during the noon luncheon. He spoke on the qualities of a great leader. He said there are leaders, there are good leaders who lead, and there are great leaders who inspire. He described leaders by saying leaders are learners and readers, and that leaders are always taking notes.



#### Membership Recruitment Awards

- Beatrice** - Eric Klassen, Ron Belding
- Aurora** - Daniel Pachta, Thomas Kell
- Omaha Breakfast** - Bob Koley, George Eckert, Merle Peetz, Dick Raasch, Vernon Dolleck
- Broken Bow** - Brent Custer, Chanda Smith, Janeen Kahnk, Jeff Oeltjen, John Smith
- Columbus** - Betty Earley, William Sherman, Kylie Hadenfeldt, Mike Langan
- Fairbury** - Ed Kujath, Judith Kluge
- Fremont** - Gordon Lowe
- Gretna** - Christ Conrad, Lori Blum, Sally McGuire, William Hollwager
- Holdrege** - Carla Andrijeski, Marge Melroy, Trisha Latter
- Kearney** - Alan Duane Kegley
- Lexington** - Bernie Valish, John Knapple
- Lincoln** - Earl Visser, Mary Bisbee
- Lincoln West** - Andy Winkler, Ardis Moody, Gary Jacobsen, Jennifer Kimmons, Larry Byrnes, Robin Ambroz-Hollman, Troy Cooney
- Minden** - August Nelson, Brent Lewis, Jay Nichol, Jeff Miller, Matt Cavanaugh, Michele Malcom, Patrick Duntz, Becky Rehtus, Shannon Lovin, Tony Ratka

(Conference Review continued on pg. 6)

# Yes, Here is More 2nd Quarter Conference News

(Membership awards continued from pg. 5)

**McCook** - Andy Hofman, Brian Esch, Jeff Gross, Mark Graf, Matt Tiller, Robert Elder, Thomas Bredvick

**Omaha Miracle Hills** - Al Penner, Marvin Wastell

**Norfolk Morning** - Dale Beckmann, Lisa Meyer, Mary Busse, Suzi Wolfe

**North Bend** - Brenda Robinson, James Havelka, Mark Flamme, Tammy Dunker, Troy Post

**North Platte** - Dave Thelen

**Norfolk Noon** - Lesley Hanson, Mark Claussen, Michelle Uhing

**Ogallala** - Charles Wortman, Don Eichner

**Omaha** - Jerry Bexten, Robert Lueder

**Papillion-LaVista** - Mary Knight

**Plattsmouth** - Tom Dunn

**Seward** - Bob Urban, Cid Besse, David Besse, John McKinney, Lana Urban, Tom Gee

**South Sioux City** - Christine Gill, Kathleen Addison, Sally Reinert

**Lincoln Sunrise** - Tony Marquez, Tim Hoffman

**York** - Jack Vincent, Matt Spanjers, William Scheve

**Wayne** - Cindy Von Fange, Darrel Rahn, Kayla Hahn, Michael Varley, Phyllis Rahn, Robert Kearing, Bob Wriedt

2008-09 Governor Ardis said that 99 members from 29 clubs recruited 163 members. The top recruiter was Becky Rehtus of Minden who recruited 11 members.

## Community Project Awards

### Community Service

Omaha, Omaha Breakfast, Papillion-LaVista, Omaha South, Omaha North, Blair, Norfolk Noon clubs and Norfolk Panther JOOI Club for the Hope Center Carnival

### Fundraising

Lincoln West for their Duck Pluck



I to r: Dick Raasch, Omaha Breakfast; Curtis Rainge, Papillion LaVista; Betty Nelum, Omaha North, Lesley Hanson, Norfolk Noon; Dan Coffman, Lincoln West

## Master Secretary Recipients

Mary Busse, Norfolk Morning

Sue Bernt, Seward

Kathy Reedy, Fairbury

Marge Melroy, Holdrege

Lori Blum, Gretna

## Club Bulletin Recognition

- ★ Best Use of Humor/Quotations
- ★ Best Reporting of Club Meetings
- ★ Best Reporting of Club Projects



Omaha Breakfast  
Dick Raasch  
Editor

- ★ Best Use of Pictures
- ★ Best Communication of Coming Events  
Lincoln Evening  
Darrell Wheaton, Editor

- ★ Best Reporting of Member Celebrations and Concerns

Norfolk Morning  
Brian Rogers, Editor

- ★ Best Use of Email Communication (non-attachments)



Gretna  
Lori Blum, Editor

- ★ Top Overall Club Newsletter/Bulletin

Omaha Breakfast,  
Dick Raasch, Editor

Lincoln Evening,  
Darrell Wheaton, Editor

## Achievement and Awards Program



1st Place

Norfolk Morning - 42,868 points



2nd Place

Gretna - 39,205 points



3rd Place

Fairbury - 32,500 points

District A & A Chair Sharon Wheaton honored four clubs for very special projects. The special project honors went to:

Sandhills Club  
Computer Safety project

Papillion-LaVista  
Halloween Hay Rack Ride

Ogallala Optimist Club  
Missoula Theatre project

Fremont Noon  
Spelling Bee

## OI Foundation Awards

2008-09 Foundation Rep Bob Wriedt reported contributions from the district to the foundation averaged \$5.55 per member.

Lincoln Evening  
averaged \$28.67 per member.

Optimist Club of Lincoln  
averaged \$22.92 per member

Omaha Breakfast  
averaged \$22.33 per member

Wayne  
averaged \$21.20 per member

Lincoln Sunrise  
averaged \$15.48 per member

Bellevue  
averaged \$13.92 per member

Auburn  
averaged \$11.51 per member

Papillion-LaVista  
averaged \$11.26 per member

Fairbury  
averaged \$11.21 per member.

Current Foundation Rep Bob "Fritz" Kluge gave Mary Lou Anderson, Lincoln Optimist Club, the Century Circle pin and his "Heart of My Heart Award" (a box of candy) as she was the first to donate \$100. Lesley Hanson, Norfolk Noon, also received a Century Circle pin. Rick Quinlan, Bellevue, and Linda Wheeler, Blair, became members of the President's Club with their donations of \$250.



Rick Quinlan (left) with Cupid?? (a/k/a Fritz)

(You guessed it, more news on next page!)

# More and More 2nd Quarter Conference Recap

## Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Six breakout sessions were available. Jerry Hoffman and John Anstey presented a session on the Academic Decathlon. The GrowMasters met with the Lt. Governors. "New Optimists Welcome, Wanted, and Needed" was presented by Lori Blum, Michele Malcom, Marge Melroy, and Ardis Moody. Dale and Barb Robertson, Past Governor and Current Governor of the Iowa District presented a session entitled, "Forest Gump's Top Ten Ways to Have a Successful Optimist Club." Debra Stroh, Director of Volunteer Services for the 2010 Special Olympic National Games, held a session on the games that are coming to Lincoln. The district's special guest, Michael Angelo Caruso, lead a session on "Internet Strategies That Grow Your Club."

### "Internet Strategies that Grow Your Club."

Michael Angelo Caruso said that when using social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, be interesting and be interested. He gave an example of a post, "I'm going to my Optimist meeting. How do you give back to your community?" By making a statement then asking a related question, people are more apt to become engaged with your comments. The more times we reference Optimists, the better it is.

He suggested posting about Optimists one or two times a week and have a photo album of Optimist activities. He uses the 80/20 rule, 80% other posts and 20% business or personal agenda posts.

## Past Governors Continue Their Support

Nine Past Governors attended the conference. They were:

Ed Kujath  
John Anstey  
Roger Simmons  
Rick Quinlan  
Chuck Mansfield  
Gaylea Sturgis  
Bob Wriedt  
Robert "Fritz" Kluge  
Ardis Moody.

## Saturday Awards Banquet

### Growth and Retention Awards

Special growth banner patches were given to 13 clubs that showed an increase in membership between July 1 and September 30. The clubs were:

Omaha Breakfast	Gretna
Plattsmouth	North Bend
Wayne	Columbus
Norfolk Morning	David City
Lincoln West	Seward
York	Minden
North Platte	

The above clubs were also entered into a drawing for a "goodie" box. The lucky winner was Plattsmouth.

Special retention banner patches were given to six clubs who retained its membership. The clubs were:

Omaha Miracle Hills	Omaha South
Auburn	Holdrege
Broken Bow	Paxton

Each of these six clubs were also entered into another drawing for "goodie" box. Auburn was the lucky winner.

Norfolk Noon Club and the JOOI Club were honored for building the Norfolk Meadows Optimist Club.

The Phoenix partnership between David City and Norfolk Morning was recognized as helping the David City Club re-energize.

### 2008-09 Honor Clubs

Omaha Breakfast  
Dick Raasch, President  
Vernon Dolleck, Secretary Treasurer

Gretna  
Jeremy Reineke, President  
Lori Blum Secretary  
Jim Wojtos Treasurer

Wayne  
Robert Keating, President  
Doug Krie, Secretary  
Michael Varley, Treasurer

Lincoln West  
Tony Kemna, President  
Connie Shaw, Secretary  
Bonnie Myers, Treasurer

Minden  
Rebecca Rehtus, President  
Kim Pearson, Secretary Treasurer

North Platte  
Lance Arterburn, President  
Randy Nichelson Secretary Treasurer

### Honor and Distinguished Club

Minden was the only club to achieve Distinguished Club status for 2008-09. Rebecca Rehtus was the President and Kim Pearson was the Secretary Treasurer.



*I to r: Brent Lewis and Michele Malcom from the Minden Optimist Club, 2008-09 Governor Ardis Moody*

### Distinguished Lt. Governor

Dan Busse, Zone 4 Lt. Governor for 2008-09, was named Distinguished Lt. Governor. He is a member of the Norfolk Morning Optimist Club.

### Distinguished Secretary Award

The Distinguished Secretary Award is given to a club secretary and is based on accomplishments of several key areas of Optimism. The 2008-09 award went to Lori Blum of Gretna.



*I to r: A surprised Lori Blum, District Secretary Treasurer Gaylea Sturgis*

### Charles "Bud" Sharrick Award

This award is given annually to the District Chair for preparation, knowledge, effort, difficulty factor, and results. 2008-09 Governor Ardis Moody named Al Penner, Omaha Miracle Hills as the recipient.



*I to r: 2008-09 Governor Ardis Moody, Al Penner*

*(Final page of Conference News on page 8)*

# The Final Page of 2nd Quarter Conference News!

## Richard V Showers Award

The Showers Award is given to the District Committee Chair of a direct youth serving area and who, in the opinion of the governor, has supervised the program that has provided the most powerful impact on the youth involved. Chair of the District Essay Contest, Larry Rippe of Gretna is the 2008-09 recipient.



*I to r: Larry Rippe, 2008-09 Governor Ardis Moody, Governor-Elect Russ Zeeb, also from the Gretna Club, is looking on.*

## Richard L. Stoehr Award

This honor is awarded to the Past Governor who has done the most to assist the district in attaining all the goals. Immediate Past Governor Ardis thanked J. Michael Allen for always being there for her whenever she needed him. Due to a death in the family, J. Michael Allen was not in attendance.

## Optimist of the Year

The Optimist of the Year is a prestigious award and is given to a member in the district who best exemplifies the Optimist Spirit in giving his or her time and talents for the ultimate good of Optimism. The 2008-09 award went to a very deserving Merle Peetz, a 40 year member of the Omaha Breakfast Club.



*I to r: Optimist of the Year Merle Peetz is acknowledging his club members, 2008-09 Governor Ardis Moody*

## Sunday Morning Session

Suzy Shrier spoke to the group about Children's Hospital. She said at Children's, they are committed to the highest quality of care with physicians of the highest quality. She also said the incidence of childhood cancer is raising, but she told us that the cure rate is increasing faster. Now the cure rate is over 80%.



Ms. Shrier mentioned the JOOI clubs and specifically mentioned the JOOI carnivals for patients. She said the carnivals take up most of the atrium and they bring a great deal of joy and happiness to the patients and their siblings. She also said that on Saturday, JOOI members and Disney volunteers completely cleaned the atrium river for the first time in 10 years. Fourteen, five-gallon buckets of coins were collected.



*Members of the Norfolk JOOI Clubs, Lincoln Lighthouse JOOI Club, Omaha's Nathan Hale Middle School and Disney volunteers are working on the river.*

## Childhood Cancer Campaign

Connie Mansfield, chair of the Childhood Cancer Campaign, reported that 1,651 items were donated to Children's Hospital, plus \$144 in cash and checks. Lincoln West donated 278 items and won a \$50 HyVee gift card, which they also donated to the hospital. South Sioux City was in second place with 239 items.

She said that last summer, the Metro Area Youth Foundation, consisting of the six Omaha clubs, Gretna, Plattsmouth, and Bellevue, raised \$39,000 for the childhood cancer with the Summer Bash. The 2010 Summer Bash is scheduled for August 21st. She also added that June 12th is the last night of Camp Quality and help could be used for the evening dinner. Camp Quality is located south of Bellevue.

## Governor Mark's ReMarks

Governor Mark closed the conference by saying that as of January 30th, the district was up by 40 members, which is behind last year's pace. The district has lost 78 members. In spite of how the figures look, he felt the district was doing reasonably well. The average loss is 20% and he said we were well below the average, which is good. He also reminded everyone of the incentive program. (See page 2 for a review of the program.)

## Final Thoughts

The conference was very informative. It recognized the hard work that clubs and members put forth last year, and there was plenty of time for fun and the sharing of ideas.

## Important Dates in Our Optimist Lives

### March

- 14th **Deadline** for club essay winner to District Chair
- 20th "8 to Living an Optimistic Life," York Country Club
- 30th **Deadline** for club Oratorical winners to District Chair

### April

- 10th - 11th Third Quarter Conference, District Oratorical Contest and CCDHH, Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center, Kearney
- 15th Blair Optimist Grilled Salmon Fund Raiser, Trinity Lutheran Church

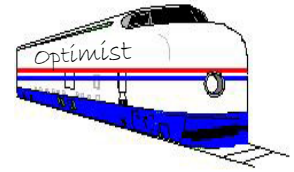
- 21st - 24th 29th Annual US Academic Decathlon National Finals, Holiday Inn Central, Omaha

### July

- 8th - 10th 92nd Optimist International Convention, Denver



# Riding the Rails to Denver



We hope to have a huge Nebraska group at the OI Convention , and here is how you can be part of the fun:

1. Call now and make your Amtrak reservation.  
 Departure July 7 (or July 8 depending on boarding point) — Return July 10.  
 Fare code number X85B-985.  
 Phone 800-872-7245.  
 Reservations must be made by phone. The 10% discount will be off the lowest fare available on the day you book. Rates will increase as summer and peak travel times approach. Save by booking now. Currently, the round trip price from Lincoln with the discount is about \$120.
2. Call now and reserve your hotel room for Thursday and Friday nights, July 8 and 9. Phone: 888-627-8405  
 Rooms have two queen beds. The rate of \$110 plus 14.85% is good for up to four people in each room.
3. Complete your convention registration **before** May 1, 2010 for the Early Bird rates to save money! There are several registration options available.
  - a. Early Bird \$186
  - b. Early Bird Special Incentive \$281  
 (includes Appreciation Luncheon, Old Timer’s Breakfast, The Future is Now Celebration Dinner/Dance)
  - c. Early Bird Daily Package \$110  
 The Daily Package (one-day) is an option for those who would like to take in some of the convention and have some time to enjoy Denver.

For more information about registration options, meals, and daily schedule , go to [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org); click on Members, click on International Convention, scroll down to Registration and click on either Register Online or Download a registration form. (Editor’s note: I found the Download option to be more informative and complete.)

Although this is a somewhat expensive trip, the costs will be spread out over time. Train tickets should be done immediately as tickets will increase in price as the peak season approaches. You’ll want to save money with Early Bird registration by May 1st and the hotel bill won’t come until we get there in July.

There seemed to be considerable interest in the train trip when we met in Omaha, and it promises to provide us with the best option. Chartering a bus requires a minimum number of passengers to make it affordable, but the train allows us to make individual reservations to board at the most convenient depot. Amtrak leaves Omaha at 10:39 p.m.; Lincoln at 12:14 a.m.; Hastings at 1:47 a.m; Holdrege at 2:34 a.m.; McCook at 3:43 a.m. and arrives in Denver at 7:15 a.m.

When we arrive in Denver, the **FREE** 16th Street Mall Shuttle runs from Union Station to within steps from the Sheraton Hotel. It doesn’t get much easier or more convenient than that, and you can’t beat **“FREE”** for a price.

The train will “plan” for us and reserve our space together so we may enjoy the “benefits of traveling as a group.” Seats are comfortable and passengers may move about among the cars. The train is handicapped accessible and there are lower rates for children and seniors. There is a lounge with sandwiches, snacks, and beverages available on board.

Convention activities end about 4:30 p.m. Saturday afternoon with the CCC Duck Race. This could allow us time to have our Nebraska Dinner together before the return trip departs from Denver at 7:50 p.m. The train does have a dining car and we can check to see if dinner aboard is a possibility and at what cost. Return trip stops are McCook at 12:29 a.m.; Holdrege at 1:34 a.m.; Hastings at 2:22 a.m.; Lincoln at 4:21 a.m. and Omaha at 5:39 a.m.

If anyone attending the convention wishes to go to Denver earlier or stay longer, our convention travel Fare Code number is valid from July 5 through July 13. This is the perfect opportunity for a great trip! Call and make your reservation! Today!

All Aboard!  
Ardis Moody  
402-477-6409  
402-540-6409  
amood1@neb.rr.com

# 3rd Quarter **Tentative** Conference Agenda

Kearney Holiday Inn & Convention Center

## Friday, April 9

Social event to be arranged by Zone 8 clubs

## Saturday, April 10

- 7:00 a.m. Executive Committee meeting
- 8:15 a.m. First-timers meeting
- 9:00 a.m. Business Session #1
- 10:00 a.m. Nebraska District CCDHH (Sr. Division)
  
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch/CCDHH awards, Essay presentation, Internet Safety presentation
  
- 1:00 p.m. Nebraska District Oratorical Contest (Boys/Girls)  
Nebraska District CCDHH (Jr. Division)
- 4:00 p.m. Danny Rodgers (Leadership/Tribes)
  
- 5:30 p.m. Hospitality Room open
- 6:30 p.m. Banquet with Danny Rodgers
- 9:00 p.m. Hospitality Room open

## Sunday, April 11

- 9:00 a.m. Business Session #2/Danny Rodgers  
"Don't Just Ask...Involve Youth" (Ardis Moody & Brett Rosenberger)  
Adjourn by 11:00 a.m.

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## "8 to Living an Optimistic Life"

## Featuring MK Mueller



Sponsored by the Nebraska District of Optimist International

**Who:** Optimist members, spouses & friends

**What:** An opportunity to experience how "8 to Great" can improve your life and make you a better Optimist

**When:** March 20, 2010 (Saturday) 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**Where:** York Country Club, 1016 West Elm Street, York, NE

**Cost:** \$50.00 per person / \$90.00 for two  
(Bring another Optimist, your spouse, or a friend)

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### Registration for "8 to Living an Optimist Life"

(Please use one form per person, but send together if applicable)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Club \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Fee Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Check payable to Nebraska District Optimists)

**Mail to: Mark Claussen**  
**504 Emerald Drive**  
**Norfolk, NE 68701**