



# Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

April, 2020



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## Governor's Message

As Optimists, we are always finding ways to positively overcome challenges. Currently, we are living in a world that requires social distancing for our safety and for the safety of others. This situation is not fair to us, our clubs, our Executive Leadership, and Optimist International, but once again, Optimists are overcoming these obstacles. We are trail blazers as no one has been down this road before.

During this time, we need to reach out and contact our members, community, and family. There are people all around us who are craving contact. Reach out and help where you can. One of our members is reaching out to her fellow neighborhood retirees and asking them to bring their chairs, a drink, and snack so they can visit in her driveway while they practice social distancing – a coronavirus version of hosting a tea party. Members of the South Sioux Optimist Club are discussing having a park clean-up using social distancing. Also, a member of the South Sioux Optimist Club

has used chalk to write inspirational messages on the sidewalk of a walking trail.

Clubs have had to cancel their face-to-face meetings, but some clubs are having their meetings via Zoom. Even if there is no business to discuss, it provides an excellent opportunity to share what is going on in their lives and to keep in contact with others. Please appoint someone to read the Creed while everyone else is mute.

Please, please continue to reach out and phone or message someone in your life every day this month. Every Monday post a selfie of yourself and make a comment about something that you are thankful for or are doing to engage with others while maintaining social distance.  
#Optimist Monday

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Coffee with the Governor

Maggie, one of the Great Plains Governors, hosts "Coffee with the Governor" bi-weekly on Saturday mornings. Are you interested in joining me on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am? Contact me via email or phone and I will set up a Zoom meeting. You only need a computer to join me, so get your coffee, stay in your PJs and share what's going on in your life and community.

Governor Linda

[lawheelz@netzero.net](mailto:lawheelz@netzero.net)

402-452-4371

## Dates to Remember!

**April 20, 2020**

**Optimist Monday**

Wear your Optimist Shirt, take a selfie, and post on FB

Webinar "Utilizing Zoom as a Digital Communication Tool"  
7 pm

**April 26, 2020**

**Nebraska District CCDHH**

**Contest**

Zoom Event

**April 27, 2020**

**Optimist Monday**

Wear your Optimist Shirt, make a phone call to someone, take a selfie and post it on FB.

**May 1, 2020**

**Respect for Law Day**

**May 4, 2020**

**Optimist Monday**

Wear your Optimist Shirt, write a thank you note to the staff at the grocery store, take a selfie, and post it on FB.

**May 11, 2020**

**Optimist Monday**

Wear your Optimist shirt and take a selfie with the pop top tabs you are saving for the Convention. Post the picture on FB.

**May 15, 2020**

**Important Change**

Deadline for clubs to submit Oratorical winner to District Chair Jon Conyers.

**May 18, 2020**

**Optimist Monday**

Wear your Optimist shirt, take a selfie with you exercising. Post the picture on FB.

## OI Updates

Due to the cancellation of the Optimist International Convention, OI will **not** be accepting bylaws amendments or resolutions.

### From OI's Marketing Committee

OI's Marketing Committee has announced a Learning Management System that will be launched on May 4<sup>th</sup>. Each Club will need to establish one Gmail account specifically for the Learning Management System (LMS). The LMS is a training tool for presidents, secretaries, treasurers, and OI Foundation Reps. All Optimist Clubs need to use the username of oc(clubnumber). Example: [oc10001@gmail.com](mailto:oc10001@gmail.com). Please contact Michelle Turner at OI with any questions at [michelle.turner@optimist.org](mailto:michelle.turner@optimist.org).

### Help OI Brainstorm For Optimist in Action

Optimists in Action Month is just a few weeks away, and with most communities still under restrictions for gatherings, OI is going to have to re-iMagine this effort. Traditionally, Optimist in Action Month encourages Optimists to perform a community service during May with the goal of raising the profile of Optimist International.

Many events will not be possible, so OI needs your help reinventing this effort as something that can be done online, on your own, or in your home. Please send your ideas, ASAP, to [marketing@optimist.org](mailto:marketing@optimist.org).

### Childhood Health and Wellness Grant postponed

The OI Foundation will **not** be accepting applications for its May

31<sup>st</sup> Childhood Health and Wellness Grant cycle. The OI Foundation **will** be accepting applications for the grant cycle with a deadline of August 30, 2020. Grant winners will be notified by September 15, 2020. For complete information, visit the OIF website at [www.oifoundation.org](http://www.oifoundation.org).

OI Foundation will continue to fund scholarships for the Oratorical, Essay, and the Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing programs, Club Grants, Children's Health and Wellness Grants and more. The OI Foundation is grateful for the support from our members that allows us to continue this work.

### Presidents: Your Vote Is Your Club's Voice

The online elections for Optimist International President-Elect, OI Board of Directors and Regional Vice Presidents will be held May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 30, 2020. This year there are four individuals running for OI President-Elect and five candidates for two positions on the Board of Directors. Check the OI Election Page for the final list of candidates, as well as Bios and other candidate information. The Election Page can be found at [www.optimist.org/elections](http://www.optimist.org/elections).

Current Club Presidents will receive an email on May 1<sup>st</sup> with a link to their ballots, provided their Club's April 1<sup>st</sup> billing dues have been paid in full. If dues are paid after May 1<sup>st</sup>, a weekly summary will be sent to the company administering the OI election and their club will receive



their ballot the following week.

To ensure the broadcast email from OI with the ballot arrives in your Club President's mailbox, the President needs to ensure his/her email is current in the OI office. Also the President needs to add the company administering the OI elections as an approved sender in their email addresses: [noreply@directvote.net](mailto:noreply@directvote.net) so it is not viewed as junk mail.

Optimists International Clubs are the most important part of this organization and are the ones who can vote.

### Not Rainy Days, but Optimist Mondays In Nebraska

Governor Linda is declaring every Monday to be Optimist Monday. She believes there is no better way to start off the week than by sharing our presence and smiles to our club and community through social media. Since we are encouraged to practice social distancing, this is a way that we can keep engaged with others.

Governor Linda suggests wearing our Optimist shirts and taking a



selfie each Monday. Post the selfie on Facebook, with the hashtag "#Optimist Monday." She says, "Let us flood Facebook with Optimists." Check "Dates to Remember" for suggested selfie activities. As she said in her March 25<sup>th</sup> message, "Stay safe, stay home, stay healthy, show your Optimism in your dress, your friendship and your service."

## A Brief History of OI An Optimist Moment from Our History

In 1924, the keynote speaker at the OI Convention was a man named Sherman Rogers, a lumberjack with no formal education who had a unique ability to resolve disputes among his fellow laborers and had also become a gifted orator and writer. He spoke to a crowd of over 1000 people who rewarded his message with a standing ovation which included the men throwing their hats into the air. He asked Optimists to remember these five things:

- ✓ *First, there are three sides to every question – our side, the other fellow's side and the right side. People must sit down and compare notes in a friendly endeavor... and when they do this fairly, they will never have much trouble in finding the right side.*
- ✓ *Second, most people really want to play the game of life fairly and radicals are made not because of a corrupt heart, but simply because of a lack of correct information.*
- ✓ *Third, a person cannot hate and reason at the same time. The person who hates visualizes conditions that are grossly exaggerated and most of them really never existed at all.*
- ✓ *Fourth, men and woman must inspire respect among all people. Respect cannot be forced or compelled. Rather, respect*

*is a result of good people taking time to inspire cooperation and goodwill in others that may appear different from themselves.*

- ✓ *Fifth, abiding faith in mankind is the gyroscope of civilization and should be the keynote of optimistic faith. It defies common sense to declare faith in God while at the same time having very little faith in the average man that God made.*

Sherman later became OI President, and although the message was delivered to Optimists more than 90 years ago, it applies as much now as it did then. Fairness, reliable information, a sense of reality and reason, respect and faith are all essential to our survival and success.

The above is from a presentation by District Historian Ardis Moody at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Conference.

### Oratorical & CCDHH Contests Re-iMagine Oratorical Contest

To enable the Nebraska District to host the District Oratorical Contest, changes had to be instituted. Thanks to technology, Zoom will be utilized for the competition. The social distancing guidelines will be met and travel will not be required. District Chair, Jon Conyers, will be providing a document that spells out the use of Zoom and the Contest procedure in detail.

Directions for using Zoom can be found on the OI website. Look for the large red-lettered notice stating that “all District meetings

and conferences should be canceled...” There are tutorials, webinars, and directions to sign up for zoom at no cost.

### CCDHH

Mark Claussen, Chair of the CCDHH Committee, announced the Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will be held on **April 26<sup>st</sup>** via Zoom to follow the social distancing guidelines. Contact Mark at [markclaussen@npsne.org](mailto:markclaussen@npsne.org) if you would like to be part of the Zoom audience.

### Governor Linda Is Still Waiting!

She is still waiting for an email or phone call from someone who knows someone in Sidney. She is also still waiting to hear from a club(s) that would be willing to sponsor a new club in Sidney.

In March's issue of the District **iMagine More** newsletter, she reported that she had been contacted as a new resident in Sidney was a former member of a club in Colorado and he was interested in starting an Optimist Club in Sidney. To start the process, she needs the names of people in the Sidney area who might be interested in learning about how an Optimist club could benefit their community.

Please, if you know someone in Sidney, or if you know someone who knows someone, contact Governor Linda. If your local club is interested in expanding our Optimist mission, contact Governor Linda. Her email address is [lawheelz@netzero.net](mailto:lawheelz@netzero.net).

## If 10 Is Perfect, What is 11? March's New Members

### North Bend

**Kurt Dunker**

Sponsored by Thomas Mullally

**Mike Dorcey**

Sponsored by Thomas Mullally

**Rich Ray**

Sponsored by Ken Streff

**Doug Vrana**

Sponsored by Troy Post

**Ralston**

**Steven O'Flaherty**

Sponsored by Andy Dubbs

**South Sioux City**

**Lindsay Bottger**

Sponsored by Tonya Bauman

**Lincoln**

**Leirion Baird**

Sponsored by Kailen Kluge

**Ogallala**

**Kaelyn Armstrong**

Sponsored by Shelly Witt

**Tyler Shriner**

Sponsored by Shirley Edwards

**AI Siple**

Sponsored by Doug Davis

**Paxton**

**Michael Holzfaster**

Sponsored by Tim Holzfaster

## I Need Your Help

During my Great Plains Zoom meeting, I was asked to find a project and or fundraiser that is working in today's environment of social distancing. We are looking for something new or revamped to suit the social restraints with Covid-19. I need to report on the project(s) at our next meeting on April 19th. I will share the results of our search and perhaps there may be something that will be of use to your club.

Please send me an email to [lawheelz@netzero.net](mailto:lawheelz@netzero.net) or call me at 402-452-4371 if you have any ideas that I can share with the Great Plains Governors.Thanks!

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Achievements and Awards

Due to the national emergency and the need for us to cancel or postpone our club and youth events, there is no need to submit a 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter A&A. If you have done so already, thank you and I will tabulate your reports. Otherwise, please just add your 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter activities to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report which will due in June.

If your club is doing anything to help your communities during this time, please submit a short article or your club communications to the Nebraska District Newsletter Co-Editors ([dcgries@cox.net](mailto:dcgries@cox.net) or [bettytotten1@gmail.com](mailto:bettytotten1@gmail.com)) so they can share the information with the District. For example, Lincoln West had planned an End-of-the Year Party for the Food Fort, but instead we donated \$1000 to the Food Fort as they are continuing to get meals to needy children.

I hope you are all safe and well as we practice social distancing and constant hand washing. Stay Optimistic!

Judy Winkler, A&A Chair

## The Winner of the Essay Contest Is...



The winner of the \$2,500 District OI Essay Scholarship is Madalyn Lobmeyer of Seward. She was sponsored by the Seward Optimist Club. Placing second is Maddox Weckerle-Dietz of Norfolk, sponsored by the Norfolk Noon Optimist Club, and the third place winner is Cade Suing of Gretna, sponsored by the

Gretna Optimist Club. These three students will also be mailed a medallion for their outstanding essays. You can read the winning essay on page 6 of this newsletter and on the Nebraska District Optimist website at [nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org).

## Two Sites ... So Much to Discover

Both the OI website and the Nebraska District website contain valuable and useful information.



The sites are completely separate and serve different purposes and needs.

Because the two websites are NOT connected, the information entered on one, does NOT appear on the other. Clubs are encouraged to update both sites regularly.

**The OI website** provides information from the perspective of the international organization and offers documents, training materials, forms, club building information, and marketing materials. Club officers use "Leader Login" to update club rosters; pay dues and complete the various reports expected from each club.

**The District website** is designed to serve the members of our District and contains information and documents unique to our clubs. Information, the District newsletter, and registration for Conferences are probably the most widely used features.

The District website also includes a "profile page" for each club. The page is intended to be edited and updated **by** club members. Any meetings, activities or events that clubs post on their page are shown on the website Home Page calendar, where a click on the date will reveal all the details.

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“Event Registration” is a valuable district website tool. Clubs may arrange to have their sports contests or fundraising events set up on the district website. This creates a spreadsheet containing all the required information which is forwarded to the club prior to their event; saving time and eliminating unnecessary paper-work.

For further information, support or assistance with either website, contact Neal Deremer or Ardis Moody. They are currently facilitating our district website. They can assist with passwords and access to these resources. Their email addresses are: [njderemer@gmail.com](mailto:njderemer@gmail.com) or [ardis.moody@gmail.com](mailto:ardis.moody@gmail.com) or you can call 402-540-6409.

### Optimists Would Have Made a Difference IF....

...the **Norfolk Noon Club** could have hosted the Prime Time Reading Program at Westside Elementary School. The event usually has **15** kids attending.

... circumstances would have allowed **Lincoln Evening** to donate over 160 stuffed animals to the CHI St. Elizabeth Pediatric Unit. Thanks to a Walgreens clearance sale, the Club was able to buy over 160 cuddly animals for less than \$200.

...the **Blair Club** could have held their annual Easter Egg Hunt. **Over 200** youth and their families would have attended.

...the **Norfolk Noon Club** would be able to host their annual Cool to Be in School Party for about **200** kids at the end of the school year.

...the **South Sioux City Optimist**

**Club** would not have had to postpone their Youth appreciation Banquet for **22** youth.

... the **Norfolk** and **Norfolk Noon Clubs**



would have been able to continue working with the Norfolk

Youth Track season this spring. Approximately **500** youth would have been involved.

...the **Norfolk Club** and the **Noon Club** would not have had to cancel their annual joint Unsung Heroes program. They were going to recognize **12** high school students who excel, but fall through the cracks and sometimes do not get credit for their achievements.

...the pandemic had not occurred. The **North Bend Optimist Club** and the **Aurora Optimist Club** could have proceeded as planned with their spring sports seasons.

### Optimists ARE Making a Difference

Members of the **South Sioux City Club**, via emails, are exploring the possibility of picking up litter in a city park while keeping social distance.

The Norfolk Jr. High School principal, Dr. Jen Robinson, has initiated a Sidewalk Chalk Challenge to the Jr. High students. The **Norfolk Noon Optimists** have committed to fully sponsor the challenge for approximately \$600.



The **Ogallala Optimist Club** purchased \$1,000 worth of Chamber Bucks. They

gave half to the DHHS and half to the Women’s Resource Center to give to people and families in need. They also gave \$200 to the Arts Society to help with the Ogallala High School art show at the Petrified Wood Gallery.

Even though school is not in the traditional session and even though **Norfolk Noon Optimists** are unable to have their regular meetings, they have not forgotten about the Carol Gall Memorial Scholarship. The Club sent applications for the Scholarship to all three high schools. The senior year is not ending as the seniors envisioned, but many graduating seniors are still planning on furthering their education.

The **Lincoln Friends Club** weren’t able to do their usual fun spring activity; instead they decorated windows of Harbor, Cove and Seagren Houses (all part of Tabitha). Not only did it bring smiles to the residents, the club members had fun, even if they were wearing masks.



Two members of Lincoln Friends OC

Continue saving the pop pull tabs and bring them to the District Convention!

## Is Optimism the Key to Achieving the Dreams you iMagine?

By Madalyn Lobmeyer

We do not typically hope for failure when it comes to reaching our goals. The bitter sting of defeat is often looked at as something to avoid, rather than pursue. Unfortunately, failure is a part of life, but there are ways to deal with it that can help you grow, rather than bring you down. Optimism is the key to achieving the dreams you imagine because it pushes you to do your best, it keeps you uplifted during disappointing times, and it helps you deal with mistakes.

As a straight-A student, I often take pride in my grades. They are proof of my hard work and dedication to my education. However, I recently failed a test in one of my AP classes. This surprised me; I had studied, yet there it was. An F. On a test, no less. My score felt like a punch in the gut. But instead of letting this disappointment drag me down, or giving up on my success in the class, I took an optimistic approach. I would not let this one set-back dash my goal of graduating with a 4.0. Rather, I used my sub-optimal grade as encouragement and motivation to study more and work harder. Tests were not a chance for more inadequacy, they were an opportunity to improve from my previous mistakes. With this approach, I was able to earn an A+ on my next exam. My optimism pushed me to work harder for my achievements and reach my goal.

Rejection is an interesting type of failure. It doesn't necessarily mean you failed, but it often feels that way. It's hard not to take rejection to heart and not focus on your faults. When I opened an email from one of my top-choice colleges and saw I had not been accepted as an applicant, it was difficult to not question my entire character. *Was I not good enough? What did I do wrong?* I very much took the refusal personally, and it hurt. However, it was unlikely I was rejected due to any of my imperfections, but rather, the school could only admit so many students and felt others were a better fit.

The next day, after I had ruminated over my self-perceived "failure" I realized that bogging myself down wouldn't achieve anything. In fact, there were positives to attending a different school. I started to focus on the benefits of attending one of the schools I had already been accepted to. Not only did this take my mind off the disappointment from the previous day, but it actually invigorated me; I became excited about the prospects that would come with attending a different school. My optimism kept me energized and uplifted in the face of defeat.

Optimism is also useful when it comes to dealing with setbacks and mistakes. For a senior portfolio, I have been working on a website designed to help high-school students in picking colleges that are the right fit for them. Prior to this project, I had very little experience in programming, and the portfolio acted as a learning experience. I was working on the code for my site when my computer froze. I waited

for about fifteen minutes before realizing I would have to do a hard reset. After restarting and reopening my programs, I saw that none of the files containing my code were in my folders. They were gone.

I searched for the files in vain; I had made the mistake of saving the project to the short term memory on the computer, meaning a hard reset would delete them. A month's work had gone down the drain due to technical difficulties and a silly mistake on my part. However, I surprised myself. Although I was a little cross that I would have to essentially start over, I wasn't overly upset. In fact, I thought of it as a learning opportunity and a chance to improve upon my original code. My optimism helped me to see the advantages of the loss and made it easier to move on from the mistake.

Unfortunately, setbacks and failures are part of life and often lie along the path to success. In order to achieve your dreams, it is necessary to deal with this failure in a healthy and productive way. Optimism is the key to dealing with these obstacles. For me, this optimism has been crucial. It has pushed me to work hard and do my best, even when I have failed. Optimism has kept me uplifted in the face of rejection and helped me to move on from disappointments. It even helps me to see the learning opportunities in my mistakes. I am a firm believer in the idea that with optimism, you can accomplish anything you set your mind to.

Reprinted with permission from Madalyn Lobmeyer

# Thank You for Your Service



## ZONE 1 Blair

\*Sarah Byrne  
Army National Guard

## Omaha Breakfast

\*Bill Madden  
Air Force – Viet Nam

\*Ivan Wineglass  
Air Force – Viet Nam

\*Michael McKee  
Air Force – Viet Nam

\*Ron Nelson  
Marines – Viet Nam

\*Nick Nichol森  
Army - Korea

\*Hal Daub  
Army – Viet Nam

\*Bob Karcher  
Army – Viet Nam

\*George Eckert  
Army

\*Vern Dolleck  
Army – Viet Nam

## Omaha Miracle Hills

\*David Catalan  
Army

\*Robert Labeledz  
Army - Viet Nam

## Omaha North

\*William McCain  
Navy

\*Stan Hanner  
Air Force

## Omaha Optimist Club

\*Art Neppi  
Army

\*Gary Lee Frantz  
Air Force

\*Jeff Deeths  
Air Force

\*Robert Howel  
Air Force

\*William Woodward  
Navy - WW II and Korea

\*Burton Jay  
Army

\*Les Zanotti  
Army

\*James Besore  
Marines – Korea

\*Willis Caster  
Marines - Viet Nam

\*Dennis Huffine  
Air Force

\*Merwyn Pearson  
Army - Viet Nam

## Omaha West

\*Ted Crouchley  
Air Force Reserves

\*Chris Walker  
Air Force

\*John Henderson  
Army Corps of Engineers



## ZONE 2

## Omaha Southwest

\*Beryle Lantz  
Army - Viet Nam

\*Jerry Warner  
Army Reserve

\*Gary Nissen Sr.  
Navy - Viet Nam

## West Point

\*Steve Brune  
Army - Desert Storm

\*Rick Wimer  
Marines

\*Donavan Wascher



## ZONE 3 Bellevue

\*Chuck Mansfield  
Air Force

## Gretna

\*Russ Zeeb  
Army



## ZONE 4 Norfolk

\*Brian Rogers  
Army

\*Tim Haley  
Navy

## Norfolk Noon

\*Jesse Dunbar  
Army

\*Karen Carlson  
Army

\*Darby Hetzler  
National Guard

South Sioux City Morning

\*Ron Bottger



ZONE 5  
Beatrice

\*Burt Foreman  
Air Force

\*Larry Hamilton  
Army

Auburn

\*Ron Jones  
Army

\*Marvin Shimmel  
Navy

\*Mark Ward  
Navy

\*John Teten  
Navy

\*Glen Hogue  
Army

Nebraska City

\*Larry Mocnik  
Navy



ZONE 6  
Lincoln

\*Tom Hawco  
Air Force

\*Ernie Weyeneth  
Navy

\*Ronald McKenzie  
Air Force - Viet Nam

\*Doug Andersen  
Navy

\*Chyrel Kritkos

\*Tom Morrissey  
Navy

Lincoln West

\*J. Candler  
Army

\*Jon Conyers  
Navy - Desert Storm

\*Dan Cuda  
Army

\*John Filbert  
Air Force

\*Phil Hood  
Army Reserve

\*Shawn McGill  
Army - Desert Storm

\*Jerry Sanders  
Army Reserve

\*Andy Winkler  
Army National Guard

\*Tony Cooney  
Army

\*Corbin Winkler  
Army

Lincoln Sunrise

\*LeRoy Sievers  
Army

\*Diane Seifkes  
Marines

\*Bob Grundman  
Army Reserves

Lincoln Friends

\*Steve Splittgerber  
Air Force

Hickman

\*Robert Leatherman  
Army - Viet Nam

\*Dr. Terrie Spohn  
Army



ZONE 7  
York

\*Jack Vincent  
Army - Viet Nam

ZONE 8



ZONE 9  
North Platte

\*Chuck Jividen  
Navy

\*Kent Stahl  
Marines

\*Richard Bannister  
Marines

\*David Thelen  
Air Force



Contact Carla Gries  
dcgries@cox.net. If:

- you do not see names from your club
- you do not see your name
- you wish to add the name of a war during which you served