



Nebraska District Optimists



Sandra Allen, Governor
April, 2021
OI 3rd Quarter Theme
“Rally”

Mark Your Calendars!

April 15, 2021

District Oratorical Deadline for entries due to District Chair Dr. Gloria Epps

April 19, 2021

OI Webinar – 7 p.m.
“Take Me to Your ‘Next’ Leader”

April 24, 2021

District CCDHH Contest
District Chair Mark Claussen

May 1, 2021

3rd Quarter Conference
Zoom Event

May 1, 2021

District Oratorical Competition
District Chair Dr. Gloria Epps

Respect for Law Day

May 15, 2021

Siouxland Summit in Norfolk

May 20, 2021

Club Officer Election Reports due

May 21, 2021

2021 Golf Classic Scramble
Omaha Breakfast Optimist Club

May 27, 2021

District Qualifying Tournament for
OI Jr. Golf Championship
York Country Club
District Chair Dick Raasch



Sandra Coaxum Allen, Governor

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”
Margaret Mead

At the beginning of the Optimist year, we set specific goals for our Nebraska District. We agreed that there were some milestones we needed to reach to effectively meet the needs of our communities. It’s time for a checkup. During the 3rd quarter conference, we will review our goals, celebrate our successes, and see where work still needs to be done.

Many of us have been active members of our local clubs for many years. We have participated in a variety of club projects and have witnessed the impact those seemingly simple community activities can have over time. We have dedicated our time, our talents and even our treasure. Yet, Optimist International has

experienced a steady decline in membership, resulting in fewer opportunities to provide meaningful service to our communities.

We put a lot of emphasis on increasing club membership. We encourage clubs to not only retain their current memberships but to also add new members on a continuing basis. Some people are turned off by that kind of focus, saying that it’s not just about numbers – it’s about impact. I agree wholeheartedly. But let’s face it. If we do not renew and refresh our membership rolls, we will eventually dwindle down to no members and therefore, have no impact.

We have six months left in the 2020-2021 Optimist year. We still have plenty of time to achieve our district and club goals. So, Optimist leaders, let’s rally the troops!

I challenge each of our Nebraska District clubs to strive to become an Honor Club this year. Don’t do it just for the recognition, but do it because of the impact it will have on the youth and communities throughout the state of Nebraska and surrounding areas. Achieving Honor Club status entails more than just increasing the number of members. An Honor Club must also demonstrate a commitment to service, community engagement, charitable efforts, and (continued on next page)

personal development. When your club achieves Honor status, you not only show the best in yourselves, but you also bring out the best in others.

(To review the Honor Club Recognition Requirements, see the last page of the newsletter.)

By providing hope and positive vision, Optimists bring out the best in youth, our communities, and ourselves. The stronger our district, the better able we are to accomplish our mission. Let's rally and work together to make a difference. Together we can bring out the best in youth - one child at a time. Together we can bring out the best in our communities - one block at a time. Together we can bring out the best in ourselves - one day at a time.

Governor Sandra Allen

“Rally” Round the Conference

If you haven't registered for the 3rd Quarter Conference, do it now! The conference will be a Zoom event and is scheduled to be completed by noon on May 1st. The registration fee is only \$10 and will be donated to the OI Foundation.

The business session will consist of Committee Reports, including the Zone Alignment Committee, which is likely to draw the most attention with two options. It is expected there will be a recommendation and vote on the two options. The realignment options are posted on the [District Website](#).

The conference address will be a presentation on “Today's Volunteers” by Tracy Huxley. Tracy is the OI Vice President for the Northeast & Great Lakes Region, and has shared with us before.

Before you forget, [click here](#) to register. See you on Zoom!

Leadership

The Internet is rife with articles and references describing leadership, and that's not to mention the multitude of books published and available on the market. Complicating matters is the fact that most of the references relate to business and industry, not so much to an organization such as ours.

Some say that leadership is an art or that leaders are born with special traits. Leadership traits can, however, be enhanced or developed, particularly if there is a desire to do so.

A leader is someone able to guide a group through inspiration, problem solving, and team building. The leader is responsible for the planning, organization, and directing of the team to ensure that goals are attained in a timely manner and within budget. An effective leader does not dictate, micromanage, or insist his/her way is the only way.

An effective leader needs to be a relationship builder and a good communicator, able to effectively express the vision and goals to others. Even someone who is not a "people person" can learn to put others first, especially since people are critical to the success of an organization. A good leader knows and relies on his/her own strengths, but delegates to others based on their known strengths. It is thus important that the leader be inclusive, soliciting and utilizing input from others. This empowers all of those involved and allows for the influx of fresh ideas and the refinement of those ideas. It also helps ensure buy-in and acceptance of the vision and goals by team members and donors.

Success of an organization or a project does not happen by accident. Effective leadership,

along with well-thought-out short and long-term plans can prevent disorganization and chaos, which wastes time and money and leads to the loss of people and resources.

Mary Lou Andersen
District Leadership
Development Chair

“Take Me to Your Next Leader”

That is the title of the next OI Webinar on April 19th at 7 pm. The Leadership Hotline describes the webinar as an opportunity to learn how to build your Club leadership pipeline. If your club has difficulty in getting volunteers to run for offices, [click](#) here to register for the free webinar.

The Fine Nine! (March's New Members)

South Omaha

Gary Kastrick

David Catalan, sponsor

Lincoln

Sherri Budt

Mary L Andersen, sponsor

Lincoln Friends

Christina Miles

Paige Higgins, sponsor

Minden

Tom Dixon

Erick Verbeck, sponsor

Shane Bock

Rob Hultquist, sponsor

Mike Breight

Rob Hultquist, sponsor

Ogallala

Jim Korth

Bud Morrell, sponsor

Kami Korth

Bud Morrell, sponsor

Paxton

Richard Strong

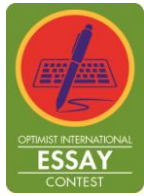
Michael Loeffler, sponsor

Essay Club Chairs, Sponsors, & Optimist Clubs

On behalf of the Nebraska District Optimist organization, I would like to **THANK YOU** for encouraging student participation in your local communities for the Optimist International Essay Contest. I so appreciate all your emails, phone calls, and questions as we worked together bringing out the best in our youth through their talent of writing. I sincerely thank those clubs for running a local club contest year after year. Also, thank you to those clubs who were willing to sponsor a student in the essay contest. We had 24 students represented in the Nebraska District Optimist Essay Contest this year. Last year, we had 18 participants. Special thanks to all of you for your registration fees that help defray expenses and reward all our students, and a special thank you to the generous Optimist couple and several Optimist clubs who donated money toward a 2nd place scholarship worth \$750.00. This extra scholarship is long overdue.

All students will receive a certificate and letter of appreciation in the mail, along with their essays and entry papers. I believe they were all winners and outstanding representatives of their schools, their communities, and the Optimist Clubs that sponsored them. Our three judges, Ellen Beck, Jen Kueller-Roebke, and Laurie ZumHofe enjoyed the variety of ways dreams can be reached by choosing optimism.

The winner of this year's \$2,500 Optimist International Scholarship is **Ava Williams** of Broken Bow High School, sponsored by the North Platte Optimist Club.



Winner of the \$750 Nebraska District Optimist Essay 2nd Place Scholarship is **Clare Oldenburg** of Lincoln Pius X High School, sponsored by the Lincoln Sunrise Optimist Club. Placing third is **Brianna Fulton** of Lourdes Central Catholic High School, Nebraska City, sponsored by the Nebraska City Optimist Club. These three students will also be mailed a medallion for their outstanding essays. **Ava, Clare, and Brianna** have given us permission to post their essays as soon as we are able on the [Nebraska District Optimist](#) website for you to enjoy.

I encourage all of you to participate again next year. Please consider adding to your local Optimist Club budget a donation to our Nebraska District 2nd Place Scholarship, hold a local essay contest, and/or seek a student to sponsor who loves to write. The 2021-22 contest topic can be found at www.optimist.org sometime in August. You may also check the [Nebraska District website](#), in October for application forms, planning guide, etc. Again, I thank you for your participation. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by email at famofurbs@gmail.com.

Lana Urban,
Nebraska District
Optimist Essay Chair

Plan to attend the Siouxland Summit on May 15th in Norfolk. This is a live event! Meet with Optimists from Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska & South Dakota. Registration is only \$20 and lunch is Included! Registration 9:30 – 10:00 AM



Are You Going to Atlanta?

If you are, be sure to take advantage of the Early Bird Registration. It is available until May 1st. Click on [OI website](#), and it will take you to the convention webpage and registration. To register, you will need your club number and member number. Your Club President or Secretary can provide this information. The cost is \$229.



The OI Convention agenda and the Hyatt hotel reservation site are also located on the OI website. The Hyatt hotel cost is \$129 per night. Hotel parking is expensive but a lower cost lot can be found and one of the convention hosts will be able to provide directions.

One of the agenda changes this year is the Heritage Brunch on Friday, July 2nd. The Heritage Brunch combines the “Old Timers Breakfast” and the “Appreciation Luncheon.” The cost of the brunch is to be determined.

On Saturday July 3rd, President Mark's Celebration will NOT have an additional cost. The attire for the “President's Celebration” will be elegantly casual. Black tie is still optional.

Volunteers are needed to assist with the Convention. If you are interested in volunteering, [email](#) OI today.

If your club will have multiple attendees, your club must determine who will get the voting credentials. Make sure the designated person gets the credentials
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when they register at the convention Credentials Desk.

Bus Trip to Atlanta

We are working with Arrow Stage Lines to journey to Atlanta. The tentative plan is to leave June 28th and return July 4th. Beryle Lantz, Dick Raasch and I (Linda Wheeler) are finalizing pricing and time for departure. Please join us on the Party Bus. More information will be shared as we finalize the plans.

Links: Atlanta:

<https://discoveratlanta.com/>

Eat in Atlanta:

<https://discoveratlanta.com/dining/main/>

Contact me with any registration questions or problems.

Linda Wheeler

OI Convention Ambassador

Cell 402-452-4371

lawheelz@netzero.net

What Is So Special about May 20th?

If you are a history buff, on May 20, 1927, Charles Lindbergh took off from New York for his historic solo flight across the Atlantic. On May 20, 1932, Amelia Earhart took off from Newfoundland to become the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. In 1961, it was the day a white mob attacked a busload of Freedom Riders in Montgomery, Alabama.

May 20th is also special for other reasons. Some people celebrate May 20th as “Be a Millionaire Day” while others celebrate “Pick Strawberries Day,” “International Clinical Trials Day,” or “Weights and Measurements Day.” While I’m grateful for Clinical Trials and the work that was done with the COVID vaccines, it is hard to celebrate “Be a Millionaire Day” if one is in my tax bracket. As for “Pick Strawberries Day,” I will pass and buy my strawberries at the grocery store, and there is

NO way I am going to celebrate my weight or measurements!

But wait, May 20th is an important day in our Optimist world. It is the day our club elections should be completed and the Club Officer Election Report (COER) sent to Optimist International

You may wonder why it has to be sent so early. Basically it gives OI and the Districts time to update their records for the coming Optimist year. It allows time for the new officers to complete their LMS training. By getting the information early, it allows additional time to prepare the District Directory so it can be in the hands of the Club officers, Governor, and District leadership in a timely manner.

As for me, I’m going to celebrate May 20th because I know my club will have completed the club’s election and the COER sent to OI. Oh yes, I will also eat the strawberries I “picked up” at the grocery store!

Betty Totten

District Newsletter Editor

March 20th, the International Day of Happiness that Was!

The Nebraska District offered two opportunities for fun on the International Day of Happiness on March 20th. In the afternoon, there was an hour of free Optimist Bingo, complete with prizes. The evening fun was Karaoke by way of Zoom. It was a new experience for many of the participants, but a fun experience.

Optimist International also celebrated with an OptiForum, “Music Makes People Happy.” The highlight of the OptiForm were the video clips of the 70 plus young musicians who sent in videos for the music competitions. Bill Myers, an Emmy-winning actor, jazz musician,

educator, filmmaker, writer, and speaker, talked about his start in music and where it has lead him in his life. The Optimist Leadership Hotline provided the following links, one of which is for the complete OptiForum. Take time out of your life to relax and watch the videos. They are guaranteed to bring smiles to your face.

[Click for OptiForum Full Live Video](#)

[Click for Musical Competition Video](#)

[Click for Vocal Competition Video](#)

Looking Back Clubs “Rallied” to the Optimist Vision In the 1990s

The **Arapahoe Optimist Club** hosted an Optimist Pheasant Box Hunt. The hunters were grouped into teams and sent out to the field with one box of shells per team. Before the hunt, the hunters were treated to a pre-hunt breakfast and an explanation of the rules. *(I am guessing they were also told to be careful out there!)*

In 1991, the **North Bend Optimists** saw to it that underprivileged kids were able to swim regularly by providing funds. The same summer they also hosted a tennis clinic.

In 1995, **Omaha Breakfast Optimists** asked: Why isn’t “phonetic” spelled the way it sounds? Why are there flotation devices under airplane seats instead of parachutes? *(Uhhh, I wonder if they ever found the answers.)*

One of **Lincoln West Club’s** highlights of the 90s was the Dedication and Open House for the club cabin at Branched Oak Lake. In addition to the cabin, the club installed Frisbee Golf, they renovated the volleyball court, and improved the beach.

These Clubs Are “Rallying” for the OI Mission!

Not only do houses get a “Spring Cleaning,” so will the **Lincoln West Optimist Club** Campsite. Clean up day is April 24th. They knew it must be spring when a Boy Scout Troop camped out at the campsite in March! (From Facebook)

North Bend Optimists did some “Spring Cleaning” on a March Saturday. They cleaned and prepared the fields for Optimist baseball and softball teams. They also gave free helmets to the players who needed one. (From Facebook)

Kids were running wild at Wildwood Part in Ralston on the 27th for the **Ralston Optimist Club** Easter Egg Hunt. The Easter Bunny greeted kids from babies up to age 12 as they arrived to take part in the fun. (From Facebook)



Gretna Optimists were not filling Easter Eggs as they were busy home baking for their traditional Good Friday Bake Sale at McKinney’s Grocery Store in Gretna. The profits were over \$700. (From Facebook)

Columbus Optimists celebrated Youth Appreciation Week by honoring students from the three area high schools. The six students received their honor at a special recognition lunch! During the lunch, Columbus Mayor

Bulkley read a City of Columbus Proclamation for Youth Appreciation Week. (From Facebook)

March 22nd was celebrated as International Day of Happiness by the **South Sioux City Optimist Club**. To celebrate, the Optimists passed out buttons to the City Council to commemorate the day. (From Facebook)



Omaha Breakfast Optimists are holding their 27th Annual Classic Golf Tournament on May 21st at Tiburon Golf Club. The tournament will be a four-person scramble and the entry fees include green fees, cart and dinner.

The **Fairbury Optimist Club** sold concessions during the Cat’s Meow Spring Market on April 3rd at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. (From Facebook)

Southwest Omaha Optimists dispensed with their regular meeting and got together to fill and wrap Easter Baskets. The baskets were donated to Project Harmony Child Advocacy Center. (From Facebook)



l to r: Gary Nissen, Corrine Wastell

The Ogallala Optimist Club has pledged \$1,000 a year for five years to support the local Dolly

Parton Imagination Library. Dolly Parton launched this effort to inspire a love of reading by gifting free books to children. The Club is also a proud supporter of the Soap Box Derby. They made a \$1500 donation to the Derby! (From Facebook)

Holdrege Optimists donated three Roku streaming sticks to the prize pool for the recent Holdrege Post Prom Party. (From Facebook)

The **Norfolk Noon Optimist Club** is sponsoring Prime Time Online on consecutive Tuesday nights from March 23rd through April 27th. Twenty families have joined on Zoom, which also includes a light dinner, great children’s books and lively discussions. (From Facebook)



Preparing the light dinners

Lincoln Friends and the Evening Clubs worked together for the Optimist Visual Arts Contest. The clubs donated art supplies to Saratoga and Norwood Elementary Schools for the contest. The art projects were on display for judging by the club members. (From Facebook)

Blair Optimists stuffed 2,000 Easter Eggs for their annual Easter Egg Hunt.



HONOR CLUB RECOGNITION REQUIREMENTS (from ICD-135)

- Service:** Complete three or more service projects during the Optimist year
- Community:** Recognize a Club member or local community individual
Grow Club by Net + 3 in membership
Conduct a Membership Recruitment/Drive (i.e. NOW) Program
- Charitable:** Appoint a Club Foundation Representative
Make a non-restricted contribution to the Optimist International Foundation of at least \$100
- Education:** Club President, Club President-Elect (or two Designees) attend District Convention (or two other District meetings/conferences)
Club Foundation Representative completes the CFR training on the Optimist International Learning Management System (OI LMS)
Club President completes the Club President training on the OI LMS
Club Secretary/Treasurer completes the Club S/T training on the OI LMS
- Administrative:** Complete the Club Pride Report and Club Officer-Elect Form
Be current on District and OI Dues and Fees
Club Bylaws to be in compliance with Standard Club Bylaws.