



# Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

December 2019



Governor Linda Wheeler

## Governor's Message

I am hoping that everyone had a great Thanksgiving feast with their family and friends and had safe travels as I did on my trip to Idaho and Oregon.

The leadership team is busy planning for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Conference. We have four workshops and several roundtables planned.

The Optimist Club of York is making arrangements for a Soup and Summer Games Challenge on February 7<sup>th</sup>, Friday evening, with voting for the best soup. While the weather outside is frightful come and enjoy some soup and Summer Games. The Executive Committee will be meeting at 8:30 PM.

Since Bragger's Hall was a disappointment at the last quarter conference, **All District Optimist Clubs** are to bring a tri-fold or hand out describing their signature club fund raiser. To make this even more interesting there will be a scavenger hunt and prizes for the winners.

For future leaders there will be a "Catch a Rising Star" workshop by Sandra Allen (this workshop was well received last year). **Every District Club** is asked to nominate one or two club members who they see as potential club leaders. Send your club nominees to Sandra Allen or Linda Wheeler by January 4<sup>th</sup>, so we can mail invitations to them.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Conference will be held in Norfolk on April 3, 4, and 5. The NE JOI Convention will be held at the same time. There is a challenge from the JOI members to see who will have the most members in attendance. Also there is a challenge to see who will bring the most pull tabs to donate to the Ronald McDonald House. Encourage your club members to save the pull tabs from pop cans, soup cans and fruit cans and bring them to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Conference.

Have you been forwarding pictures of your club holiday events for kids to Kailen Kluge, District Facebook, Betty Totten & Carla Gries for the District newsletter, and Neal Deremer for the District website?

Wishing everyone a very Merry and Safe Christmas and New Year. Since this message does not get to every member would you be sure to share this with those members.

**Wannabe a Star Club Member?**  
*You can be with help from your Club members. The Club with the most PRE-REGISTERED members will be designated as a Star Club at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Q Conference.*

## Dates to Remember!

**December 16, 2019**

Webinar "How to Hold a Club Oratorical Contest" 7 pm

**January 18, 2020**

Academic Decathlon Regionals

**January 20, 2020**

Webinar "A Goal Without a Plan is Just a Wish" 7 pm

**February 8, 2020**

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Conference  
York Holthus Convention Center

**February 17, 2020**

Webinar "The Professional Development Program" 7 pm

**February 21 & 22, 2020**

Academic Decathlon State Finals

**March 7, 2020**

Deadline for clubs to submit winning Essay to District Chair, Lana Urban

**March 16, 2020**

Webinar "Resources for Success to Include Dropbox" 7 pm

**April 3 – 5, 2020**

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Conference  
Norfolk Divots Conference Center & Hotel  
&  
JOI Convention  
Norfolk

**April 15, 2020**

Deadline for clubs to submit Oratorical winners to District Chair, Jon Conyers

## Membership: What You Can Do

We all are aware that clubs cannot survive without growth. Growth is needed to replace members who fail to renew membership, who move, or pass away. Growth is needed to help with activities, which helps the youth of the community. The following, written by Jeff Knapp, is from the Kearney Optimist Club Newsletter.

"If each member invited one friend to come to a meeting and join our club, we could quickly double our membership. People don't knock on our door and ask to join. We need to seek them out, encourage them to come to a meeting, and encourage them to join our club.

### STEP ONE

Sit down for 10 minutes and make a list of people in the community that you feel comfortable extending an invitation to join our club.

### STEP TWO

Make a personal invitation from you to the prospect. Offer to pick that person up on the day of the meeting. Talk about the activities we do in Kearney that benefit kids.

### STEP THREE

Introduce the prospect at a meeting. Close the deal, ask them to join us. If the person declines, go to the next person on your list and invite them."

Jeff continued by challenging each member of the Club to bring a guest to a meeting before December 31. Do you accept the challenge to bring a guest to your club by January 31<sup>st</sup>?

*The Star Club Members are entitled to "priority privileges" like being first in the buffet line!*

## A Message from Marguerite

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to the OI Foundation so far this year. At the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Conference, contributions in the amount of \$1198.90 were collected. This is a great start to the year! The Nebraska District contributed \$11,329.77 to the foundation during the 2018-2019 year. The OI Foundation sends funds back to the Nebraska District for Scholarships for the Essay Contest, Oratorical Contest, and the CCDHH (Communications Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing).

For individuals, a simple way to donate is the Dime-A-Day program. That's only \$36.50 for the year! Clubs can contribute \$1.00 per member or \$365.00 for the year. Other programs available are the President's Club, The Women's Philanthropy Council, Honor/Memory/Veteran, Friends of Today, the Christian D. Larson Partners and the William H. Harrison Society.

Let's do our part and make the 2019-2020 contributions exceed the total from last year.

Marguerite Hansen,  
District OI Foundation Chair.

### Do It for the Students!

There are multiple benefits to the students if your Club sponsors an Essay Contest. First is the obvious, which is the opportunity to win a \$2,500 scholarship from the Nebraska District. But as the infomercials say, "But wait, there's more!" Good writing skills will aid the students in school, in pursuit of higher education, and wherever their career paths take them.

The Essay Contest provides another vehicle for the students to practice considering the topic,

researching if necessary, and organizing their thoughts in well constructed and coherent sentences and paragraphs. Honing this skill will benefit them all through their lives. Stop and think about how frequently you write a letter or email or text. Written communication is not effective if it cannot be understood.

If you can't enlist a school, search out home schools, or youth clubs and groups, maybe put an ad in your local paper. There is still plenty of time to sponsor a contest, but you will need to start soon as the winning essay from the clubs need to be received by District Chair, Lana Urban, by March 7. For more information, go to [nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org).

## A Brief History of OI

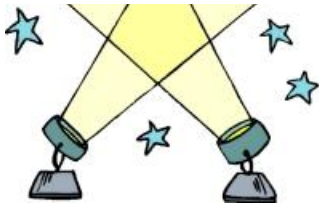
Part 1: As industrialization and urbanization brought many new problems to society, citizens began forming voluntary organizations to address the needs of their communities. In some areas, these groups took the name "Optimist Club" to express their desire for a positive outlook in the face of all these problems.

The first official Optimist Club was formed in Buffalo, New York, in 1911. Envisioning a nationwide organization, founders of the Optimist Club of Indianapolis, Indiana started Optimist Clubs in many other major cities in the summer of 1916. Many of these clubs quickly grew to more than 100 members.

In October 1920, the first edition of "The Optimist" magazine was published. Each club was asked to report in at least once a month with news of their club.

The above is from a presentation by Governor Linda at the First Quarter Conference. Part 2 will be in the January issue of iImagine More Newsletter..

## The Spotlight is on the Optimist Club of Lincoln



During the OI Convention last summer, the longest serving Optimist Clubs were honored. The Optimist Club of Lincoln was one of the honored clubs. The following is taken from a history of the Lincoln Optimist Club that was written for their 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2011.

The challenges that have faced the club in meeting the needs of the community date back even before the chartering of the Optimist Club of Lincoln, the first Optimist Club west of the Missouri River. A group of Lincoln volunteers answered a call to counsel delinquent boys in the early 1920s, calling themselves the Pathfinder Club. When they learned of the creed for Optimist International, which paralleled their philosophy, they became chartered Optimists on March 26, 1926.

The first president of the new Optimist Club was Judge Edward F. Fogg who continued the programs with delinquent youth, but adding service to young boys who were on parole. Each member of the club accepted a parolee and worked with him one-on-one.

The record of the Lincoln Club is enviable in meeting youth problems throughout its history. In their fledging years they added a program to help mentally retarded youth of the area. In later years they organized roller skating competitions. They also sponsored an American Legion base-

ball team that went on to win the national championship in 1960, while J.J. Exon (later Nebraska Governor and U.S. Senator) was President of the Club.

In the 70s and 80s, the Lincoln Club had the nation's only Junior Indian Optimist Club for the Native American boys and girls who were coming to Lincoln from the Omaha, Winnebago, Ponca, and Sioux tribes. The junior club gained national attention. In the late 80s women were officially able to become members of OI and the first woman officially admitted as a member of Optimist International was from the Lincoln Club.

Through the years, in addition to the regular Optimist activities and programs, the Lincoln Club bought an iron lung for children with polio, special telephones for the hard-of-hearing, sponsored a handicapped Boy Scout Troop, and provided volunteers for the Lincoln Children's Zoo during the Halloween season. They hosted the U.S.A. Jr. Olympics and for 20 years they hosted the Lincoln Public School Girls Holiday Basketball Tournament. In more recent years, they have helped with the Nebraska Academic Decathlon, Tri-Star Sports, Fun Day in the Park, Homer's Heroes Baseball, bell ringing, and helping with the YMCA's Midwest Invitational Basketball Tournament, a Kids Helping Kids program, and have helped support Saratoga Elementary Schools' Back Pack Program. Their newest project is stocking and restocking books and coloring supplies at a local Lincoln restaurant.

This club has survived all of the economic ups and downs and changes in society and society's attitudes that have taken place during the last 93 years. Under the guidance of current President

Kailen Kluge and the Board of Directors, they are continuing to be an active club in the Lincoln community by caring about the youth.

### New Members in November

**Miracle Hills**  
Ebony Byars  
sponsored by Tamera Bailey

**Plattsmouth**  
Adam Meyer  
sponsored by Michael Tabler

Rebecca Stoskopt  
sponsored by Bob Hahn

**Lincoln Sunrise**  
DK Solutions, LLC – FOO  
sponsored by Diane Siefkes

**Ogallala**  
JC Piepho  
sponsored by Deb Devine

Ebony, Adam, Rebecca, and JC, thank you for taking the opportunity to help the youth in your community through your Optimist Club. Thanks also to the sponsors to took the step and invited a guest to a meeting.

### Not AA and Not AAA, but the New A&A Report

The new and improved A&A Report is available on the District website at [nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org). (As a reminder, A&A stands for Achievement and Awards.) The report for the first quarter is due to Judy Winkler, A&A District Chair, by January 30<sup>th</sup>. If it is received by January 10<sup>th</sup>, the club will be awarded an additional 250 points.

## News of Our Clubs

**Norfolk Morning Club** has a busy December planned. They will be helping with the HyVee West Christmas Party; ringing bells for the Salvation Army at two locations; packing snack bags for the Salvation Army; and adopting a family and helping the mother give her children a nice Christmas.

In addition to Norfolk Morning, other clubs adopting families for Christmas are the **Omaha Optimist Club** and **Omaha Miracle Hills**.

**Ogallala Optimists** sponsored their 4<sup>th</sup> annual Polar Bear Express for the Ogallala community. During the tour of the Christmas lights in Ogallala, there is a reading of "The Polar Express" and carol singing. At the end of the tour guests are given hot chocolate and each child receives a bell. The event is complete with Mr. & Mrs. Clause and their elves. Ogallala Club President, Bud Morrell said they sell 360 tickets for the tours and they sell out every year. Each year they ask a High School organization to help with the tours and then donate a percentage back to the organization.



Members of the Ogallala community loading the bus for the Polar Express Tour.

At their December 19<sup>th</sup> meeting, the **Lincoln Club** will be presenting a book shelf to The Eatery, a family owned restaurant in Lincoln. The Club will also be stocking and restocking the bookshelf with books and coloring books for children. The idea for this project came from a speaker at the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Conference. The project is to provide an incentive for families to put away their electronics when dining out and instead be engaged with each other.

The **Fairbury Optimist Club** spent a recent meeting labeling the dictionaries and preparing for their distribution to third graders at Fairbury, Diller-Odell, Meridian, and Tri-County schools. Members also brought toys for Stuff the Emergency Vehicle project.

The **North Omaha Optimist Club** partnered with the Center for Holistic Development to collect new and unopened toys to be given away at Christmas.

Last month the **South Sioux City Optimists** held a very successful Soup Luncheon. They raised over \$3,000 to fund their projects. This month they are ringing bells for the Cardinal Baskets program. The money raised goes to provide holiday meals for those less fortunate. Club members will also help pack and deliver the boxes.

The **Star City Optimist Youth Foundation**, made up of the Lincoln Optimist Clubs, hosted their annual awards dinner recognizing the PP&K and PH&R winners. In addition, each year SCOYF honors adult members of the community. This year the Bob Lund Optimist Sportsmanship Award,

named for former Lincoln Club member, went to Jim Hansen of Babe Ruth/Junior Saltdogs Baseball ;and the Hartley Doane Optimist Mentor Award, named for former Lincoln Evening Club Member, was awarded to Judi Yost, a TeamMates volunteer. The Optimist Corporate Friend of Youth Award was given to Leon's Gourment Grocer and the Foundation Leadership Award was given to Judy Klusman for her work with the Childhood Cancer Campaign.

The **Blair Club**, with the help of other organizations, collected and sorted donations to provide gifts for about 250 kids in Washington County.



Blair Optimists showing some of the new coats that were donated.



Two Washington County mothers taking advantage of the Blair Toy Project.

Several clubs participated in Bell Ringing. The clubs were: **Lincoln Evening**, **North Bend**, **Omaha Miracle Hills**, **Papillion-LaVista**, **Southwest Omaha**, and the previously mentioned **Norfolk Morning** and **South Sioux City**.