



Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

February 2020



Governor's Message

Over 56 attentive, involved, and energized Optimists participated in the 2nd Quarter Conference in York. Many commented that they liked having the one day conference though it was packed full of presentations and information.

Keynote speaker Elizabeth Hain, Director of York County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), presented lots of thought provoking information. Court appointed volunteers are trained to represent a child who has been placed in the Foster Child System. The advocate engages with the child every month and seeks reports from the foster parents, school teachers and parents. The Advocate then writes a report for the Judge. Optimists had many questions about this program.

Following the 2nd Quarter Conference the Leadership and Financial Committees met and started detailed planning for the 3rd Quarter Conference, April 3-5 in Norfolk. It will be a joint JOI Convention and Nebraska District Optimist Conference. An estimated 50 - 75 JOI members are

expected. A guest speaker, Mike Donahue from "Value Up," will be presenting to both the JOI members and the Optimists. (see more about Value Up on page 5.)

There will be **two** District Service Projects at the 3rd Quarter Conference. We will collect pull tabs from pop, soup, or fruit cans and the JOI clubs would like everyone to bring snacks for The Zone.

(continued on page 2)

Remembering Roger T. Simmons

Past Optimist Governor Roger Simmons, passed away on February 2, 2020. A Memorial service was held on February 7th in Lincoln. He is survived by his wife Margaret, two sons, and three grandchildren.



Roger was a Distinguished Club President; served two terms as Lt. Governor; and was the Governor of the Nebraska District for the 1996-67 year. He served on multiple District Committees through the years while remaining an active member of his Club. Roger was awarded the District Charles "Bud Sharrick Award for his work on the PGI Program during 1994-95 and the District Richard L. Stoehr Award for the 1998-99 year.

He joined the Optimist Club of Lincoln in 1987 and remained a member until his death. His dedication, leadership, and service will be missed.

Dates to Remember!

February 21 & 22, 2020

Academic Decathlon State Finals
University of Nebraska at Omaha
North Campus

March 7, 2020

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

March 13, 2020

Applications for OIF Grants must be received in St. Louis

March 16, 2020

Webinar "Resources for Success to Include Dropbox" 7 pm

April 3, 2020

Huskers vs Heroes Basketball Game
Norfolk Noon Fundraiser

April 3 - 5, 2020

3rd 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

April 18, 2020

Siouxland Optimist Summit
Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center
Sioux City, Iowa

April 26, 2020

Nebraska District CCDHH Contest
Clifton Center, Lincoln

(Gov's Message continued)

The Zone is an after school program for low income kids in Norfolk. The March issue of the District iImagine More newsletter will have a list of snacks that the kids in The Zone program enjoy.

Friday, April 3rd The Huskers vs Heroes will be playing basketball in Norfolk and all Optimists and JOI members are encouraged to attend this annual matchup. This is an annual fundraiser for the Norfolk Noon Optimist Club. Admission is \$5 and the concession stand will be open.

OI President Adrian Elcock assured his 49 District governors that members wishing to register for the OI convention in Chicago will be able to do so by February 14th. The OI Convention will be a mix of traditional and contemporary sessions and speakers. Look for the schedule of planned events on the OI website.

Happy (belated) Valentine's Day to all.

Governor Linda Wheeler

Communication Contest for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (CCDHH)



The Nebraska District Communications Contest for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) will be held on Sunday, April 26, at the Don Clifton Center in Lincoln. This will be the 22nd year of a collaborative effort between the Nebraska District Optimists and the Regional Programs for Students who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing. This year's theme is "Just iImagine a World Without Boundaries". To be eligible, a student must have at least a 40 decibel hearing loss in one or both ears.

The Nebraska District receives a \$2,500.00 scholarship from the Optimist International Foundation and provides a second matching scholarship thanks to the generosity of clubs across the district and our business partner Hamilton Relay. The scholarship provided by the OIF is named in memory of Chet Arnett, a long-time supporter and promoter of the CCDHH. Thanks to a generous private donation, this second scholarship (Katie Gurnsey Remembrance Scholarship) has been virtually assured for years to come.

Students in grades 10-12 compete for the two scholarships while students in grades 7-9 have the opportunity to practice as part of an exhibition to help build their skills. Contact CCDHH Chairman Mark Claussen for more information.

Mark Claussen,
markclaussen@npsne.org

Help Childhood Health & Wellness - Buy a Raffle Ticket

OI has started a new program entitled Childhood Health & Wellness. Clubs and Districts will now have the opportunity to initiate projects and services to improve the quality of life for children across a broader spectrum of needs. In the new program, there are four areas of focus:

Healthy Lifestyles

Child obesity, healthy eating, physical fitness, Happy Heart advice, March of Dimes

Chronic Diseases

Childhood cancer, juvenile diabetes, HIV, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, sickle cell anemia,

Mental Health

Depression, bullying, abuse

Disabilities

Physical, Intellectual & Developmental (Autism, Special Olympics).

Since this is a new program, it will need to be funded. I am asking all of my fellow Optimists for your support. My talented Mom, Sharon Tintori, has pieced together a beautiful quilt using Optimist colors with batik fabrics that will be up for raffle. It was quilted by a friend, Pat Doro. It is gorgeous!



Angela Tintori holding the quilt.

The tickets were sold at the 2nd Quarter Conference and will be sold at the 3rd Quarter conference. We will draw the winner at Convention. If you aren't at a conference in person, just e-mail me to purchase tickets. Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20. Thank you in advance for your help in serving the children across Nebraska. This quilt is one of a kind!

Angela Tintori
angelatin_2000@yahoo.com

May Is Military Appreciation Month

The Nebraska District will honor all who have served our country, but we need the names and branches of service. Please send the information to Carla Gries at dccgries@cox.net by March 1st. We do not want to omit anyone!



Did You Know?

Did you know there are five scholarships and exemptions available for the OI Junior Golf Tournament? Did you know that last year Lindsey Thiele from Wahoo was a recipient of a scholarship? Did you know the five winners not only receive a \$1,000 scholarship for higher education, but they receive an exemption into the 2020 Optimist Championship tournament that includes golf, hotel accommodations and meals?

Each year the Hugh Cranford All-Scholastic Awards recognize the academic and community service accomplishments of five junior golfers. For more information, go to www.optimist.org/golf or contact Richard Raasch.

Do You Wanna Be? Would You Be? Have you Thought About?

The Club Officer Election Reports are due to OI on May 20th. If you "wanna be" an officer or if you "would be" an officer, please let it be known to your club president or secretary so they won't have to look for you!

If you've been a Club President, have you thought about being a Lt. Governor? It isn't difficult. If you want to know more about being a Lt. Governor or if this interests you, contact Governor Linda Wheeler lawheelz@netzero.net or Governor-Elect Sandra Allen sancoax@yahoo.com. They are waiting to hear from you! Go ahead, email them or they will come looking for you!



**Time to start
looking for
officers!**



Proposed Bylaws Change February 12, 2020

The NE District Finance Committee is proposing increasing the Nebraska District Dues \$1 per quarter which would raise the District Dues to \$15 per year. There will be a breakout session at the 3rd Quarter Conference to answer questions.

Rational: The District Dues have not been raised in 23 years. The District Committee Chairs are asking why they are not reimbursed for travel to conferences or convention to make presentations or reports. Also there is no budget for expenses such as printing. Also the non-profit section of the IRS rules allow up to 58 cents per mile for travel reimbursement. With the dues increase these items could be considered in the budget.

Siouxland Optimist Summit

The 4th Annual Siouxland Optimist Summit will be held in Sioux City, Iowa, on Saturday, April 18th. Optimist Club members from Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin are expected as well as Great Plains Regional VP Lyle Merriam.

The Siouxland Optimist Summit is intended to provide an opportunity for club leaders to gain new skills, help get answers to their questions, share concerns and successes with a different group of Optimists than those who typically attend our district conferences. The cost is just \$20.00 and includes lunch. For more information, contact Mark Claussen at markclaussen@npsne.org.

Mark Claussen

Optimist Day 2020

On February 6th Optimists throughout the world celebrated Optimist Day. All Optimist members were encouraged to wear Optimist attire to promote efforts in helping youth and communities. There are 2400 Optimist Clubs, with more than 70,000 members worldwide. These clubs carry out more than 6500 projects serving over six million youth each year. Of these clubs, 46 belong to the Nebraska District with nearly 1400 members.

Governor Ricketts Proclaims Optimist Week

On February 3rd, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts signed a Proclamation naming the week of February 3 through February 9 as Optimist Week in Nebraska. The ceremony was attended by Optimist Governor Linda Wheeler, and Past Optimist Governors Al Penner, Ardis Moody, Bob "Fritz" Kluge, Judith Kluge, and Beryle Lantz.



L to r: Al Penner, Ardis Moody, Bob Kluge, Governor Ricketts, Optimist Governor Linda Wheeler, Judith Kluge, Beryle Lantz

David City Mayor Proclaims Optimist Day

Mayor Alan Zavodny signed a proclamation declaring Thursday, February 6 as "OPTIMIST DAY IN DAVID CITY." Zavodny stated, "May this day instill pride in our city's Optimists for all of their accomplishments and for the impact they have to truly make a difference in other's lives."

Membership Remember Me?

In OI information I received last fall, there was a page that hit home. When I read Judith Kluge's article for the January issue of the "iMagine More" newsletter, I remembered that page. I found it, and once again I saw myself. As you read the following, do you see anyone you know, possibly a former member or yourself?

"Remember Me?"

I'm the person who was asked to join this club. I'm the person who paid money to join, and promised to be a faithful Optimist.

I'm the person who came to every meeting, but no one paid any attention to me. I tried several times to be friendly, but they all had their friends they had to talk or sit next to. I hoped that somebody would have asked me to help with the last fundraising project, but no one asked me. No one saw my hand when I volunteered.

When I missed my first meeting since joining, no one asked me at the next meeting where I was. I guess it didn't matter. The next meeting I decided to stay home and watch a game on TV. The following week I attended the meeting and no one asked me where I was the week before. I think I'm a good person, a family person, I hold a responsible job and I love my community. You know who else I am? I'm the person who never came back!

It amuses me when I think how they were discussing why the club was losing members. It amuses me to think that they spent so much time looking for new mem-

bers, when I was there all the time. All they needed to do was to make me feel NEEDED, WANTED, AND WELCOME."

Signed, Feeling Invisible

Maybe this is one of the reasons we lose members, they feel invisible. In the first "Princess Diaries" movie, a boy asks the new princess why she invited him to the ball and her answer was, "You saw me when I was invisible." I know it was just a line in a movie, but the feeling is real. I have felt, and sometimes still feel invisible.

I now realize that as a shy person, I am also part of the problem. I need to stretch my comfort zone and be more welcoming to guests and new members, then maybe I can be part of the solution.

People join to be part of the community, to help make the community a better place, to help the youth of the community, and many other reasons. However, if they are not made to feel welcomed, needed, and appreciated, next year we may be trying to "Remember Them."

Betty Totten

A basically shy Co-Editor

A Brief History of OI

Part 3: The oldest and most well known program of Optimist International was started for the Junior Optimist clubs in 1928, as an organization wide Oratorical Contest. Through the years, its purpose has been to provide a valuable self-improvement activity and scholarship program for youth.

By 1929, the organization had grown to 8,000 members in 117 Optimist Clubs when the stock market crashed. During the early 1930s, as a result of the Great Depression, membership dropped significantly. Despite a de-

creased membership, Optimists increased their youth service, nearly tripling the number of youths reached. In fact, there were twice as many Junior Optimist Clubs in 1931 as there had been in 1929, and by the turn of the decade, membership in Optimist International had climbed to over 11,000 members.

The above is from a presentation by Governor Linda at the 1st Quarter Conference.

Let Me Introduce You to January's New Members

Blair

Rich Ferrington

sponsored by Jordan Rishel

Omaha

Rebecca A Valdez

sponsored by Robert Blanchard

Southwest Omaha

Gary Nissen, Jr

sponsored by Michelene Nissen

West Point

Justin Hansen

sponsored by Nadine Hagedorn

Fairbury

James Erickson

sponsored by Jake Hightshoe

York

Tony Dawson

sponsored by Jack Vincent

Ben Santo

sponsored by Jack Vincent

Lexington

Jaycob O'Hanlon

sponsored by Jeremy Roberts

Harrison Racek

sponsored by Jeremy Roberts,

McCook

Brad Cain

sponsored by Darin Morgan

Optimists

Making a Difference

Norfolk Morning hosted their annual Art in the Mall project recently. The Sunset Plaza Mall provides a space for the student's artwork to be displayed and judged. The artwork, in various mediums, is by students, grades 1 – 12, from the area private schools, as well as the local Homeschool Association. (This year Norfolk Public Schools are hosting their own Art Show.) The artwork is judged by local artists and ribbons are placed on the artwork. The Optimists hang the artwork and return it to the teachers. The club purchases the ribbons and pays a small stipend to the artists who judge the show. A member said that it makes no money, but goes a long way promoting their Club and the Youth Mission.



Norfolk Noon member Adele Gallop helping to set up the Art in the Mall.

The **Beatrice Club** hosted four free events for youth during Youth Appreciation Week. It started on Monday, January 6th with Swimming at the YMCA, Tuesday was Crafts at the Library, Wednesday was Free Movie at the Theater, and Thursday night was Roller Skating at the Rolla-Rama. Over 450 youth participated in the various activities.

Lincoln Evening Optimists used a meeting to make 10 blankets for the Wuzzlewubbies Program sponsored by Blixt Locally Grown Teaching Artists. In 2017, the Teaching Artists, working in Title One Schools, learned that many of their students lacked warm blankets. The artists collaborated with Lincoln Public Schools to get blankets to the students. The Lincoln Evening Club bought 10 fleece blanket kits and turned the kits in to warm blankets.



From top clockwise: Halle Pflughaupt, Melissa Masters, Crystal Masters

Kearney Optimists handed out foam fingers to kids at the UNK women's basketball game on February 8th to celebrate Youth Appreciation. It doesn't take much imagination to know the kids had fun with the fingers!

Looking Ahead to 3rd Quarter Conference – “Value Up”

Value Up, whose co-creator Mike Donahue, will be featured at the 3rd Quarter Conference and JOOI Convention, was designed to raise the Value of Human Life. It was established by Craig Scott and Mike Donahue in 2016. Craig was a student in the library of Columbine High School on April 20, 1999. He was under a

table with two of his friends who were both killed. His sister Rachel was the first person killed that day.

Mike and Craig have come to understand the negative issues that are directly related to how students view and see themselves – a byproduct of not understanding their value. If a student believes they have a high intrinsic value and identify with this high value, they choose things that match that identity. Students who value and respect themselves make more positive life choices and are more likely to show value and respect to others.

Have You Ever Wondered Why?

Q. Have you ever wondered why your Optimist Club has never been mentioned in the District iImagine More newsletter?

A. Governor Linda, Governor-Elect Sandra, and the Co-iImagine More newsletter editors, have not received any of your club's communications. We will read them if they come as an email, we will read them if they come as just an email message, we will read them if they come by way of USPS.* All you need to do is to add us to your mailing list and we will read them and then we can let the District know of your wonderful projects!

Our email addresses are:

lawheelz@netzero.net

sancoax@yahoo.com

dcgries@cox.net

bettytotten1@gmail.com

* Betty's correct address is 5540 Enterprise Dr, Lincoln, NE 68521.

We



Emails!

Looking Back at the 2nd Quarter Conference



Norfolk JOI member Cami Sothan talking about the JOI Convention.



First Timers at the Conference
From l to r: Governor Linda, Ernestine Dorsey (North Omaha), Feleshia Evans (North Omaha), Jake Hightshoe (Fairbury), Halle Pflughaupt (Lincoln Evening), and Zeke Potter (Omaha Southwest)



North Omaha was the winner of the Club Traveling Banner.
From l to r: (front row) Feleshia Evans, Club President Connie Campbell (back row) Dr. Gloria Epps, William McCain, Bill Graves, Tamara Bailey, Felicia Carroll, Sandra Allen, and Ernestine Dorsey



Finance Chair Curt Huston explaining the rational for proposing a District dues increase.



Ardis Moody leading the "In the News" workshop.



David Catalan sharing his knowledge in "Grant Writing 101"



Immediate Past Gov Beryle honoring 2018-19 OIF Representative Paul Keller.



Past Governors Bob "Fritz" and Judith Conway Kluge with the Friends of Today signed and numbered print.



New member sponsors, l to r: Sandra Allen, Carla Gries, Paul Keller, Corrine Wastell, Marvin Wastell, Linda Leatherman, Mark Claussen, Lana Urban, Curt Huston, Diane Schutte, William McCain (mostly hidden), and Beryle Lantz



Immediate Past Governor Beryle presented 2018-19 District Secretary-Treasurer, Ardis Moody, with a framed Certificate of Appreciation. She presented him with the official sponsor photo of the Nebraska District sponsored horse race last August. The photo shows the horse, the rider, and the Optimists in attendance.