



Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

January 2020



Governor Linda Wheeler

Governor's Message

My sincere wishes for a very blessed 2020 go to all of our Nebraska District Optimists and their families. May everyone be healthy, safe, energetic and enthused for the new decade. Also, may your clubs be just as blessed through this year.

The Nebraska District Leadership Committee has planned a full and event full day for our 2nd Quarter Conference in York. It is my sincere hope that every club will be represented and all will leave with lots of great ideas for the clubs to consider.

"Catch a Rising Star" will be held again at 2nd Quarter Conference. We are seeking nominations to attend this event. Do you have a member in which you see something special, perhaps some leadership talents? This event is an opportunity for them to learn about being a leader, how to recognize differing communication styles, and benefits of exploring new opportunities in Optimism. All Club Presidents will be receiving a phone call for names of nominees for "Catch a Rising Star" so they can be invited to attend on Saturday February 8th.

Please be thinking of your nominees.

The deadlines for the Essay and Oratorical contests will be fast approaching so I hope every club is considering having contestants for both of these Optimist International Scholarship Programs.

The District Leadership Committee is working on the 3rd Quarter Conference. The JOOI Clubs will be attending and interacting with us so it will be an energetic, fun conference. The Nebraska District Bylaws are being reviewed by the District Bylaws Committee..

Stay warm and safe as winter seems to have driven in with force today. Looking forward to seeing everyone and learning what your clubs are doing. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance.

Governor Linda Wheeler

From the District Finance Committee

The District Finance Committee is proposing a District dues increase of \$1 per quarter which will raise the District dues to \$15 per year. A proposed bylaw change will be written and submitted to the membership, voting to take place at the August Convention

The committee felt this information should be shared so clubs and members are aware of this proposal and they can hold discussions. Rational for the increase is that the District has not raised dues in 23 years. During that time the cost of living has been going up yearly.

Dates to Remember!

January 18, 2020

Academic Decathlon Regionals

January 20, 2020

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

January 30, 2020

A&A Reports Due to District Chair

February 6, 2020

Optimist Day

February 8, 2020

2nd 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

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

Nebraska Academic Decathlon Program

The Academic Decathlon is an educational growth program for high school students. The program requires participating students to develop an understanding of a specific curriculum and take tests in the areas of Art, Economics, Literature, Mathematics, Music, Science and Social Science. In addition, they must write an essay, present a planned and impromptu speech and complete an interview. The curriculum theme for this year is "In Sickness and In Health: An Exploration of Illness and Wellness."

The unique feature of this program is a participating school must have students from all grade levels working together to earn a school score. In addition, it is designed to include students from all achievement levels. Thus, students must fit into the following categories:

- At least two students must have an "A" grade level average in the last two years.
- At least two students must have a "B" grade level average in the last two years.
- At least two students must have a "C or below" grade level average in the last two years.
- **NOTE:** For Grade 9 students, only Grade 8 courses are evaluated.

Although all students take the same tests, the students in a given level are competing with only other students at that level – i.e. -the "B" grade level students compete with other "B" grade level students for medals in each of the ten events. Scholarships are earned by all regular team members of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams at each Regional and in each division (Large School and Small School) at the State Final.

In Nebraska, the schools are divided by the Grade 9 – Grade 12 enrollment. The divisions are - - Large School Division (800 + students), Medium School Division (400 – 799 students), Small School Division (126 – 399 students) and Very Small School Division (less than 126 students). Although a school can have as many students in its Academic Decathlon Program as it desires, only twelve students can test at the Regional and State Final levels. All schools are encouraged to have an Alternate Team of six students.

There are several benefits for participating students. These benefits are:

- The obvious benefit is the enhanced degree of understanding of an additional curriculum.
- With students of different grade levels working together for a team score, it is an excellent example of teamwork and cooperation which mirrors many life situations.
- They have a chance to earn both medals and scholarships.
- Many universities and colleges grant admission points for each year a student participates in the Academic Decathlon.

For the entire 38-year history of the Program, the main sponsor has been the Optimist Clubs of Nebraska. The educational co-sponsors are the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Creighton University and Bellevue University.

John Anstey, Ph.D.
District Academic Decathlon Chair

**There has been a change!
The Executive Board
Meeting will be 8 am on
Feb 8th.**

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

It is my sad duty to report that 2,135 Nebraska children will no longer be served by the Optimists of Nebraska due to the loss of 61 members since our year began.

This statistic is due in part to the deaths of members: Robert Garrett and William T. Johnson of the Minden Optimist Club; David Lawler of the Paxton Club; Hans Wagner of the Meadows-Norfolk Optimist Club and Jim Hanson of the Southwest Omaha Optimist Club. Together these gentlemen served the youth of their communities for over 146 years. The District wishes to extend condolences to the families and fellow club members of these fine individuals. Another 10 former members stated moving was the reason for leaving, this is unavoidable and we wish these people well and encourage them to join a club in their new locations because it is certain the children residing there will benefit from their service and it is a great way to integrate oneself into the new community.

The rest of our deleted members cite desire to "Resign" or "Lack of Interest". WHY? What can we do to rekindle the interest they once had? Please send suggestions to Governor Linda or Membership Chair Judith Conway Kluge.

(See current Membership Zone Competition in Appendix, page 6)

Judith Conway Kluge,
Membership Chair

May is Military Appreciation Month

Please send the names of members who are veterans or in active service to Carla Gries at dcgries@cox.net. We want to recognize their service in our May iMagine More Newsletter.

Let's Think Golf, Jr Golf!

Over 5,000 kids from the US, Canada, and 28 other countries compete in local tournaments to qualify for The Optimist International Tournament at the Trump National Doral Golf Course in Miami, FL. Last year, 49 Nebraska boys and girls, ages 10 – 18, played in our Nebraska Qualifier with eight golfers actually competing at “The Optimist” tournament in Miami.

This year's Nebraska event will be at the York Country Club on June 4th. There are four age groups for boys and three age groups for girls. We are allowed to send two qualifiers from each group plus two additional girls in the 15-18 age group to the international tournament. What this means for junior golfers is:

* They can compete in one of the top International Junior Golf Tournaments in the world. Many pros competed there in their youth and Tiger Woods won it several times!

* “The Optimist” is ranked by Junior Golf Scoreboard, Golfweek, Amateur Golf World Ranking and is included in the AJGA Performance Based Entry Process.

* Approximately thirty college coaches attend and recruit during the tournament. (We have four former Optimist Jr Golfers on the current Husker roster.)

* It is a chance to play against golfers from all over the world. Several youth have said that this is one of their most important experiences of the trip.

Nebraska Optimist Clubs made our tournament a success last year and I know will make it even better this year! Several Optimist Clubs played a part in the success by sponsoring jr. golfers or contributing dollars to help defray tournament costs and providing support for the youth playing at

”The Optimist. The clubs were: Aurora, Columbus, Seward, Hickman, Paxton, West Point, Norfolk, York, Kearney, Lincoln, Lincoln Sunrise, Lincoln West, Lincoln Evening, Omaha Breakfast, Omaha, and Omaha Miracle Hills.

Here are some of the ways you, your club, or your business can help:

1. Sponsor golfers – The entry fee is only \$60 per golfer. We will provide lunch, a fun day of golf, and the opportunity to qualify for “The Optimist.” Golfers can register online or you can download a flier and application form.
2. Post Fliers –Post fliers at the local golf course and school bulletin boards. Give some to your local golf coaches and newspapers. (We plan to email high school coaches, but it is more effective if you deliver it as well.)
3. Birdie Sponsor - \$100 sponsors a hole and it includes a sponsor sign on the hole.
4. Eagle Sponsor - \$150 sponsors a hole and Includes a sponsor sign on the hole.
5. Double Eagle Sponsor - \$200 sponsors the driving range, putting green, or scoreboard.
6. Title Sponsor - \$1,500 and you will be promoted as “Title Sponsor” on all event printing, signage, and promotional material.

There are additional details, forms, etc. on the Nebraska District website or the Optimist Junior Golf website for Nebraska at: <https://sites.google.com/site/neoptimistgolf/tournament-information>.

Please mail checks and forms to:
Richard Raasch
Nebraska Optimists
5734 N 78th Ave
Omaha NE 68134
RWRaasch@cox.net
402-681-9438

Richard Raasch
OI Jr Golf Championships
District Chair

It's A&A Time!

Achievements and Awards (A&A) reports for the first quarter, October- December, are due January 31. Extra points are awarded to clubs submitting their reports by January 10. The report form is available on the Nebraska District website or from District Chair, Judy Winkler. Remembering and recording your club activities for the quarter is a great way to start the New Year!

Judy Winkler, jwinkler@neb.rr.com

Essay Contest Deadline Is Approaching!

The District Optimist Essay Contest gives youth a chance to express themselves and fine tune their writing skills, plus the additional bonus of being in the running for a \$2,500 OI scholarship. Placing at the local club level contest also brings perks for those students. All youth participating at the state level receive a certificate, with the top three places also receiving medallions.

It's not too late to ask youth to participate. Lead them to our nebraskaoptimists.org, and click on District Programs under the heading Youth Programs. There you will find a local club planning guide, application, and all information needed by the Essay Chair with the club's winning essay. Application rules are on the website.

In order to be eligible for the state completion, I need the following by March 7, 2020: a \$10 Club application fee (check made payable to NE District Optimists); copy of birth certificate or passport; typed essay with title page (see application rules); and the completed application form. If your applicant's essay is chosen as the state winner, you will be

(Continued on following page)

notified for additional information required by OI.

So, find a student who likes challenges; run an essay contest with the English teacher; contact a teacher for students interested in writing; sponsor a student who has contacted me and is interested in participating.

Please email or call me with your questions or concerns at: famofurbs@gmail.com, cell 402-641-3099, or land line 402-643-3964 and leave a message.

If your club is interested in supporting this contest, please send a donation in any amount to: Lana Urban, 1717 Eastridge Ave, Seward, NE 68434. Please make checks payable to: NE District Optimists. Thanks for your support!!

Lana Urban
District Chair

LET'S CELEBRATE OUR OPTIMISM AND SHARE IT WITH OTHERS

Members of Optimist Clubs will celebrate "OPTIMISM" day all around the world on the first Thursday of every February--this year on February 6!! This is a single, unified way to promote the mission and value of Optimism to the public. We encourage and know that many of our Optimist Clubs will showcase your programs to your community on this special day. Optimists around the world are asked to wear Optimist wear (shirts, caps, pins, etc.) and smiles to display Optimism in your community. Share your pictures on social media and email your picture/activities to us for the newsletter.

Proclamations and news releases can be found at Optimist.org by typing "Optimist Day" on the search line in the upper left hand corner

2nd Quarter "Need to Knows"

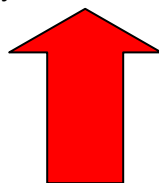
A highlight of the 2nd Quarter Conference will be the Awards Luncheon honoring clubs and individuals who pressed on to greater achievements during Immediate Past Governor, Beryle Lantz's year. It is hoped all honorees will be in attendance so they can have the recognition they deserve.

The keynote speaker will be Elizabeth Hain from the York CASA. As a follow-up to her speech, clubs are asked to bring **duffle bags or small suitcases** so children who are being removed from their homes will have bag of their own in which to carry their belongings instead of a trash bag. The duffel bags or small suitcases may be gently used but clean. Let's **"iMagine More"** bags for these innocent children.

Governor Linda is requesting that all clubs bring a **tri-fold display** of their signature service project(s) for the House of Optimism's Bragger's Hall. This is an opportunity to share project ideas with other clubs. It would be helpful if handouts are provided that describes the project, number of youth served, approximate cost, and number of volunteers required.

The conference ends with "Catch a Rising Star," an invitation only workshop. The workshop is to help prepare future leaders for leadership roles. Club Presidents will be contacted to nominate potential leaders.

If you haven't registered, do it now! It is easy and quick and online at nebraskaoptimists.org. We'll see you in York!



A Brief History of Optimist International

Part 2: In 1922, the Optimist Creed, written by Christian Larson and published under title "Promise Yourself" in 1912, was adopted as the official creed of the organization. In the same year, the first official emblem of Optimist International was developed and adopted. The emblem consisted of a youngster with a beaming countenance and the words "International Optimist Club." Along with the smiling face logo another symbol appeared—it had a sun in its center and the words "Friendship, Sociability, Loyalty, and Reciprocity" as a border.

From the very beginning, Optimist clubs directed major efforts toward youth service. As a result, in 1923, the motto "Friend of the Delinquent Boy" was chosen, setting the course of the organization; however, just a year later the motto was revised to be "Friend of the Boy" by the convention delegates. Also in 1924, the first organization-wide youth service program was established with the chartering of Junior Optimist Clubs, whose purpose was to instill the value of volunteering in young boys.

Optimist International truly became international in 1924, when the Optimist Club of Toronto, Ontario, became the first club outside of the United States. (Part 3 will be in the February issue of iMagine More Newsletter..)

We Love Pictures, but...

We are cautious about using pictures with identifiable youth. To protect your Club and our District, please obtain permission from the parent or guardian and submit it with the pictures. We will follow the old mid-19th century saying, "Better to Be Safe than Sorry."

New Members in December

Blair

Maddi Propst
Sponsored by Jenny Propst

Norfolk

Adele Gallop
Sponsored by Larry Grunke

Norfolk Noon

Heather Hansen
Sponsored by Mark Claussen
Breanna Lopez
Sponsored by Mark Claussen

O'Neil

Morgan Childers
Sponsored by Lacie Miller
Samantha Connot
Sponsored by Lacie Miller
Suzanne Hagemann
Sponsored by Lacie Miller

Fairbury

Capri Motel – FOO*
Maatsch Oil Company – FOO*

David City

Russell Heller
Sponsored by Linda Wheeler

*Friend of Optimists Membership

News of Our Clubs

Have you ever wondered if Adopting a Family really makes a difference? Yes it does. Mark Nelson, **Norfolk Morning Club** President, reported they delivered gifts to the home of a mother and three children. The apartment was pretty bare of furnishings; however there was a tree, which had only a few decorations and had been given to them by another organization. When the group arrived, there were no presents under the tree. The single mother of three was so appreciative and happy that she cried.

The **Lincoln Optimist Club** has installed their bookcase and library at The Eatery, where they hold their monthly meetings. Books and coloring books are available and hopefully keeping the youth engaged in something other than electronic games.



LOC members from l to r: Jerry Salber, Jeremy Williams, President Kailen Kluge, Mike Kritikos, Tom Hawko, and Elaine Hawko

Seward may be known as the 4th of July City, but the **Seward Optimist Club** makes it a Christmas City. The club hosted a Movie Day for the community. It was free to adults and children with a donation of two toiletry items per person. The club also decorated Bemis Park with Snoopy characters and made repairs to the lights. For the Sixpence project, the club was able to provide 29 families with passes to the Children's Museum and annual passes to the Lincoln Children's Zoo.



Seward members repairing the Christmas lights for the Bemis Park display.

While many clubs were recovering from the Holiday projects, **Norfolk Noon** has taken advantage of the after Christmas sales and purchased most of the supplies they will need for the 2020 Operation Christmas Tree project. This included getting trees from Menards in Norfolk, Columbus, and Elkhorn. During the 26 years the club has sponsored this project, they have delivered 902 trees to 2,741 children. Forty-seven trees were delivered this past Christmas.



Norfolk Noon members loading the trees on the trailer for delivery.

Papillion-LaVista and **South Omaha Optimist Clubs** were among the many clubs that rang bells for the Salvation Army and other charitable groups. These two clubs had the assistance of the Outlaws Softball teams. The clubs partner with the Outlaws by helping to support them financially and the Outlaws volunteer their time to the clubs by helping with projects and the fireworks stand.



The Outlaws help out by ringing bells.

Norfolk JOOI Members delivered New Year's cards to the Norfolk Veterans Home. The cards were made by students at the Middle School as part of the "Adopt-a-Vet" project proposed by JOOI members and funded by a Daycos4 grant.

Appendix

Zone Membership Scorecard

October 1

Zone 8 = 232 vs. Zone 6 = 230
Zone 2 = 136 vs. Zone 7 = 133
Zone 4 = 148 vs. Zone 9 = 147
Zone 1 = 198 vs. Zone 3 = 157
Zone 5E = 32 vs. Zone 5W = 46

January 1

Zone 6 = 212 vs. Zone 8 = 207
Zone 7 = 132 vs. Zone 2 = 124
Zone 4 = 147 vs. Zone 9 = 145
Zone 1 = 198 vs. Zone 3 = 156
Zone 5E = 32 vs. Zone 5W = 44

Zones must be + **in membership** in order to win the competition.