



# Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

July, 2020



Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Governor's Message

It has been a long 17 weeks of uncertain days but I am immensely proud of how the Nebraska Optimist Club members have been able to reach out and support each other and their communities. Many have learned new skills like Zooming and re-imagining their club activities. Optimist Clubs are slowly finding ways to meet and yet social distance themselves.

The Optimist International Virtual Convention was another venture which was well received. I am encouraging all Nebraska Optimists who did not register and attend the OI Convention to register for \$35 and scroll through the virtual rooms and to see and hear the breakout programs. You can also watch the live presentations, which were recorded, to hear President Adrian share the results of programs initiated during his year and which will continue to make an impact in the future. You can also see President-Elect Mike Weinsoff talk about his ideas and plans for Optimist International.

Governor-Elect Sandra Allen is

making an excellent recovery from her three surgeries. She is looking forward to beginning her year on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Her 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Conference is planned for the weekend of October 17<sup>th</sup> in Kearney (COVID-19 guidelines permitting). Due to her health issues, she has fallen behind in setting up her team for 2020-2021. If she reaches out to you please seriously consider serving on her team. Reach out to her if you would like to be involved.

The Leadership Team is working on developing an interesting one-day District Convention Zoom meeting. You will be receiving more information soon.

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Club Bylaws Update Deadline – August 15<sup>th</sup>

The deadline to submit your updated Club Bylaws to OI is **August 15<sup>th</sup>**. The fill-in-the-blank form is available on Optimist Leaders (under reports) with mandatory language already included.

Rational: In order for us to do our club activities, the company that provides the insurance for our clubs needs us to minimize the risk and keep our insurance rates reasonable. The mandatory language must be added to all club's bylaws. If clubs do not make these changes, insurance rates will be raised, and we will have to increase our Optimist International dues to cover the increase.

If your club is unable to locate their current club bylaws contact [membership@optimist.org](mailto:membership@optimist.org) and

ask them to send you a copy. Once your club approves the by-laws, submit them electronically to OI. The Club President and Secretary must electronically sign the approved bylaws for them to become official. If unable to submit electronically, scan and email your signed Club Bylaws to Optimist International.

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Dates to Remember!

**July 25, 2020**

Coffee with the Governor  
Zoom event 9:30 am

**August 17, 2020**

Webinar "The Professional Growth and Involvement Program: How to Start Your Journey"  
7 pm

**August 22, 2020**

**Cancelled**

Summer Bash for Childhood Cancer Fundraiser  
However the Corona Virus has NOT cancelled the needs of families whose children have cancer.  
Donations are appreciated!

**August 29, 2020**

**Nebraska District Convention  
Zoom Event**

**September 1, 2020**

Club Officer Election Report due to OI (Requirement for Honor Club)

**September 21, 2020**

Webinar "Making Sure that the club Paperwork is Done!"  
7 pm

**September 30**

Optimist of the Year Due  
Marge Melroy, District Chair

## New Requirement for 2020-21 Honor Club

Every 5 years the OI International Board of Directors review and update the requirements for Bring Out the Best Club, Honor Club and Distinguished Club.

Before any Optimist Club can be an Honor Club, the 2020-21 club incoming officers **must** complete training on the Learning Module System (LMS) before September 30, 2020. If any club president, secretary, treasurer, or secretary/treasurer is repeating his/her office, they also will need to complete the training.

Following the OI Virtual Convention, the training modules for president, secretary, treasurer, and secretary/treasurer were uploaded onto the Learning Module System (LMS). Each club should have a Gmail account setup and this account is shared by the club officers to access the Learning Module System (LMS). Please follow the instructions sent out and complete the basic modules currently on the LMS, so you will be set up and ready to complete your training.

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Proposed District Policies

The District Policy Committee has reviewed the District Policies. The format has been simplified for ease of reading and understanding.

Once these changes are reviewed by the Executive Committee and recommended for approval, a copy of the proposed District Policies will be sent out to District Optimists. 30 days after receiving the proposed policies, they will be presented for discussion and voting at the Nebraska District Convention.

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## The 2020 State Tri-Star PPK Needs a New Site!

Bob Grundman reported that the Lincoln Star City Optimist Youth Foundation **WILL NOT** be hosting a state Tri-Star FB PPK Contest in 2020. Their partner, Nebraska Wesleyan University, will not be allowing outside groups to use their facilities this fall.



In the past the Star City Optimist Youth Foundation usually played host to approximately 150 kids competing from 15 communities across the state: Norfolk to Fairbury; Omaha to Ogallala and McCook; and many points in between. Approximately 1/3 of the contestants come from the Lincoln/Omaha area. Including their siblings, parents, and grandparents, there are usually 300 or more spectators.

**Is there another Optimist Club or group of Optimist Clubs willing to serve as a host this year?**

## Creating Your Club Profile: It's Free and Easy!

We're hearing lots about "marketing" and "branding" from our Optimist organization these days. The intention and purpose is to encourage and assist clubs in promoting who they are and what they do.

Although banners, flyers, billboards, radio, newspaper, and television resources all still apply, social media and websites are becoming increasingly popular and useful. As part of this technology, the Nebraska District website ([nebraskaoptimists.org](http://nebraskaoptimists.org)) includes **Club Profile Pages** which offer each club a **free** plat-

form to promote their activities and events. Every club has this resource available, but few clubs are taking advantage of it.

Basic club meeting and contact information appears in the club listing, and space to add photographs, and announcements is just a click away. Any events posted on the club calendar also appear on the district calendar on the home page of the website.

Any club member may be authorized to edit and update the profile for the club; and then provided with a password to make those changes. No special skills are required, and video tutorials and personal assistance are available. It's easy to make this a showcase about your club.

As members become more aware and more comfortable using the website to post activities and accomplishments, more information is available to everyone. A quick look at the district website can reveal what is happening in each club; and the resources for clubs to contact each other for details.

A club roster is also included, but that information is protected and available only for club and district use. Membership information changes should be updated as that information allows the district to share newsletters and other important updates and details with all the members in the district.

Communication is vitally important to club success. Your club's **Profile Page** is a free, quick and easy place to start!

To learn more, request a password and get help marketing your club on the district website contact Neal Deremer) or Ardis Moody. ([njideremer@gmail.com](mailto:njideremer@gmail.com) or [ardis.moody@gmail.com](mailto:ardis.moody@gmail.com))

Ardis Moody

## Optimist International Virtual Convention Opens Eyes to New Opportunities

Optimist International attendees to the virtual convention were treated to outstanding general sessions and workshops, as well as “chat opportunities.” Our OI team pulled this virtual event off without a hitch with very short planning time. Twenty-two members from Nebraska attended and relished in the fact that they could participate in their pajamas, it was not any more expensive than a night on the town, and they could pop in and out of sessions with the click of a mouse. OI certainly exceeded our expectations and some described it as the best convention they have attended!!

The virtual convention did a much better job of being “real” than many of us had thought possible. The messages from President Adrian and those from his wife and daughter were enhanced by being able to clearly hear them and see the expressions on their faces. Their comments reinforced that Optimists is a family affair with a focus on young people. The opening speaker, Jermaine Harris, talked about making decisions and going into “4 Wheel Drive Goal Setting,” as well as readjusting your goals when they do not work out, all while being happy along the way.

The Kids Speak Out workshop was about getting children in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades involved with the Oratorical Contest, which is an excellent program to use in the schools. The Learning Management System was another workshop that explained how the club officer training sessions can be used 24 hours a day at your own home and at your own pace. This is a wonderful way for ALL members to access information

about multiple positions in the club and what the duties are. Digital Fundraising is a technique that many clubs have had to use during this year of COVID; this session addressed the benefits and strategies of fundraising on line. Unleashing Creativity highlighted the new Visual Arts Competition, as well as better onboarding for volunteers. Creating Powerful Graphics highlighted creating graphics and how to make them work for your club. Perhaps the best parts of this workshop were the free resources recommended to make your graphics pop. Videos for all of the workshops and sessions can be downloaded and used in your club meetings by just clicking on the link to find a topic of interest.

OI President Adrian's closing remarks showed a sincere, thoughtful outpouring of care and love for Optimist International, as well as its leaders and individuals. Perhaps the most exciting news is that registration numbers were higher than in the last 20 years, and there were hundreds of first-time attendees. This event reached people in new ways and provided new opportunities—a wonderful alternative to attending “live.” We can look forward to what will grow from this first “virtual” event.

Thank you to our contributors for this article: Mary Lou Andersen, Tamara Bailey, David Catalan, Judith Conway Kluge, Linda Leatherman, and Ardis Moody.

Written and edited by Carla Gries,  
Newsletter Co-editor

The Nebraska District Convention will be coming to you by way of ZOOM!

The details will be coming!

## Attending the OI Convention from the Comforts of Home!



From l to r: Kailen Kluge, Past Governors Bob and Judith Conway Kluge

What I learned at  
the Convention:  
Work from the  
top down.

Betty

## OIF Disaster Grants

The Optimist International Foundation (OIF) provides grants up to \$1,000 for projects that specifically address a disaster. OIF has funded support for tornadoes in Illinois; flooding in Nebraska; fires and earthquakes in California; and hurricanes in Texas, Louisiana and Florida.

COVID-19 is viewed as a “disaster” if a Club has a **specific project to directly aid a community**; for example providing masks to the homeless, senior citizens, first responders, or other projects of assistance. If that criteria is met, a grant request could be possible. Grants are for hands on projects of the Club.

A grant request form can be found on the District website. It should be sent to Optimist International Foundation, Attention: Benny Ellerbe, Executive Director, 4494 Lindell Blvd, St. Louis MO 63031 or email him at [Benny.Ellerbe@optimist.org](mailto:Benny.Ellerbe@optimist.org).

Linda Wheeler, Governor

## Optimists, Pessimists & "Yabuts"

Are you a "Yabut"? A "Yabut" is the opposite of an Optimist who tends to be hopeful and confident about the future or the success of something. A "Yabut" is similar to a pessimist who tends to see the worst aspect of things or believes that the worst will happen. A "Yabut" lacks confidence. A "Yabut" believes that for any number of reasons something simply cannot happen.

On October 1, an idea was conceived. If each member would be responsible for asking only one neighbor, family member, friend or co-worker to become an Optimist we could *double* our volunteer work force and service to our youth, our communities and ourselves. Nine months have passed and how close are we to giving birth to this concept?

There has been a population explosion of "Yabuts". *Ya but* I don't think my neighbor would want to join. You won't know if you don't ask. *Ya but* my family members probably would not be interested. Maybe your relatives would enjoy spending time with you on a project. *Ya but* my friends don't have spare time. Maybe now they do. *Ya but* they are busy with work. Many employees are not going to their typical work places. *Ya but* they have their own kids. As members they can learn of scholarships and activities in which their youngsters could benefit. *Ya but* with the COVID 19! So, now they can attend zoom gatherings from the confines and comforts of their own homes. *Ya but* they might say "NO." They might say "**YES**" and be grateful you afforded them the opportunity for purpose and self enrichment.

Judith Kluge  
Growth Chair

## Sponsors Thru First 3 Quarters

Congratulations to the following members who have accepted the challenge to sponsor at least 1 new member into our Nebraska District family:

### Three (3) Members

J.A Candler - Lincoln West  
Mark Claussen - Norfolk Noon  
Lacie Miller - O'Neill  
Michelene Nissen - Southwest Omaha

### Two (2) Members

Jordan Rishel, Blair  
Linda Wheeler - Blair/David City  
David Catalan - David City\*  
Jeremy Roberts - Lexington  
Tony Cooney - Lincoln West  
Thomas Mullally - North Bend  
Jack Vincent - York

### One (1) Member

**Blair** - Garth Brown & Jenny Propst;  
**Fairbury** - Jake Hightshoe  
**Gretna** - Sally McGuire;  
**Lincoln** - Mary Lou Andersen & Kailen Kluge  
**Lincoln Sunrise** - Diane Siefkes  
**Lincoln West** - Vicky Sorensen  
**McCook** - Darin Morgan  
**Norfolk** - Larry Grunke  
**Norfolk Noon** - Jana Hellbusch  
**North Bend** - Ken Streff & Troy Post  
**Ogallala** - Shirley Edwards & Doug Davis & Deb Devine  
**Omaha** - Cheri Duryea & Robert Blanchard  
**Omaha Breakfast** - Richard Raasch  
**Omaha Miracle Hills** - Tamara Bailey & Alan Penner & Marvin Wastell  
**Paxton** - Tim Holzfaster & Spencer Holzfaster  
**Plattsmouth** - Michael Tabler & Bob Hahn  
**Ralston** - Andy Dubbs  
**Seward** - Marc Guthrie

**South Sioux City** - Tanya Bauman & Vern Bright

**West Point** - Ann Beckenhauer & Nadine Hagedorn

\* Sponsored members into Club different from own.

Judith Kluge, Growth Chair

## Celebrating Seven! June's New Members



### Omaha

**Andrew Galvin**

sponsored by Cheri Duryea

### Lincoln West

**Deeann Candler**

sponsored by J A Candler

**Zachary Knaub**

sponsored by Vicky Sorensen

**Kenneth Stithem**

sponsored by Tony Cooney

**Laurie Stithem**

sponsored by Tony Cooney

**Cory Ziegenbein**

sponsored by J A Candler

**Sherrie Ziegenbein**

sponsored by J A Candler

*Andrew, Deeann, Zachary, Kenneth, Laurie, Cory, and Sherrie, welcome to our world of helping to bring out the best in the youth and our communities.*

What I learned at the OI  
Convention II

Take a breath, wait 10  
seconds and reread note,  
text, post, or tweet before  
sending.

Impulsive Betty

## Clubs Adjusting to the New Normal

### Meeting Situations

**Norfolk Noon** has started indoor in-person meetings with Zoom as an option for those who prefer it. **Fairbury** had a June in-person meeting but are in hiatus for July. **Omaha Miracle Hills, Kearney, Ogallala** and the **Omaha** clubs have started their in-person meetings at their regular meeting places.

Instead of BYOB, it is BYOC (Bring Your Own Chair) for the **South Sioux City** and **Lincoln Evening Clubs**. South Sioux City is having outdoor meetings at the Koffie Kinnnection. Lincoln Evening is planning their first in-person meeting for July 14<sup>th</sup> at the Optimist Sports Complex.

### Fireworks Stands Provide \$\$

At least five Optimist Clubs operated fireworks stands to help provide funds for their service projects. The clubs were **Papillion/LaVista, Paxton, Gretna, Ogallala, and Fairbury**.

The **Ogallala Club** was able to move inside a vacant building with air-conditioning for their annual fireworks sales. **Fairbury Optimists** with the help of their High School partners, operated their annual stand. Maatsch Oil Co allowed the club to use their property and the Capri Motel allowed the club to use their electricity.



Fairbury Club President Diane Schutt, in foreground, helping to set up the stand

## Other Club Happenings

Life is getting somewhat back to normal for approximately 50 youth thanks to the **Holdrege Optimists**. The Youth Track Club, for youth in grades 3 – 7 finally was able to start practicing. The youth meet two times a week and learn the fundamentals of each event: running, long jump, high jump, discus, shotput and etc. Club member Alisha Melroy with the help of some high school and college kids is running the program.

The **North Platte Optimist Club** sponsored a fireworks display following the last race at the Lincoln County Raceway on July 4<sup>th</sup>. This is an annual event for the Club.

Prime Time Family Reading Time, sponsored by the **Norfolk Noon Club** at the YMCA is under



way. The program is scheduled for 4 consecutive Thursday evenings between July 9 and July 30. The Club will host another Prime Time program beginning in September at Woodland Park Elementary School.

**Omaha Miracle Hills** member Al Penner presented a \$500 check from the club to the Sunny Slope Neighborhood Association for a Little Library Box. The Sunny Slope neighborhood is one of the neighborhoods where Miracle Hills places 206 flags on holidays.

**Ogallala Optimist Club** had a great club social. Club members Steve and Tammy Bristol hosted the gathering in their backyard. The evening's entertainment was a 9-hole backyard golf tournament. **Paxton Optimists** also joined in the fun.

**Lincoln Evening** finished up the landscaping work on the Hartley Doane Plaza at the Optimist Youth Sports Complex. Actually, it was finished by member Pat Driver with the help of two strong young men, Pat's son Logan and his wrestling teammate Cooper Jackson. The improvements included covering approximately half with concrete, three new metal benches, laying landscaping fabric and edging, and scooping 8 ton of river rocks.



The teens said the money they earned will help them pay for wrestling camp



They deserved a rest!

**South Sioux City** is finally able to host their postponed Youth Appreciation Dinner. They will also be presenting their Friend of Youth and Junior Friend of Youth Awards. The combined event is scheduled for July 13 in the First Lutheran Church parking lot. In the interest of safety, the meal will be sack-lunch style.

Seward's Bemis Park received a spring spruce up by **Seward Optimists**. Flags were put up for Flag Day and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Plan to be a part of the District Optimist Convention with Zoom on August 29<sup>th</sup>! Details will be coming to an electronic device near you!