



Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

June, 2020



Governor Linda Wheeler
#OptimistMonday

Governor's Message

Fourteen weeks ago, we began self-isolating. Life has changed, but as Nebraskans we have been approaching this challenge with grace, humor, kindness, and generosity for those around us and those in our communities. Zoom meetings have enabled many Nebraska Optimist Clubs to stay in touch, while other clubs have reached out with phone calls. This last week a few Optimist Clubs, Norfolk Noon, Ogallala, and Big Omaha, have met using social distancing. Other Nebraska clubs are discussing resuming their club activities while considering ways to social distance and protecting their vulnerable members.

The Leadership Committee is planning for our annual District Convention, scheduled for July 31, August 1st, and 2nd. A survey was sent out to all members of the Nebraska District regarding how to set up the Convention. The committee wants to organize a meeting that will meet the needs of the membership regarding social distancing and protecting everyone while fulfilling

the business needs of the District. We encourage all members to share their thoughts by Friday June 26th.

OI Virtual Convention

I am anxiously awaiting the Optimist International Virtual Convention and hope to have many of the Nebraska Optimists join me. The agenda should be published this next week and you will be able to select sessions that are of personal interest to you. This is a great opportunity for many of you to experience Optimists from around the world. Please join me, virtually, at the OI Convention, June 27th & 28th.

Well Wishes

Sending prayers to Governor-Elect Sandra Allen and her family as she is undergoing her third surgery since March. Well wishes go out to Lt Governor Ron Nelson for his surgery last month. He is reporting feeling better and on the mend.

Congratulations to all who have been celebrating significant life events: anniversaries, birthdays, graduations, births, and etc.

Please continue to reach out to those members in your club who are self-isolating. The days can seem overly long and quiet without a phone call or card. I am looking to the future day that we can meet, hug, and feel like one in the community of family and friends.

Linda Wheeler, Governor

PLEASE COMPLETE THE DISTRICT CONVENTION SURVEY THAT WAS EMAILED TO MEMBERS ON JUNE 4TH. IT IS DUE BY JUNE 26TH!

Dates to Remember!

June 22, 2020

Webinar "Just Ask: Your Membership Growth and Retention Strategy Has Just Found a Friend"
7 pm

June 27 & 28, 2020

Optimist International Virtual Convention via Zoom

July 4, 2020

Virtual Freedom Run
Seward Club Fund Raiser

July 10, 2020

A&A Reports Due

July 11, 2020

Coffee with the Governor
Zoom event 9:30 am

July 31 – August 2, 2020

Grand Island Quality Inn & Convention Center

Note – Due to the Covid-19 situation in Grand Island, this may be subject to change.

August 17, 2020

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

August 22, 2020

Cancelled
Summer Bash for CCC Fundraiser

September 1, 2020

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

Optimist Liability Coverage & Probable Exclusion

North Bend Optimist and Ogallala Optimist Clubs have asked about insurance coverage for events they were considering holding. Optimist International and Mercer Consumer were contacted and the representative from Mercer reported that they are awaiting a decision from the Insurance Underwriters, but feel that they may be making COVID-19 an exclusion

Before holding an event, all Nebraska Optimist Clubs should complete a Certificate of Insurance form and submit it to Mercer Consumer well before any event to verify coverage. In addition, Optimist International has issued an Assumption of Risk and Waiver Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19 form. This form has been emailed to all Nebraska Club Presidents and Secretaries and can also be found on page 7 of this newsletter. You may call Mercer Consumer at 1-800-503-9227 with your questions.

Governor Linda Wheeler

North Bend's Response to the Question – Does OI Insurance Cover Covid-19?

As was mentioned in the previous article, the North Bend Club had concerns about their youth sports and OI Insurance coverage in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic. The following is an email they sent to Governor Linda regarding the response that was received from OI.

The Optimist Club met...and voted to cancel Tball and coach pitch this summer, as we felt the guidelines set forth by the Governor were too difficult to adhere to at those ages. We voted to proceed with 10U-18U softball as well as Didgets, Broncos, and Ponies baseball, dependent on what their league decided at their meeting...The baseball league decided to table a decision for 5 days... At that meeting many liability questions arose. This week we have been trying to gain some information in regards to our own Optimist International insurance coverage, to see what the ultimate coverage was for our coaches and it seems they would be bearing most of the responsibility.

Today we received information from OI in regards to the Covid-19 situation. Basically it's very vague and would be handled case by case. They also stated that in the near future they may be making Covid-19 an exclusion. This is definitely not positive information for our club....Today a group of officers, as well as members who are closely involved with the ball program decided to cancel baseball and softball for the summer 2020 season. We decided that if regulations and restrictions started to lift in July, we will try to hold some practices/mini camps to at least get our youth involved in the sport for a couple weeks....

Thank you Andrea Halladay and the North Bend Optimist Club for permitting this email to be reprinted.

Nebraska District Optimists Survey

On June 4th, a survey was sent out via the Nebraska District website for all Nebraska Optimists to complete **by Friday June 26th**. The survey is asking for your thoughts and preferences on the District Convention to be held on July 31, Aug. 1st, and 2nd in Grand Island. In discussions at the Coffee with the Governor, several at-risk individuals are not willing to travel and spend the nights in Grand Island. A few of these are willing to attend a one day with social distancing while others are not willing to venture out yet. The survey addresses the above issues as well as possibly moving the convention to another site or having a virtual convention.

There is business that the District must accomplish to start Governor-Elect Sandra Allen's year off correctly: election of a 2020-21 Governor-Elect, approve Sandra's appointee for Secretary-Treasurer, approve the 2020-21 Lt. Governors, and the NE District By laws Committee has proposed bylaws to present for approval. To conduct business **a majority of the Nebraska District Clubs** must be represented in attendance to have a quorum.

The Nebraska State guidelines will be followed to protect everyone. Your opinion is valued so please complete the survey and email it to Linda Wheeler at lawheelz@netzero.net by Friday **June 26th**.

There Is Still Time to Register for the OI Virtual Convention

The deadline to register for the Optimist International Virtual Convention is **June 26th**. This is one international convention that is affordable (\$35), plus one doesn't need to worry about the travel costs, hotel rates, packing, and most of all, being with a large group of people during the Covid-19 pandemic!

The virtual convention will be held online via Zoom on June 27 and 28th. There will be one 3-hour session each day. Participants can attend group events, such as the opening ceremony and keynote addresses, while also creating a personalized schedule of educational sessions. A few of the breakout session topics are: Guide to Online Fundraising, Insurance, and Staying Connected with Your Club. There will even be opportunities to socialize and network in the virtual lounge. As of June 10th, 961 are registered, including 17 from Nebraska.

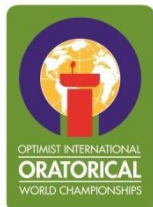
To register, have your club number and member number available. You can get that information from your club president and or secretary. Now go to the Optimist International website and click on Member Resources, scroll down to Meetings & Convention, click on International Convention Goes Virtual, and scroll down to the Registration Form link. Now all you need to do is register. I did!

Betty Totten

Co-Editor iImagine More newsletter

With Technology's Help, the District Oratorical Contest Was a Success

On June 6th, the Nebraska District held the District Oratorical Contest and with Covid-19 and Social Distancing the contest almost did not happen!



We had originally planned a traditional contest at the excellent facility in Seward for the topic "iMagine a World Without Borders." When Covid-19 arrived, it became apparent that having meetings of any sort was at least not advisable and potentially downright dangerous. So the plans for the "traditional" contest had to be abandoned.

Optimist International sponsored a few seminars on the use of Zoom, a tool for internet meetings. OI also "relaxed" the rules and procedures a bit to facilitate the contest. Diane Siefkes had some Zoom expertise and volunteered to "run the board" as Zoom Host for the contest and we were off to the races! Clark Kolterman from Seward used his contacts to round up some quality judges. We had a staff rehearsal a week or so ahead of the contest then a "technical" rehearsal with the contestants the day before the contest to ensure all contestant's audio and video devices worked.

June 6th the six contestants gave their speeches to the judges (Judi Harper, Nancy Shulz, and Stephanie Shearer), time keeper

(Linda Leatherman), the Contest Chair (Jon Conyers) and the Zoom Host (Diane Siefkes). The contestants were Kylie Edgington (Seward), Alexandra Sick (Seward), Brooklynn Schmidt (South Sioux City), Malaki Holmes (South Sioux City), MicKael Halverstadt (Fairbury) & Cordell Vrbka (Lincoln West). The winner of the 1st Place \$2500 Scholarship was Brooklynn Schmidt, the 2nd Place \$1500 Scholarship went to Cordell Vrbka, and the 3rd Place \$1000 Scholarship was taken by MicKael Halverstadt. Congratulations to all the contestants for their hard work and skill!

Jon Conyers, District Oratorical Chair

Postscript: The Regionals

The winners of the District Oratorical Contests will move on to the Regionals. Each winner of the seven Regionals will receive a \$5,000 scholarship and will compete for the \$15,000 World Champion scholarship. The Regionals and the World Championship will be held via Zoom on July 16 and 17th and live-streamed on YouTube and or Facebook.

1 + 1 = 2 New Members in May

Blair

Jennifer Stolz

sponsored by Linda Wheeler

Lincoln OC

Sue Petracek

sponsored by Mary L. Andersen

Jennifer and Sue, welcome to our Optimist world!

COVID, ZOOM and Dressing "UP" with NO Place to Go!

Because of the pandemic, does your Club hold ZOOM Meetings? What is ZOOM? A ZOOM meeting is an online conference on a computer, laptop, tablet or phone.

What does it cost? There is no cost to "attend" -- it is FREE. To the individual *hosting* the meeting on a basic plan it is FREE, with stipulations, i.e. 100 guest maximum and a 40 minute limit.

Several Clubs utilizing ZOOM are finding an increase in attendance. Members are staying home with fewer scheduling commitments since there are limited opportunities to go to concerts, sporting events, church or their social functions.

Meeting via ZOOM is as easy as 1, 2, 3: **1.** You will receive an invitation to join a Scheduled ZOOM meeting. Like other invitations it will have the name of the host, date, time, and topic, and in addition, it will have the link to the meeting. **2.** When the date arrives, click the link to the meeting, and click to join. There may be a meeting ID and or password provided. If you are using a phone, contact the host prior to the meeting for further instructions. **3.** After a brief wait, the host will admit you to the meeting.

This is the perfect opportunity to invite your friends, neighbors and relatives to sit in on a meeting and learn who we are and what

we do. The beauty of ZOOM is no one uses gasoline to attend; one can attend from home, and with ZOOM "dress up" actually means "dress *waist* up". For more information, contact Gov. Linda for the names of individuals who can help you meet or host a Club meeting in this casual method in our very unique circumstance.

Continue to ask others to join your club. People are not as busy as they were before COVID-19 and youngster's needs are greater than before CoVID-19.

Judith Kluge
Growth Chair

Is Your Club Making the Best Use of Social Media?

When you are looking for something, ex. a new church, a paint store near you, or reviews



for a movie, where do you go to look? I go to Google. If someone is searching for a way to get involved with a community or civic organization, they may ask friends, or they also may start with Google. If they check out Google, how would your club rate? Would it entice someone to inquire about your club?

Facebook - Nebraska District's 47 Optimist Clubs, 26 clubs have at least one Facebook post in 2020, but 11 clubs have not made a post since 2019. Four of those 11 clubs have not made a post since 2018 or before and 10 clubs do not have a Facebook page. Even if a club has a

Facebook page, opportunities to attract new members may be missed if pages are not kept updated.

Nebraska District Website - Are you aware that on the District Website, each club has a "Welcome" page and the opportunity to add photos and information about their club and activities? But WAIT, there's more! The "Welcome" page can be linked to your club's Facebook page or website! This is another great opportunity for each club to brag about themselves and to pique a visitor's interest at no cost to your club! The bad news is that only 11 clubs are making use of this service.

Websites - Seven clubs have websites, but of the seven, three have not been updated. To attract interest, it is important to keep the site updated with information regarding activities and most important, keep the contact information updated.

Not only is there the possibility of attracting new members through your presence on social media, it can also help keep your members updated on projects, future club events and socials. (Shhhhh! Between you and me, even though most people won't admit it, they do like being recognized for their work on a project. What better way to do it than to post pictures.)

Remember, it is important to keep the information updated. It sends a much better message than information that may be two years old!

Betty Totten, Co-Editor iMagine More

News from Nepal

There are 11 Optimist Clubs in Nepal, and Omaha Miracle Hills and Lincoln West have sponsored two of those Optimist clubs. Recently both Nebraska clubs received communication from their Nepal Clubs and are sharing them with the District.

The following is the response to an email sent by Judy Winkler, on behalf of the Lincoln West Club, to the President of the Ilam Nepal Club.

"It's my pleasure to see your email and learn about your club. It is so unfortunate to learn the loss incurred by COVID-19. I am sending my prayers to America and all my friends out there. I can imagine that you have done a bit of research about our town ILAM and, yes... you are right. It's a hilly area with tea garden, few colleges and a lot of farmers and students. We have some major 5 specialties like Tea, Milk, Zinger, Broom grass, Cardamom, and few more. Besides this, it is one of the very beautiful places of Nepal and a tourist attraction.

By the way, we are fairly very young club as you know, and we haven't been able to do as much apart from meetings and some joint projects with others clubs in Nepal. Activities like our conventions, debate contest for differently able students (that was done in Biratnagar). We had our all Nepal Optimist members meet in the month of March and after that we are in complete lock down in the fear of the Corona and it's been some 45 days and counting. We had a zoom meeting on May 3rd with Clubs in Kathmandu and Pokhara to jointly organize a programme to educate and train school students on adolescence issue mostly for female. This is going to be a long term project in Nepal for all optimist clubs. This pro-

gramme is contingent to funding and support. We have planned to request Mr. Jim Boyd to help us secure some funding as far as possible. Our programme will help us grow in Nepal and eventually in Asia. The other challenge we have taken is to hatch 10 more clubs within a year.

Our Club of ILAM has a separate programme in the pipeline for psycho-social support for vulnerable youngsters. This is especially for the reason that ILAM has highest rate of suicides in Nepal. Our Programme goes well with our name the "Optimist". We have plans like working with FM stations, establishing in person counselling support (hiring counsellor/s) and providing training in school and colleges. But this requires a lot of resources and continuity as well. A lot of thing depends on our fundraising. Hopefully, we can launch this programme by next six months. Director Jim Boyd has infected us with his idea of zoom meetings and Clubs in Nepal have very well adopted it. But again, as you know, the devil has brought us to stand still and we are all waiting for time to go out and breath. Thank you so much for reaching out. Let's stay connected. Warm regards,
Niraj Dhungel, President, Optimist Club of ILAM."

On March 3rd, Omaha Miracle Hills member David Catalan initiated correspondence with the Shyam Kumar Basyal, President of the Nawalparasi Optimist club in Nepal. Interesting to note that some issues know no boundries!

March 10, 2020

Dear David, How nice to hear from you and I am really sorry for the late reply. Actually, my daughter got married last week so last couple of weeks have been kind of crazy. Let me thank you and Miracle Hills Optimists for being so kind to be our sponsors and me and my club are really

looking forward to a long and wonderful relationship with Miracle Hills.

Currently, we have 18 members in our club and are planning a few projects to be accomplished within the next couple of months. Some of the projects that we are thinking of are oratorical contest for the deaf and hard of hearing, sickle cell anemia screening/treatment and an educational project for the children of prison inmates. Lets see how much we are able to accomplish. I will share with you the further details soon and look to collaborate on most, if not all the projects. Also, I am on board with the conference call idea on a regular basis and will talk to my members about the possible date and time given that the time difference between Nepal and the US poses a lot of challenges communcia-tion wise....

Warmly, Shyam Kumar Basyal

May 28, 2020

Hi David, Sincere apologies for not being able to get back to you sooner. While the health challenges remain evident at the moment, technological difficulties are challenging as well. I hope you and your family are doing well in these testing times. I am sorry for our club not being able to connect with yours. I am hopeful that will happen soon.

Also an update: we helped charter a new club- Optimist club of Nawalpur recently and two more clubs from Nepal are in the charter process. While the pandemic has us locked down, we are hoping once things ease out, we could get on with our Optimist movement at the earliest....

Also convey my apologies to your club memebers for not being able to connect. Shyam

We ARE Making a Difference

Lincoln Friends sent Thank You cards to Lincoln fire fighters. They are meeting via Zoom and each week each member sends a card to another member. The names are rotated so they send to a different member each week. It helps the members to stay in touch with each other. The club is happy to announce they have a new website. Check them out at lincolnfriendsoptimistclub.org.

Omaha Miracle Hills hung more than 400 flags in four different neighborhoods on the morning of Memorial Day. Club members also took down more than 400 flags on the same evening. The residents pay \$35 a year for flags to be hung at their residences five times a year.



From l to r: Rick Havenridge, Bradly Labeledz and Bob Labeledz

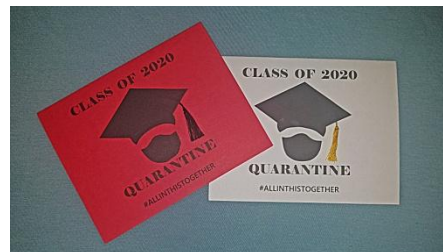
The **Kearney Club** is planning on finally being able to hang flags on Flag Day and on the 4th of July. They were rained out on the last two holidays (Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day). For a donation of \$30, the Club will hang flags at businesses nine times a year, weather permitting.

The **Lincoln OC** is collecting purses and will fill them with personal care items for the pre-teens and teenage ladies at the F Street Community Center. The Center is where youth go after school and on weekends for homework help, recreational activities, and the most important a

warm meal on weekends and during the week in the summer. If a child is going to the Center, it generally indicates the family doesn't have much money and sometimes providing for personal cares items is difficult. Club President Kailen Kluge knew they could help more youth with a grant, so they applied for a grant and received a \$500 matching grant from OI Foundation.

The **Metro Area Youth Foundation**, formed by Optimist Clubs in the Omaha area, eastern Nebraska and southwest Iowa, has had to cancel their Summer Bash for Childhood Cancer due to the Corona Virus. As their website says, "...However, **the Corona Virus has NOT cancelled the needs of our families....**"

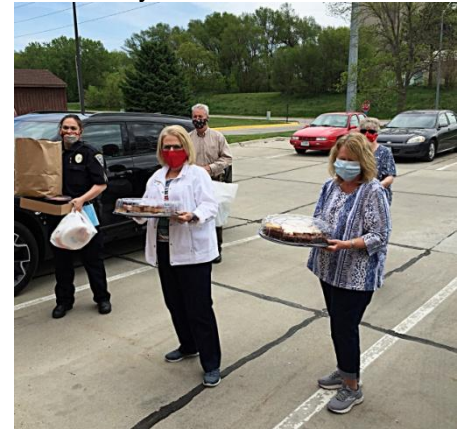
David City Optimists sent congratulation cards to the graduating seniors at David City High School and David City Aquinas High School. Included with each card was a wallet size "Optimist Creed Card."



The cards were in school colors.

Scholarship Update: In addition to the clubs that were mentioned in previous issues, the updates include two additional clubs and the number of scholarships awarded by clubs previously mentioned. The two additional clubs are the Seward O.C. (2) and Papillion-LaVista O.C. (2). The following are clubs previously mentioned with an update on the number of scholarships awarded: Norfolk Noon (3), Holdrege (7), Broken Bow (5), and Blair (3).

For their Respect for Law service project, the **South Sioux City Optimist club** honored the police force by taking lunch to them as a Thank You for keeping their community safe.



From l to r, front row: Police Officer, Debby Gunsolley, Cherrie Malcom, back row: Police Chief Ed Mahol, and Linda Brostad. Not pictured Larry Brostad

Want Some Fun, Sign Up for the Seward Virtual Freedom Run

Seward Optimists will soon be ready to sign you up for the re-iMaged Freedom Run! Everyone will mark their own trail, run on their own, and post their times on the website. The cost will be \$10 for either the 2 Mile or the 10K (6.2 Mile) races. Children 10 and under run free with a paying adult, but must register. Entrants will have until 6 PM on July 15th to finish their race and post their running/walking times.

Each runner is to receive a MiraCool Cooling Bandana in 4th of July colors and a personalized certificate to be emailed when posting their time.

When registration opens, go to getmeregistered.com, and in the Search Bar, enter: Seward to pull up the race. (Be sure to click on the **Freedom Run.**) Registration will be on-line only.

Join the 4th of July Spirit!

Lana Urban,
Virtual Freedom Run Chair

Assumption of the Risk and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. **COVID-19 is extremely contagious** and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. As a result, federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and have, in many locations, prohibited the congregation of groups of people.

The Optimist Club of _____ (“the Club”) has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the Club **cannot guarantee** that you or your child(ren) will not become infected with COVID-19. Further, **attending the Club meetings and events could increase** your risk and your child(ren)’s risk of contracting COVID-19.

.....
By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that my child(ren) and I may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by attending the Club meetings and events, and that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, and death. I understand that the risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at the Club meetings and events may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of myself and others, including, but not limited to, Club employees, volunteers, and program participants and their families.

I voluntarily agree to assume all of the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to my child(ren) or myself (including, but not limited to, personal injury, disability, and death), illness, damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense, of any kind, that I or my child(ren) may experience or incur in connection with my child(ren)’s attendance at the Club or participation in the Club meeting, event, and/or programming (“Claims”). On my behalf, and on behalf of my children, I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless the Club, its employees, agents, and representatives, of and from the Claims, including all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. I understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of the Club, its employees, agents, and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during, or after participation in any Club meeting, event, and/or program.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Print Name of Parent/Guardian

Name of Club Participant(s)