



Nebraska District Optimists



Sandra Allen, Governor
June, 2021
OI 3rd Quarter Theme
“Rally”

Mark Your Calendars!

June 21, 2021

OI Webinar

“Facebook Page Management” 7 p.m.

June 30-July 3, 2021

International Convention
Atlanta, Georgia

July 10, 2021

Coffee with the Governor
Zoom event 9:30 a.m.

A&A Reports due to District Chair
Judy Winkler

July 14 – 29, 2021

2021 Optimist International Junior
Golf Championship

August 1, 2021

MAYF Kickoff for Childhood
Cancer Wine Tasting Party
4:00–7:00 p.m.

Charlie’s On the Lake
4150 W 144th St., Omaha

August 20-21, 2021

District Convention
Omaha

August 23, 2021

OI Webinar
“Tools for Communication”
7 p.m.

August 30, 2021

[Health and Wellness Grant Applications](#) due to OI
Foundation



Sandra Coaxum Allen, Governor

*“One can never consent to creep
when he feels an impulse to
soar.” – Helen Keller*

During the Nebraska District Annual Convention 2019-2020, I had the opportunity to share my vision for the continued success of the Nebraska District Optimists. I introduced the eagle as our symbol for the year and highlighted a few characteristics of that majestic bird. Eagles have strong vision and focus on their goals. Eagles partner with their mates and invest in the training of their offspring.

The final characteristic that I shared with you is that eagles love the storm. In fact, eagles are at their best -- and are shown in all their majesty -- during the storm.

When storm clouds gather, most other birds head for cover, hiding in the leaves and branches of the trees. But not the eagle. The fierce and fearless eagle actually gets excited when the storm comes! An eagle senses when a storm is coming, finds a high spot on which to perch, and waits for the storm’s wind to lift it higher, higher, far above the clouds. The eagle then flies into the storm and uses the wind to rise even higher in a matter of seconds. (I actually find this quite fascinating.)

An eagle can soar in the midst of the storm because it has the unique ability to lock its wings in a fixed position and glide along, allowing the strong winds to carry it to majestic heights. The eagle ignites the momentum and fearlessly allows itself to soar without having to overexert itself by flapping its heavy, expansive wings.



What does this have to do with being a Nebraska Optimist? Here is the analogy, as I see it. The eagle? The Nebraska District (continued on following page)

Optimist. The wings? Our “busy-ness.” The way we introduce our clubs by listing all the things we do – the youth activities, the fundraisers, the community events The wind? Choosing optimism as a way of life!

To soar means more than just to fly. Flying is just moving through the air, and generally requires a steady, gradual acceleration. To soar means to elevate rapidly above the usual level. I ran across a blog that says it better: “To fly means to be simply moving along and going about the daily routines without any hope or joy. But to SOAR HIGH is to display joy, thrill, and gratitude in living. It means to rise above disappointments and to spread your beautiful God-given wings into the Sun.” [dianasdiaries.com]

In other words, soaring high is not just about altitude, but also about attitude. It is a way of life. We *choose* to soar high, even when the going gets tough and our challenges seem insurmountable. We choose to soar high because we have embraced optimism as a way of life.

I think we can all agree that the last eighteen months have placed us in strong winds. It doesn't matter if you think COVID is fake or not. It doesn't matter if you think it is over or if you think it will be with us for a while. It has impacted all of us. And it has impacted Optimists all over the world. We have been forced to be more creative in the way we meet and in the way we serve.

It would have been easy for us to hang our heads, cover our eyes, hope for the best, and quietly ease into the next Optimist year. But we are Optimists! We do not “hope” for the best. No, we think of the best, we work for the best, and we expect only the best. No,

we do not just hope for the best. We bring out the best—in youth, in our communities, and in ourselves!

Remember that the best is not found in the storm, but above the storm. The best doesn't come when we flap our wings and tell prospective members all the things we do. The best comes when we show our optimism, when we share our optimism with others, when we live out the Optimist Creed.

Let's promise ourselves to forget the mistakes of the past – like taking shelter during the storm by not meeting or serving over the past year – and press on to the greater achievements of the future. Your club can still finish this year with distinction. If we are to soar like eagles, we cannot be afraid of the storm. Instead, we must allow ourselves to be lifted by stormy winds and rise to higher levels by “Soaring With Optimism!”

Sandra Allen, Governor

It Is Not Too Late to Register

If you think it's too late to register for the OI Convention, there is good news! If you want to go to Atlanta, **advanced registration continues until June 19th**. After that date, on-site registration rates are in effect. The on-site registration deadline is June 29th.

If you think maybe you would like to attend the virtual convention, you have until midnight on July 3rd to register. The registration fee is \$49. There is also a **Voluntary Gold Registration** fee of \$25 to help mitigate some of the financial burden of a hybrid convention if you choose to help. To view the convention schedules and to find the registration forms, [click here](#).

Are You Working to Develop Professionally? (PDP)

We are well into our current Optimist year with activities and competitions taking place. Those of you who are working to advance through the Professional Development Program should focus your attention on completing all the required activities on the various levels in which you are interested.

If you planned or participated in past (over the years) activities, those activities can be applied toward pins for Levels I-X. The bronze, silver, and gold activities must be completed during the current 2020-2021 membership year.

Each of the levels require that you put on a presentation to your club or other clubs depending on the project you are doing. You need to work with your club president or secretary to get on the planning calendar so you can accomplish those feats.

To be certified for each level you must have your club president or secretary-treasurer sign off on each level. If you haven't begun any activities yet, with most communities opening up, your PDP goals can still be accomplished.

There is a document that you will need to submit to me and I will forward it to Optimist International so you can receive your pin for the completed levels. We are working on making this document available for you via either the district website or the district Facebook page.

Questions can be directed to me at redvirgo1959@aol.com.
Tamara Bailey
District PDP/PGI Chair

May had Four, Can June Have More?

Gretna

Walter Volmer III

Julie Hayes, sponsor

Norfolk Noon

Alexis Thieman

Amanda Smith, sponsor

Lincoln West

Jett Birkett

Angie Birkett, sponsor

Paxton

Quade Brees

Mark Spurgin, sponsor

*Welcome to our world of
Optimism!*

Achievements and Awards (A&A)

The A&A program is struggling this year. For the first two quarters, we received one report total. I was remiss in not sending a reminder second quarter due to illness and traveling, and many clubs did not have a lot going on. As clubs are getting back to normal and are able to do more, we hope that you are keeping track of your achievements and will submit a third quarter report or perhaps, you will submit a year end form with the year's activities. If you need the form, drop me an email and I will get one to you.

jwinkleroptimist@gmail.com

We would value your input. Do you think this program has run its course? Is it helpful for your club? Options are to continue as we have, revamp the program, or cease it altogether. If you have thoughts on this, please send them to me or Governor Sandra or Governor-elect Cindy.

I hope you are all healthy, vaccinated, and enjoying life!

Judy Winkler
District A&A Chair

LEADERSHIP PERSONIFIED

Once upon a time there was a man named Al Ballard. As an optimist himself, he would have been a great member of our organization. However, at the time neither he nor I were aware of this organization. He not only operated "out of the box;" he didn't even acknowledge there was a box. He was a man of vision for not only himself but for the organization he led and all of those with whom he associated.

Problems were not obstacles, rather they were challenges to be tweaked or overcome. He understood that even the greatest of ideas had a timeline, to be accomplished when the time was ripe, yet not to be abandoned. He knew how to plant the seeds for success and how to harvest those seeds when appropriate.

Al was my mentor. He hired me as office manager and his personal secretary. My first assignment was to relieve the current secretary of her position. He, of course, could have let the secretary go himself; however, she was the daughter of a member of the organization's board of directors, so there was a "political" issue of sorts at work. I accepted the position, even though it meant a substantial cut in salary, with the assurance that I would always have his support and that salaries would be increased in time. He kept his word on both counts, not only with me but with the rest of the staff and employees.

Al's leadership style was to build relationships with others based on their strengths rather than their weaknesses. He created a team atmosphere, wherein everyone worked toward the personal growth of each other and the

greater good of the organization as a whole. I miss Al Ballard.

Mary Lou Anderson
District Leadership Chair

An Optimistic Approach (and Solution) to Bed Bugs

There are many needy people in our state and there are many organizations that are helping with food, clothing, household goods and furniture, but there is one problem. The problem concerns bedding and fabric furniture. They are often overlooked



due to the risk of bedbugs. Many organizations will not accept bedding and fabric furniture and many needy families will also pass on accepting bedding and fabric furniture due to the risk of bed bugs.

Partnership 4 Hope, with the assistance of the Omaha Home for Boys, and the Omaha Miracle Hills Optimist Club and many volunteers have built a "bed bug chamber" to sanitize beds and furniture prior to distribution. The chamber is safe and no chemicals are used.

When developing a chamber, the main need is a space for the chamber inside a warehouse that receives the donations of beds and furniture. The chamber in Omaha is 12 feet by 8 feet. The chamber needs access



to a water line as it is necessary to include a sprinkler system as a safety measure. Some of the other items involved are an electric bed bug heater and a digital thermometer and sensor. Labor involved a carpenter, an electrician, and a sprinkler system installer.

When beds and fabric furniture
(continued on the next page.)

are delivered to the warehouse, they immediately are placed in the chamber for sanitation. The chamber must get to 123 degrees Fahrenheit in order to kill the bed bugs, but must be 135 degrees to ensure sanitization.

If you and your club are interested in helping with this important project, either the Omaha project or in creating a chamber in your community with the help of other organizations, contact Paul Keller @ pkeller56@cox.net for additional information. Everyone deserves a clean and bug free bed. (This is condensed from an article submitted by Paul Keller.)

Marketing Minute

The Nebraska District Marketing and Communication Committee encompasses a variety of areas: social media, websites, newsletters, email, and Zoom. If you've ever thought about getting involved with the district but wasn't sure how, this is your opportunity! If any of these areas sounds like something you may be interested in, please reach out to me or Governor-Elect Cindy Von Fange.

The **social media** position posts to the Nebraska District Facebook page. Ideally, there are three posts a week. Facebook has a scheduling tool so you don't have to take a lot of time every day. To help, there are ideas for posts on the OI Facebook group – [OI Marketing](#).

The **webmaster** position works with the district website. Don't let the title "master" fool you! You don't have to know it all, you just need to be comfortable with the technology. It involves getting things onto the website - like

conference information or committee reports.

You are familiar with the excellent work of Betty Totten, our current **newsletter** editor! If you've ever thought, "that might be fun," now is your time. Don't worry if your ideas are a little different – change isn't bad.

We use MailChimp to send a monthly **email** with our newsletter. We will also send other emails with important information like conference registration or important reminders. The templates are set, it's a matter of ensuring the email is sent when it needs to go.

The **Zoom** coordinator position is new but one that will stay as the Nebraska District continues with virtual meetings. This job entails someone setting up the meeting for any club or committee within the district. Then you'll need to 'start' it. We don't have so many meetings that you'll need to be available 24/7 but we need one point of contact to make sure things get done.

None of these jobs in and of themselves are all that difficult even if you don't know anything! As current committee chair, I'm more than willing to provide training and/or answer questions.

If any of this sounds even a little intriguing, then give me a call. No pressure! Or talk to Governor-Elect Cindy. It's very gratifying to get involved at this level knowing you are helping the district's clubs and members be successful in their communities.

.#ChooseOptimism
Diane Siefkes
Marketing & Communications Chair



The Party Bus to Atlanta has been cancelled, but the OI Convention has not been cancelled!! It isn't too late to register for an in-person convention or the virtual convention. If you don't have your plane tickets, take a scenic drive. Atlanta is only about 15 ½ hours away!

Optimists Help With Higher Education

The following are the Nebraska Optimist Clubs that awarded scholarships to graduating high school seniors this year.

Blair
Columbus
Gretna
Holdrege
Kearney
Norfolk
Norfolk Noon
North Omaha
Ogallala
Seward
South Sioux City

If your club awarded scholarships, but is not listed above, please email me. My address is bettytotten1@gmail.com. I will update the list in the July issue.
Betty Totten
District Newsletter Editor

Beginning June 1, the new Member Fee of \$15.00 has been waived until September 30th, 2021. It is time to invite a friend to share your Optimism!

THE OPTIMIST

International Junior Golf Championships



Forty-eight Junior Golfers from across Nebraska competed in the Nebraska Optimist Junior Golf Qualifier at The York Country Club. They were vying for the opportunity to represent Nebraska in "The Optimist" at the Doral Resort and Spa, Miami, Florida.

Top Scorers

Boys Ages 16-18

Top 2 Qualifying Score of 77 & Under*

Alex Schademann (71) Geneva
Coltrane Mittag (72) Ashland
Cole Feddersen (72) Kearney
Marley Jensen (74) York
Andrew Whittaker (75) Elkhorn

Boys Ages 14-15

Top 2 Qualifying Score of 82 & Under*

Trey Ruge (71) Omaha
Emmanuel Jensen (71) York
Trevor Gutschewski (74) Elkhorn

Elijah Jensen (81) York
Soren Bostrom (82) Lincoln

Boys Ages 12-13

Qualifying Score of 89 & Under*

Zach Alt (117) York

Boys Ages 10-11

Qualifying Score of 95 & Under*

Tye Treadwell (79) Omaha

Girls Agnes 15-18

Top 4 Qualifying Score of 84 & Under*

Lauren Thiele (73) Wahoo
Nicole Kolbas (76) Lincoln
Emily Kamazin (81) Omaha
Karsen Morrison (82) N. Platte
Julia Karmazin (87) Omaha

Girls Ages 13-14

Top 2 Qualifying Score of 92 & Under*

Brooke Thiele (81) Wahoo
Madison Murnan (92) Omaha
Ansie Giesselmann (93) Fremont
Julia Messere (97) Gr. Island

Girls Ages 10-12

Top 2 Qualifying Score of 96 & Under*

Naryn Kim (83) Lincoln
Tasha Kolbas (105) Lincoln

*OI allotted a specific number of slots in each age division. Our Jr. Golfers had to meet both the number and score. If the 1st qualifying golfer is unable to attend, the next golfer with a qualifying score can attend in his/her place.

A heartfelt thank you to:

◆ Triple Eagle Plus Sponsors – Omaha Breakfast and Omaha Miracle Hills Optimist Clubs

◆ Double Eagle Sponsor – Papillion/LaVista Optimist Club

◆ Club Birdie Sponsors – Lincoln Evening, Lincoln Sunrise, Lincoln West, and Omaha Southwest Optimist Clubs

◆ Individual Birdie Sponsors – Linda Wheeler and Richard Raasch

◆ Player Sponsors – Aurora 2, Hickman, Kearney 2, Omaha Breakfast, Paxton, West Point 2, and York 2

◆ Volunteers at the Event – Governor Sandra Allen, Past Governors Linda Wheeler, Beryle Lantz, and Bob "Fritz" Kluge, Lt. Governor Carla Gries, and Nolan Irwin, my grandson

◆ Golf Pro Bill Thomas and staff at The York Country Club

The District pays the registration fee for the winning boy and girl in the oldest age divisions. This includes golf, five nights lodging, four dinners, and breakfasts for the golfer. Transportation and any family costs are on their own. Other qualifiers receive minimal financial support unless clubs, businesses, and individuals step forward to help fund their expenses. So far, Omaha Breakfast, Ralston, Omaha West, Omaha Southwest and North Platte clubs have indicated a desire to help. If you or your club can help, please let me know and make a check payable to Nebraska District Optimists. We will issue one check to OI so we do not run afoul of amateur sport rules. Thank you for your support.



l to r: Governor Sandra Allen and Lt. Governor Carla Gries, the designated golf cart chauffeur traveled the course together.



Nice drive for this 16 year old lady!



Wow! What a drive for this young man!



Boys (11 & 12 age group) line up their putts. Hoping for a birdie?

Dick Raasch
OI Jr. Golf Championship District Chair
5734 N 78th Ave, Omaha NE 68134
402-681-9438 rwaasch@cox.net

(More pictures of Jr. Golf Qualifier Tournament on the last page)

These Clubs Just Keep on Soaring!

May 8th was a busy day for **Blair Optimists**. The chilly morning started with the Pitch, Hit and Run competition at 9 a.m. The Storm Chasers (a Triple-A Affiliate of the KC Royals) mascot made a special appearance at the event. At 11 a.m., the Optimist Club and other sponsors hosted the annual Washington



County Bike Rodeo. The Bike Rodeo featured games, helmets, an obstacle course, prizes, and a

fix-it station. Other sponsors for the Bike Rodeo were the Blair Police Department, the Blair Volunteer Fire and Rescue, the Nebraska Extension in Washington County, Memorial Community Hospital & Health Systems of Blair, the Three Rivers Public Health Department, and the Blair Family YMCA.

(From Facebook)

For their May project, the **Lincoln Friends Club** made gift bags for the women at Fresh Start, a “transition” shelter for homeless women who are working to improve their lives. The gift bags were filled with basic essentials and some pampering items. Twenty gift bags were delivered.

(From Facebook)



Lincoln Friends meeting to fill the gift bags for the ladies at Fresh Start.

The Norfolk and the Norfolk Noon Optimist Clubs jointly recognized 12 Norfolk students as “Unsung Heroes.” The stu-

dents were nominated by their teachers for “having overcome obstacles to accomplish something noticed by others.” Each student will receive a certificate and special centerpiece. Instead of serving a meal for the students and their families as has been done in the past, due to the pandemic guidelines, each family was given a \$20 gift card to Culvers.

The **Norfolk Noon Optimists** recently donated \$1,000.00 to support efforts of the Norfolk Panther Octagon Club at Norfolk Senior High during their "Battle of the Sevens" fundraiser for Childhood Cancer. A total of \$2,800.00 was sent to Children's Hospital in Omaha to purchase 112 "Dream Bead" kits for young cancer patients there! Also, per their Facebook page, "A handful of Norfolk Noon Optimists helped during the Landon Bos Memorial Bicycle Rodeo Over 100 children and youth are now better prepared for a safe summer!"

South Sioux City Optimists did their part to help keep South Sioux City beautiful when five members collected eight bags of trash in their



stretch of highway cleanup.

(From Facebook)

Meanwhile, **Lincoln Evening** members met to clean up the plaza at the Optimist Youth Sports Complex. Following the cleanup, members were rewarded with “Pizza on the Plaza.”

Papillion/Lavista Optimists are anticipating the arrival of their College World Series team. However, due to teams being in the “Covid Bubble” the club will not be able to host the traditional team event

Members of the **South Omaha Optimist Club** volunteered to help with the South Omaha Business Improvement District Planting Day. The group beautified the 68 planters along South Omaha’s historic 24th Street.



Two men standing on the right, l to r: Ross Pesek, Cliff McEvoy

The **South Omaha Optimist Club** is also partnering with the Cinco de Mayo Festival for a fundraising event. Optimist volunteers will provide clean-up services during the festival.

(From Facebook)

Kearney had two flag hanging holidays in May: Armed Forces Day on the 15th and Memorial Day on the 31st. They have divided the city into six routes and each route can be completed in about 30 minutes. This is a major fundraiser for the club.

Looking Back

In a 1994 District newsletter, the Omaha Breakfast Club featured a “Hymn Humor Quiz.”

1. The Dentist’s Hymn?
2. The Contractor’s Hymn?
3. The Tailor’s Hymn?
4. The Gossip’s Hymn?
5. The Highway Driver’s Hymn at 60 MPH?
6. The Highway Driver’s Hymn at 80 MPH?
7. The Highway Driver’s Hymn at 100 mph?

(1. Crown Him with Many Crowns 2. The Church’s One Foundation 3. Holy, Holy, Holy 4. Pass It On 5. God Will take Care of You 6. Nearer My God to Thee 7. Lord, I’m Coming Home)

Nebraska Junior Golf Qualifier Photos - Medal Winners



Only one 11 year old, but he is headed to Miami with a score of 79!



Only boy from 12-13 age group is receiving his medal. Unfortunately his score isn't qualifying him for Miami. Maybe next year!



Girls 10-12: Golfers had to walk all 18 holes! This was a first for the 10 year old.



Girls 13-14: Governor Sandra presented their medals.



Boys 14-15: These medalists all shot qualifying scores. The top two tied with a 71!



Girls 15-18: The top scorer shot 73! Another top scorer from Wahoo!



Boys 16-18: All medalists shot qualifying scores. The winner shot a Par 71!

**Congratulations
Medalists!**