



Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor

May, 2020



Governor Linda Wheeler
#OptimistMonday

Governor's Message

Our journey in this "new normal" began eight (8) weeks ago. It is my sincere hope that every Optimist in Nebraska is doing well, staying well and staying safe. During this time of social distancing, I trust every Club is staying connected and has re-**iMagine**d ways to stay in touch with your community and youth. In this newsletter, you will read how some clubs are staying in touch and about projects that some of our clubs are engaged in with their youth and community.

While doing activities, also look at the future, evaluate and brainstorm with your Club members about the needs of your community and find a way to meet those needs. Consider joining with other groups to make more of an impact in your community.

While reaching out to your community groups, please look at those people who are interested in helping their community. Plan a "Meet & Greet" Post-COVID-19 party or outing and invite them to join your Club.

Update your Club's social media presence. Review your club roster that is on the OI Leaders page, to assure the information is correct. The District uses that information to connect with your club members, so if their email addresses are not correct, they will not receive this District "**iMagine More**" newsletter, or information sent from "governor@nebraskaoptimists" or any other information sent out from Optimist International.

Please consider using Zoom or other platforms to meet with your membership. There are people in the District who would be willing to assist if you are unsure how to set it up. Also, Optimist International has been providing Zoom webinars to answer questions about setting up and using Zoom.

Even though your Club Officer Election (COER) report is not due until September 1st, please select your club officers and submit the Club Officer Election Report as soon as possible. Governor-Elect, Sandra Allen, needs this information to get ready for her year and to plan training for those officers. This information is also needed to prepare the District Directory.

I hope all Optimist mothers had an incredibly Happy Mother's Day. Be safe, be well, and make plans for a brighter and energetic year for your Optimist Clubs.

Linda Wheeler
Nebraska Optimist Governor

Dates to Remember!

May 15, 2020

Important Change

Deadline for clubs to submit
Oratorical winner to District Chair
Jon Conyers.

May 16, 2020

Coffee with the Governor
Zoom Event 9:30 am

May 18, 2020

Optimist Monday

Wear your Optimist shirt and take
a selfie with you wearing your
mask while out in public. Post the
picture on FB.

Webinar "All about the Honor
Club and What it Takes"
7 pm

May 25, 2020

Optimist Monday

Wear your Optimist shirt, take a
selfie of how you celebrate
Memorial Day while keeping your
social distance. Post it on FB.
9:30 am

May 30, 2020

Coffee with the Governor
Zoom Event 9:30 am

June 1, 2020

Optimist Monday

Wear your Optimist shirt, take a
selfie and write a positive
statement and post on FB.

June 4, 2020

Cancelled

OI Jr. Golf Tournament

June 13, 2020

Coffee with the Governor
Zoom Event 9:30 am

It is time to Update the Bylaws

Last Friday, notice was sent out from OI to Club Presidents and Secretaries stating that clubs need to update their bylaws due to new mandatory language for insurance purposes. If all clubs do not update the bylaws, the cost of insurance will rise and will be passed on to the clubs. As of May 6th, a deadline for the updating had not yet been set, however OI realizes it may take a couple of months for all clubs to complete the updating.

During the Siouxland Summit webinar, OI's Stephanie Mon-schein said that if clubs had previously sent their bylaws to OI online, the club can go online to update and print off a copy of the bylaws for their club. Otherwise the updated bylaws will need to be mailed to OI.

Don't Forget the OI Foundation!

The Board of Directors of the Optimist International Foundation realize that we all are living in a state of uncertainty at this time, but they wish to assure you that they are here to support you and your clubs. Because the 3rd quarter conferences were cancelled, they are concerned that individuals and clubs may have missed opportunities to donate to the foundation. If your club members could donate only \$5 each or what you feel you can afford at this time, it would show support for the OI Foundation which in turn would assure that the grants and scholarships that come from OI would continue to support the programs in the Nebraska District.

Marguerite Hansen
OI Foundation Rep

Have You Ever???

Have you ever thought about attending the Optimist International Convention, but decided it cost too much or would take too much of your vacation? Or if you attend the convention each year, have you ever thought that it would be cancelled and you couldn't go?

This year the OI Convention has been re-iMagine! OI President Adrian Elcock announced that all Optimists will have the opportunity to experience the convention from their own home on June 27th and 28th. There won't be any \$125 (plus taxes) hotel room rates and the convention registration is only \$35 for the two days! If you are one of the first 500 to register, the rate is only \$25! Each day there will be keynote speakers, breakout sessions for training, OI catalog vendors, and chat rooms.

If you have never been to the International Convention, this is an opportunity to get a taste of the OI Convention experience. If you are a regular attendee, this is an opportunity to keep up-to-date and in touch with your OI Convention friends. Online registration is planned to open on May 11th.

Presidents, It Is Time to Vote

Presidents, May is the time for you to cast your Club's vote for 2020-21 Optimist International leadership. If you are uncertain who to vote for, go to the OI website www.optimist.org, open the Member Resources tab and look for 2020 International Election on the left hand side of the first page. Discuss it with you fellow club members, select your candidates, and VOTE!.

It's New! The Learning Management System

The Learning Management system is a centralized training tool for President-elects and other club officers. The LMS went online May 4th. Presidents who signed their club up will receive a password to access this site from TOVUTL. Please check your junk mail or spam if you have not received it. If you are unable to locate this email, contact Michelle Turner at Optimist International at michelle.turner@optimist.org.

Once you have your password, share it with your officers for the 2020-21 year so they can begin their online training. Should one of your officers be serving again in the upcoming year, they will also need to complete the training modules. The officers can complete the modules at their own pace. LMS has a comment section to provide information or to point out any errors in any module.

Everyone using the Learning Management System is encouraged to take time to watch the welcome video in order to become acquainted with this system. Besides officer training, there are modules on using Zoom within your club, success planning, and concussions from sports injuries. The Learning Management System will be continually updated with new modules for club use.



A Re-iMagineD CCDHH

The Nebraska District Communication Contest for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) was held on Sunday, April 26th, via Zoom. Originally planned as an in-person event at the Clifton Center in Lincoln, we were forced to use Zoom due to closures and the effects of COVID-19. It was fortunate for us that our partner in this, the Regional Programs for Students who are Deaf & Hard of Hearing, has had experience using Zoom for such things; making the transition relatively easy. Only those necessary for the event (three judges, an interpreter, the host, the three participants, a Regional Program Director and myself (as emcee and timer) participated in the event.

The judges watched each of the participants and emailed their scores to our Regional Director, who assisted me in tabulating the scores and determining the scholarship winners. The interpreter helped those participants and judges communicate with the rest of us throughout the event which lasted just over an hour.

The Nebraska District receives one \$2,500 scholarship from the Optimist International Foundation which we have named in memory of long-time CCDHH supporter. Chet Arnett. The family of Katie Gurnsey, a sign language interpreter who was severely injured in a car accident a few years ago,

Hamilton Relay and Optimist Clubs in the Nebraska District collectively provide funds for a second matching scholarship. Since there were only three participants this year and all were seniors, funds were sought for an additional scholarship of \$1,000 to be provided along with the two we typically provide. The Omaha Breakfast Optimist Club generously offered to fully support the third scholarship so everyone truly was a “winner” during this year’s event.

The following are the results which featured speeches on the theme, “Just iMagine a World without Boundaries.”

Chet Arnett

Memorial Scholarship

Samantha Clifford

(Diller-O’Dell High School)

Katie Gurnsey

Remembrance Scholarship

Claire Johnson

(Hastings Adams Central High School)

Omaha Breakfast

“Friend of Youth” Scholarship

Molly McEvoy

(Ralston High School)

Other Optimist Clubs that made this year’s scholarships possible were Aurora, Lincoln Evening, Lincoln Sunrise, Lincoln West, Omaha Miracle Hills, Norfolk Morning, Norfolk Noon, Omaha, Seward and West Point.

Mark Claussen
CCDHH Chairman

Something is Missing!

What’s missing are April’s new members. There weren’t any!

District Oratorical Contest Update

As of May 5, there are contestants from Fairbury, Nebraska City, South Sioux City, Omaha Breakfast, and Seward Optimist Clubs. The deadline for submitting con-

testants to Jon Conyers, District Chair, is **May 15th**. If you have a contestant, or if you have any questions please contact Jon. He is planning a practice session for all the contestants, judges, and timekeeper prior to the competition so everyone will understand how the competition will operate. The District competition will be held on June 6, 2020 via Zoom. The District winner will advance on to compete in the Regional/World completion which will presumably be held as an online event.



Coffee with the Governor

Every other Saturday morning you can join Governor Linda and other Nebraska Optimists for a virtual coffee via Zoom. The “Coffee” starts at 9:30 am and last for approximately 40 minutes. It is an opportunity to share ideas, club experiences, and to know members from other clubs. The “coffee” is very casual and a great way to start the weekend.

The next “Coffee” will be May 16th. A few days prior to the “Coffee,” the invitation and the link to join will be sent out via the Nebraska District Website. Come join us on the 16th!

May is Military Appreciation Month!

It was planned to honor our Optimist Veterans during the 3rd Quarter Conference last month. Due to the conference being cancelled, we listed the veterans in the April issue of the District **iMagine More** newsletter. The names below have since been received or updated.

Thank You for Your Service!

ZONE 4

South Sioux City Morning

Ron Bottger
Navy

Bill Garvey
Army

ZONE 5

Nebraska City

Neal Deremer
Air force



Members We've Lost

We would like to extend condolences to the families of Donna Weed (The Norfolk Meadows Club), Mary Bonman (Lincoln West Club), and George Beasley, a 50-year member of the Fairbury Club. These three members had a combined 71 years of service to youth.

During March and April, the Nebraska District had five members resign due to moving. We wish them well.

Judith Kluge

Distance Recruiting

Suddenly "distance" has become an integral part of our language. Social distance, distance learning, and long distance have all become part of our everyday conversation. As Optimists we can add another distance to our vocabulary – "distance recruiting."

With so many clubs holding Zoom meetings, we could invite friends and relatives to join and hear members share ideas of how to help youngsters navigate through these unprecedented times. Observing the camaraderie and interactions might impact them in such a way that they would want to join and share in the service and entertainment. Be sure to follow up and "just ask."

Do you know you can sponsor someone in a club other than your own? This is just another form of distance recruiting. We all know a friend, relative, former co-worker, college roommate, or business associate living in one of the 36 cities or towns in Nebraska where an Optimist club exists. You can invite them to join a local club. Have them complete an invitation (application) and submit it with the one-time application fee. You will receive sponsor credit, the Club gets a new member, and they will begin a fulfilling life of service and friendships.

If there is not a Club in their community, one could be established, nothing is impossible. Just contact the District Governor and start the process. Every community can benefit from an Optimist Club. We are all in this together: for our youth, our communities, and ourselves.

Judith Kluge
Growth Chair

Do You Need an Unusual Graduation Gift?

This graduation season is like none other, very unique. Give a gift that is equally unique. Give the gift of Optimism. Consider presenting that special young adult with a membership to an Optimist Club. If they reside in or plan to attend a post secondary school in a community with an Optimist Club, contact that Club to learn what their "college student dues" are and arrange to enroll the student as a member.

Many school curriculums involve community service hours; being an active member of Optimists, would fulfill that requirement. Membership in an Optimist Club can be included on the resume when applying for employment.

If the person is graduating from college, give them a membership into an adult club. Unless they are a non-traditional student, you can enroll them in a Club through the \$30 under 30 program. This can be the perfect gift to launch them into a future of service and friendships.

Judith Kluge

Progress on New Club Building in Sidney

There are three persons interested in building an Optimist club in Sidney. The plan is to begin in earnest once we no longer need to shelter in place. We are still seeking people that you may know in the Sidney area who would be great potential Optimists. We are also seeking two Nebraska Optimist Clubs to sponsor this club. Please contact me if you know someone or if your club would be a sponsor.

Governor Linda Wheeler
lawheelz@netzero.net



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YOU CAN STILL BECOME AN HONOR CLUB!!

Yes, even in this era of uncertainty, you can still become an Honor Club! As you peruse through this newsletter, you will see how some of our other clubs are doing what they can to reach that goal.

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) Complete 3 or more service projects each year.
- 2) Complete the *President's Pride Report and Club Officer Election forms. (NOTE: The COER deadline is September 1st. Please see Governor Linda's Message on page 1.)
- 3) Recognize a Club member or local community individual.
- 4) Grow Club by net of +3 in membership.
- 5) Appoint a Club Foundation Representative and make a non-restrictive contribution to the OI Foundation.
- 6) Conduct a membership recruitment drive (NOW Program.)
- 7) Club President and Club President-Elect (or two designees) attend District convention or two other district conferences.

- 8) Be current on District and OI dues and fees.

*The President's Pride Report is due at the end of the year, September 30th. You can get online and start the report anytime you want. Then go back in anytime you want to update your numbers and information. Just save as you go. It is there until you finally submit it.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author

YOU ARE WORKING TOWARD DISTINGUISHED CLUB!!

Meet Honor Club Criteria plus one of the following:

- Add Net +15 in membership OR
- Build one or more new clubs OR
- Increase by Net +8 and build two or more JOI clubs

The **Distinguished Club** is one that progresses in club growth, either by adding to the membership (15 members) or building a new club.

Carla Gries
Governor's Assistant

*In the midst of chaos,
There is also
Opportunity*

*Sun Tsu
On Thrive Global website*

Spring Has Arrived, A Time to Grow And Time to Show

Even though spring has arrived, we are not out of hibernation, but it is time to get back to our PURPOSE in our communities. Your Club has a PURPOSE: A mission to make a difference in the lives of the children you serve in your communities. This purpose is your WHY: Your WHY is the very reason your club exists. Now is the time to share that WHY in your communities and to tell them that you are back!

President Adrian Elcock has asked clubs to "Share to Inspire" and "to Keep in Sght" by pulling out old pictures of your club's accomplishments and sharing them on Facebook or Instagram (or your favorite social media). Do not forget to share the pictures with Kailen Kluge who hosts our Nebraska District Facebook page. Kjkluge62001@gmail.com.
Governor Linda Wheeler

2020 Nebraska District Convention Update

Due to the pandemic situation in Grand Island and Hall County, the site and the status of the Nebraska District Convention is uncertain at this time. Governor Linda has been trying to contact the convention site, but has been unsuccessful. Members will be notified when decisions regarding the convention are made.

The proposed dues increase discussion is tabled at this time due to the financial issues brought on by the pandemic.

Good News! Optimists Are Still Finding Ways to Help!

Even though the high school seniors did not have the senior year they were expecting, many Optimist Clubs continued to award scholarships to deserving graduating seniors. The Optimist Clubs are: **Plattsmouth, Miracle Hills, Norfolk Noon (3), Norfolk Morning, Holdrege, Columbus, Kearney, Broken Bow, South Sioux City (2), Blair** and the **West Point Club**.

Norfolk Noon Optimist Club sponsored "Show & Tell" projects for Middle School students. Students who participated in the "show" part of "Show and Tell" drew or painted a picture that showed what they thought it meant to be an Optimist or what they had to be optimistic about. The participating students in the "tell" part of the project submitted a videotape of themselves giving a 2 – 3 minute speech telling what they thought it meant to be an Optimist during this pandemic and school closure. The winners received Burger King gift cards.

Fairbury Optimists are looking to once again working the concession stand at Jefferson County Speedway. Races are tentatively set to start in June and the Optimist Club's first concession date will be June 13th.

South Sioux City Optimists have found a way to have a club social while practicing guidelines for social distancing. They will be gathering in a restaurant parking lot and the social will be complete with parking lot food/car hop food and beverage service.

Omaha Miracle Hills also hosted a club social using Zoom. The

cocktail party featured a game of Trivia, and conversation.

The 162 stuffed and cuddly animals, donated by the **Lincoln Evening Club**, finally got to their foster home at CHI St. Elizabeth in the Pediatric Area. The day they were delivered, at least 17 animals already found their forever home with pediatric patients.



From l to r: LEO President Crystal Masters and daughter Avah, Dottie Williams, and two CHI Staff Members and a cuddly bear

The **Lincoln Evening Club** also provided a Thank You Meal for Fire Station #1 in Lincoln. The firemen from Fire Station #1 assist the Lincoln Optimist clubs with Homer's Heroes each year.

Ogallala Optimists are making plans for their fireworks sales this year. They have the place, they have the staff, and they have a mission to help the youth of Ogallala.

The **Norfolk Club** and the **Norfolk Noon Club's** "Unsung Heroes" program is back on track, but in a re-iMaged format. Instead of the traditional pizza party, the each of the 17 students will receive a certificate and a gift card for Raising Canes.

The **Elkhorn Club's** "Chalk Your Walk" project created Sidewalk

Chalk Obstacle Courses in high traffic areas. Ten bags full of chalk and an instruction sheet for the project including the Elkhorn Optimist Club Project name of "Chalk Your Walk", their FB Page Name, and an example of an obstacle course.



An example of a sidewalk obstacle course.

The **Southwest Omaha Club** honored the staffs at two nursing homes with a small bag for each employee. Each bag contained a Thank You note and a wallet sized card with the Creed. They also delivered candy for the employees. A staff member thanked them and said the staff was very grateful to be recognized for their efforts.



From l to r: Jerry Warner, Naomi Warner, Carla Gries, Marvin Wastell, and Corinne Wastell, Photo by Mycki Nissen

Many activities have had to be cancelled, including the **Star City Optimist Youth Foundation's** (Lincoln Optimist Clubs) Fun Day in the Park and Homer's Heroes baseball season (for special needs youth). **North Bend** and **Aurora** have also had to cancel their spring soccer seasons.

#CovidKindness Challenge

A challenge from the New York-New England Optimist District has challenged members to: "Providing kindness can make the world better one person at a time during a pandemic." The purpose of #COVIDKindnessChallenge is to create a movement of kindness during the pandemic. For the challenge, they are asking that once you are tagged, you complete one act of kindness within 19 hours. *If you do not perform one act of kindness within that time frame, it is suggested that you make a donation in any amount to the Optimist International Foundation with the comment #Kindness. Also challenge five people to keep the movement going.

*The original challenge from New-York-New England District worded the failure to complete the challenge as "...then you must donate \$19.00 to the Optimist International Foundation." The Nebraska District leadership believe the challenge in itself is a positive movement, but telling people they MUST donate a certain amount is not appropriate, especially in this time of financial uncertainty for many Optimists.

Give OI Webinars a Try

Have you checked out the OI webinars? Every month the interesting and informative webinars are part of the Dates to Remember Calendar.

If you want to see what you've missed, go to the OI website, click on Member Resources, scroll to Leadership Development, click on Webinars, and choose your topic.

For current webinars, be on the lookout for email notices regarding the webinars or check out the Leadership Hotline.

Zone Membership Scorecard

October 1 – 1st Quarter

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 - Results of 1st Quarter

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

April 1 – Results of 2nd Quarter

Zone 8 = 209 - *	vs.	Zone 6 = 193 - *
Zone 2 = 113 - *	vs.	Zone 7 = 132 - *
Zone 4 = 145 - *	vs.	Zone 9 = 150+
Zone 1 = 200	vs.	Zone 3 = 156 + *
Zone 5E = 32	vs.	Zone 5W = 45 *

May 1 – Results of April

Zone 8 = 209*	vs.	Zone 6 = 193 *
Zone 2 = 113 *	vs.	Zone 7 = 132
Zone 4 = 144 - *	vs.	Zone 9 = 150
Zone 1 = 195 - *	vs.	Zone 3 = 156 *
Zone 5E = 32	vs.	Zone 5W = 44 - *

*indicates – in membership since October 1

Red +/- indicates change from preceeding month

1st Quarter = all clubs maintained or decreased in membership

2nd Quarter = memberships increased in Zone 1: Blair + 1

Omaha Miracle-Hills +1

Omaha +1

Zone 9: Ogallala +2

Paxton +1

Congratulations and Welcome to the new Optimists!!

NOTE: Zones must be + in membership in order to win the \$100 competition.

For questions regarding the Scorecard, please contact Judith Kluge.