



Nebraska District Optimists

Linda Wheeler, Governor
November 2019



Governor Linda Wheeler

Governor's Message

I personally want to thank everyone who attended and participated in the 1st Quarter Conference. Your evaluations are being reviewed by the District Leadership and Conference & Convention Committees; every effort will be made to apply your suggestions to the 2nd Quarter Conference. If anyone has any suggestions for breakout sessions that would be energizing and engaging, please let me know of a speaker or idea that you have; we will try to incorporate them.

Optimist International President Adrian Elcock shared his plans and goals for his year 2019-2020. Currently the OI website is being reworked and updated and soon will be unveiled. He also is encouraging all Optimist Clubs to review your service projects to determine if you are filling a need in your community and to envision a new service project for your community.

Retention of your club members

is key to the survival of your Clubs. Please consider one or more of the following to energize your membership –

- Plan a strictly social event for your members and their families 2-3 times yearly,
- Develop a calling tree or text your members to remind them of upcoming events,
- Create a Club newsletter to recognize your Club members' achievements,
- Write a note of thanks for their participation and support,
- Invite speakers to talk about community programs or events.

The "Catch a Rising Star" will be held again at 2nd Quarter Conference. We are seeking nominations to attend this event. Please identify members of your club that have special qualities and talents that make them potential leaders who may be interested in exploring new opportunities in Optimism. Participants will learn about being a leader and recognizing different communication styles. All Club Presidents will be receiving a phone call after the first of the year from me.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions, or suggestions to improve our conferences with engaging breakout sessions, or nominations to invite members of your Club to "Catch a Rising Star".

Governor Linda Wheeler

Dates to Remember!

November 21, 2019

Soup Luncheon & Bake Sale
South Sioux City Fundraiser
At American Legion

December 16, 2019

Webinar "How to Hold a Club
Oratorical Contest"
7:00 pm

February 8, 2020

2nd Quarter Conference
York Holthus Convention Center

March 7, 2020

Deadline for clubs to submit
winning Essay to
District Chair, Lana Urban

April 3 – 5, 2020

3rd Quarter Conference
Norfolk Divots Conference Center
& Hotel

JOI Convention
Norfolk

April 15, 2020

Deadline for clubs to submit
Oratorical winners to
District Chair, Jon Conyers

April 18, 2020

Siouxland Optimist Summit
Sioux City, Iowa

May 2, 2020

District Oratorical Contest
Seward Civic Center

June 28 – July 1, 2020

Optimist International Convention
Chicagoland

Focus on Membeship!

The District Growth Committee is asking all clubs to have an **active** Club Membership Chair for 2019-2020. We will be contacting members, but if you want to submit a name, yours or someone else's, we would be happy to share our vision. We are looking for someone who readily invites friends, neighbors and co-workers to become part of our great organization.

Since Nebraskans are competitive by nature we thought it would be fun to have a contest. While examining our District trends, it was noted the similar numbers of members in the various zones. Based on the official numbers as of October 1, here are the challenges: Zone 2 (136) vs Zone 7 (133); Zone 4 (148) vs Zone 9 (147), Zone 6 (230) vs Zone 8 (232), then it becomes a bit tricky. Zone 1 (198) vs Zone 3 (157), so the winner of this match up will be based on % of increase at the conclusion of September 30, 2020. The final competition will be between Zone 5 -East (32) vs Zone 5 -West (46), this too may be based on % of increase.

The committee is challenging ALL clubs to finish the year with a 10% net increase. For instance if #1 Gretna (91 members) were to accomplish this goal, they would break the 100 member mark; there are other clubs also within striking distance of breaking 100. Just think of the benefits the youngsters in those communities would receive! All youngsters and all communities gain countless rewards by having an Optimist club in their community, they are the winners!

Judith Conway Kluge,
District Growth Chair

Benefits of Participating in the Oratorical Contest

This contest is one of the better known ways that Optimists serve the youth of the world. Most everyone has at least heard of the contest. AND... we are doing it again in May 2020!

The District contest cannot happen without winners from our Zones! We cannot have Zone winners without Club winners. Will your Club host a Club level competition?

Winning participants at the District level and beyond will receive some scholarship money. The international winner will receive combined scholarships totaling up to \$22,500. The Nebraska District will award three scholarships for \$2,500, \$1,500 and \$1,000. EVERY participant will receive a boost in confidence in their ability to stand in front of 'people' and speak.

Having the confidence and skills to stand up and speak opens up several educational opportunities, fields of employment, community service, and politics. Your Club can help open all of these to Your Club's participants! And, potentially, allow them to win some scholarship money. It is so easy!

On the OI website, Optimist International has prepared a 'soup to nuts' guide for having a Club level Contest.

A few Important Things:
Contestants must

- Not be a enrolled in a degree seeking program at any Post Secondary Institution
- Not be over 19 on 1 October 2020, there is no minimum age

Clubs need only 1 contestant, although having more contestants is encouraged

Contests must be complete with results submitted to the District Chair by April 3rd

* Zone contests (if required) must be complete with the results submitted to the District Chair by 17 April 2020.

Remember! It is ALL about the kids! Find some contestants! Plan a contest! Let me know so I can follow your winner's progress! Have a contest! Send your winner (potentially) to the Zone Contest!

The District Chair, Jon Conyers (me) invites you to send any questions or concerns your club may have with holding a contest to jon_conyers@cox.net.

Jon Conyers

Tri-Star/PP&K Report

One hundred twenty-one contestants out of the 181 eligible winners from 16 Nebraska Optimist clubs traveled to Abel Stadium at Nebraska Wesleyan University on October 13th to compete in the finals of the Nebraska Optimist Tri-Star Football Punt, Pass, & Kick Contest. The winners of local Optimist Club contests competed for 5 trophies in each of 10 age categories in both boy and girl divisions. Clubs represented were: Auburn, Bellevue, Columbus, David City, Elkhorn, Holdrege, Kearney, Lincoln, Lincoln Evening, Lincoln Sunrise, Lincoln West, McCook, Minden, Norfolk Noon, Papillion-LaVista, and Paxton.

Submitted by Bob Grundman

1st Quarter Conference is History

The conference opened with the traditional ceremonies including the national anthems of Canada, in honor of OI Vice President Lyle Merriam and his wife Debbie, and the United States, sung by Sydney Weiler.



l to r: VP Lyle Merriam, Debbie Merriam, Governor Linda

There were several special moments for the 53 registered Optimists during the Conference. The first was recognition of the armed services veterans in attendance.



l to r: William McCain, Dennis Huffine, Beryl Lantz, Ron Nelson, Tom Morrisy, Chyrel Kritikos, and Marvin Shimmel. Not pictured: Jon Conyers

Past Governor Al Penner presented a brief message on Optimistic Activism. His definition of activism was the action of vigorously campaigning for social change. An important point was that we need to be positive activists in our leadership roles.

Another highlight was the House of Optimism. There were 15 dis-

plays set up covering various programs and committees. One of the most eye-opening, was the display showing the Nebraska District recipients of the OI Foundation grants. The grant program has helped start and advance multiple programs throughout the District.

The lunch with seven international students from UNK was another special moment. During lunch, the students sat among the Optimists and it gave Optimists an opportunity to interact with them one on one. The students were from Japan, Nepal, Columbia, South Korea, and Germany.



During the luncheon, the First Timers were recognized.



l to r: Ian McLean, Bill Graves, Ra'Liyah Carroll, Felicia Carroll, Gloria Epps. Not pictured Alexis Varoz-Norval

The afternoon's special moment was the election of Sandra Allen to the position of Governor Elect for 2019-20. The vote was by acclamation.

During the afternoon session, OI VP Lyle demonstrated various aids on the OI website, including

the new club logos and the "Top 10 Ways to Market Your Club." A discussion of the District website was led by Past Governor Ardis Moody and Governor Linda.

The next Conference will be February 8, 2020 at the York Holthus Convention Center.

Meet Governor Elect Sandra Allen



Sandra Allen has been a member of the North Omaha Club since 2009. She served her club as Secretary/Treas, President, and OI Foundation Rep. At the District level, she has served as District Secretary; Lt. Gov, Parliamentarian, and District Leadership Development Chair. Sandra has attained Level 16 in the OI Professional Growth & Involvement Program. She has also sponsored 15 members.

Governor Elect Allen has a BBA in Accounting from the University of Texas, Austin and a Juris Doctorate Degree from the University of Texas Law School. She is currently employed at the Center for Holistic Development, Inc, a non-profit in Omaha. She is married and has two adult sons.

She thanked everyone for their support and said she hopes to empower and equip people to step up for leadership roles. The Nebraska District will continue to be in the care of a well qualified and dedicated leader.

News of Our Clubs

Lincoln Evening helped Girl Scouts earn their First-aid Badges. The scouts made 23 kits and they learned where a First-aid kit should be kept, as well as what they should do in an emergency. Each girl took a kit home and the extra supplies were donated to Connection Point, a community outreach center.



President Crystal talking about the kits.

The **Blair Club** is working with individuals, businesses, and churches to provide gifts to approximately 250 children of 80 families in Washington County. The Optimists will be sorting the donations and creating a shopping list and shopping for families who were not adopted. The gifts will be given to the parents on December 7th.

The **Lincoln Friends Club** and **Lincoln Evening** were among several other families and organizations that participated in a Trunk or Treat event at Lincoln High School.



The Lincoln Friends Club

Justin Smallfoot, president of the **Kearney Optimist Club**, presented \$1,000 to Scott Hayden, director of Kearney Park and Recreation. The funds are a disaster relief grant the Kearney

Club applied for and received from Optimist International. The purpose of the grant is to assist with restoration at Yanney Heritage Park that was damaged during the July flooding. (From "Kearney Hub", by way of OI Communication, October 31, 2019)

Papillion-La-Vista will be hosting an Outstanding Student Luncheon on November 14th at Bellevue University to honor students from Papillion LaVista High Schools and Middle Schools, Omaha Public Schools, and Gross High School.

South Sioux City Optimists delivered lunch to their local firefighters on October 10th. The project was done to thank them for their bravery and dedication to the community.

The **Fairbury Club** hosted seniors, selected by school counselors as students who had overcome obstacles, for Youth Appreciation. The students and their families were served dinner, followed by a short program, then the students were introduced and presented a certificate and a medal. Seniors from four area high schools were honored.

Did you miss seeing your club mentioned in News of our Clubs?

We missed getting your club communications so we don't know what's happening!
Please add us to your mailing list.

lawheelz@netzero.net
bettytotten1@gmail.com

New Members in October

Omaha Miracle Hills

David Catalan,

sponsored by Al Penner
Michelle Miller-Mccoy, FOO

Omaha Breakfast

Shon Treadwell,

sponsored by Dick Raasch

Gretna

Christopher McMeekin,

sponsored by Sally McGuire

Norfolk Noon

Jon Hellbusch,

sponsored by Jana Hellbusch

Kayla Ramsay,

sponsored by Mark Claussen

Seward

Donna Maly,

sponsored by Marc Guthrie

David City

Allen Covault,

sponsored by David Catalan

Anna Nolan-Covault, sponsored by David Catalan

Welcome to our world! You will be making a difference in someone's life by helping with your club activities.

Thank you sponsors!

Please!

Please add

governor@nebraskaoptimists.org to your address book. That will help prevent communications from the Nebraska District Governor from ending up in the Junk or Spam folders. Please pass this information on to your club members. Thank you.