

Illinois District Optimist Land of Lincoln Bulletin



February 2017

illinoisoptimist.org



Don't forget your favorite hat for our 3rd Quarter District Conference!

April 28-29
The Chateau
1621 Jumer Drive
Bloomington



Our 3rd Quarter District Conference is jam-packed with youth activities:

Oratorical Contest
Poster Contest
Essay Contest winner reads their essay

Registration and hotel information was sent out recently and is also on page 11 of this Bulletin. You won't want to miss it! Contact District Governor **Ruth Del Re** (ruthdelre@sbcglobal.net) or 847-571-8985 with any questions about the conference.

From the Governor

By Ruth Del Re, Illinois District Governor

We have already begun our 2nd quarter and by now your rosters are cleaned up, your new officers and board are busily working on club events and activities, your committee chairs are planning and preparing for their events...so now what??? If you are reading this and saying to yourself "I am not one of those people" or "I am not busy right now", well then I have a great idea for you. Tomorrow when you awake, say to yourself "I am going to spread the word of Optimist today and find that next new member for my club." Every club needs fresh faces and new ideas. Every club needs an extra pair of hands to share the work load. It is time to say: I CAN find that person. I CAN bring in that fresh face. I CAN bring in that new idea. I CAN.

So...how do you do what you just asked yourself? Invite the next person you meet today to help at your next event, not just come and sit at a meeting but ask for their help. Make sure they know how much you appreciate what they have done. Show them what great work your club does to bring out the best in kids. Show them the impact your club has on the lives of our youth. Together your club CAN do that.

If every member of your club invites just one person to an event or to join your club this year, there is no telling how far we can go. Together, your club, the Illinois District, and Optimist International will be unstoppable.

The Year of the Honor Club – Promoting Healthy Clubs!

By Ruth Del Re, Illinois District Governor

This is the “Year of the Honor Club”. It is a designation denoting excellence for the operation and projects presented by an Optimist Club. I would like to challenge you and your club to achieve Honor Club status.

It is my pleasure to announce a special drawing during each of the three remaining quarters of the 2016-17 Optimist Year. Each individual member and club can benefit by increasing the number of people who call themselves Optimists. The details are as follows:



This is the “Year of the Honor Club” – Together We Can! Together We Will!

Honor Club isn’t just about winning another patch to put on your club’s banner. It’s about keeping your club **healthy** so you can continue to serve the youth in your community for many years to come. You can track your club’s progress toward being a happy and healthy club at <http://www.optimist.org/Forms/2016-17-Tracking-Forms/2016-17-Honor-Club-Tracking-Form.pdf>.

Here’s a list of the activities your club must complete to achieve Honor Club (HEALTHY Club) status for the 2016-17 year:

- ✓ Complete three service projects – identify where, when, # of children served, etc.
- ✓ Conduct an OI “NOW Program” – identify where, when, # of attendees, # joined.
- ✓ Grow your Club – Net +3 for the year.
- ✓ Appoint a Club Foundation Rep (CFR) and make an unrestricted donation to the Optimist International Foundation (OIF). OIF provides significant funding for Optimist International. Any size donation qualifies, but consider making a “Dollar a Day” (\$365) donation to qualify for a special banner patch.
- ✓ Be current on dues to both Optimist International and the Illinois District.
- ✓ Recognize a club member or a community member annually (Optimist of the Year, etc.).
- ✓ Complete these two reports by their due dates:
 - Club Officer Elect Report (COE) – due May 20
 - President’s Pride Report – due September 30
- ✓ Club President OR Club President-Elect OR TWO designees attend District Convention (or two other District meetings/conferences). You can still do this with our May and August meetings.

Taylorville Christmas for Kids

By Terry Wright, Taylorville Optimist

Some 100 children and their families were in attendance for the **Taylorville Optimist Club's** annual Christmas for Kids. The evening began with a meal, followed by the singing of Christmas carols, led by **Ron Spears** and the Optimist Singers. The highlight of the evening was Santa Claus greeting each child and presenting them with a gift chosen just for them.



Ron Spears leading the singing of carols



Optimist Singers l. to r.: **Mary Milling, Dick Marshal, Sally Brusveen, Jay Vaughan, Bill Chastain, and Alta Himstedt**



Santa brings big smile



Santa & Isaac Younker



Santa & Jae'ana Calan



Santa & Kimimela Steele

Wilmette Glug Party & Raffle Raises \$18,000

By Noel Jackson, Wilmette Optimist

The Wilmette Optimist Club held our 2016 Annual Glug Party & Raffle at the Wilmette Golf Course on December 7. We raised over \$18,000 that evening to support such organizations as The Kindness Connection and The Alliance for Early Childhood.



Wilmette Optimist Treasurer **Steven Santacruz** and his wife Karen; Lisa Rosenberg, Executive Director of The Kindness Connection; Liza Sullivan, Executive Director of The Alliance for Early Childhood; **Norm Petelik**, charter member of the **Wilmette Optimist Club**

In addition, the club had a float in the Wilmette Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade in November. **Gerry Crabbe**, a charter member, was honored as a 30 year participant in the parade.

Freeburg Toys for Tots a Huge Success

By Carol Schlitt, Freeburg Optimist



Freeburg Optimist Club Toys for Tots
Chairpersons **Jerry Menard** and **Angie Mueller**



Freeburg Township Hall set up for the families to select toys, arranged by both age and gender

The **Freeburg Optimist Club's** annual Toys for Tots Christmas toy drive and distribution was a huge success. The club gave a variety of toys and gift certificates to more than 95 children in the community.

Toy collection boxes were placed in the community schools and businesses after Thanksgiving, where hundreds of new toys were placed by the generous citizens in the Freeburg area. In addition to toys, monetary donations were received to help purchase toys and gift certificates.

The St. Paul UCC Food and Clothing Bank helped the club in scheduling appointments for the families receiving toys, which were distributed December 16th and 17th at the Freeburg Township Hall.

Quincy Optimists Honored

By Terry Wright, Lt. Governor

Quincy Breakfast Optimists John Ohnemus and **Eugene Hutter** were recently honored for sponsoring ten new members in the club.



John Ohnemus and Lt. Governor **Terry Wright**



Eugene Hutter and Club President **Matt Schmidt**

Champaign-Urbana Optimists Serve Community Well

By Tori Exum, Champaign-Urbana Optimist

Long-time **Champaign-Urbana Optimist** member **Howard Schweighart** was honored with a plaque at the Jefferson Middle School Archery tournament on January 28. The Jefferson Middle School Archery Club was started by Howard's son, Greg, and a friend several years ago, with the financial support of the **Champaign-Urbana Optimist Club**. Greg died a few years ago, but his memory lives on with this tournament now being named after him. The Archery Club began with 17 members and has now grown to 104 members, and the **Champaign-Urbana Optimist Club** continues to sponsor them. The Jefferson Middle School Archery Club has been a role model for other schools who are starting their own archery clubs, and the club's teams have placed well at Nationals and Worlds.



This plaque is presented to the Schweighart family in memory of Coach Greg Schweighart for whom this tournament is now proudly named. Coach Schweighart's love for the sport of archery, his fellow coaches, and the students whom he instructed was second to none. Greg gave countless hours of support and instruction to the team and led them on to many tournament wins. His competitiveness and pursuit of excellence continues forward in every tournament in which the Jefferson Jaguars compete to this day. He is still greatly missed, but never forgotten.



Youth Christmas Chair, **Grace Mitchell**, reported that club members purchased Christmas gifts for 87 children. Along with buying the necessities of coats, hats, socks, and gloves, the club was also able to provide for some wants, such as dolls and toys.



Our Christmas Tree sale was a huge success. It is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Our Christmas Tree Lot Chair, **Jack Widholm**, reported that we sold 380 trees to help support the youth in our community and we donated 20 trees to needy families.

Pictured at right is our Essay Contest Winner, Quintin Powers, with his parents.



Granite City Optimists in Action

By Sally Strohmeier, Granite City Optimist

The **Granite City Optimist Club** supports their community financially, as shown below in presentations by President **Paul Hellrich** below.



Left: Check is presented to Margaret Holland Pennell. She is Principal of Holy Family School in Granite City.

Center: Check is presented to Illinois State Police Public Affairs Officer Calvin Dye for the Team Illinois Youth Police Camp.

Right: Check is presented to Jo Curran, Interim Executive Director of the Phoenix Center in Granite City. The Phoenix Center serves adult and child victims of domestic violence in the Granite City area.

Secretary-Treasurer **Karen Gambichler** welcomes **Rick Suryk** to the **Granite City Optimist Club**. Welcome, Rick!!



Belleville Optimist Celebrations and FUNd-Raising

By Jane Bonaldi, Belleville Optimist



Optimist Club of Belleville President **Jane Bonaldi** presents the Optimist International Foundation's Christian D. Larson Award to member and Past President (1968-69) **Robert H. Dintelmann** at the club's Christmas party. His wife Joyce is pictured to his left.

The Christian D. Larson Award recognizes a \$1,000 unrestricted donation to the Foundation in recognition of a member or by a member.



Optimist Club of Belleville FUNd raising event "The Night With the Stars" held the last Saturday night of January. Pictured is Steve Davis impersonating Elvis Presley.

The picture below includes club members **Cindy Hawkins, Cindy Beatty, Sharon Dahm**, 99 year old mother of **Vickie Helms**, and **Afton Shambro** swinging with the music!



Installation of Officers in September for the **Optimist Club of Belleville** (2016-2017) year. **Jane Bonaldi** President, **Jim Bryant** Vice President, **Charles Mayhew** Secretary, and **Terri Seipp** Treasurer.



Cindy Beatty received the President's Citation, **Afton Shambro** received the Optimist of the Year, and **Lois Stroh** received the Lifetime Achievement Award on September 20, 2016 at the Installation of Officers Dinner.

Highland Optimists in Action in the Highland Community

By Kevin Hemann, Highland Optimist



The **Highland Optimist Club** donated money and a new power generator to the Highland-Pierron Fire Prevention Training Trailer.



The **Highland Optimist Club** has committed a total of \$30,000 to be paid over the next five years for a new Tennis Court Pavilion at Highland High School – "Support of Court" fund-raising in 2016.





Highland Optimists donate \$8,000 annually to college scholarships.



Highland Optimists donate \$4,000 annually to 4th, 5th, and 6th grade Basketball Rec Leagues.



The **Highland Optimist Club** donated \$6,000 to a new Early Childhood and Pre-K playground structure at the Highland Primary School in 2016.



Highland Optimists donated to the Highland High Tech Club this past year. In addition, the **Highland Optimist Club** donates over \$18,000 annually to more than 20 other organizations in the Highland community through matching grants and annual budgeted donations.



Highland Optimist Club president **David Callahan** (right) and secretary **Kevin Hemann** (left), along with Highland Assistant City Manager Lisa Peck (back right), present a \$600 check to the founder of the Junior Code Academy, Michael Pederson (middle), and his daughter Chastity (front left). The check presented by the Optimist Club will be used as a scholarship for two students participating in the "Intro to Coding" eight-week class.

Learn more about the Junior Code Academy at <http://www.bnd.com/news/local/community/highland-news-leader/article133107264.html>.

District Poster Contest

By Charles Mayhew, Poster Contest Chair

The theme of this year's Poster Contest is "**Be a H.E.R.O. – Helping Everyone Respect Others**". Be sure to bring your club's winning posters to the April District Conference. Posters, entry forms, and a check to Illinois District – Optimist International in the amount of \$10 per poster entered must be turned in to the District Poster Chair no later than 9:00 AM on April 29th. Winners will be announced at the District luncheon on April 29.

All the information about the Poster Contest was included in the November ***Land of Lincoln Bulletin*** and in a separate email sent out to club presidents. Any questions about the Poster Contest should be directed to **Charles Mayhew**, District Poster Chair, at 618-806-5145 or charles.mayhew@sbcglobal.net.

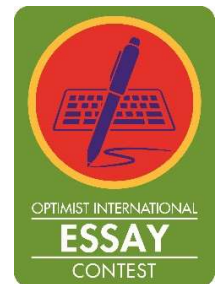
District Essay Contest

By Connie Minnes, Essay Contest Chair

There is still time to submit your entry in the Illinois District Essay Contest. The 2017 theme is "**Chasing Optimism in the Face of Challenges**". Your winning club essay must be postmarked by February 28, 2017, accompanied by a check for \$25 to Illinois District Optimist, copy of birth certificate, and district entry form. These are to be mailed to:

Connie Minnes
Illinois District Essay Chair
19051 N Camino Del Sol
Sun City West, AZ 85375

Additional details about the Essay Contest were included in the November ***Land of Lincoln Bulletin***. Any questions should be directed to the District Essay Contest Chair **Connie Minnes** at 217-417-2734.



District Oratorical Contest

By Ron Elvin, Oratorical Contest Chair

The Illinois District Oratorical Contest will be held at our 3rd Quarter District Conference on April 29. All clubs holding Oratorical Contests should have provided that information to the District Chair, as requested in his January email. The theme of the contest this year is "**What the World Gains from Optimism**". Regional Oratorical winners will compete for two \$2,500 scholarships during the Illinois District Oratorical Contest.

Any questions should be directed to the District Oratorical Contest Chair **Ron Elvin** at elvinmanor@sbcglobal.net or 630-551-4274.



Registration Form
3rd Quarter District Conference in Bloomington
April 28-29, 2017

The Chateau Bloomington
1621 Jumer Drive, Bloomington, IL
Reservations: 309-662-2020
Cutoff Date: April 13 by 5 P.M.

Hotel: \$89 including breakfast for two

Conference — \$15 (\$20 after April 21)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____
Email: _____
Club: _____ Club Role: _____
District Role: _____

Lunch — \$25

Lunch will be a buffet with: Chicken Parmesan, Spaghetti and marinara sauce, mixed green salad, veggies and garlic bread

	Cost
Registration	\$15 or \$20
Meals	\$25
TOTAL \$	

Please use a separate sheet for each registrant.

Please send your registration and payment to:

Bill Powell, Treasurer
Illinois District, Optimist International
129 Oaklawn Avenue
Oswego, IL 60543

Congratulations to these Optimist clubs on their significant milestones:

Milan	50 years	Chartered April 19, 1967
Lewistown	65 years	Chartered May 1, 1952
Delavan	35 years	Chartered May 1, 1982
Belleville Westside	65 years	Chartered May 15, 1952
Deerfield	45 years	Chartered June 13, 1972
Mendota	35 years	Chartered June 24, 1982



Illinois Junior Golf Tournament Slated for June 13-15

By Terry Wright, OIJGC Chair

The 2017 Illinois Optimist International Junior Golf Championship qualifying tournament will be held at Red Tail Run Golf Course in Decatur, host course for our tournament for the ninth consecutive year. Days of play are Tuesday-Thursday, June 13-15. The tournament format is the same as it has been for the past two years, when we expanded it to include a third round of competition for those senior divisions who make the 36 hole cut. The District website (<http://www.oijgc.org>) and 2017 registration for the Illinois qualifying tournament are now open. Three young golfers have already signed up as of February 21, 2017.

Fund-raising efforts to support our outstanding event are now underway. We are reaching out to various corporate sponsors to continue their loyal support of the tournament. Many of those sponsors are in-kind sponsors, meaning that they provide products in lieu of financial support.

Much of our cash financial support comes from the clubs of the Illinois District. Many clubs participate in the "hole sponsorship" program. For \$200, any Optimist Club may have their club name on a sign displayed on the course for the entire tournament. If your club has previously participated as a "hole sponsor", THANK YOU! If your club has not yet taken advantage of this opportunity to support our young golfers, it is never too late to start. I will be reaching out to each Illinois Optimist Club to either renew their sponsorship or welcome them as a new sponsor of the Illinois OIJGC qualifying tournament.

As usual, we welcome any and all volunteers who would like to join us for all or any part of the days of the competition. The Decatur Conference Center & Hotel (DCCH) is our home venue for those who stay over. Anyone who would like to join us for any part of the event should contact me at terry@oijgc.org. If you have any questions about the tournament, sponsorship, or volunteering, please don't hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from anyone who is interested in our Optimist Junior Golf program.



Fun and Frolic at 2nd Quarter District Conference



**Barb Reich, Robert Peterson,
Grace Mitchell**



**Lynn Collmire, International VP Chuck
Davis, Governor Ruth Del Re**



**Past Governor
Martin Schmidt**



International VP
Chuck Davis
receives a gift of
Valley Blue Farm
Honey from Past
Governor **Martin
Schmidt**

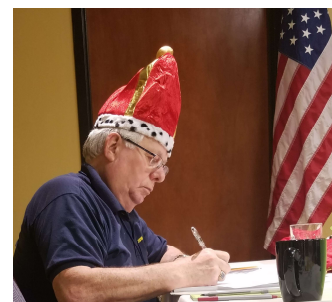


**"King" Bill Powell, District Secretary-
Treasurer and Assistant Governor Barb
Reich**



International VP **Chuck
Davis** and **Harold
Olsen**, Parliamentarian
and Sgt. At Arms

Bill Powell and
John Del Re



Membership Retention

The First Year Member

While the first year of membership offers the best opportunity to lay the foundation for long-term loyalty to your Club, it's also the year that members are most likely to leave your Club. When new Members feel they are getting a lot out of the Club, they will be more willing to dive deeper into their participation and commit to remaining a member for years to come.

*Is it a "privilege" to be a Member of your Club? **IT IS A PRIVILEGE!!!!!!***

- ✓ Retention starts with recruitment. When you lose a Member, you must recruit two in order to show growth.
- ✓ Renewal is only the last step in the long process of retention.
- ✓ Members are neither identical nor interchangeable.

Reasons for Losing Members

Uncontrollable Losses

A small fraction of losses can't be prevented. Most uncontrollable losses fall into one of the following categories:

Death; economics; health; military service; business conflicts; moving from the community

Controllable Losses

Club Leadership

Failure to assign responsibility; old-timers usurp leadership; internal politics; President operates one-person administration

Club leadership problems are immediately corrected when the President:

- ✓ Distributes responsibilities to give more Members the opportunity for service & recognition
- ✓ Understands the type of organization he/she leads and recognizes the reasons people join
- ✓ Provides opportunities for all Members to use their talents and leadership skills

Club Activity

Service activities program too narrow; lacks variety & absence of service opportunities

The Club with a wide variety of activities will motivate a greater number of Members than the Club with limited projects. Without activity, a Club's membership will soon diminish to the few who joined simply to belong to something.

Too much time or work required

Most members will object to too much work, like ticket selling or fundraising. Share assignments and responsibilities to prevent resentment and ill feeling.

Neglect of Club objectives; lack of social affairs; no activities including spouses/families

Overcoming inactivity will revitalize a Club and make it an integral part of a progressive community, give current Members pride in membership, and motivate other individuals in the community to join.

Club Meetings

No programs or poor programs at business meetings

Problems in this category are easily corrected. Varied, interesting, and meaningful meeting programs are the key. Experience proves that the absence of meeting programs is sufficient in itself to cause a club's eventual downfall.

Lack of punctuality in starting and adjourning

Another factor affecting attendance is meeting punctuality. A Member may refuse to attend if meetings consistently start late and or run over time.

Poor meals; less than desirable meeting place

The meeting place, location, and menu are also important factors affecting attendance and tenure.

Education and Orientation

Members not acquainted with Club objectives; lack of proper orientation for new Members; lack of opportunity for participation; absence of, or poor, induction ceremony; no assignments of new members to committees

Establish a routine for making each new Member a part of Club activity. This will result in more Members becoming active, interested, and proud participants in the Club's operation. Too often, the working dedicated Member acquired these qualities by accident. An annual reindoctrination for ALL Members is a good procedure with many benefits.

Personal Objections

Personal slight or embarrassment of Members; dislike of Club officers; lack of recognition for efforts; lack of fellowship

Various kinds of personal objections contribute to membership loss. They are seldom voiced; the very nature of the reason inhibits the individual. A Member may instead claim lost interest, little time, or business conflicts as a reason for resignation.

The Board should create policies and practices that will reduce, if not eliminate, the chance of insult or embarrassment of Members. Even the most playful ridicule may cause the loss of a Member.

Club officers should constantly watch their relationships with Members. The President should strive to seek the friendship and confidence of every Member. Fellowship is the keystone of Optimist Club membership.

Financial

Objection to the practice of fining Members; fines too high

Financial objections cause Member losses. Excessive fining and frequent demands for cash contributions are the leading objections. They are best eliminated by an adequate dues structure and a successful fundraising project.

Expensive meals; excessing demand for cash contributions from Members

Club leaders should realize that costs are a factor in Members' tenure and attempt to prevent unusual, unexpected financial demands.

Board Action

If the disenchantment of Members is to be checked, the Board must take remedial action. The only alternative is continued membership decline and eventual disintegration of the Club. There are strong, active Clubs everywhere that set splendid examples of what can be accomplished with the proper approach to preventing controllable membership losses.

Coming Attractions:

Optimist International Junior Golf Championship Qualifying Tournament – June 11-15

Host course – Red Tail Run Golf Course in Decatur

June 11 – Sponsor Golf Outing

June 12 – Registration and practice rounds

June 13-15 – Tournament play

Camp Coco – Lights, Camera, Action – June 27

Timber Pointe Outdoor Center at Lake Bloomington

Optimists should plan to arrive at 9:00; activities with the campers from 10:00-noon



Optimist International Convention – Albuquerque, NM - July 6-8

Find all the information at

<http://www.optimist.org/e/Member/convention1.cfm>.

District Convention – Murder Mystery Event, The Chateau, Bloomington – August 4-6

Along with training and education, the murder mystery event will round out our year of fun events.

Want to see your Optimist Club in the **Land of Lincoln Bulletin**? It's simple – just email your pictures, with a story or captions, to Bulletin editor SchmidtSandi@gmail.com. It only takes a few minutes to share the great things your club is doing

Action pictures of your club's activities are more fun to share with your fellow Optimists around the Illinois District, so keep that in mind when sending your information.

We will also publish information about your upcoming events – the next issue will include events from June through September.

The deadline for the next issue of the **Land of Lincoln Bulletin** is **Tuesday, May 9**.