

Illinois District Optimist

Land of Lincoln Bulletin



March 2022

Hello Illinois District Optimists:

Burr....it's cold outside but warm in this Optimist's heart. I don't know about you but I'm ready for some warmer weather. While I love snow, a little goes a long way!

I hope you have been busy in your clubs designing and carrying out programs that enhance your community. The Illinois District has decided to "sweeten" the pot and give away **3 grants at the April 3rd Quarter Conference**. These grants in the amounts of \$500, \$300 and \$200 are designed to help clubs with a new or existing service project that must be carried out between Jan 1 - Dec 31, 2022. More information on the qualifications and application are included in this bulletin so read carefully and get your application in by the deadline.

Speaking of the 3rd Quarter District Conference, it will be held at the beautiful Holiday Inn & Suites in East Peoria, April 29 - 30, 2022. This conference will feature a rousing mini-corn hole tournament on Friday night followed by a jam-packed Saturday program where we will have the finals of the Oratorical Contest, Essay Contest and Poster Contest. In addition there will be training and a special hands-on youth service project for deserving Peoria-area youth. Registration information will be sent in an email in March so you're inbox for details. Information about the conference will be posted on the Illinois Optimist website - www.illinoisoptimist.org. I hope to see you at the conference.

At our 1st quarter IL District Conference, we kicked off the year of "Living the Creed" - my 2022 theme since *it is the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the creed* - with a session that looked at the first 3 tenets of the creed. At our 3rd Quarter Conference we will look at the next 4 tenets and how we can truly live these wise words every day to enhance our lives. I hope you have taken the time to discuss the Creed tenets in your club meetings this winter. I assure you that by "Living the Creed" this club year you'll see opportunities others miss.

As I stated in the last bulletin, my goal this club year is to physically visit each club within the Illinois District. Since late September, I've had the opportunity to travel around Illinois, visiting with thirteen Illinois Optimist Clubs, sharing my thoughts and goals. I have a lot of clubs yet to visit and if I haven't contacted your club yet about attending a meeting or event, please call, text or email me. (618) 977-7787 or cschlitt54@gmail.com I love visiting our wonderful club members and having the opportunity to see first-hand all the exciting projects that Optimists are conducting across the state.

Yours in Optimism, Carol Schlitt, Illinois, Optimist Governor 2021-22

Speaking of new members! Welcome!

We welcome these 29 new Optimists who have joined an Illinois District Optimist club since October 16, 2021.

- ❖ Michael Behn
Deerfield
- ❖ Deerfield Public Schools
Deerfield
- ❖ Jeff Rabuck
Rock Falls
- ❖ Joseph Gomez
Moline breakfast
- ❖ Lynn Sequra
Moline breakfast
- ❖ Bob Schwieder
Moline breakfast
- ❖ David B. Ross
Moline breakfast
- ❖ Kari J. Ross
Moline breakfast
- ❖ Lisa Broer
Moline breakfast
- ❖ Judi Thornton
Chillicothe
- ❖ Ginny Molleck
Chillicothe
- ❖ Patricia Pearson
Chillicothe
- ❖ Diana L. Maxwell
Chillicothe
- ❖ Neil Price
Chillicothe
- ❖ Rosa McDonald
Chillicothe
- ❖ Lorenzo Kindle
Champaign Urbana
- ❖ Jeremy Higgs
Marshall Clark County
- ❖ Julie Mayer
Taylorville
- ❖ Laura Dudley
Taylorville
- ❖ Pamela A. Slack
Freeburg
- ❖ Gary Slack
Freeburg
- ❖ Karen Surber
Freeburg
- ❖ Kelly Touchette
Millstadt
- ❖ Jeff Rodenberg
Waterloo
- ❖ Justin R. Riebeling
Waterloo
- ❖ Rodger Dillon
Alton Area
- ❖ Gary Holzaur
Greenville
- ❖ Kevin Keeven
Highland
- ❖ Aaron M. Schumacher
Highland



District Membership Campaign offers Clubs Opportunity to win up to \$500

From William Wagner, Past Governor, District Membership Chair

Purpose: To create a positive atmosphere for membership growth within the Illinois district.

Incentive: The District Board of Directors approved \$2175 for recognition incentives to clubs within the Illinois District. To create a fair format, clubs within the district have been divided into three divisions based upon their size as of October 1, 2021.

The divisions are as follows, division 1 consists of clubs with a membership of 20 members or less, division 2 consists of clubs with membership ranging from 21 to 59. Division 3 is comprised of clubs greater than 60 members.

What will a division winner receive? Each division winner will receive \$500 from the district for the winning clubs to use to support their projects. This award is intended to provide funds for clubs who have been impacted by COVID.

What must Clubs do to enter this contest, and be eligible for the \$500?

1: Identify prospects to invite to be Optimists. The number to identify is dependent upon your division.

Division 1 - 3 prospects

Division 2- 6 prospects

Division 3 will be subdivided as follows:

Clubs 60-100 members- 9 prospects

Clubs greater than 100 members- 12 prospects

2: Submit your prospect list to our district membership chair by March 31, 2022. Along with your list include a brief statement outlining how your club intends to expose these prospects to your Optimistic environment. *This may be a personal invite, a NOW event, or a WOW event.*

How will winners be determined?

Clubs compiling the most points per quarter and for the year will be determined as the winner.

How are points earned?

10 points for submitting prospects with your recruitment plan to District Membership Chair

5 points if your club appoints a membership Chair and provides name to District Membership Chair

12 points for each new member added to your club's roster.

Extra Additional Points

20 points for attending a Zone meeting

20 points for attending a District Conference or District Convention

40 points for presenting at Spring Conference your efforts, and implementation of the plan your club submitted March 31, 2022

50 points if your club submits the name of a community for a New Club.

Community names may be submitted to District Membership Chair or New Club building Chair, Martin Schmidt, schmidtmartinc@gmail.com

50 points if new club formed on or before 9/30/2022 and is the community your club submitted.

Summary:

Each Quarter points will be totaled to determine quarterly winners for each division.

\$75 Winter Quarter winners presented April 30, 2022

\$150 Spring Quarter winners presented at District Convention August 12-13, 2022

\$500 grand Prize winners to be presented at Fall Conference TBD

Clubs are free to use these proceeds as the club winners feel best serves their needs. These funds are provided by the district as recognition for maintaining an Optimistic spirit during these COVID times.

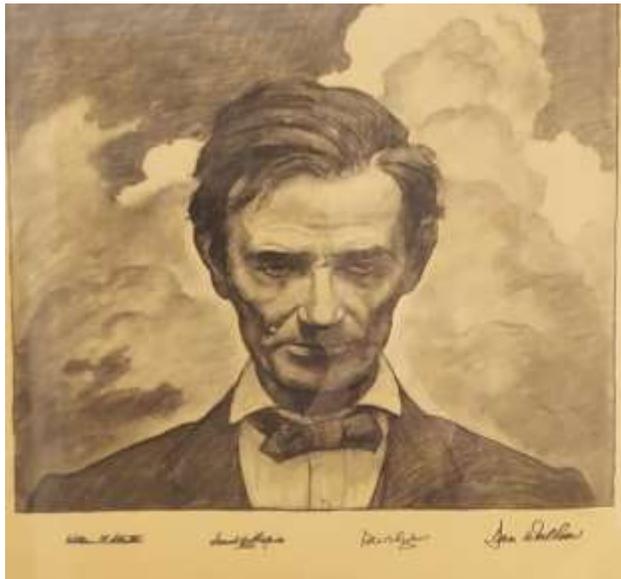
As your District Membership Chair, I encourage all clubs to make plans and participate in this new member incentive. Please place this on your next club's board meeting agenda, discuss and make your membership aware of what is available in the way of a financial award for your club.

Together we can accomplish much! You deserve your share!

Thank you for your consideration of this incentive plan for new members.

Bill Wagner, Illinois District Membership Chair, 618-401-0681

wwagner6@charter.net



**From: Nancy Roach-Wilder, Editor,
Co-Lt. Governor Zone 1, Deerfield
Optimist Club**

New members to Optimist International, will be inspired by everyone they meet, and by our history. Born during tough times, OI seeks to shine a light on the power of optimism.

When I see countries invading countries, I wonder, what can I do, to keep this world a place I want my grandchildren to inherit?

I have learned that optimism is the best path through any crisis. Sincere optimism isn't always easy, but it will always have an impact that lasts, it matters.

As Optimists we can act when it is within our power. We can vote, we can donate resources. My husband is a regular blood donor. Our attitudes, point of view, and positive behaviors matter. One family, one neighborhood, one project and one club at a time. We can work for good. We can give a smile to those we meet. We can spend so much time on the improvement of ourselves

that we have no time to criticize others. We can lend a hand, and help restore hope.

And so with gratitude for each of you and your results I present the March 2022 Illinois District Newsletter. From important announcements like the Membership Drive Grants, to deadlines for the Oratorical and poster contests, Golf Outing links, and the national conference, what you need to know is here.

Please submit your special news to: nroach12@gmail.com. Your good work encourages others and promotes more giving activities throughout the district.

Yours in optimism, Nancy Roach-Wilder, CFP*, Editor,
nancy.roach@prudential.com 224-305-2257

Moline Breakfast Optimist Club Partners with Project NOW Head Start

The Breakfast Optimist Club partnered with Project NOW Head Start in a couple of amazing projects this winter.



In December, we met the Head Start teachers to shop for coats, shoes, and clothes for all the students at four Head Start locations in Moline, East Moline, and Colona. Every member who showed up to be part of this shopping extravaganza had a great time! In total, we provided coats, shoes, and clothes for 209 pre-school students at Head Start and the Jefferson Early Learning Center.



On February 1 we kicked off 100 Head Start Readers, with club members Bob Clancy and Sandi Schmidt reading to Head Start preschoolers on day 1 of this 3-month project. Breakfast Optimist Club members, city leaders, local news personalities, and other volunteer groups are all coming together to read to the students. It's always a great day when we can share our love of reading with these young students!



From Illinois District Foundation Representative, Rich Gaebel

Hello Fellow Optimists.

I know the past years have been tough for all of us, including our family and friends. It has been tough for our clubs and the Optimist International Foundation and definitely the youth in our communities. I know that you and your clubs dug deep to help the Foundation as well as you could. The Optimist Foundation did not forego any Optimist Programs. All programs were funded as before the pandemic.

What we need to do is dig deep and do what we can. If you can donate to Dime a Day, that's one dime each day amounting to \$36.50 that would be great. There continue to be ways to contribute as a member and a club.

Please review www.optimist.org foundation tab, to see what the program does and is planning to do, that would be great. Ask your club Foundation Representative what you can do to help to spread the word. Thank you!

Rich Gaebel, Optimist International Illinois District Foundation Representative

From: Charles Mayhew, Poster Contest Chair:

Slogan for 2022 is: "*Climate Change: You Can Make a Difference!*"

As a reminder the annual Illinois District Poster Contest is coming up, with entries due by April 20th. Full rules and entry forms have been emailed to all club presidents. If your club does not have this information, please email me - charles.c.mayhew01@gmail.com

Clubs may enter their winning boy and girl posters (1 boy and 1 girl per club) by taking a picture of each and sending the .jpg file to charles.c.mayhew01@gmail.com With each picture please include a separate picture of the completed entry form that includes the student's full name, gender, address, phone number, grade, school name, teacher's name and the name of the Optimist Club submitting the entry.

All entries must be received by 11:59pm, Wednesday, April 20, 2022 to be eligible for judging. Winners will be announced during the April 29-30, 2022 District Conference.

A \$10 District entry fee, paid by the local Optimist Club, must accompany each poster entered. Checks should be made out to: Illinois District - Optimist International. For each entry, please send \$10 to the Illinois District Secretary-Treasurer, Sandi Schmidt.

District winners will receive \$100 for first place, \$75 for second place and \$50 for third place. All entries will receive prize ribbons. Checks and letters of congratulation will be sent to each winner with a copy to the sponsoring club.

**Charles C. Mayhew, *Optimist Club of Belleville, 2021-22 Club Secretary*
*Club Foundation Representative (618) 806-5145***



2022 IL District Optimist Club Grants

Three grants in the amount of \$500, \$300 and \$200 will be awarded at the 3rd Quarter IL District Optimist Conference to be held April 29-30, 2022 at the Holiday Inn & Suites in East Peoria, IL.

Eligibility: Any Illinois District Optimist Club (Adult or JOI) is eligible to apply for a grant for a new or existing service project.

- 1. The service project must be conducted between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.**
- 2. Club dues must be current as of March 1, 2022.**
- 3. A representative from the club must make a 5-10 minute presentation at the April 30th IL District 3rd Quarter Conference.**
- 4. Conference attendees will vote on which clubs will receive the grants, with the club receiving the most votes getting the \$500 grant, second most votes the \$300 grant and third most votes the \$200 grant.**
- 5. An application for the grant will be included in the 2nd Quarter IL District "Land of Lincoln Bulletin" and will also be sent to each club president by snail mail.**
- 6. Club Grant Application is due March 31, 2022**
- 7. Notification of grant application acceptance will be on April 1, 2022.**
- 8. Winning club grants will be required to submit an article with pictures to the "Land of Lincoln Bulletin" after completion of the project.**

Leaders Tip: Time to Preview and Use the New LMS System

*Are you a club president, secretary-treasurer or foundation rep in your club? A new Learning Management System (LMS) was introduced in 2020 as a leadership training tool for Optimist club officers and district leaders as a way to provide consistent and high-quality content. Use it to access short videos and step by step *suggestions to keep your club current, organized, efficient and energized.**



From: Cheryl Farwell-Duckworth, President, Chillicothe Optimist Club

This year has been quite challenging for our club with COVID shutting down schools and businesses part time. We had to table several projects but we were able to *do some creative fundraising.*

We had a speaker from The Sanibel Optimist Club in Florida, Randy Carson, who shared many of their fundraising ideas. One of those ideas was a “Christmas Bonanza”.

One of our members, Sherry Adams, ran with this idea and approached all of our local businesses. She asked them to donate gift cards in any denomination for this Bonanza. We partnered with our local Lion’s Club and Rotary Club for this event. Each club was struggling with fundraising so we approached them with great optimism!

In the end, 414 tickets were sold in total which netted \$4,140. The



Optimist Club's portion was \$2,680. This was roughly a one month last minute project!

We are discussing ways to assist our local youth other than scholarships. One suggestion is to help with scholarships for low income youth at our local health club. Time will tell how our youth will benefit, but I was amazed at how much was raised in a last minute fundraiser!

Optimistically yours, Cheryl Farwell-Duckworth, President, Chillicothe Optimist

ACH Payments for Club Dues By Sandi Schmidt, District Secretary-Treasurer

Here's a great idea to save your club's Treasurer time, while reducing the effort required to pay your Optimist International and District Dues – sign up for ACH Payments today. My club, along with several other clubs in Illinois, use this method and we're very happy with how it works!

An article in the Winter issue of The Optimist magazine detailed the advantages of using the Automated Clearing House (ACH) payment system to pay your club's dues and new member fees. You can check out that article on page 19 in the online magazine https://issuu.com/optimist551/docs/winter_2022_magazine_final.ndd?r=sMmM3NDQ2MTA5MDk.

Making the switch to ACH Payments means your payments for dues and new member (CRA) fees will be paid automatically. No need to worry about missing a payment or sending it in late. No more checks to write for dues or stamps to mail the payments. It's simple and it works well.

When you use this payment method, your Treasurer receives an email with the club's dues invoice, showing the amount due for the quarter. Then about 5 days later, the money is automatically withdrawn from the bank account your club authorized. Optimist International deposits your club dues amount in our District Bank Account and sends a report to the District Secretary-Treasurer of the payments that have been made.

**To enroll in ACH Payments, simply follow these steps:
Go to www.optimist.org.
Select Member Resources.
Under Administration & Tax Information, select ACH Debit.
Complete and submit the applicable Authorization Agreement.**

If you have any questions about the ACH Payment enrollment process, please email ar@optimist.org. If you have questions about how this all works, you can contact me at schmidtsandi@gmail.com or call me at 309-236-1342.

From Sam Meier, 2021-22 Illinois Oratorical Contest Chair

Fellow Illinois Optimists

My name is Sam Meier and I am serving as the district chair for the Oratorical contest. This year's theme is "Healing the World with Optimism". Both the Southern and Northern Regional contests will be held on Saturday, April the 9th. Clubs in the Southern Region are asked to get required paperwork to Terry Wright by Monday, April 4th. Northern clubs have the same deadline to get paperwork to myself.

The following are required:

- **\$25 entry fee per contestant**
- *** Entry Form**
- *** Copy of Speech**
- *** Proof of Age**

Please see Optimist.org for copies of all required forms. The Southern Regional will be held in the Community Room of the People's Bank (located at the junction of Rts. 29 & 104). The contest will begin at 10:00 a.m. The Northern Regional will be held virtually and will also begin at 10:00 a.m. I will be working directly with participating clubs to get the relevant Zoom invitations sent.

As you know, the district contest will be an in-person event, held at the Holiday Inn & Suites (East Peoria) on 4/30/22. Terry can be reached at

217-827-5978 or terry@oijgc.org with questions. I can be reached at 815-213-0315 or sam.meier@edwardjones.com.

Yours in Optimism, Sam Meier – CFP®

From: John E. Ohnemus,
Re: Illinois Optimist Clubs Essay Contests

Theme: How Does an Optimistic Mindset Change My tomorrow?

The 2021-2022 Essay Contest is open to contestants under the age of 19 as of October 1, 2021 and who have not yet completed secondary school or its equivalent. There is no minimum age.

Illinois Optimist Clubs interested in having an Essay Contest should go to www.optimist.org. Click on Member Resources and go to Scholarship Contests and click on Essay Contest. Download and print the Club Essay Planning Guide.

All contestants need to read and complete the Application for 2021-2022 Optimist International Essay Contest. Clubs must submit the winning essay so that it is delivered or postmarked no later than February 28, 2022. All the necessary forms are in the Essay Planning Guide.

Illinois Clubs should send the local essays to: John E. Ohnemus, 2831 Harrison Street, Quincy, Illinois 62301. Essays must be received or be postmarked no later than February 28, 2022.

From Howard Hirschbaum and Tanya Labuda, Deerfield Optimist Club

With a little help from our Friends in Des Plaines our Tree Sale was a success! The Deerfield Optimist Club's main fund-raiser, that has taken place since 1978, was "back in business" in 2021 after being scuttled in 2020 due to the pandemic. The club was thrilled to be selling trees again and truly enjoyed the opportunity to visit (safely, of course) with so many customers that have purchased trees from us "forever."

The Club sold more than 425 trees in just three weeks! Mid summer, it looked like we had lost our vendor, when after much consideration and a reach out to our friends at the Des Plaines Club, we piggy backed our order on theirs Ending up with incredibly fresh, gorgeous trees from Wisconsin and Nova Scotia.

We could not have made so many of our happy neighbors without the support (muscle) of the Deerfield High School Wrestling and Tennis Teams, the Deerfield Parks Foundation, and the Deerfield Park District. Additionally, the support and volunteer spirit of our members simply “topped the cake!”

On our third weekend outside, we participated in Winterfest with the Village of Deerfield, and had a great day introducing the Optimist Club along with our sale. We’re committed to starting early to make plans for next season’s tree lot, so if you need a tree for Christmas, 2022, come see us in Deerfield!



From: John Good, President Glenview Club, District Leadership Chair

Now’s the time to complete the LMS System

March 31st is the deadline for club president’s, secretary/treasurer’s and club foundation reps to complete the online Learning Management System (LMS) to be eligible for Honor Club status and awards. If your club is trying for the President Patsy’s Presidential Incentives, you’ll need to complete the LMS by March 31st.

It's easy to complete this requirement – simply login in to the system which can be accessed through the Optimist International website (www.optimist.org) under Member Resources – Leadership Development.

The direct link is <https://www.optimist.org/member/learning-management.cfm>

Login in, using the credentials sent to you this fall by OI and complete the modules for your club leadership position.

Even if you completed the modules last club year, if you still hold the same position you need to take them again. The modules do change from year to year so there's always something new to learn about your position.

If you have any questions, please email LMS@optimist.org

From: William Wagner, District Golf Tournament Chair



Illinois District Golf Tournament
Dates: June 13,14,15
Course: Red Tail Run Golf Club
Location: Decatur, IL.

Tournament Format: 36 holes

Age Divisions:

Girls: 10-12; 13-14; 15-18

Boys: 10-11; 12-13; 14-15; 16-18

June 13: Practice round for all golfers which includes a skills contest

June 14: Day one of competition 18 holes**

June 15: final day of competition 18 holes**

** Youngest boy and girl age division will play 9 holes each day of the tournament to obtain a qualifying score for 18 holes.

Skills Contest will consist of Longest Drive, chipping and putting. Winners in each age division for girls and boys will be determined by total points for all three skills.

A BIG Thank You to the **Optimist Club of Alton** for sponsoring and providing the prize money of \$350 for this contest.

Why be involved in Optimist Junior Golf?

1: Your club's involvement is a great way to expose your golf community to the benefits of Optimist International, and the activities of your club. Consider reaching out to your local golf course about hosting a golf tournament to identify golfers for the District Tournament. Include your schools' golf coaches to help promote the tournament to their team members. Great way to make your Optimist club known in your community.

2: Bring out the best in your community's youth by sponsoring one or two golfers to the district tournament by providing their registration fees to the tournament. Golfers sponsored by clubs receive a discounted registration fee.

3: Once parents see the quality of the district tournament your club will have an opportunity to recruit new members.

Still not sure? Come spend a day with us in Decatur. You will be exposed to not only some fine golf but some of the nicest, most polite youth you could possibly meet from throughout the Illinois District and possibly the world. In addition, you will have the opportunity to be around some **GREAT** Optimist members who support this tournament from all over the district. **You will not be disappointed.**

Registration will open and fees will be posted on the district's website: www.oijgc-il-dist.org the week of February 22.

If you or your club needs help with a local tournament let me know.

Bill Wagner, OI Junior Golf Chair

wwagner6@charter.net

618-401-0681



Freeburg Optimists Recognize Burt Wikgren on International Optimist Day

With Thursday, February 3rd being International Optimist Day, the Freeburg Optimists decided to recognize one of their own members, Burt Wikgren, as the epitome of an optimist.

Burt joined the Northwest Belleville Optimist Club in 1973 and was elected president of the club the next year. He joined the Downtown Belleville Optimist Club in 1974 and became involved at the District level, first serving as a Lt. Governor. Over the years he has served as a Lt. Governor for several zones. In 1995 he was elected Governor of the Illinois District and led 96 clubs across the state.

Burt joined the Optimist International staff in St. Louis as a New Club Building Chairman. In his years as a field representative, he has organized over 100 new clubs throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

One club Burt organized with the Downtown Belleville Optimist Club as the sponsoring club was the Freeburg club in 1988. He joined the Freeburg Club as a member 2008 and is still a member today.

“Burt is the quintessential Optimist,” states Rita Baker, president of the Freeburg Optimist Club. “He along with his wife, Marilyn who is also a member of the Freeburg Optimist Club, live and breathe optimism,” added Carol Schlitt, a member of the club who is serving this year as Governor of the Illinois District. “No matter what, Burt always sees the sunny side of everything,” said his wife, Marilyn.

International Optimist Day is celebrated throughout the world annually on the First Thursday of February by members of Optimist International. This is a day where Optimist Clubs and members are recognized and celebrated for all they do year-round to promote efforts in bringing out the best in youth, our communities, and ourselves.

Directories Available

New 2021 District Directories are available!! Governor Carol distributed them at the October District Conference. If you didn't attend, your Lt. Governor has yours and will be getting them to you.

*****Please check them for accuracy and let Carol know if there are any changes. The most recent, up-to-date directory can be found on the Illinois District website under the Members tab. You'll need to enter the following to access the directory:**

Username: Member

Password: Yours in Optimism

TAKE NOTE: Important District Dates

Program	Paperwork Due	Event Date	Resource	Contact
Essay Contest	February 28	Winner announced at April 30 Conference	www.illinoisoptimist.org	John E. Ohnemus, District Essay Chair
District Jr. Golf Tourney	May 30	June 13-16	www.oijgc-il-dist.org	Bill Wagner, District Golf Chair
LMS Officer Completion	March 31 for awards	Ongoing	www.optimist.org	John Good, District Leadership Chair

District Oratorical Contest	April 4th	April 30th District Conference	www.optimist.org	Sam Meier, Oratorical Chair sam.meier@edwardjones.com
IL District 3rd Quarter Conference	April 20th	April 29th and 30th 2022	Holiday Inn East Peoria	Carol Schlitt, Governor www.illinoisoptimist.org
Poster Contest	April 20th	April 30th	at conference	Charles Mayhew, Poster Chair charles.c.mayhew01@gmail.com
GRANT APPLICATION	March 31	Application in this Bulletin	See article in this Bulletin	Carol Schlitt cschlitt54@gmail.com
OI National Conference	June 30- July 3rd	June 30th to July 3rd	Reno, Nevada	www.Optimist.org/Convention
Optimist Madness	March 21st	7-8:00 pm	Community outreach	www.illinoisoptimist.org
One Degree More event	May 16th	7-8:00pm	online, ideas and recognition	www.illinoisoptimist.org registration required

Want to see your Optimist Club in the Land of Lincoln Bulletin? Send your information to Nancy Roach-Wilder at nroach12@gmail.com Watch for my email announcing the deadline for the next issue which is May 15, 2022. The deadlines are also in the IL District Directory and on the Illinois Optimist website <http://illinoisoptimist.org> but go ahead and send me your club's information ANY time. I can't wait to see what everyone has been up to!

Action pictures of your club's activities are more fun to share with your fellow Optimists around Illinois, so keep that in mind when sending your information. Always include captions or a story to explain what your club has done. We will also publish information about your upcoming events – you never know who might show up if they know you have an activity going on.