

Illinois District Optimist Land of Lincoln Bulletin



November 2018

Optimism – *The Perfect Fit*

Hello, Optimists! The theme I've chosen for Illinois for the 2018-19 Optimist year is "Optimism – The Perfect Fit". When I think of our Optimist clubs, I think of them as jigsaw puzzles – lots of varied pieces that create an amazing picture in our communities when they are all put together.



I see each of you as an important piece of your Optimist club's puzzle, and I see every Optimist club as a critical piece of the Illinois Optimist puzzle. When we all work together, we complete the puzzle and we provide the most service to the kids and our communities. When even one piece of those puzzles is missing, we can't do everything we want and need to do for the kids and our communities.

Your efforts matter – together we can truly make a difference.

For the past few weeks, I've had the opportunity to travel around Illinois, visiting with several Illinois Optimist Clubs, sharing my thoughts and goals and installing the clubs' new officers for the 2018-19 Optimist year. It didn't matter how large or small the club or how many members were in attendance at the meeting or banquet I attended. What I saw everywhere was the passion every Optimist has for what their club is doing for the kids and in their community. I heard countless stories about projects, saw awards presented to club members who have gone above and beyond, and saw the pride each club has in what they do. I was thrilled to be part of that and to have the chance to spend time with so many wonderful Optimist members. I know that passion extends to every Optimist club in Illinois, and it's what makes this such a wonderful organization!

I'm sure each of you has a favorite Optimist project or two, the one you make sure you are part of every year, the one that brings a smile to your face when the club starts planning it. For me, my favorite project is reading to the pre-school kids. I love seeing how excited those kids are when I show up in their classroom and read them some of the books I read to my own kids when they were pre-schoolers. The thank yous and the hugs at the end of the hour make it all worthwhile.

No matter what your favorite project is, it's important! Stay involved, stay excited, and vow to make every project your club does even better in the coming year. Together we are the perfect fit!

My personal goal for this year is to make sure I do whatever it takes to help you and your Optimist Club be successful. I am here for each of you. Please call me at 309-236-1342 or email me at schmidtsandi@gmail.com if there's anything I can do to help. No question or concern is too small, and I'd love to have you share your success stories as well.

Sandi Schmidt

Illinois Optimist Governor 2018-19

Illinois Optimist Conference – August 11, 2018



Ali, Dani Grace, and Joanie Schrock told convention attendees about their experience at the OIJGC championship in Florida. They are looking forward to repeating the experience next year!



Governor-Designate Sandi Schmidt addresses Convention attendees



Optimist International Board Member Patsy Garner provided outstanding training during the Convention.



Ken Garner, Past International President, and Patsy Garner, OI Rep for our Convention, receiving the District gift from Governor-Designate Sandi Schmidt

Foundation Auctions are always a little more fun with Past Governor / incoming Lt. Governor Corky Helms as the auctioneer! Corky is assisted by Past Governor Steve Turner.



Camp Coco – June 2018

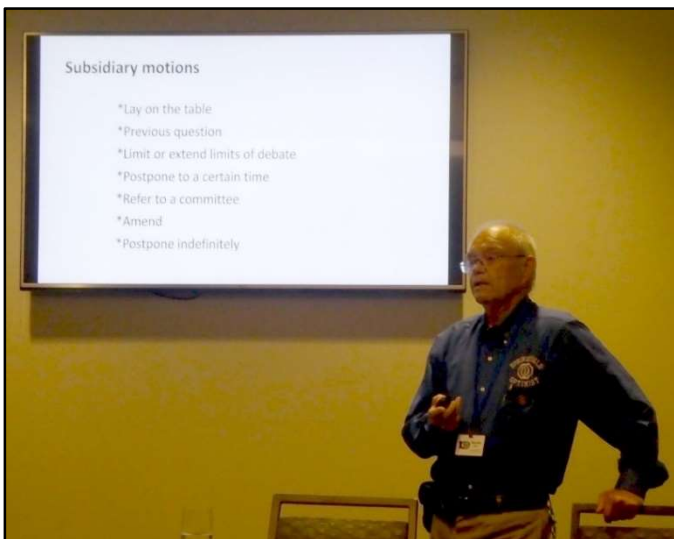




Campers were thrilled with the return of the cardboard boat regatta at Camp Coco! Optimists from Delevan, Moline, Silvis, and Taylorville helped build the boats...and watched as some of them sank spectacularly.

Make plans now to attend Camp Coco next year on June 25, 2019.

Illinois Optimist Conference – October 6, 2018



Parliamentarian Harold Olsen teaching



Optimist International President
Rebecca Butler Mona



Optimist Training by OI President Rebecca Butler Mona and Governor Sandi Schmidt

100 Ways to Appreciate our Members



Breakfast Optimist Club Reading Program Kick-Off



Optimist International President Rebecca Butler Mona kicked off the fall reading schedule at Jefferson Early Learning Center in Moline, IL. She and the Sneech helped the children learn that we can all be friends, even if we are different. And The Mixed-Up Chameleon found out that it's best just to be yourself.



Breakfast Optimist Club members read to the children in both the morning and afternoon pre-school classes several Fridays each semester. There's nothing like the smiles on the faces of these kids to make your day

A Letter From Bill Wagner

Governor Elect and Membership Chair

Hello Fellow Optimist!

First let me introduce myself. I am at Governor Sandi's request and my consent the District Chair for Membership for the 2018-2019 Optimist year. I have also been elected to be Your Governor Elect for 2018-2019 year. So I am in training to be Your Governor for 2019-2020.

I will try to keep this relatively short. Why the numbers you ask? Well here are the answers.

1358 = Number of members in district as of 10/1/2018. This is our starting point.

86 = Number of new members / names added to club rosters in 2017-2018

33% = Clubs that did not add a new name to their club roster

17% = Clubs who added 5 or more names to their roster in 2017-2018

9% = Net % growth to date of new members thru 10/24/2018. This assumes a goal of 100 new members in this Optimist year.

I would hope each of you would reflect upon the following questions. I believe they have a bearing on the above information, and membership.

Why should someone join your club?

What makes your club relevant to the community it serves?

In what areas could your club improve?

Why do people not join an Optimist Club?

"Too busy is not a good reason"

I encourage each of you reading this newsletter to take these questions seriously and discuss them with your membership. Each club officer will be receiving from me a letter within the next two week seeking your club's goal for membership growth and their Plan of Accomplishment for this Optimist year.

In the meantime, have you thought about asking a teacher or a past member to consider joining or rejoining? They can do so for a dues payment of \$30.00 (plus \$11.00 Illinois Optimist dues). Anyone have a college student? They can be a member at the collegiate rate. Do you have supporters of your club that might be considered a Friend of Optimist? They could be included for \$100 and part of the dues is reimbursed back to your club. These are ways to increase membership.

My goal for membership in 2018-2019 is twofold.

1: Net growth in membership by more than 100. ($42 \times 3 = 126$)

2: Eliminate the 33% figure from the list above.

Members these goals are attainable. So let's not be Pessimists but instead be OPTIMISTS!

Work with your club membership to develop a strategic plan to accomplish your club's growth!

Thank You for your time!

Bill Wagner

2018-2019 Membership Chair and Governor Elect

Optimist Club of Belleville Installation



The Optimist Club of Belleville celebrated our 95th anniversary on September 25th. Illinois District Governor Sandi Schmidt inducted the 2018-19 Optimist Club Officers & Directors: (pictured left to right) Brenda Fedak – President, Charles Mayhew – Secretary, Terri Seipp – Treasurer, Corky Helms – Director, Connie Sinn – Director, Geoffery Schwalenberg – Director, and Jim Bryant – Past President.

The Faces of Optimism in Illinois

Quincy Breakfast Optimist officers (below)





Glenview Optimist
Club officers for the
2018-19 year

Springfield Luncheon
Optimist Club at
installation banquet



Optimist Notes and Reminders

- ✓ The **Illinois Optimist Winter Conference** will be January 25-26, 2019 at the Radisson Hotel in Normal, IL. The agenda, registration form, and hotel information will be sent out very soon. Watch your inbox – you won't want to miss this!
- ✓ The **Illinois Optimist District Directory** is available online at illinoisoptimist.org. Go to **Members**, then **Directory** to access it. The username is "member" and the password is "Yours in Optimism". Lt. Governor Zone 8 Craig Rathgeb's name and email address have been updated in the online directory (correct email is crathgeb@charter.net). If you see any changes that need to be made in the Directory, please send them to Governor Sandi at schmidtsandi@gmail.com.
- ✓ Your club treasurer has received the first quarter dues billing from Optimist International for the 2018-19 Optimist year. Illinois District dues are now included on this billing, so your club no longer needs to write a separate check for the District dues. The District dues amount is \$2.75/member each quarter.
- ✓ Every new member added to your club that 35 more kids in your community are served by your Optimist Club. Remember to ask your friends, family, and co-workers to join!
- ✓ The deadline for the next **Land of Lincoln Bulletin** is February 7, 2019. You don't need to wait - Bulletin Editor Michael Taylor will accept your club's information any time – just email him at michaeldemosstaylor@yahoo.com.

Taylorville Optimists Install New Officers

By Terry Wright, Taylorville Optimist Club

The Taylorville Optimist Club held its monthly business meeting on Thursday, October 04, 2018, in the TMH auditorium. President Steve Switzer called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. Pastor Ted Marrinan then led the group in the morning invocation. The special guests for this meeting were the new Illinois District Governor, Sandi Schmidt, and her husband, Martin Schmidt, himself a past District Governor.

Governor Sandi was present to formally induct the new officers for the 2018-19 Optimist year. In her prepared remarks, she listed some of her goals for the district. Membership growth and retention are key to the success of our organization. Sandi also commended the Taylorville club as they begin their 54th year serving our community, as Optimist International begins its Centennial Year in 2019.

Officers for the 2018-19 year are: President Steve Switzer, 1st VP Blake Davis, 2nd VP Dan Raab, Sec./Trea. Jim Adcock, along with board members, Larry Vaughan (past president), Linda Canale, John Crist, Terry Wright, Jennie Jones, Bill Chastain, and Dick Marshal. This group will help lead the Optimist Club through the 2018-19 year.



Pictures L to R: Dick Marshal, Bill Chastain, Dan Raab, Blake Davis, Sandi Schmidt, Steve Switzer, Jim Adcock, Larry Vaughan, Terry Wright, and John Crist

Optimist Club of Deerfield Annual Installation Dinner



(Left to right) Richard Southon (board member), Marilyn Knilians (board member), Lynn Zwyers (board member), Judy Geuder (secretary-treasurer), Mary Lou Heinrichs (board member), Roger Simonson (board member), Sandi Schmidt (Illinois District Governor), Ron Schwartz (president), Bob Rosenbacher (vice president), Howard Kirshenbaum (board member).

Photo credit: Larry Feder

Welcome to New Optimists!

Illinois Optimists, we are off to a great start! As of October 22, Illinois Optimist Clubs have welcomed 19 new members and 2 new Friends of Optimist.

Welcome to these new Optimists and thank you to the sponsoring members who've strengthened their clubs by inviting these new members to join. Keep up the great work! The kids of Illinois are the winners every time we welcome a new Optimist to our membership roll.

<u>New Optimist Member</u>	<u>Optimist Club</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
Avery S Wheat	Waterloo	John Bicklein
Josh E Deutch	Waterloo	Quinn Rodenberg
Kristofer Bochat	Des Plaines	Ray Bochat
Roy Wilken	Des Plaines	Ray Bochat
Jane Gilbert	Des Plaines	Toby Gilbert
John Winters	Silvis	Dave Leibovitz
Kristie Amato	Silvis	James Patrick Schmidt
Brett D Whipple	Belleville	Susan Price
Pamela S Werle	Belleville	Cindy Hawkins
Bill Skiles	Moline	Pat Wendt
James Cornelius	Springfield Breakfast	Mark Depue
Richard Arnold	Des Plaines	Ruth Del Re
Leeann Arnold	Des Plaines	John Del Re
Tricia R Voorhees	Sterling	Sharon Hammer
Dick Warren	Sterling	Sharon Hammer
Susan Zanger	Quincy	John Ohnemus
Nolan Schuler	Mendota	Evan Wixom
John Duft	Highland	Friend of Optimist
George Jones	Highland	Friend of Optimist
Kevin Crask	Highland	Virgil Wilke
Bernice Harrington	Champaign-Urbana	Torionna Exum

Remember these membership incentives when recruiting new members for your club. For each of these, the member pays just \$30 in dues to Optimist International and \$11 in dues to the Illinois District for a full year. The \$15 membership registration fee is also waived for members who join under one of these programs.

- Teachers Incentive – teachers, aides, administrators – active and retired
- \$30 under 30 – any new Optimist who is younger than 30 years old
- Homecoming – former Optimist club members who rejoin any Optimist Club (members may not be dropped and re-added in the same year)

The Friend of Optimist (FOO) is an option for individuals who want to support the good work your club does, but who aren't able to participate actively in the club. For \$100 per year, anyone can become a FOO, with \$40 of that fee coming back to your club's treasury.

Anyone ready for some basketball?!

The Highland Optimist Club is excited for their upcoming largest fundraiser of the year, taking place on January 5th! This will be their 28th Shootout and could be one of the best line ups they've ever had at this event. There will be a total of 8 games starting a 8:30 a.m. Check out the lineup below:

WWW.HIGHLANDSHOOTOUT.COM

**JANUARY 5.
2019**

**Annual
Highland High School
BASKETBALL
Shootout**

Presented by the
Highland Optimist Club

ALL DAY PASS
TICKETS \$14.00

TICKETS \$8.00
(Must leave after Game 4)

SESSION #1

GAME 1
8:30am
GIRLS
Highland (IL)
vs.
East St. Louis (IL)

GAME 2
10:00am
Edwardsville (IL)
vs.
Normal West (IL)

GAME 3
11:30am
Nashville (IL)
vs.
Effingham (IL)

GAME 4
1:00pm
Bloomington (IL)
vs.
East St. Louis (IL)

TICKETS \$14.00
(Good for all games)

SESSION #2

GAME 5
3:00pm
Highland (IL)
vs.
Poplar Bluff (MO)

GAME 6
4:45pm
Rock Bridge (MO)
vs.
CBC (St. Louis, MO)

GAME 7
6:30pm
Nicolet (WI)
vs.
Chaminade
(St. Louis, MO)

GAME 8
8:15pm
Belleview West (IL)
vs.
Vashon
(St. Louis, MO)

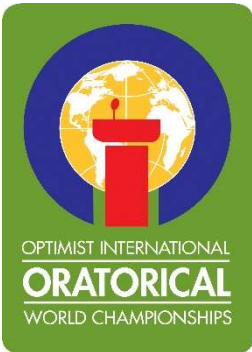
The 28th Highland Optimist Shootout Classic sponsored by Scott Credit Union, widely known as the premier basketball shootout in the St. Louis area, will once again bring together some of the top local and national basketball players and teams.

(Submitted by Kevin Hemann – Secretary Highland Optimist Club)

The Optimist Shootout website is up to date with the premier players attending this year's event. You can log onto www.highlandshootout.com for complete video highlights of the players to watch at this year's shootout. Details on the players can also be taken from the webpage. You certainly won't want to miss a moment of this spectacular event!

Illinois Optimist Contests

Today is a great day for your Optimist Club to start planning to participate in all the Illinois Optimist contests for 2019! More detailed information was emailed to club presidents, secretaries, and treasurers by each of the contest chairs. Here's the basic information for each contest.



2019 Oratorical Contest Topic:

"Is There a Fine Line Between Optimism and Reality?"

Club Contests must be completed by March 16, 2019
Regional Contests must be completed by March 30, 2019
Illinois District Finals will be held April 13, 2019

District Scholarships: \$2500 – 1st, \$1500 – 2nd, \$1000 – 3rd

For more information: Sam Meier, sam.meier@edwardjones.com, 815-213-0315

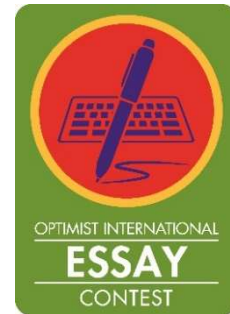
2019 Essay Contest Topic:

"When All the World's Problems are Solved, is Optimism Still Necessary?"

Winning Club essays must be postmarked by February 28, 2019. Mail to:
Connie Minnes, 19051 N Camino Del Sol, Sun City West, AZ 85375

District Scholarship: \$2500

For more information: Connie Minnes, mcmminnes@sbcglobal.net, 217-417-2734



2019 Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) Topic:

"Is There a Fine Line Between Optimism and Reality?"

Notify contest chairs if your club is holding a CCDHH.

District Scholarship: \$2500

For more information: Angela Flaherty, dancewithflair6@gmail.com, 630-201-4305
Kristen Sanders, kriscot@comcast.net, 630-292-4797

2019 Poster Contest Topic: "Say YES to Being Healthy"

Winning club posters must be turned in to Poster Contest Chair at Illinois Optimist Conference on April 13, 2019 for judging. Open to students in grades 4-6. Cash prizes will be awarded.

For more information: Carol Schlitt, carolschlitt@charter.net, 618-977-7787

Celebrating the Centennial!



Optimist International President Rebecca Butler Mona stopped in Silvis on October 4 for the first Presidential Centennial Event of the year! The eight Quad City Optimist Clubs (Milan, Moline, and Silvis, Ill.; Bettendorf, Davenport Noon, North Scott, Quad-City Morning, and River Valley, Iowa) gathered to celebrate.



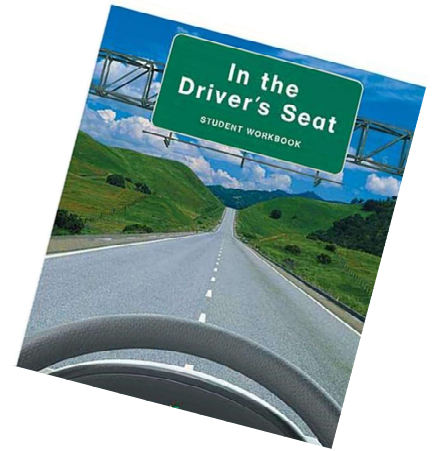
Governor Sandi Schmidt hosted, with presentations from President Mona as well as BSA Troop 383, Friendly House, Jefferson School, and YouthHope – all organizations that have benefited from the work of our clubs. Mayor Matt Carter declared October 4 to be “Optimist International Celebration Day” in Silvis.



This was an inspiring evening that will keep our members energized as we begin the new year!

We Are In The Driver's Seat

Helping kids, in all regards, that's what it's all about. the Foundation is the vehicle and we're the drivers. How far can we go? That depends the amount of gas. There are 11 different ways to contribute to the Foundation and make a difference in kid's lives as Optimists.



Where does the money go you ask? Here are ten things accomplished in 2017:

- 1) Sent 136 students off to college with Optimist International oratorical, essay and CCDHH scholarships totaling \$315,800.
- 2) Relaunched and broadened the CCC Matching Grant program to include health and wellness projects that relate to Childhood Cancer.
- 3) Helped 352 Optimists help 7,027 children and their families by awarding 22 Club Grants including 2 grants to clubs in Africa.
- 4) Assisted Clubs in receiving \$303,158 in charitable contributions for their own local programs through the Pass Through program.
- 5) Supported the Optimist International Oratorical World Championship Contest by funding the US and International winners totaling \$35,000.
- 6) Contributed \$35,540 towards the Optimist International Research Fellowship in Pediatric Hematology and Oncology at Johns Hopkins.
- 7) Paid out \$384,052 to clubs utilizing the Club Campaign program and added an additional \$21,421 in interest to Club Campaigns funds.
- 8) Ended the year with 204 Members to the Women's Philanthropy Council, which will fund two scholarships and two Club grants in 2018.
- 9) Launched initiative to provide \$100 grants to new JOI Clubs with 25 members or more to help conduct service projects.
- 10) Increased unrestricted giving over the previous year by 15%.

I am currently in the process of contacting each club to see who the Club Foundation Representatives are. If your club doesn't have a rep currently I encourage you to be that person. I am looking forward to working with each club to facilitate the future accomplishments I know we can achieve together as a district. At the end of the day there is no more satisfying feeling than knowing you have had a direct impact on the lives of others who may never know your name.

Ron Elvin

District Foundation Representative

The Silvis Optimist Club hosted their Annual Halloween Weenie Roast and Costume Contest!



Children and their parents love to come out each year to enjoy a night full of fun that includes hot dogs, pop, a bonfire, and a costume contest where everyone wins.

At the end of the evening the Silvis Optimist Club received \$1,000 from proceeds of the Silvis Family Run, an event that raises money each year to give back to local organizations like the Optimist Club. What a great way to end a successful event!



Martin Schmidt, Dave Leibovitz, James Schmidt, David Hays, Michael Taylor, Matt Carter

When Optimists Come Together

The Sterling and Rock Falls Optimist Clubs got together and sponsored students from the Two Cities to attend a Junior Historian Program offered by the Sterling-Rock Historical Society.



(Submitted by: John Plummer)

This was their second year of sponsorship, a total of 37 students in two years. Way to go Sterling and Rock Falls Optimists!

Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society - Junior Historians, 2018

A team of six retired teachers have completed one week of a Junior Historians Camp through the Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society and in partnership with the Sterling and Rock Falls Optimists Clubs. Our theme for the entire week was "Illinois' Bicentennial." Twenty-two students participated in the week's activities in our new Lincoln Learning Center next door to our historical Lincoln-Manahan Home. We met from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM each day during the week of July 9-13. The timeline provided by the Illinois Bicentennial Commission was used to develop our curriculum. Students learned about the early settling of Illinois and what transportation was used in its growth. The routes of the Cumberland Road, Lincoln Highway, and Route 66 were mapped. A guest speaker presented information and samples of prairie vegetation. We observed the growth of the Monarch butterfly in its pupae and chrysalis stages. Agriculture, industry, and natural resources were studied, in addition to learning about the accomplishments of various individuals over the course of 200 years. Crafts included cornhusk dolls, sachets, tic-tac-toe games made from burlap, and Bicentennial-themed rock paintings to be placed around the twin communities. Students made pumpkin "ie" and ate melon in conjunction with studying the various state symbols and products of Illinois. They made their own "Illinois history books" to commemorate important aspects of Illinois history.

A program was presented to families and the public on the last afternoon. Students received Illinois passport books, Bicentennial pins, and maps of Illinois. They performed a square dance to the tune of "Going Down to Cairo" and sang the state song "Illinois" along with popular folk tunes from over the last two centuries. Students recited poetry by Carl Sandburg and Gwendolyn Brooks. The program ended with refreshments of Illinois-shaped cookies decorated by the students, melon, and pumpkin bread being served.

Each lesson and activity of every day was designed to recognize some aspect of Illinois' rich history. Several photos have recorded those activities, if you should be interested in them. We printed class photos and presented the students with a photo collage as a memento of the program.

A Time to Celebrate

The Freeburg Optimist Club celebrated their 30th Anniversary on September 21, 2018 with a reception and open house at Reifschneiders Restaurant in Freeburg. Congrats to 30 wonderful years of Optimism!



(Submitted by: Carol Schlitt)

A Letter from the Editor

Hello Fellow Optimists,

I hope everyone has had a fantastic November and is ready to celebrate the upcoming holidays with friends, family, and loved ones.

As many of you know Sandi Schmidt has graciously asked me to be the Editor of the Land Of Lincoln Bulletin. It is my honor and distinct pleasure to take this on, and I wanted to thank all of you for taking the time to submit your club activities and achievements.

It is truly a joy to see all the amazing activities going on throughout Illinois, and I am proud to be part of such an amazing organization. As someone who grew up directly impacted by the strong outreach and mission of the Optimist Club, I am excited to join this wonderful team and give back to the community that helped shape me as an individual.

I also would like to thank you in advance for your patience and understanding on the timeline of my first bulletin, as you can imagine taking on something new there is always a "Learning curve." I often hear the wise words from my Grandfather saying, "If there is something worth doing, do it right," and this was something worth doing "right!"

I greatly look forward to working with all of you and would sincerely appreciate any feedback or suggestions to implement for future bulletins. Thank you all again, and I can't wait to hear from you soon!

Yours In Optimism,

Michael DeMoss Taylor
Illinois Optimist Land of Lincoln Bulletin Editor
Vice President - Silvis Optimist Club

Successful Fundraising At Its Finest

Now this is a group that knows how to have fun and raise money for their club! The Granite City Optimists hosted a successful fundraising event on October 6th in Granite City!



Photos submitted by: Dan Connors

As always, don't forget to recite the creed!



Want to see your Optimist Club in the **Land of Lincoln Bulletin**? Send your information to Michael Taylor at michaeldemosstaylor@yahoo.com. Please note the deadline for the next bulletin is February 7th, 2019. 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 the 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.