



SWIS District Newsletter 2020 – 2021



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From My Home to Yours

Amanda Szymkowski, SWIS District Newsletter Editor

I recently received a holiday card with photos from previous Optimist events from a fellow Optimist member. I was extremely touched and underprepared for the rush of feelings and memories these photos brought back. Seen here is when I was a member of the Milwaukee Area Young Professionals Optimist Club (MAYPOC). We planned a bobbing for apples booth at the Kosciusko Community Center's (KCC) Halloween and Safety event.

It's truly amazing to look back at such a pivotal moment. This was the day I became an Optimist.

Optimism has added so much value and support to my life, definitely way more than the girl in the homemade cat costume pretending to bob for apples could have anticipated. First, I want to share a little background on when the door to Optimism presented itself to me. I was living with my parents, struggling financially, and struggling emotionally. My mother had been diagnosed with Breast Cancer that January. I was feeling pretty helpless as my mom underwent surgeries, chemo, and radiation. And then this opportunity to volunteer came up, and I said "sure, why not." Optimism gave me a purpose, an outlet, and a connection to my mom's childhood neighborhood. To think I was helping a community that she was a part of, made me feel like I was retroactively helping her. And now, 10 years later, my mom is still Cancer-free.



Now I'd like to talk about Cancer again, but this time, Optimism was there to support me when things didn't turn out the way we wanted. In December of 2016, one of the physicians I worked for was diagnosed with Cancer. She was in the hospital for a while and then released with expectations that she'd return to work. We completed FMLA paperwork indicating that she'd be out for surgeries but would work through treatments. By February, she was in the hospital again. But when she was released, it was into hospice. That weekend was the UW-Whitewater annual trivia night. I only slept a couple of hours the night before and I spent most of the workday crying. I was unsure if a long drive and a weekend away from home was the right call, but ultimately, I decided it was better to be with Optimists. Our trivia team was a Hawaiian beach theme. We drank cocktails, made up ridiculous stories, took silly photos, and laughed so hard we cried. I can't tell you all how appreciative I am of that night and all of you. The sun peaked its head out from behind the clouds that night, and I knew I'd be okay. I should also mention that Optimists were there for me a few days later. The night I visited my friend and mentor in hospice, the night I said goodbye; I met with Optimists to plan a Tri-Star Basketball event. They were patient with my needs to share my personal feelings before getting down to business. What other group of people would be so supportive and compassionate during a business meeting?

I started writing this story on New Year's Eve. I felt it was appropriate to reflect on these memories as a very rough year came to a close. I realized that Optimism is the only way to get through the setbacks and the tragedies. It's the only way to face the future despite the past. 2020 was rough, but being an Optimist helps us appreciate the journey and those we meet along the way, no matter how long they stay. Happy New Year, Optimists!



Maxine's Message: *Look at the Sunny Side of Everything and Make Your Optimism Come True*

Maxine Lane: SWIS District Governor 2020-2021

Needless to say, my year as SWIS District Governor has not started the way I planned for. I had plans for fun and excitement at the quarterly conferences, from nursery rhyme games to identifying members through childhood pictures. One of my goals was to bring attendance to our quarterly conferences back to what they were years ago when the room was overflowing. My ultimate goal was increasing our district with 14 new clubs, accounting for approximately 210 new members. This would result in reaching 6,300 additional children. WOW, reaching this goal for the district would go down in history.

Back to reality...our unwelcome nemesis is still hanging around. Yes, COVID19. Things are looking more positive each day; however, my time as Governor is going much faster than I anticipated back when I was nominated and sworn in.

What I Believe...Yes, we have a difficult year ahead. In Optimist Year 2019-2020, Adrian Elcock, OI President, and Christine Dieckhoff, SWIS District Governor, also realized disappointment. They had goals and dreams, some of which came to be and others that remain to be accomplished. Looking at myself, I have accomplished assembling an engaged leadership team and a first quarter conference that was attended by 60+ members, 10 joining for the first time. We kicked off a Combo Zone meeting for the first-time allowing club Presidents or Officers to share what's working and bring concerns to the table for discussion. We are making a difference!!

Let's look at membership...we have maintained 53 clubs, even though one is currently teetering. As I'm writing this note, the date is December 20th, our membership stands at 1,568 members. We are down 52 members from October 1, 2020. Just think of the impact 14 new clubs would have on these numbers. We could go from being down by 52 to being in the positive by 158!! That results in 4,740 additional children being served by Optimist Members who believe in "Bringing Out the Best in Everyone".

My year as Governor is just getting started. I am an Optimist. I *Look at the Sunny Side of Everything and Make My Optimism Come True!* I cannot fail because I do not give up. I have a great team working with me and I have 1,568 people who took an Oath to recite and live by the Optimist Creed. I'm confident as we continue through 20-21 we can meet the challenges, build our SWIS District, and meet our ultimate goal of serving more youth.

Thank you to my team for serving the District in the year of "The Power of One". Thank you to our members for your loyalty and commitment to serving youth and your community by being an Optimist!



1st Quarter Conference – Awards and Recognitions - 11/7/2020

Past Governor Award

Governor Maxine hosted a toast where she presented Past Governor Christine Dieckhoff with the Past Governor Pin along with a plaque of gratitude.



Birthday Award

1st Quarter birthdays (October, November, December) were recognized, celebrated, and entered in a random drawing. The lucky winner was Todd Paulus, Menomonee Falls Optimist Club and Zone 2 Lt. Governor. He won FREE registration to a 20-21 SWIS District Conference. Happy birthday, Todd, who was born on October 4th. 2nd Quarter birthdays (January, February, March) will be recognized at the conference on February 13th.



First-Timer Recognition

Of the 60+ Optimists who attended the 1st Quarter Conference, 10 of which were first-timers! Each of these members received a \$10 gift certificate to put towards a future 20-21 conference. The First-Timer Recognition goes out to:

- Alaina Reeves
- Fern Nall
- Tom Nall
- Linda Thomas
- Heidi Sternig
- Kate Ksobiech
- Kathie Newman
- Kathleen Klem
- Ray Thomson
- Sharon Andrews



Veterans Award

In honor of Veterans Day, Governor Maxine recognized Optimist members who served in the military. They were entered in a random drawing, and the winner was Howard Crofoot. He was awarded a lap blanket, hand-crocheted by Eileen Engelke. She specifically used red, white and blue colors in honor of the United States flag. Thank you, Howard and our other Veterans, for your service to our country.

Unsung Hero Award

Governor Maxine recognized Steve Bailey for his ability to share words of wisdom and Christian beliefs with meaning and commitment. He has inspired many Optimists over the years by placing meaning into our lives and our meetings by honoring our Almighty with his powerful invocation full of commitment and purpose. Kathy Newman, President of Sauk Trails-Madison Optimist Club present the certificate to Steve.



Pajama Party Award

The benefits of a virtual conference are that attendees can join in the comfort of their own homes and wearing their comfiest clothes. Governor Maxine asked the group if anyone was wearing pajamas. Sure enough, Eileen Engelke from the Platteville Optimist Club was wearing her Fred Flintstone pajamas. Eileen received a \$10.00 gift certificate towards a 20-21 conference.





SWIS District 2nd Quarter Conference

Date: Saturday, February 13th 2021

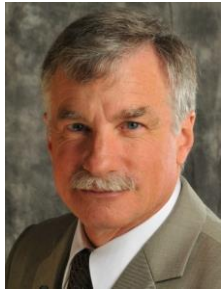
Location: Virtual, Zoom

Registration Opens: Tuesday, 1/12/21

Registration Closes: Wednesday, 2/10 (at noon)

Dear SWIS District Optimist Friends - In just a little over a month, we will join together via Zoom for our SWIS District, Second Quarter Conference.

Continuing with our theme of “**The Power of One**”, I’m excited to share with you two guest speakers: Jessica Delger and Rose Cutting. These wonderful women are all moms of children with Autism, and they will share their personal stories. They found within themselves, as we all can, “The Power of One”. What we will learn from each of them: They did not give up.



I am also pleased to share with each of you that our keynote speaker will be Optimist International President **Mark Weinsoff**. Mark has been serving on the OI Board of Directors since 2016 and has served in OI leadership roles such as Leadership Development, New Club Building, and Membership. In addition to being OI President, Mark is a member of the Pacific Northwest Optimist Clubs: Optimist Club of Santa Barbara-Northside and Optimist Club of UC Santa Barbara in California. Mark’s theme for this Optimist Year is **Choose Optimism**; something that I’m confident we, as Optimist Members, do daily.

In addition to our guest and keynote speakers, we will also have programming from SWIS District Leaders. They will share with us updates on their committees and programs.

For more information on the conference and to register visit: [SWIS Registration](#) on the SWIS District website.

Looking forward to meeting many of you and seeing you on February 13!

Forever in Optimism,

Maxine Lane

Governor SWIS District 2020-2021

SWIS District Leadership Updates

By: Maxine Lane, Governor

It is my pleasure to announce that we have added three new SWIS District Leadership roles/members! Amanda Szymkowski accepted the position of Marketing and Communications Chair. You may have noticed a new monthly newsletter called “The Sunny Side” in your email inbox. Amanda started this monthly one-page newsletter as a way to answer some of your questions regarding Optimist International and SWIS District programming. Previous issues include: Membership Retention, Recruitment Incentives, the Optimist International Foundation, and the Optimist International Marketing Corner. If you have any questions for District Leadership, email her at Amanda.Szymkowski@gmail.com and your answer may appear in the next issue.

We also welcomed Sherry Fickau to our Growth Committee. In addition to her new SWIS District leadership role, she is also the Club Secretary for the Mukwonago Optimist Club. We look forward to growing our clubs and our district with the help of Sherry and our other Growth Committee members. Last but certainly not least, Megan Larrabee from Lake Mills Optimist Club accepted the position of Junior Optimist International (JOI) Chair. If you have any questions on starting or growing a local JOI club, please contact Megan at larrabeemj23@gmail.com or (920) 988-6997. She'd be happy to help you on your JOI-ful journey!

SWIS District “Combo” Zone Meeting Recap

Bonnie Spindler

The SWIS District Lieutenant Governors held a “Combo” Zone Meeting on Saturday, January 9th. More than 50 Optimist Club members attended. Three Lieutenant Governors hosted presentations on support topics: Jerry Kuhn, Zone 1, hosted *Speakers*; Todd Paulus, Zone 2, hosted *Fundraising*; Elizabeth VanNatta, Zone 5, hosted *Youth Activities*. Lieutenant Governor Bonnie Spindler, Zone 6, moderated the event, kicked us off with the Pledge of Allegiance, and closed us out with the Optimist Creed; Lieutenant Governor Phillip Sheahan, Zone 4, managed the chat and technology needs; Lieutenant Governor Dave Lowe, Zone 3, and Fred Dorn, Zone 7, took minutes on topic discussions.

The planned agenda sparked great club member discussions which included: Utilizing virtual platforms for club meetings, hosting a virtual Oratorical contest, running local and District Tri-Star competitions, awarding Students of the Month, addressing club fitness, and marketing club events. A more robust recap of this event will be shared via email and via the SWIS District website, so please keep a lookout.

Thank you to everyone who helped plan and participate in this much-needed event!

Lake Mills Optimist Club

Dave Wendt

Our Adopt-a-Family Christmas Project was a huge success. We helped 37 families/ 92 kids. Each family received a food basket (turkey & ham) from the Lake Mills Market and a \$50 gift card as well. Each child received a minimum of 4 gifts (\$25 value or more of each). 34 of our Junior Optimist Club Members helped wrap gifts at the Saturday wrapping party which was a great experience for each of them! The gifts were distributed on Sunday, December 20th at the Lake Mills Town Hall. Special thanks to the event Chair Larry Kuhl for organizing this event.



Platteville Middle School Junior Optimist (JOI) Club Maxine Lane

Platteville Middle School Junior Optimist (JOI) Club donated \$300 to the Platteville Middle School Giving Tree. Donations from the Giving Tree benefit Platteville families in need. JOI members also spread “sweet” holiday cheer by treating students, faculty, and staff with a candy cane. 2020 marked the second year for both of these holiday events. Way to continue these cheerful traditions!

Optimist Club of McFarland

Club Chair: Penny Simmons

In the first month of the new year, our Club will recognize Laetitia Hollard as the High School Senior of the Month on Tuesday, January 12 at 8:00a.m via Zoom. We will recognize Laetitia for her leadership and accomplishments in our community, specifically regarding Black Lives Matter (BLM) rallies and policy development which addresses equity at the village board and the school district levels.

In December, we recognized Payton Jarrett. Her nomination letter read: “Payton is a free spirited, loving and energetic person. She has overcome adversity her entire life. Every day is a success for her. She makes everyone she talks to smile and laugh. She will brighten your day with her presence. Payton is successful at school and is very involved with being a Spartan. She is the varsity volleyball manager and enjoys every minute of it. She brings her high fives, cheering and smiling face to encourage her teammates on the court. When she's at school she is very social and loves to interact with her peers during social hours. Payton love to be a Spartan and is a great example of Spartan Pride.” Optimist Board Member Tom Mooney presented the award for Payton’s “Substantial and Diligent Service to McFarland Schools and Community”.

Special gratitude to those who assisted with this year’s Santa Hotline event! Special thanks to Katie for coordinating the week-long event, for monitoring the Venmo payments, for organizing the google call lists, and for providing a training packet for our volunteers. Thank you also to our Santa and Elf teams who worked remotely from their home workshops: Vicki & Rodger Herian, Sandy & Curt Bakk, Jackie & Kevin Bacon, Scott & Kim Brown, Katie & Cole Unger, and Alan & Stephanie!

Thank you also to the Optimist members—Nancy Walsh-Boeder, Candy Mooney, Ronda Bernhardt and Bev Ziech, plus Kathi Adams who provide the leadership for the Optimists’ Weekend Snack Sack Project. Weekly, they shop for and stock the shelves at the McFarland Youth Center and assemble food packages for McFarland families.



Janesville Wednesday Morning Optimist Club

Jan Bier

The Janesville Wednesday Morning Optimist Club has put our meetings on hold until the COVID situation improves. We cleaned up the gardens and yard at the Janesville Community Daycare facility shortly before Thanksgiving. Our Optimist Park was featured in the local paper when a cross country skier was spotted using the park in December. We’re anxious for things to return to normal, whatever that may look like in the future, so we can get back to doing our good works for the children in our community.



Optimist Club of Milwaukee

Club President: Barb Brinkmann

Christmas came a little early when the Optimist Club of Milwaukee prepared gift bags for 27 students at Escuela Vieau. These students chose in-person schooling because they do not have the resources at home to attend school online. On December 19th, four Optimist members (Tom Wisniewski, Paul Grippe, Barb Brinkmann, and Greg Moulton) and a very special guest (spoiler alert: Santa Claus), handed out the gift bags and posed for family photos. Each student went home with a stuffed animal, a book, a gift card for a boardgame store, and other various items. In addition, four families who have been particularly affected by the pandemic were gifted grocery store gift cards.

Everyone went home that day with the joy of Christmas: Santa brought the teachers to tears with holiday cheer; students were thankful for gifts that are great for their whole family; and Optimists were grateful to be a part of such a joyous occasion.



Metro Milwaukee Optimist Club

Club President: Amanda Szymkowski

The Metro Milwaukee Optimist Club (MMOC) volunteers annually at Candy Cane Lane, a family-friendly drive-through neighborhood light display that is also a fundraiser for the MACC Fund. MMOC members Josh Zaidel, Amy Soleimani Mafi, and Barb Brinkmann took the 6-7:30pm shift, and CoryAnn St. Marie-Carls, Brock Sarnstrom, and Michele St. Marie-Boelkow took the 9-10pm shift. Shout out to Jo'el who scheduled us on Mascot Night (featuring Milwaukee's favorite mascots). Despite the pandemic and unpleasant weather conditions, the turnout was spectacular, and our members were busy with donations - so busy that we weren't able to take any photos, so please enjoy this throwback photo from 2018. The final total has not yet been calculated, but according to WISN, Candy Cane Lane doubled its goal of \$100,000. Donations fund research for childhood cancer and related blood disorders.

Brodhead Optimist Club

Christine Dieckhoff

Ninety-two needy children had gifts under their Christmas trees due to the Brodhead community's response to the Brodhead Optimists Mitten Tree project. The project worked like this: The needs of children were written on paper mittens which were hung on trees placed in two participating businesses. Community members selected mittens from the trees, and then purchased the items on the mittens. Community members wrapped and then donated the gifts to the Brodhead Optimist Club. Optimist members distributed the gifts to the parents/guardians of the children. The gifts were placed underneath the tree for children to open on Christmas morning. Thank you, Brodhead for spreading Christmas cheer during this unprecedented year!



Reminder for Club Fitness

Club Fitness Chair: Amy Soleimani-Mafi

As many clubs have turned to calls or online meetings this year, I'd encourage you to infuse fun, jokes and/or optimistic moments amidst the business you need to conduct. For many, we're missing the other social aspects of the club as well, plus who doesn't love a little laugh or fun? Including an aspect of fun or added joy does add to the vibrancy and overall health of your club and will breed more optimism!

Looking for an idea? You could follow the lead of the Sauk Trails Optimist Club and kick-off your meetings with "Happy Dollars" wherein club members contribute \$1 towards their school fund and in-turn, share a quick bit of happy news. The Mukwonago Optimist Club has done something similar, concluding meetings with their "Jar of Joy" with \$1 donations going towards the Foundation.

Additionally, the good health of your club also includes paying timely dues to District and International, as well as ensuring Club Secretaries/Treasurers submit your annual 990 forms with the IRS by the deadline of *February 15th*.

If you'd like additional information and ideas - or if you have concerns about the overall health of your club, feel free to reach out to me.

Yours in Optimism,
Amy Soleimani-Mafi
Club Fitness Chair
608-436-1815
amy.soleimani@gmail.com

SWIS District OI Foundation

OIF SWIS District Chair: Wayne Dieckhoff

The Optimist International Foundation (OIF) is in need of our help. Since moving our SWIS District Conferences to virtual platforms, we have not hosted our usual gift basket and 50/50 raffles. These opportunities typically raise around \$600 for OIF each conference.

Since this has been a difficult year, we thought we'd encourage donations such as:

- In Memory/Honor/Gratitude of a Loved One
- In Gratitude for Life's Gifts
- A Valentine Wish
- In Gratitude for the health recovery of a Loved One
- One (due to COVID or otherwise)
- Other (you may specify)

If you are interested in participating in this OIF donation initiative, please send your check and acknowledgement note to:

Wayne Dieckhoff
SWIS District Foundation Representative
W2202 Pinnow Road
Brodhead WI 53520

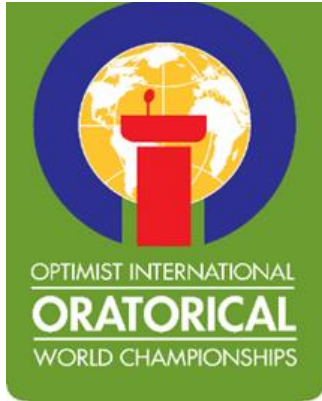
Remembrances received before February 13th will be acknowledged at the 2nd Quarter Conference.

Thank you in advance for supporting the OIF!

Wayne Dieckhoff
(608) 558-5868

Optimist International Scholarship Contests 2020-2021

https://swisdistrict.org/youth_programs/district_programs.asp



Oratorical Contest

Topic: “Healing the World with Optimism”

Beginning in 1928, the Oratorical Contest has become the longest-running program of Optimist International. The contest is designed for young people to gain experience in public speaking and provide them with an opportunity to compete for multiple college scholarships with a pre-assigned topic. District Scholarships: First Place: \$2,500, Second Place: \$1,500, Third Place: \$1,000 with a chance to win up to \$22,500 at the World Championships level.

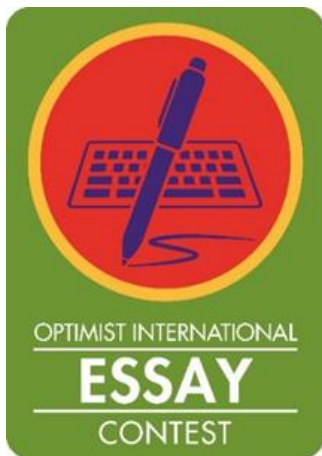
Oratorical Chair: Jo’el Pearlman, Eventplanner2000@hotmail.com

Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Topic: “Healing the World with Optimism”

This contest offers an opportunity for students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing to present their thoughts in the community, gaining skills, which can only come from signing or speaking to a large audience. Patterned after the Optimist Oratorical Contest, the contest offers youth the chance to compete in speech or sign language with the chance to win a college scholarship. One District Scholarship of \$2,500

CCDHH Chair: Christine Dieckhoff, christidee@litewire.net



Essay Contest

Topic “Reaching your Dreams by Choosing Optimism”

The Essay Contest is sponsored by Optimist International to give young people the opportunity to write about their own opinions regarding the world in which they live. The approach can encompass a young person’s personal experience, the experience of their country or a more historical perspective. In addition to developing skills for written expression, participants also have the opportunity to win a college scholarship! One District Scholarship of \$2,500

Essay Chair: Jessica Hodgson, jessstar_13@yahoo.com

SWIS District Tri-Star Basketball and CCDHH Competitions

Tri-Star Basketball

District Tri-Star Basketball Chair:
Maureen Crombie

We recognize that it is a difficult time to host in-person events while trying to protect everyone's health and safety. The District Tri-Star Competition is no exception. Therefore, we may be putting this event on hold.

If you feel comfortable, I still encourage you to host club level competitions. Please just keep proper COVID-19 protocols in mind as you plan and execute your event. Protocols include: staying 6-feet apart, wearing masks, and washing hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

The current date for the District competition is April 24th, 2021 in Sun Prairie (exact location TBD). We as a District will continue to monitor Public Health Department communications, advisements, and protocols. We may consider pushing the date into the summer so we can host the competition outside. This would create a safer environment for contestants and families, and would allow clubs more time to plan their local competitions. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we consider the options and determine what is best for Optimists and our guests.

Stay safe and healthy,

Maureen Crombie
District Tri-Star Basketball Chair



SWIS District CCDHH

District Chair: Christine Dieckhoff

The Communication Contest for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCDHH) is an exciting opportunity for students who are deaf and hard of hearing to boost their confidence, develop their skills, and compete to win a \$2,500 scholarship.

Club Leaders: Promote the contest at your next meeting and encourage one or two of your members to be the event chair. Promote your contest in schools and neighborhoods encouraging students in the community who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate.

CCDHH Contest Eligibility: Contestants must be students in 12th grade or below. Students who are certified to have a hearing loss of 40 decibels or more may compete in this contest and may present either in sign or orally to an audience. (Speech is limited to 4-5 minutes).

District Scholarships and Awards: Will be presented at the SWIS District 3rd Quarter Conference on 5/14/21.

2020-2021 CCDHH Topic: "Healing the World with Optimism"

Your SWIS District CCDHH Committee:

Christine Dieckhoff, SWIS District CCDHH Chair
christidee@litewire.net

Rose Schwartz, SWIS District CCDHH Team Member
rschwartz24@wi.rr.com

For more information, visit the SWIS Website: [CCDHH-Info](#)



SWIS District Oratorical Contest

Topic: "Healing the World with Optimism"

SWIS District Oratorical Team Contact Information:

Phone: (262) 620-1588

Email: Eventplanner2000@hotmail.com

Helpful Oratorical Contest Links:

- [Club Planning Guide](#)
- [Checklist of Job Responsibilities](#)
- [Project Timeline](#)
- [Brochure Template](#)
- [Oratorical Application](#)
- [Oratorical Zoom HowTo](#)

Club Competitions:

- Notify your Lieutenant Governor if your club will host an oratorical contest by **January 15th**
- All club competitions should occur by **March 31st**

Zone Competitions:

- 1st and 2nd place winners of club competitions will advance to the Zone Competition
- Zone Competitions will be held no later than **April 20th**
- Please note: There is no sponsorship fee beyond the Zone Contest

NEW SWIS District Regional Competition:

- 1st and 2nd place winners of each Zone competition will advance to a Regional level
- Two SWIS District Regional Contests, one in Madison and one in Milwaukee, will occur on **May 1st**

SWIS District Competition:

- 1st and 2nd place winners from each Regional competition (4 contestants in total) will advance to the District Competition
- The SWIS District Competition will occur at the 3rd Quarter Conference (May 15th) in Platteville, WI
- Each student will win a scholarship: 1st place: \$2,500; 2nd place: \$1,500; 3rd place: \$1,000; 4th place: \$500

OI Regional and OI World Competitions:

- The 1st place winner of the District Competition will advance to the OI Regional and OI World competitions in St. Louis in July 2021
- Great Plains Regional competition winner: \$5,000
- World competition winners: 1st place: \$15,000; 2nd place: \$10,000; 3rd place: \$5,000

Why Be Optimistic Now?

By: Christine Dieckoff, Brodhead Optimist Club

Here we are, 42 people in the Brodhead Optimist Club, who still cling to our ideals as Optimists. But Why? We are unable to see our friends and family in person, to receive those warm, soft hugs. We are sitting at home looking for things to keep us busy until this deadly virus is defeated and fearing for loved ones who are diagnosed with COVID-19. We are hungry to get back into the community and to serve the children we profess to help grow into active citizens. We long for and need to celebrate our hometown festivals once again. Finally, we grow weary and depressed as this situation drags on.

And yet, we look up and are hopeful that this national crisis will end soon because we live by our Optimist Creed. The first tenet states “Promise yourself to be so strong that nothing will disturb your peace of mind.” This stabilizes us and allows us to fulfill the rest of the Creed. We “Look at the sunny side of everything and make our optimism come true.” Sunny side, really? During Covid-19? Let’s face it, we’ve learned how to communicate with sight when we learned how to attend a zoom meeting or used face time on our phones. We’ve gotten to know our family members better as we have eaten together, played games together, enjoyed talking to each other, and showed our love in different ways. We’ve tried cooking different dishes and found out our cooking and baking is better than eating out. We’ve enjoyed our quiet times, reading, working puzzles, writing letters or emails to those with whom we’ve lost contact. And when we do leave the house to grocery shop with our masks on, we are kind and helpful.

PROMISE YOURSELF:

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Please join our club in writing letters to keep your families and friends Optimistic during these unprecedented times.

The Power of One

John Fons

“Hi. My name is Matt.”

“I don’t know what I’m doing.”

“After about ten months of pandemic a lot has happened.”

“First, my parents are talking about getting a divorce. They don’t talk much anymore. They just seem to argue. Dad goes to work and Mom got furloughed, so she’s home all the time, but there’s nothing to do. Only she cleaned all the closets about four months ago and they did some painting in one of the bedrooms, but then they just started getting on each other’s nerves.”

“So I stay out of the way.”

“My little brother doesn’t understand. I don’t try to explain it to him. He’s too young.”

“I wish I was young.”

“I’m thirteen. If there were classes at school I’d be in the sixth grade.”

“Anyway, the computer classes they do are OK. I know the teachers are trying, but it’s not the same. I like being with kids and eating in the lunchroom, but all that’s gone now and no one knows when it will come back.”

“I mean, how weird is that? It’s like something out of a science fiction movie and I don’t even like science fiction. I like poetry and literature and I guess that makes me weird to begin with.”

“I need something to do. I need something to think about happening in the future.”

“I heard about the Optimist Club. Dad used to belong, but he dropped out when Mom lost her job because of the money. We used to do things together and now I know he has his reasons; I just wish someone would come and tell him he needs to get back in it and do things for other people. I think that would help. Maybe he and Mom would stop arguing and get back to living. And I could write an essay and maybe win a contest and get a scholarship. That would be good.”

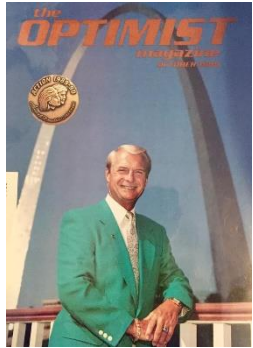
“So if anyone is out there reading this I just want to say I heard about the Power of One thing you’ve got going on and I’m One. I mean I’m One Kid and if you could do something to help just me just One Kid it would be worth all the effort to make it happen.”

“That would be powerful.”

“Don’t you think so? I mean, after all, you’re Optimists.”

“Aren’t you?”

In Memoria: Optimist International Family and Extended Family



Honoring Past International President Ken Monschein

(Photo are notice are from the January issue of the Optimist International Hotline)

Ken Monschein was a talented leader who served as Optimist International President in 1989-1990. Ken passed away January 7, 2021. Ken took our wonderful organization to new heights during this time. Under his leadership, the Optimist movement had our largest growth in history with 340 new clubs.

Ken once said that *“Optimist International is the best of all service organizations because we are hands-on and really get involved in youth work. He also reminded Optimists that “we’ve barely scratched the surface on what we can do.”* Please keep his family in your thoughts. As an expression of sympathy, the family suggests sending memorial contributions to the Optimist International Foundation.



Remembering Optimist International 2019 Convention Keynote Speaker Jeff Hanson

On December 20th, the @jeffhansonart Instagram account announced:

“It is with heavy hearts that we share that 27-year-old artist Jeffrey Owen Hanson passed away peacefully at home this afternoon with his parents at his side...Jeff received national attention for raising \$1 million for charity with his art by his 20th birthday. At the time of his passing, he had raised more than \$6 million toward his goal of \$10 Million by 30.”

On December 17th, the Instagram account announced that Jeff “was recently diagnosed with a new brain tumor associated with his genetic condition, neurofibromatosis. After a prolonged hospitalization, Jeff is now home in the care of his parents, resting comfortably under the care of Hospice.”



Those of you who attended the Optimist International Convention in Louisville, KY would remember that Jeff was one of our Keynote speakers. He also designed this year’s 50th anniversary Optimist International Foundation (OIF) pin. The Optimist International Magazine featured Jeff in their Summer 2019 [issue](#). The article included information about the “colorful impression” that was “left on Louisville after holding its 2019 International Convention.” OIF commissioned a painting from Jeff which was donated and hung at the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Kentuckiana (Kentucky/Indiana area). According to the article, Jeff said at the unveiling:

“After a day of medical treatment, I always enjoyed returning home to a cheerful, uplifting environment, to my safe haven...My artwork, Backyard Safari, attempts to convey these happy feelings. The adventure of exploring my backyard as a child.”

A photo of the piece (shown above) is curtesy of @jeffhansonart. If you are interested in donating to his charity, you can donate [here](#). You can also donate to the Optimist International Foundation in his memory.

OptiForum Sessions

“How to conquer the Pandemic with Optimism”

Talk Titles Include:

- Financial Resources for Struggling Clubs
- Safe Ways to Continue Bringing Out the Best in Youth, Our Communities and Ourselves
- How to Meet Safely: Staying Connected and Strengthening Relationships with other Club Members
- Reaching out to Share Optimism with People Outside the Organization

If you missed it live, you can watch [here](#)

“Optimist International Foundation Grants”

Grant Topics Include:

- Club Grant
- Childhood Health and Wellness
- Disaster Relief

If you missed it live, you can watch [here](#)



Optimist International Convention
Wednesday, June 30th –
Friday, July 2nd 2021
Atlanta, GA

SWIS District Governor's Team 2020-2021

https://swisdistrict.org/resources/district_officers.asp



Maxine Lane
Governor



John Fons
Gov Elect



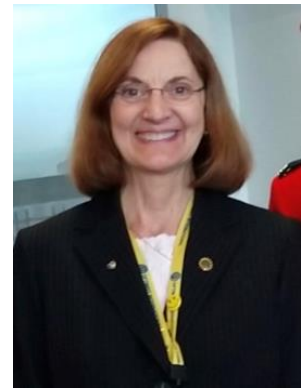
Howard Crofoot
Treasurer



Joan Bahr
Secretary



Wayne Dieckhoff
OI Foundation Rep



Joanne Ganske
OI Ambassador



Barb Brinkmann
Leadership Dev



Jessica Hodgson
Essay Chair



Maureen Crombie
Tri-Star Chair



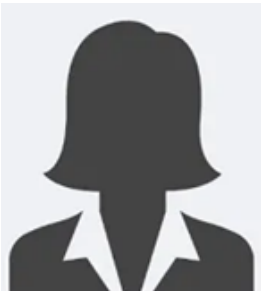
Christine Diekhoff
CCDHH Chair



Tom Carls
Jr Golf



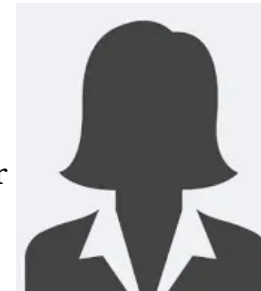
Bonnie Spindler
Webmaster



Megan Larrabee
JOI Chair



Amanda Szymkowski
Newsletter Editor
Marketing, Communications Chair



Jo'el Pearlman
Oratorical Chair
Event Planner

SWIS District Governor's Team 2020-2021 Growth Committee



Gary Engelke



Vern Andren



Maureen Crombie



Elizabeth VanNatta



Phillip Sheahan



Rich Voegel



Don Kresch



Jeanne Voegel



Tom Bier



Dave Lowe



Sherry Fickau

SWIS District Finance Team & Lieutenant Governors 2020-2021

Finance Team



Jeff Kuckenbecker
Finance



Sue Kranz
Finance



Wayne Dieckhoff
Finance



Duane Borgen
Finance

Lieutenant Governors



Jerry Kuhnz
Zone 1



Todd Paulus
Zone 2

Lieutenant Governors



Dave Lowe
Zone 3



Phillip Sheahan
Zone 4



Eileen Engelke
Zone 5



Elizabeth VanNatta
Zone 5



Bonnie Spindler
Zone 6



Fred Dorn
Zone 7



The Optimist Creed

Promise Yourself...

- To be** so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.
- To talk** health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.
- To make** all your friends feel that there is something in them.
- To look** at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.
- To think** only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best.
- To be** just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.
- To forget** the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.
- To wear** a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.
- To give** so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.
- To be** too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Visit the SWIS District Website today!

www.swisdistrict.org

Bonnie Spindler

Chair, SWIS District Website

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Thank you, Contributors!



Thank you to everyone who contributed articles to this edition of the SWIS District Newsletter. I couldn't put out this quarterly publication without you – and I very much appreciate your time!

If you are interested in contributing to the next edition, please send me your: Club Stories, District and Zone Events, Committee and Chair Updates, Member Acknowledgments, and other articles that you would like to share. I will gladly accept them at anytime.

If you are ever unsure of submission deadlines, please reference the SWIS District Conference schedule found here: <https://swisdistrict.org/conferences/default.asp> The date that registration opens, is the date that I try to send out the newsletter.

Thank you!

Amanda Szymkowski
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