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# HOTLINE

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## Dear Optimists,

As you are well aware, we are currently facing a global financial crisis. Businesses are closing, major industries are declaring trouble and entire nations are facing bankruptcy. As governments at all levels review their financial situations and work to adjust budgets, services will be cut. These will no doubt include services to youth.



This is an opportunity for Optimists to step up to the plate. As Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Our great organization has watched its numbers decline over the past 15 years. This might just be the time for us to truly rediscover ourselves, as an organization and individually. Optimists can help save the day for children everywhere.

As businesses and governments review their budgets, Optimist Clubs will be doing the same. Tighter budgets don't have to mean fewer children served. Be resourceful. Realize how valuable your time can be. A few hours dedicated to serving a child can go far in any economy. Clubs do not always have to raise large amounts of money in order to make a big impact.

We must count our blessings, whatever they may be. We each have an optimistic outlook on life, and that, fellow Optimists, is priceless.

*Don Sievers*

Don Sievers  
President  
Optimist International

## Keep the Questions Coming



The main reason people don't join Optimist Clubs is because they are never asked. This March, it is once again time for "Just Ask," the program that gets people asking questions about Optimist Clubs and gets Optimists asking individuals to join!

"Just Ask" is designed to spread the news about Optimist Clubs.

By simply wearing a "Just Ask" button wherever you go, you will encourage curious people to ask questions. And that's when you can start telling them all about the good work of your Optimist Club!

Optimist International encourages all Clubs to take part in the "Just Ask" program this March. Join fellow Optimists in this big promotion and listen as interested people start asking all of the right questions!

To arrange for a "Just Ask" kit to be sent to your Club at no cost, please send an e-mail to [membership@optimist.org](mailto:membership@optimist.org) or call (800) 500-8130.

## REMINDER FOR PRESIDENT-ELECT SHRIVER'S TEAM

Optimist International would like to remind all Governors-Elect and Vice Presidents-Elect that there will be no Governor-Elect training on July 12, 2009, following the International Convention.

## Junior Golfers Look Forward to Fun New Opportunities This Year

The new year has brought about new developments in the Optimist Junior Golf Program. With a new location for the Tournament of Champions and a new parent/child event, the possibilities are exciting for those Optimists who volunteer with junior golf.



*The Optimist International Junior Golf Championships return to PGA National Resort and Spa for the 15th annual event. Photo courtesy of PGA National*

District qualifying events will take place in the coming months in preparation for the international championships at PGA National Resort and Spa in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Approximately 650 junior golfers are expected to make their way to the tournament this summer. Boys and girls ages 10-15 will compete July 23 through 28, and boys and girls ages 16-18 will compete July 28 through August 2.



*The Tournament of Champions moves to Orange County National Golf Center & Lodge for 2009. Photo courtesy of Orange County National*

(Orlando area) for the fifth annual event. The tournament is also moving up in the schedule to November 7-8. Top junior golfers ages 14-18 will compete on Orange County National's Crooked Cat course.



*Optimist Junior Golf introduces the new Parent-Child Classic at Disney's Lake Buena Vista Golf Course. Photo courtesy of Disney*

aunt or uncle. The event will take place December 5-6 at Disney's Lake Buena Vista Golf Course at Walt Disney World in Florida. Divisions include parents and junior golfers ages 16-18, 14-15 and 13 and under. The format of the 36-hole event will be "best ball" play. Optimist International hopes this new event will become a favorite for parents and their young golfers!

For information about these events, visit [www.optimist.org/golf](http://www.optimist.org/golf).

## Essay Contest Deadline

Don't forget that the deadline for Clubs to submit their winning entry for the Essay Contest is February 28. Clubs should submit the winning essay to their District Chair. If you do not know who the Chair is in your District, please contact the Programs Department at [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org).

## Colorado Club Recognized for Commitment to Childhood Cancer Research

The Optimist Club of Littleton, Colorado, is the first Club to donate \$2,000 to the Johns Hopkins commitment during the 2008-2009 year. The Club was awarded special banner patches in recognition of their donation. A Club representative will be invited to be recognized on stage at the 2009 International Convention in Florida. The Club's dedication to providing the care and finding the cure deserves a "high five!"

If your Club is interested in the Johns Hopkins and Canadian CCC Recognition incentive, please contact the Programs Department at (800) 500-8130, ext. 261 or 235, or via e-mail at [ccc@optimist.org](mailto:ccc@optimist.org).



## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW HOUSING RATES AT CONVENTION

A summer vacation awaits all Optimists in Central Florida! It's time to plan for the 2009 International Convention July 8-11 at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Kissimmee. And Convention has introduced new housing rates of just \$149+ per night\*, making it that much easier to attend!


With this hotel rate, Optimists can plan to attend the International Convention and make a family vacation out of it all at once. The Gaylord Palms is located just 1.5 miles from the front gate of Walt Disney World, is in close proximity to other Orlando theme parks and is just 20 minutes from Orlando International Airport.

For hotel reservations call (407) 586-2000 or visit the Gaylord Palms webpage designed just for Optimists! For information about

Convention plans, go to [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org) and click on the International Convention link.

\*Room rates are subject to a \$10 per room per night resort fee and applicable taxes.

## Deadlines Approach for Bylaws Amendments and Convention Resolutions



Please take time to re-evaluate the Optimist International Bylaws and make sure they continue to effectively serve the organization. By doing this, you and your Club can help shape and improve all of Optimist International.

If your Club wants to recommend a revision, it must submit a proposed amendment citing the

article and section, and exact proposed wording change to all articles and sections cited, along with a written rationale (in 200 words or less) for the change. The Club must submit the proposal on Club letterhead signed by the Club President. The proposal may be e-mailed or faxed to the International Office but the original Club letter must be received in the International Office in order for the proposal to be considered. The rationale as submitted will be printed in the May issue of the *Hotline*. All submitted changes will be brought before the 2009 Convention delegates for vote and possible endorsement.

All proposed change submissions for the Bylaws must be received at the International Office by 5 p.m. (CST) April 9, 2009. Items postmarked on or before but received after April 9 will not be accepted. Please mail them to: Dana Thomas, Executive Assistant, Optimist International, 4494 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108.

### Convention Resolutions

The Convention Resolutions Process can be used for any aspect of the organization not covered in the Bylaws. Clubs must submit resolutions by May 9, 2009, to the Resolutions Committee. The committee will choose the strongest resolutions and report them to Convention delegates on Saturday, July 11, for debate and vote (note: Resolutions endorsed by Convention delegates are non-binding and are sent to the International Board of Directors for further consideration and study).

Please type resolutions on Club stationery and include your Club name, Club number and Club President's signature. All resolutions should be written in standard resolution format: "Whereas ... , Whereas ... , Whereas ... , Be it resolved that the Board of Directors of Optimist International is asked to consider..." Please mail your resolutions to: Resolutions Committee, Optimist International, 4494 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108.

## Quack for Fun and the CCC at the 2009 Convention

The presale for the upcoming duck race is off to a fast waddle. Eighty ducks have already been sold to Optimist Members who hope their entrant will be the first one to cross the finish line in Florida.

There's still time to purchase a ticket for a rubber duck for \$10 US/CN. The presale is for a limited time only, and all order forms must be submitted to Optimist International by June 19. After that date, ducks can be purchased in the House of Optimism at Convention during the normal hours of operation.

Everyone can participate, even those who will not be attending Convention. There is no limit to the number of ducks each person can buy.

Only a limited number of ducks will be sold, so make sure to place your order soon. If you would like to purchase your duck or ducks today, contact your District CCC Chair or Optimist International at (800) 500-8130 to obtain an order form.



## Get a Head Start on the President's Pride Report



The 2008-2009 President's Pride Report is now available for Clubs to begin filling out on the Optimist Leaders website at [www.optimistleaders.org](http://www.optimistleaders.org). After logging on, click on "Reports" on the right side of the screen and then select the correct report. Under each question are boxes that can be checked with a simple click of the mouse to indicate that your Club participated in that activity. If your Club participated in an activity that is not listed, type a brief description of the activity in the box marked "Other."

You can enter information throughout the year as you do activities. Just go to the report, fill out the selected information as it happens and then hit the "Save" button. When you are filling in your dollar amounts, please round off to the nearest dollar and be sure to hit the "Save" button or you will lose the dollar figure!

When you have completed the form by filling in the data for the entire Optimist year, click on the signature button and then click "Submit." The form will be sent electronically to Optimist International. Please keep in mind that once you hit the "Submit" button, you cannot change or add any information to the report.

Hard copies can be printed from the Forms page of the Optimist website, [www.optimist.org](http://www.optimist.org), and faxed or mailed to Optimist International. Hard copies of the President's Pride form will not be mailed unless requested through the Programs Department.

Submission of the President's Pride Report is a requirement for attaining Honor Club status. Clubs must also complete three service projects that must be noted on the Pride Report to achieve this award.

If you have any questions about the form, please contact the Programs Department at (800) 500-8130, ext. 235 or 261, or via e-mail at [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org).

## Showcase Your Club's Winner of a Project

A Bragger's Hall will be held during two workshop sessions at the 2009 International Convention on Friday, July 10. Each participating Club will be assigned a table where they can display project materials such as posters, pictures, informational handouts or even a CPA entry. Clubs can share information about any of their Club's creative community service projects or successful fundraisers. Participating Clubs are responsible for transporting their own materials.

Convention attendees will be invited to visit the Hall to get new ideas and learn how to organize the projects in their communities. A representative from the participating Club must be present during the entire session registered for so they can talk to visitors and answer questions.

As an incentive for Clubs to participate in the Hall, a special prize will be offered to the Club with the best project display! As attendees leave the Hall, they will be able to vote, and the winner will be announced at the Closing Business Session. The winning Club will be awarded one free registration to the 2010 International Convention in Denver, Colorado!

If you would like to participate in the Bragger's Hall, please contact the Programs Department at (800) 500-8130 or via e-mail at [programs@optimist.org](mailto:programs@optimist.org) for a registration form. Clubs must complete the form and submit it to Optimist International by May 15, 2009, in order to ensure space availability.

## *An Open Letter to all Life Members:*

From: The Board of Directors of Optimist International

Being a Life Member indicates your strong sustained support for the organization. You believe in what our Clubs do and you have committed yourself to our mission of providing hope and positive vision to kids. In many cases, your Life Membership was awarded to you by your Club in honor of your year as Club President or for many years of dedicated service. Many of us on the Board are also Life Members. We understand the strong emotional attachment to being a Life Member.

Today, our organization faces a serious emergency that requires all Life Members to step up and do something more. The worldwide financial crisis is affecting not only governments, financial markets, corporations and small businesses. Optimist International finds itself struggling to survive financially. Total membership in Optimist Clubs has fallen from 175,000 in 1990 to 96,000 today. Our average annual decline in membership is three percent. Recent new laws governing pension plans have created additional, unexpected expenditures for the organization. The cost of doing business continues to rise each year while our reserves have been all but depleted.

As your Board of Directors, we have taken several steps in recent years to trim expenses to try and keep up with ever-rising costs. Twelve staff positions have been eliminated over the past six years. Annual personnel salary increases have been drastically cut. We have eliminated several programs that we felt we could no longer afford, i.e., the Rose Parade float. We have made many other tough decisions that ultimately have left the organization weaker and less able to meet the needs of our Clubs and Members.

Here is our request of you. Would you voluntarily give up the reduced dues advantage that being a Life Member affords you? If every Life Member voluntarily paid full dues the organization would receive an additional \$560,000 of revenue each year. This would allow us to continue our present level of service to all Members and Clubs.

If you are already paying full dues to your Club, but your Club continues to pay the Life Membership amount for you to Optimist International, please request your Club Secretary/Treasurer to start sending the full amount with the next dues billing.

To do your part for the good of the organization just fill out the form on the following page and return it to Optimist International, or send an e-mail to [accounting@optimist.org](mailto:accounting@optimist.org) to give your permission for your Club to be billed full dues for you.

On behalf of the over 6,000,000 young people we all serve every day, thank you for your dedication to "bringing out the best in kids."

# Life Member Voluntary Dues Change



I agree to pay the full amount of International dues, in lieu of the reduced Life Member rate, to help the organization through its current fiscal crisis.

If I am already paying the full amount, but my Club is sending only the Life Member amount to Optimist International, I will request that my Club send the full member dues amount instead.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Club Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form to:  
Optimist International  
4494 Lindell Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63108