

2009-2010 REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 10, 2010

GROWTH:

At the Convention in Denver, the leadership team (Sue Creswell, Patsy Garner and Paula Reyling) encouraged the Governors to “finish strong” – and they did.

We finished the year with 93 new Optimist Clubs, and almost 13,000 new members. Particularly encouraging was the number of Charter members – the 25 member clubs (58) averaged 29 charter members and 15 member clubs (35) averaged 20 charter members. There is a market for our product.

As a result, there were eight (8) Distinguished Districts/Governors and six (6) Honor Districts (Exhibit #1). All of the eight (8) Vice-Presidents performed well; they were there for their respective Governors, consistently providing support and encouragement. The No. 1 Vice President was Mark Weinsoff from the West Coast Region. Melvin Bannister from the Southeast Region was No. 2, with Marc Katz from the Northeast/Great Lakes Region a very close No. 3. Their efforts are particularly appreciated.

FINANCES:

Again “finishing strong” was the theme with regards to the financial condition of Optimist International in 2009-10. Certainly, the dues increase was the most significant factor contributing to the surplus on September 30th of over \$700,000.00. However, other factors contributed as well.

First, there were considerable cost-saving measures taken: moving the Board meetings to the Headquarters building, the combined Governor/Governor-Elect Conference (negotiations by staff Benny & Ronda with Gaylord Properties), and reducing the International Convention to three (3) days. These, combined with reduced volunteer expenses resulted in considerable savings. In fact, the International Convention showed a profit of \$25,000.00, the first profit in many, many years. The Convention Committee, chaired by Charlie Jerman, deserves special commendations for their efforts in making the Denver convention such a success.

An additional factor was the tax refund of over \$100,000.00(U.S.) from the Canadian government. Jacques Pelland, J.C. St. Onge, and others are to commended for their relentless effort to make this happen. Recognition is also in order for Mike Allen and the members of the Finance Committee, as well as Tom Owen and Connie Pellock (and their staff) for their continuing oversight that facilitated these results.

PROGRAMS:

The Internet Safety Program and the eOptimist website were launched during the 2009-10 year and both have met with considerable success. Efforts are well underway to upgrade the Internet Safety Program. Specifically, the Faux Paw program will soon be available in Spanish and will include modifications to reflect Canadian cultural differences. Improvements to the adult presentation are being developed as is a program focusing on teenager internet use. The goal

date for release is the Convention in Baltimore. Members and staff in St. Louise (Danielle) and Montreal (Genevieve) are jointly involved in these efforts.

eOptimist continues to develop and expand. Maggie Fairchild is staff coordinator, adding new features regularly.

The potential impact of these programs for Optimist International is unlimited. Accordingly, it is important that a strong, effective marketing plan be developed and implemented for each program with all deliberate speed.

FUTURE:

After visiting 26 Districts in the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean, it is clear that our District Meeting model is worn out – it is no longer serving its primary purpose of training current and future Club, Zone and District leaders.

From the 2009-10 District Conventions the maximum percent of Club President-Elects present was 37%; the maximum percent of Club Secretary-Treasurers was 38%; with most being approximately 20%. (Exhibit #2). We, as a Board, through our Committees, working with staff, must make it a priority to educate District leaders about this reality and to develop new models to propose to the Districts so they become meaningful again. The Parallel District Conferences are a good first step in this process, but we must ensure that the new purpose and focus of PDC's be taken to the District, Zone and Club levels as quickly as possible.

The other significant need that Districts and Clubs have is for marketing assistance and direction from the International Office. I am pleased that this effort was initiated in 2009-10 with the report from the Charles Jordan Group. And I look forward to working with you to develop and implement the plan. My observation is that its implementation needs to happen as soon as possible – the need for marketing assistance at the local level is overwhelming and it will have significant impact on our immediate and future growth.

Toward that end, I suggest that the focus and direction of the International Office should include two (2) major functions, not only one (1). Currently, the focus is assisting Clubs and Districts to be administratively efficient.

The second major focus should be providing marketing assistance and direction to Clubs at a local level to help them maximize the impact of their youth-serving projects and their community identity.

It has been a true Honor to serve as President and your support has contributed significantly to the year's successes.

Promise yourself for the kids – and to press on to the greater achievements of the future.

Optimistically,

Mark O. Shriver, IV
President 2009-10