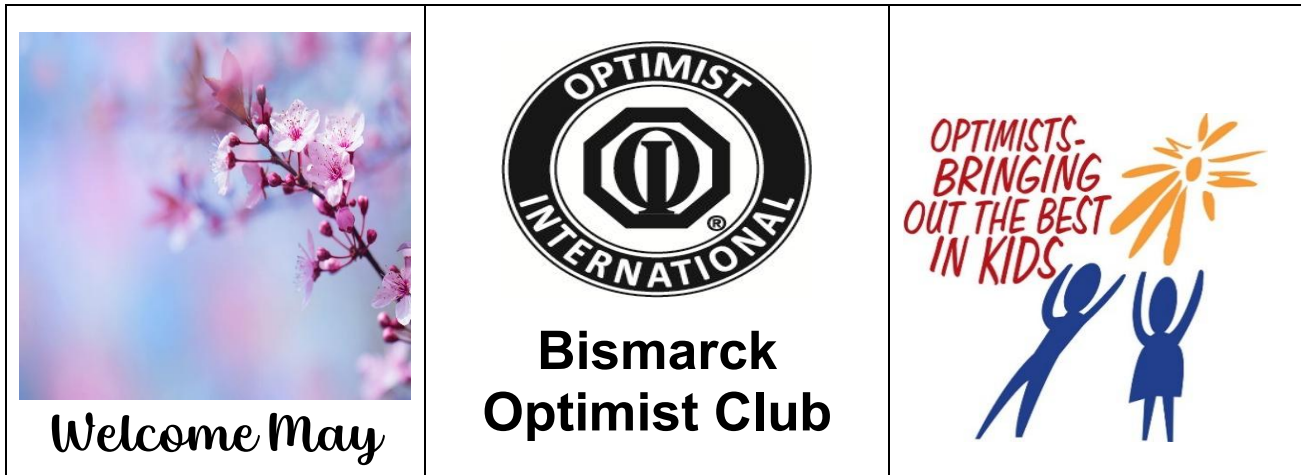


The Optimist Outlook – May 2026



A Look Ahead to...

May Programs, Rob Koppinger, Chair

May 2nd – Keep Bismarck Beautiful event at Optimist Park

May 4th – Fill Caring for Kids Backpacks

May 5th – Bismarck Arts and Gallery Association, Cherise Pfaff

May 7th – Board of Directors Meeting

May 12th – Furry Friends, Julie and Katie

May 19th – Dakota Zoo, Allison

May 25th – Avenue of Flags – Memorial Day

May 26th – Soul57, Jenny Maattala

Recap of April Programs, Keith Magnusson, Chair

April 2nd – Board of Directors Meeting

April 6th – Filled 30 Caring for Kids Backpacks

April 7th – Western ND Honor Flight, Rickylee Schatz, Board Member

April 14th – North Dakota Public Service Commission, Jill Kringstad, Commissioner

April 21st – Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, Morgan Bruhn, Development Assistant

April 28th – Miss North Dakota 2025, Kennedy DeLap

Upcoming Program Chairs:

June: Jerry Haas

July: Brent Helm

August: **Speaker Chair needed – how about you?**

Contact: jillian.lagasse@hotmail.com for more information

Welcome New Members

Marcus Christianson

Jon Lengowski

Member Anniversaries

Shelly Lockard – 2 years

Kristin Oban – 5 years

Jennifer Henderson – 14 years

Sarah Miller - 3 years

Alexis Larson-Evert – 5 years

Cindy Clairmont – 3 years

Roger Anderson – 14 years

Rob Koppinger – 23 years

Committee Feature - Avenue of Flags



Since 2013, the Bismarck Optimist Club has been installing 60-3'x5' U.S. flags on 10-foot poles on each side of State Street/US Highway 83 from the south entrance of the Capitol grounds to the Interstate. These flags are approximately 100' apart and are displayed from dawn to dusk on Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Veteran's Day (weather permitting).

With safety trailers provided by Traffic Safety Services in tow, two pickups, and a crew of 4 individuals for each pickup, it takes about an hour to setup and another hour to retrieve the flags. Volunteers are also needed to load the flags the evening before, pick up the safety trailers, and put the flags back into storage after takedown. Metal bases that hold the flags have been installed and the curbs along the route have been marked with white spray paint to make the metal bases easier to find. The bases are also capped with white plastic caps.

Sponsorships are available at \$50/individual; bronze sponsorship \$250-499; silver sponsorship \$500-\$749, and gold sponsorships \$750 +. These 5 holidays each year are excellent opportunities to promote Optimism and Patriotism.

Watch your email for your opportunity to be a sponsor this year!

Rob Koppinger, Committee Chair

Bismarck Optimist Club members are encouraged to help our club clean up Optimist Club Park on Saturday, May 2 as part of Keep Bismarck Beautiful. This family-friendly event is open to people of all ages, so feel free to bring members of your family (children, grandchildren, significant others, etc.). The more people we have the quicker we will get our park cleaned up.

In the below graphic you can either scan the QR code or visit <https://tinyurl.com/jjradkue> to register. Please email Julie Jeske (jjeske@bravera.bank) when you have registered so that she can pick up your safety vest, clean-up essentials to Optimist Club Park. Plus, I'll bring DONUTS!

Bismarck Rotary Club

volunteers needed!

KEEP BISMARCK BEAUTIFUL

MAY 2, 2026 | 9:00 AM - NOON
PEACE PARK, 400 E FRONT AVE

SCAN ME

Family-friendly door prizes!
Register by signing up to volunteer.
<https://tinyurl.com/jjradkue>

Onward and Upward Scholarship Awarded

Bismarck Optimist Club proudly announces its selection for its first annual \$1,000 scholarship for one Burleigh or Morton County graduating high school senior – Shelby Kalvoda from New Salem High School. The scholarship is to assist in her pursuit of a post-secondary degree at Bismarck State College in the upcoming school year. Shelby will attend our noon meeting on May 26th to receive her check.

Applicants must meet eligibility requirements and be self-motivated, dependable, respect others, and have a spirit of service and volunteerism.

For future submissions, all the details and a fillable application are available on the Optimist Club website under the Community Service tab.

Committee Co-Chairs: Laurie Hatzenbuhler and Sylvia Burgess

Oratorical Contest

The 2026 Oratorical Contest Topic is “The Moment I Realized I Belonged - My Definition of Community.” This year, we had three finalists: Mehdiya Amiri, Olivia Tavares, and Kendall Jones.

Our 2026 Optimist Oratorical Contest winner is Kendall Jones. Kendall is a student at Legacy High School and will graduate in 2028. She is a highly trained competition dancer, apart of pageantry through Miss America, and loves singing, volunteering, and traveling.

In her speech, Kendall focuses on the importance of finding beauty within authenticity, supporting each other within communities, and how much each individual person can make an impact on someone’s life, even if they may not realize it. She plans to further her education at the University of Alabama to earn the prerequisite to become a Physical Therapist. She specifically thanks her supportive family— Camille, Bryan, Aurora, and Sienna— for encouraging her to follow every dream and never give up, as well as anyone who has supported her journey in any sort of way. Lastly, she wants to give a huge thank you to the Optimist Club for this incredible opportunity to earn scholarship support, make connections, and speak to the world.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Optimist Oratorical Contest this year, from our judges and MC, to our Educator Supporters, fellow Optimists, and families. We wish Kendall all the best as she heads to the next level!



(l to r) Olivia Tavares, Kendall Jones, Meldia Amiri

Seats and Feet Drive

On April 2 Bismarck Optimist Club delivered six boxes full on new underwear and socks to Closet 701 in conjunction with the Club's first ever Seats and Feet Drive. Donation boxes were distributed to a variety of participating locations. The Club was grateful for the generosity of our members and community for making this drive successful.

Julie Jeske, Chair



Daryl, Maddie, Julie, Rob, Laurie and Kim Wood, Closet (701)

Energize your Optimism- one month to go!

Since our Energize your Optimism membership drive kicked off last September, we have had 8 new members join our Optimist Club! Hats off to everyone who has recruited a new member and it is so AWESOME to have new members joining and getting involved with our club!

The highly coveted GOAT trophy will be awarded to the Optimist who recruits the most members by the end of May. So, there is still time to bring a guest to check out one of our meetings. Your guest will have the chance to draw an energy themed item from our mystery box during the meeting. If your guest ends up joining our Optimist Club, we will have a \$25 gift card with your name on it as the recruiter!

There are so many exciting and energizing things happening in our club over the next few months so let's do our best to take the energy and impact of our club to the next level by bringing in some new members!

Jerry Haas and Jillian Lagasse

Bismarck Optimist Club Essay Contest Update

We are pleased to announce that the winner of the Dakotas-Manitoba-Minnesota District essay contest is Paige Njos of Lincoln, ND. Paige won our Bismarck Optimist Club essay contest in February and was awarded a \$500 scholarship from our Club. Winning the local Club contest allows the essay to be submitted to the District contest. The topic for this year's essay contest was "How My Acts of Service Help Me Understand What My Community Means to Me". Paige will be awarded a \$2,500 scholarship as the District winner and also receive a gift card being given by the DMM District. We are proud of our young local talent representing the Bismarck Optimist Club!

Kathy Torske, Committee Chair

Kristi "Cricket" Palmer (r), DMM District Governor, joined us for our weekly club meeting on April 14. She is pictured with Jilliam Lagasse, Club President.



New member* induction was held on April 21st. (l to r) Jilliam Lagasse, Kurt Weinberg*, Daryl Kerzman, Marcus Christianson*, Sarah Rooney*, Mary Reiser*, Julie Jeske, Tracey Pruess*, Charee Linton*, Tami Emtter, Laurie Swank* and Sylvia Burgess

2025-26 Board of Directors:

President: Jillian Lagasse, email: jillian.lagasse@hotmail.com

Vice-President: Rob Koppinger, email: robk@kirkwoodbank.com

Secretary: Sylvia Burgess, email: sylvia.sturn.burgess@gmail.com

Treasurer: Tami Emter, email: tamiemter@hotmail.com

Past President: Julie Jeske, email: jjeske@bravera.bank

Director: Cindy Clairmont (2 years remaining) email: c_clairmont@hotmail.com

Director: Laurie Hatzenbuhler (2 years remaining) email: laurieh@bis.midco.net

Director: Brent Helm (2 years remaining) email: brenth701@aol.com

Director: Sarah Miller (1 year remaining) email: sarahm@kirkwoodbank.com

Director: Maddie Berger (1 year remaining), email: mberger@bravera.bank

Director: Jerry Haas (1 year remaining) email: jerry_r_haas@yahoo.com

Optimist Resources:

Email: bis.optimist@gmail.com

Website: www.optimistbismarck.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/optimistclubofbismarck

Twitter Handle: @optimistbis; <https://twitter.com/OptimistBis>

DMM: www.optimist-dmm.org

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 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 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 & too happy to permit the presence of trouble.