

The Optimist Outlook – April 2026



A Look Ahead to...

April Programs, Keith Magnusson, Chair

April 2nd – Board of Directors Meeting

April 6th – Fill 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

Recap of March Programs, Cindy Clairmont, Chair

March 2nd – Filled 30 Caring for Kids Backpacks

March 3rd – USpire-Healthy Family Programs, Heather Glass

March 5th – Board of Directors Meeting

March 10th – ND Health & Human Services – Foster Parenting, Rachel Sudo

March 17th – Gateway to Science, Hope Burdolski

March 24th – Project 31:8 – Human Trafficking, Stacy Schaffer

March 29th – Easter Egg Hunt

March 31st – ND Safety Council – Safe working conditions, summer children's programming

Upcoming Program Chairs:

May: Rob Koppinger

June: Jerry Haas

July: Brent Helm

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

Welcome New Member

Tracey Pruess

Member Anniversary

Jerry Haas – 15 years

Dave Leftwich – 43 years

Optimist Easter Egg Hunt

Our 9th annual Optimist Easter Egg Hunt took place on March 29th at the ND Capitol Grounds and we could not have asked for a more beautiful afternoon - the weather was perfect! This was a record breaking year as we had 780 kids in attendance - our most ever! The excitement from the kids and their families was truly something to experience. Three of the 12,000 eggs had golden tickets inside for grand prizes and as a result, three lucky kids walked away with a trike, a trampoline and a polaroid camera! In addition, there were 43 other prizes that were given out at the event. The Easter Bunny also made an appearance and spread tons of egg-citement throughout the crowd!

As a committee, we have a lot of fun putting this event together each year for the kids in our community. However, we couldn't do this without all of our AWESOME Optimist volunteers. A HUGE thank you to everyone who pitched in whether it was stuffing the 12,000 eggs, setting up at the event, scattering eggs, registration and perimeter patrol - it takes a tremendous amount of teamwork to make this all happen! We would also like to thank the AVID students and members of the Shiloh baseball team for helping us out at the event as they all did an amazing job. Thanks again everyone for your support which makes this our club's largest and most fun filled event!

Your Easter Egg Hunt Committee,



Jerry Haas, Amanda Yellow, Sylvia Burgess, Alicia Vollmers, Brooks Grotte, Laurie Hatzenbuehler, Sara Pic









Celebrating-Easter.com





⚡ Energize Your Optimism Update! ⚡

🔥 Round Two is already heating up!

Darryl Kerzman has wasted no time and is already leading the second half of the contest with **one official new member** on the board! But wait – **Jerry Haas** has added a new member as well!

With the competition reset for the stretch run, the race is wide open. The next — and final — traveling GOAT trophy will be awarded at the **end of May** to the Optimist who brings in the most new members from now until then.

⚡ So the big question is...

Who will come out ahead in the Energize Your Optimism membership recruitment contest?

There's still plenty of time to spark a conversation, invite a guest, and help us grow the energy and impact of our club. Every new member strengthens our mission and amplifies the optimism we bring to the Bismarck-Mandan community. And don't forget:

- **Any guest you bring to a meeting gets to draw a fun prize from our "energy" themed prize box!**
- **Any member who recruits a new member gets a \$25 gift card to a place of your choice!**

Extend the invite. Let's keep Energizing Our Optimism all the way to May! ⚡🔥



Caring for Kids Backpacks

Thirty backpacks were filled by Dave Leftwich and Sylvia on March 2nd. Also pictured is Jackie, Dave's wife, who often helps.

15th Annual Funds for the Future Grant

This grant provides funds to Bismarck and Mandan elementary schools to help with a specified project they plan to complete in the near future. This year's grant amount will be up to \$5,000 for one school.

Grant applications were sent to all Bismarck and Mandan Elementary schools on February 15th and again March 15th. The completed application packages are due back by April 15, 2026.

The unique application process involves the students as well as staff and PTO. There will be a celebration in the spring for the school selected!

Committee Chair: Sylvia Burgess





Laurie Swank

I grew up in Bismarck with a brother and sister.

My current family includes three daughters, three sons-in-law and ten grandchildren.

I graduated from SMCHS and from the University of Mary with a degree in Business Administration.

I was employed at the Knife River Corporation as their Office Services Manager for 46 years. I retired in June of 2024.

I serve on the Board of the Railway Credit Union. I also volunteer one morning a week at Annunciation Monastery and am an active member of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit, assisting with their Faith Formation program and distributing communion to our homebound members. Since retirement I have also been volunteering at Heaven's Helpers Soup Cafe.

I joined the Optimist Club mainly because of Sylvia Burgess! She had explained the mission of the club and encouraged me to join as I began the transition from the working world into retirement. I really appreciate how welcoming and friendly everyone has been.

All my grandchildren live in Bismarck, so I spend a great deal of my free time spending time with them and attending their activities. This is my favorite way to spend my time. I also like to work on home improvement projects, especially gardening/landscaping. I also like to walk with my golden retriever Jasper. Since retiring, I have had the opportunity to do some traveling, which I also really enjoy.

My family is really into movie quotes, so it is hard to pinpoint any one movie or quote. However, my favorite movies include The Sound of Music and Mary Poppins. I am not sure why---I guess I just really like Julie Andrews.

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.