



**ATLANTIC CENTRAL DISTRICT
2nd QUARTERLY MEETING
Minutes
2/21/2026**

Attendance: Governor Connie Sohnleitner, Guy Templin (P.O.I.V.P.) ,Marino A. Garbin, Jr. (Lt. Governor, PG) Kathleen Manchee(PG), Sharon Mc Clain (District Sec), Judy Odom (Lt. Governor), Robert Collier, Sr. (PG/ Treasurer), Maxcine S. Collier, (PG), Delores Wright (PG), Diana Lynn (Pres. Lancaster), Susan Grimm- Mattox (Lt. Governor), Bill Woodard (Pres., Freehold-Sunrise), Brent Smith (Treasurer/Gettysburg), Carlos Richter Sec/ Lower Providence), Eugene A. Riordan,III (Foundation Rep.-Rose Tree) Lorin Richter Pres/. Lower Providence), Lydia Rieger (Daniel Boone OC), Scott Pinheiro (Lt. Governor/Cherry Hill) , Philip Haddad (Sec./Boyertown), Raja Vaidya (Pres./ RoseTree- Media), Curtis D. Clifford (Sec./Daniel Boone), Don Hickman (Sec./Kutztown), Anne Keleher (Pres./Barnegat) , LaVera Seymour (Sec./Valley Forge-King of Prussia), Peter C. Eschmann, Jr. (Sec/Barnegat), Sue Creswell (Foundation Rep/Daniel Boone), Judith Odom (Lt. Governor), Sue Creswell (O.I.Bd.)

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ABSENT: Lue Drummond (Sec), Cynthia Monroe, Sherry Butts

The meeting was called to order by Governor Connie Sohnleitner at 9:03 am.

First Timers: Brent Smith at a Quarterly Meeting

INVOCATION:

Bob Collier gave the Invocation (prayer)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: in unison

Led by Sue Grimm-Mattox

MINUTES/SECRETARY - Sharon Mc Clain

Minutes were emailed out earlier to the members. Motion was made to accept the Minutes by Maxcine S. Collier and seconded by Kimberly Evans, Boyertown. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT - Guy Templin, PG

\$17,406.31 - Balance in the District Funds

First Quarter Finance attached

Question: There are items that are in the red. Is this something we should be concerned about?

Answer: Nothing at this point we should be concerned about. If it is in the income ...it is a plus. That means more money than what we were budgeting.

The treasurer's report is filed for audit.

DISTRICT POLICY: Marino Garbin (Lt Governor / PG)

Marino shared the District Policy and asked for questions. It was reviewed extensively in the First Quarter.

Guy Templin has questions about the Finance part.

Discussion ensued about changing the number of signatures.

Marino explained that he wants to avoid checks going back and forth through the mail. He wants to have a shorter turnaround period. Doing checks electronically. Checks being written are done onsite. He further explained that two people (Secretary / Treasurer) will see the reimbursement request. It will be seen twice. The finances of the District are the purview of the Board of Directors. The Director of the Board of Directors, Secretary/Treasurer and the upcoming Director of the Board of Directors have the power to do it. The Committee Chair is not part of the Board of the Directors. Marino continues to say, the finance is part of the Board of Directors - and not the Committee Chair.

Disagreement continued. Additional discussion ensued.

Bylaws Section 5 Item F states -" Depositories and Signatories

The District Board shall annually determine the official depositories for District funds and designate officers authorized to endorse, execute and sign checks or orders for the payment of money and such shall be cosigned by two such officers."

An email is being composed to send to the Governance Committee to say we may need to look at the bylaws to see if they need to be updated at which point in time those bylaws need to go to the members at the International Convention.

Marino indicated that he thought it was a recommendation. He will reverse and put the second signatory back.

Motion on the floor - We add the Finance Chair as a person authorized to approve expense vouchers for reimbursements. There were 3 members who voted "no".

Clarification who can vote: Presidents of the club, executive committee or President's delegate

Susan, as Governor-elect, was asked to have the vote go to her:

12 - "yes" Majority motion is passed

Guy moved that we accept the changes as modified or amended. Marino seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion was carried.

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATES: LaVera Seymour (PG Sec./Foundation Rep)

6 clubs have already sent in their candidates: Boyertown, Valley Forge, York, Barnegat, Dreambuilders, Lower Montco Anne - Susanna Esperanza - has questions regarding the change in this year's guide as opposed to the 2024-2025 guide.

The application included Rule 4 that stated that the word count must be listed at the top of the page of the Essay. The 2025-2026 that sentence that the word count Not only should be on the Title Page but should be on Page 1 of the Essay.

The judges are instructed to penalize essays if the word count is not accurate or on Page 1 of the Essay. She thinks that needs to be looked at again.

Governor Connie indicated that the Governors looked at the application on Wednesday evening. Based on what the application says it is not matching what the guidelines are saying.

Question: Is page 1 the page where they put their name and school?

Answer: Governor Connie indicated that the description is the "Title Page". Those are taken off because the judges cannot see who the person is.

In addition, it has been the past policy that the Chair is responsible to count the words that are required for the Essay.

If not then the Chair is supposed to share the penalty with the judges.

VISUAL ARTS - Guy Templin (P.O.I.V.P.)

**The Visual Arts Contest is finished. Winners have been identified for the children under 7 and 8-11
9 clubs participated this year.**

Governor Connie asked everyone to get their photographs sent to Cynthia Monroe prior to April 1st. She has one club that has submitted their photograph.

First place \$100 Josie Hickman 7 years old

Daniel Boone

Second Place \$75.00 Marie Gomes - 6 years

Daniel Boone

8-11 years

1st Place - York

2nd Place - Daniel Boone

3rd Place - York

Third Place 50 - Kenneth Seymour

ORATORICAL CONTEST: Phil Haddad

Topic: "The Moment I realized I Belonged: My Definition of Community"

Winners go to the International Oratorical Contest on July 16th& 17th at St. Louis University

\$50.00 entry fee is needed by 4/1/26

The contest is scheduled for 4/25 at Kutztown. Phil asked the members to have the students there by 8:30-9:00 am

Any questions, please contact Phil:

610-587-7754

acoratoricalchair@gmail.com

Sue Creswell asked if any judges were needed.

Phil indicated he is waiting for a few people to get back to him. He states he needs 2 more judges.

Coen Beamesderfer Senior at Jr District Governor JOI Convention

The service initiative is a district-wide donation drive for children receiving treatment at the Penn State Medical Center and families at the Ronald Mc Donald House. The items that they collect will be a way to provide comfort and distraction and a sense of normalcy during their treatment process.

They are collecting lego sets, board games, card games

At Central York in March they will be running a focus

donation drive and competition which will increase

participation in the amount of donations. All collected items

will be brought to the District Convention 4/11. At the

convention they will assemble the donations into organized packaging.

Tucker Huss, who is a cancer survivor, will speak at the Convention. He was previously treated at the hospital. He is asking members for any suggestions of ideas or ways to be helped, they will appreciate the efforts.

QUESTION: Would it be possible for clubs in New Jersey that are not close to York, to send monetary donations so that they can make a purchase?

ANSWER: Governor Connie indicated that she spoke to all of the JOI Advisers. If they want to do one in their area, they can do so. If they are close to a hospital which treats children with cancer, they can provide donations there as well.

Monetary donations can be sent to the York club.

QUESTION: Can a list of items be sent out that they are trying to collect?

ANSWER: A list will be sent out.

QUESTION: Where is the JOI Convention?

ANSWER: Zion Lutheran Church, Brandywine Lane, York Facility will be free 10 am to 2 pm

Marino asked Coen to send a list of what music they would like to have played at the Convention since he is a disc jockey and will bring his equipment.

A box company in York will be donating needed boxes to put these items in. Governor Connie also indicated that wrapping paper, tape is needed.

Jr. GOLF - Sue Creswell (O.I.Bd.)

Date and Location to be selected in the next month. It will probably be on a school day. She is forming a committee. Interested members may call her. Asking for Jr. Golf committee members to help. The contest will be on the OI site in Florida. Suggestions to reach out to spread the word to local golf clubs and golf coaches, anyone across the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Upper Delaware. This will increase the number of people to learn about our tournament. Sue encouraged members to send the names of the golf clubs and/or golf coaches to the following: Sue has 5 pros and 35 schools

OIJGC Qualifier Contest - Sue Creswell

suetav58@gmail.com

Kudos to Bill who was able to get names of golf pros, schools and others. He suggested for other members to get names of the schools' athletic directors.

FOUNDATION: Guy Templin

Has rewards from the Foundation. He has patches:

Amounts from last year:

Daniel Boone - \$10.00

York County - \$10.00 / member

Gettysburg - \$10.00 / member

-10-

Lower Providence - \$90.00 / member

Springlawn - \$130 / member

Kutztown - \$10 / member

Dreambuilders - \$10 / member

Lancaster - \$20 / member

Cherry Hill Business - \$50 / member

South Chester - \$20

Freehold - Sunrise - \$40

New Dime-A-Day pins Awards list as of the 31st:

Lydia Rieger, Governor Connie, Guy and Sue Templin, Sue Maddox, and Kathleen Manchee

Guy encouraged clubs to invite him to their zone or club meetings to have him explain available grant programs from the Foundation. A video call could be set up with the clubs for his instruction and from foundation reps. These are all matching grants. The club will have to put the same amount of money and then tell how it was used.

Sue suggested a Zoom meeting or conference call that might be offered to the clubs.

Last year, if a member was a DIME-A-DAY member (\$36.50) a person was eligible to vote until the end of February 28. Guy instructs members to go on OI website, there is a link to click onto, provide name and club number. Members can vote in order to have a say in who gets onto the Board of Directors of the Optimist International Foundation.

Governor Connie stated that Jim Oliver contacted our District. He asked to send out the flyers. He is one of the candidates running for the OI Foundation Board.

Guy endorses Jim Oliver.

Marino agrees with others regarding Jim Oliver. In addition, Marino states that once a person gets on the Optimist Foundation Board, there is a natural progression onto the Office of the President of the Optimist Foundation.

MESSAGE FROM TOM KENDO

President Tom Kendo, District Conference Message

He encouraged the members to look in the mirror and say “I will be the change”. For the 2nd quarter, clubs across the globe are gearing up for the signature youth programs such as golf, essays, oratorical contests which are life changing moments when they realize that their voice matters.

In February we will be celebrating Optimist Day - spending time serving others. This should be done all year long.

Challenge for the 2nd quarter - keep the momentum going.

Support foundations. Mentor a new member.

BE THE CHANGE!

Kathleen Manchec - Audit and Finance Committee Chair

Kathleen indicated that it was stated - “Things were being done out of budget”. She discussed and explained that payments that were spent last year were within budget.

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There was more activity in the Western part of our District so there were more expenses that were put through. The Governor has not done anything out of budget.

Anything that might have been done out of budget was brought to the Board for approval before it was paid which was supposed to occur. She wanted to make sure that the Board was aware.

Lt GOVERNOR's report:

***Zone 1 Scott Pinheiro PG**

3 active clubs - age 60

Howell - leader in the zone has 33 active members

Fundraiser - Car show - Coordinator with Chamber of Commerce -Will contribute to Camp Quality, New Jersey Club has essay and oratorical contests

Freehold Sunrise - \$7500 plan is to spend down the balance.

Plans are to disband club at the end of this year

Golf proceeds and grants - \$11,000 donation to Camp Quality

New Jersey. The event is well attended.

Will participate in essay and oratorical contests

Respect for the Law event

Cherry Hill - Marino - 9 members in.

Have had 4 fundraisers

\$5000 in scholarships

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***Zone 2 - Connie Sohnleitner**

Wildwoods - has had large school basketball tournament

Barnegat - Anne Kelleher, Pres. - 13 members

Oratorical contest

Given \$5,000 in scholarships

3/2 - going to Barnegat School to read to children

Breakfast - Easter Egg Hunt

***Zone 3 - Lt Governor Jason Scotti**

Kearney Club is closed

***Zone 5 - Lt. Governor Maxcine Collier, PG**

East Montco 1/31 Game day

2/8 - deadline Photo Contest

321 - Fed homeless at Chosen 300 Ministries

3/22 Oratorical Contest

4/25 - 3rd quarter district

Lower Montco

December - gave out 2 needy baskets

Gave out Gift certificates

Lower Providence

2/6 - Respect for Law Luncheon

2/9 - partnered with library - children made cards

3/6 - pot luck dinner

3/21 - Parks and Recreation Dept - Egg Roll

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Valley Forge- King of Prussia

Neighborhood clean up

Respect for Law - 6 students

Dr. MLK celebration

May - Youth Appreciation - 2 high school students

Getting ready for lunch in Spring

***Zone 4 - Lt. Governor Judith Odom**

South Chester 2/25 New Hope Missionary Family Church 9-2

Rose Tree Media -Food Booth - 4/26

**Cheyney University - Havertown Student of the Month
Program**

**Marple-Newtown Sq. - Annual Student Achievement
(For those residents who live in Marple or Newtown)**

First State - local and clothing bank

***Zone 6 - Lt. Governor Don Hickman, PG**

Boyertown- JOI club - 21 youth

Daniel Boone Lydia Rieger, Pres.

**3/21 - 9 am -3 pm OC Annual Spring Craft Show at Daniel
Boone Middle School.**

Will honor Essay winner and Visual Arts Winners

3/28 - Easter Egg Hunt

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Saturday before Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt - 280 signed up

4/25 - Semi Annual yard sale

Kutztown - snacks at Ronald McDonald house

JOI service project - give items to young people at Hershey Medical

***Zone 7 Lt. Governor Susan Mattox**

Elizabethtown - Jr. High Wrestling tournament

Spring Sports equipment raffle

Lancaster - 2 new members

Completed visual arts contest

Offering basket raffle

York - 4 local businesses

OWLS

Completed visual arts contest

Gettysburg - Brent

14 new members

BINGO Games

Basketball - April

He explained that staff get to meet the kids face-to-face. They do not always get recognized. They love being singled out for their improvements.

Respect for Law - May

Baseball - April

Marino Garbin - Zone 8

Kensington - problems getting new members

Continuing everyday Hero Program -they take kids from local schools once a month and acknowledge the fact that they are helping people with basic needs.

Indiana Club - had 18 members in the beginning of the year Many of the members do not understand why they are paying dues. They think the money should stay within the community.

Scholarships seem to be towards elite students. They are a sports management club unlike Elizabethtown or Boyertown. They are like a “coach management” where all the coaches come together and they discuss what happens between the sports but the club does not operate the sports.

Marino reasons maybe the discussion should be around introducing other scholarships for different sports. More discussion to take place.

North Pittsburgh Club - continue to do all types of fundraisers

Duck Races (they go to a local creek) - 500 ducks - they have different races and the winner takes all. It is the best opportunity for recruiting new members. It is one of the biggest clubs in funding. They are going off the 990-EZ because they have exceeded the \$50,000 threshold.

Someone passed and left a bequest of \$20,000/year to the club. That combined with their strong fund raising capabilities has taken over \$50,000. Their President, John Harford, says he will give a hand in building a new club in the area.

Marino had an interest from Heather Myers, Director of the Optimist Institute, from Williamsport. She told Marino at last year's Convention of her interest in building a club in that area. There has been no communication since then.

Governor Connie complimented all of the Lt. Governors in submitting their reports to the District Secretary before the start of the meeting.

Lorin Richter, Marketing Chair - Each group of 7 minutes of content and 7 minutes of questions

Group I - Marketing

In the fall - a webinar on Growth and Marketing - was a 30 presentation

Some clubs are using incorrect logos. It is important that each Club and District use their logos in the appropriate way.

Ex: Dunkin' Donuts to Dunkin'



to



Use correct logo, colors, shapes



Check the OI Marketing website to find out the correct logos for each District and Club. Stick to the approved colors, correct font (primary and secondary colors)

Lorin shared info on Zoom.

She shared that consistent marketing is the bridge between Optimist International's message and its mission. It turns awareness into action, inspiration into involvement, and recognition into growth. Marketing does not just mean social media marketing, it means wearing Optimist Gear, etc.

QUESTIONS: Governor Connie indicated that she received a post from Optimist International that indicated "one volunteer can change a life". She shares such sayings on Facebook and other social media. Is this the kind of Marketing Lorin is talking about?

ANSWER: Lorin's reply: The main objective in the general postings click on Facebook page, there is a new landing page for External Markets. If you have someone who is interested, direct them to the landing page.

They have created a fake landing page for people interested in joining without being overwhelmed with info for a cold contact. There is a video, several generalized sections about Optimist International. It is a wedge to get people to see what Optimist International is about without being inundated with a lot of information.

Landing page optimist.org/landing page

Governor Connie indicated that clubs need to have by-laws signed and submitted every year. If any legal action is brought on a member or the Club, Optimist International will not help you since you do not have current by-laws. Reports will be sent out to Presidents and Lt. Governors.

Contests- Fairness and Integrity - entries remain affiliated with the club that conducted the original contest. Governor Connie gave her Club as an example. They had 78 entries for Visual Arts. Reassigning entries to another club in order to increase representation would not align with Spirit of Fair Competition. If you want to send some of those entries out - you cannot claim that is your contest. Recognition belongs to the original club. When it comes to the District, it should remain to the original sponsoring club.

OPTIMIST-IN-ACTION. Governor Connie indicated that Ava gave her a report on Optimist in Action. Newsletter also should be forwarded. Clubs are to send pictures and descriptions to Ava. Clubs that have participated to date: Lower Montco, Lower Providence, East Montco, Barnegat, Dreambuilders, Daniel Boone, and Pittsburgh North. We should be sending those reports to Ava - Optimist-in-Action. We want to make sure we share our good news with other clubs.

There was a member survey sent to each member in the District. Sunday is the deadline. The entry form has the name of the Optimist Club that sponsored the contest. This is the club that contacted the school district.'Entries are intended to remain affiliated with the club that conducted the original content.

Delores and Judith

**Group II - Optimist Institute- Delores and Judith
(slide presentation)**

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Go to your Dashboard which will tell you everything that you have done as well as everything that is available.

How to Use Optimist Institute

User name (email address)

Password

Member registration 2526

Put in information

Click subscribe

Dashboard - courses, quick reference guide, library, new club, subscriptions, contacts, groups

Select Course - 15 courses

Search

Building ideas, inspiration, show clips, put them on the website (empathy, black history month, building new clubs, work sheets)

Media Library

(music video)

Judith Odom 610-348-1841

Realpraiser@hotmail.com

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1330xyRyB7Y5Xe0cIli_s8IkpDh9nZr1YuBGT1PVroHs/edit?usp=sharing

There is also good instructional information about building new clubs. There are worksheets that can be used.

Group III Marino Garbin and Gene Riordan

Where you at?

Assess where your club is going

Retention is growth

What are you doing to keep your membership engaged?

Gene - Where are you going?

You don't have to know how to take action

Pick and choose some of the top courses and then go back to your planning session.

Marino: Do you have a business plan?

Marketing is part of growth

Events is part of growth

You don't have to add many members. Add one member at a time. It is about self-preservation.

Board of Directors, President, Treasurer

Do you know how to get there?

Gene - leadership roles

You don't have a new member who suddenly becomes President.

If you find past Optimist Workers, bring them back into the fold.

Will take the ideas and get the club going. The marketing of your Club is key.

Marino - How are you going to get there?

What are you going to do when you get there?

Are you going to keep doing the same thing you've done before?

And new ideas?

Engage other people's ideas

If one Club gets the message out, the other Club can ride on the coat tails. One success story breeds others.

What are you going to do next?

Where are you going with your Club? Do you know how to get there? Your club president and Club Board of Directors have to ask at some time. Otherwise the club gets stagnant especially if there is burnout. New people are not willing to put in the effort.

What can you do to help your community?

What are you going to do to get you there?

Different ideas, younger members

Partner up with a different organization to seek volunteer positions.

**Town fairs - get a table, sell pretzels, water, local material/flyers
Show people that you are active within the community. Promote excitement and activity.**

Get a Facebook page for your Club.

Lorin stated if your club was gone, what would your community see? What would they miss?

Group IV- Robert & Maxcine - Member Engagement

Make Members Feel Good

Reacquaint members to OI

Put people to work, make them feel they are needed

Membership folder, send them a note in the mail

Have an induction ceremony. Don't skip this important ceremony. Take place after the new meeting has joined. Have a new member's kit;

Get the sponsor to pin the new member.

**Take plenty of pictures of the Induction Ceremony.
Put them in the club newsletter and Facebook but ask permission
before posting on Social Media.**

Providing a mentor is positive about growth and a good fit.

Get new members involved immediately.

**OI has a Member Interest Finder. It has a check list of different
things new members might be interested in. Members can check
off things they are interested in.**

**OI has the Care Program.(clubs do a yearly “check in” using this
four-step program to keep membership happy, healthy and
engaged. C-Celebrate, A-Address, R-Recognize and E-Excel.**

**This structured program is designed to reward and celebrate a
club’s accomplishments while also resolving any issues
pertaining to member loss while working toward strengthening
clubs and individual membership needs which allows everyone
to feel they have a voice),**

**When someone misses a meeting, contact them immediately and
show them that we care. If there is no contact, they may feel that
they are not wanted.**

Engage a Member Guide for Clubs

Are members enjoying being a member of the Club?

**Get feedback. - Let people know that their suggestions are
valued.**

Members ought not say “we’ve done this before”.

Get members to try out new ideas.

Meetings should be informative and interesting. Get the quiet members involved and engaged. When meetings are fun, everyone looks forward to the next meeting.

Make sure that you communicate to all members. The President of the club should be sending out a President's message - thanking them for things they have done. Newsletters, social media, sending birthday cards, anniversary cards, get well cards inspirational cards should all be thought of to send out.

I FEEL GOOD!

Governor Connie indicated that there are two clubs that are celebrating 50 years - Optimist Club of Audubon Lower Providence (Lorin Richter, Pres./ Carlos Richter. Sec); Optimist Club Rose Tree-Media (Raja Vaidya, Pres. Delores Wright, Pres. South Chester)

Governor Connie honors members that have been members a long time (Guy and Lou helped assimilate names), Governor Connie will be sending remembrances out to these long-term members.

The 4th Quarter is going to be a celebration of our District's success stories. Celebrate the members who have passed.

Gerald Craig 1962

Lester Mc Macken (late) - 1963

John Presswell - 1971

Curtis Clifford - 1973

Looking at 60s, 70s, and 80s Write something up and either come or Zoom next meeting or come in person in Harrisburg.

Marino congratulated Governor Connie of the excellent job she has done so far this year. This time last year, we were the last District in the whole organization. Because of the time Governor Connie has put together, has made us stronger.

OI has written a couple of District Awards. One Club last year which was an honor club - Chester/South Chester (Judith and Delores). They were plus 5 at the end of the year.

They did the correct amount of funding to the OI Foundation and their officers completed the required Optimist Institute courses. They will receive certificates and lanyards.

We will also receive certificates for being an honored District (came in 4th last year).

CONGRATULATIONS EVERYONE!!

Governor Connie indicates that there is another incentive program to entice growth. - Growth and Retention Program In our 1st Quarter Wildwood with 8 members was honored for that. It was a percentage of growth and retention.

Governor Connie has an incentive program that she has offered this year 2025-2026 Atlantic Central District Incentive Program. She reviewed everyone's CRA - Congratulations to Lt Governor Don Hickman Boyertown with 24- new members. Marino encouraged them to remain although they are a sports club.

Kim Evans who is Pres. of Boyertown Club will get a free registration to 3rd quarter.

Tracy Woo brought in 10 members. She will get a free registration.

A Club can only win one quarter each year

Governor Connie gave the District beautiful closing thoughts to this District.

Raja spoke about him being an immigrant coming from India and his feelings towards incorporating Optimist International with the lives of children in the impoverished areas of India. He realizes this would be a long-term project. Bill indicated that he has a contact for Raja.

Susan Grimm Mattox - has connections in Sierra Leone and West Africa in a group project with supporting schools in getting children educated. Our governor-elect is looking for someone to follow her position.

Marino - reminded members about the Oratorical Contest 4/25 at Kutztown University. He has been checking hotel prices in Kutztown.

Motion - Marino made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Susan Grimm-Mattox seconded the motion. Motion passed.

CREED - unison by the members.

Delores Wright led the members reciting the Optimist Creed in unison.

The meeting ended at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Mc Clain, ACD

SHARON MC CLAIN ACD

District Secretary

