



Pathways



Sauk Trails Optimist Club
Jan/Feb/Mar 2026

<https://sauktrailsmadisonoptimist.org>



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Trisha Lucas, Co-President's Message Jan-Feb-Mar 2026;

Welcome to our third quarter when the days become longer and the temperature warms up (?). We just had a very successful Culver's Share Night thanks to Kathie for organizing it (again) and all the people who volunteered to work. There are grant recipients who will speak at our next two meetings - Bikes for Kids and the Miracle League. Mary has already planned our next social event along with a Joke contest on April First. We have 3 new members to celebrate and welcome (Thank you Bonnie and Frank for introduced them to us). They are a great addition to the club. They have already worked at Culver's Share Night.

Frank Rath, Co-President 25-26

There is progress in contacting potential companies, one being Walmart, for finances that could be used for Sauk Trails Grants given every year. He also met recently with Natasha Miller-Sykes, from Northwestern Mutual who volunteered for the Christmas party. She recently joined the Sauk Trails club.

2025-26 Officers & Board

Co-Presidents: Trish Lucas & Frank Rath
Secretary/Treasurer: Carole Klopp
Past President: Kathie Newman
OI Foundation Rep: Bonnie Spindler

Board Members:

1. Patti Levenson
2. Mary Schwartz
3. Liv Sandberg

2026-27 Officers & Board

President: Mary Schwartz
Vice President: Liv Sandberg
Secretary/Treasurer: Carole Klopp
Past President: Trish Lucas & Frank Rath
OI Foundation Rep: Rick Thomas

Board Members

1. Patti Levenson
- 2.
- 3.

Contact a Board Officer if you're interested in a Board Position starting Oct. 1, 2026.

**Sauk Trails
Club Officers 2025- 26**

President's:
TRISHA LUCAS
FRANK RATH

Secretary/Treasurer:
Carole Klopp

OI Fnd Rep: Bonnie Spindler,

Past President: Kathie Newman

Birthday's

Diane Hoebel 03/10
Brinda Thompson 03/10

Doug Poole 04/11
Jeff Kuchenbecker 04/12
Pete Graven 04/25
Liv Sandberg 04/25

Board of Directors

Patti Levenson 23-25
Mary Schwartz 24-26
Liv Sandberg 24- 26

Newsletter Editor/Distributor

STOC Website Updates

Bonnie Spindler

**A reminder that the Progressive Dinner was rescheduled
from March 22nd to Sunday, April 12th.**

Our Annual Progressive Dinner will be held on Sunday, April 12th, starting at 4:30. Carole & Reid Klopp will host the Appetizer Course and Ted & Jacci See will host the Main & Dessert Courses. As always, spouses and significant others are welcome.

You can sign up at the next lunch meeting or respond to this email. Let me know if you would like to bring an appetizer, main course dish or side, or dessert. We already have 12 members signed up!

April Fool's Day Joke Contest 🤪🤪🤪

Bring your sense of humor and your best joke to the April 1st Wednesday Lunch Meeting. Members who want to participate can share their joke and those in attendance will vote on the best one for a fabulous prize (yet to be determined).

Logan’s Corner: GRANT Recipient shared about the Logan organization and also St. Patrick’s Day. A group also visited the organization after the lunch meeting.



Bicycles for Kids Receive a Sauk Trails Club Grant
Rick Thomas and Trisha Lucas presented the Grant



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President Trisha
installed 2 new
members:

**Walter Crow and
Cathy Mays.**

They were both
sponsored by Bonnie
Spindler, after
requesting information
on the STOC Website.,

Cathy has lived in Madison for almost 30 years, and moved to Wisconsin to work for Lands'end. She was a merchandise director with them for 23 years and took early retirement in the pandemic. She will celebrate her 25th wedding anniversary this May with her husband Dave who is a realtor with First Weber and a lifelong Madisonian. They have 2 adult children, a daughter graduating this May from UT-Austin and a son who graduated from UW Madison working with Dave in real estate. They also have a 3 year old golden retriever! They love to travel and have many wonderful memories from various trips over the years!

Walter is originally from Canton, Ohio but recently moved from Tucson, Arizona where he resided for 30 years. He was very involved with the Rincon Optimist club in Tucson, and responsible for fundraising for several years. He is a widower with 5 adult children and 6 grandchildren scattered throughout the U.S! (Texas, California, Ohio, Wisconsin....) Walter worked for decades as a Sr VP of Marketing for Diebold, and then moved to Arizona and worked the remainder of his career in real estate with his wife Joan. He loves sports, poker and particularly golf, but is not particularly fond of our Wisconsin winter weather! He's traveled throughout the world and made many wonderful memories. Walter and Cathy are happy to be part of Sauk Trails Optimist club and to be on this adventure together!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS: CATHY MAYS & her DAD WALTER CROW

Spartan Youth Service JOI Team

Current / Future Status

The Spartan Youth Service JOI Club was chartered on **09/30/1999** so has existed for about 25 years. The club is 1 of 9 clubs in the SWIS – Southern Wisconsin District – SWIS with other clubs in: Lake Mills, Milwaukee Area (3), Monroe (2), and Janesville (2) each with enrollment anywhere between 5 – 45 JOI members. The enrollment for our Spartan Youth Service Team has been up to over 150+ JOI kids over time. They had been (enrolled in Optimist International) until September 30, 2025 at \$10 each, for the first 50 kids (maximum needed).

Thanks to Carole Klopp, Mary Schwartz, Rick Thomas, Rick Conne and many other Sauk Trails Optimists who have participated with JOI kids on projects in the past. Per Optimist International recent records from Technical Support, our club is one of 8 clubs over 150 kids with the largest one in the Twin Cities of 267 members.

For Sauk Trails Optimist Club financial reasons, it was decided to NOT pay the enrollment for ALL the JOI kids. The reasons for dropping the majority of students were:

- Some graduated from High School earlier and needed to be dropped;
- Some parents did not want their students name on the website, (Names are put on with first name, last name first letter initial ONLY leaders have access to their names).
- Memorial High School has insurance on ALL the students so OI insurance was not needed.
- Financial impact for a small club for the year of \$500 starting on Oct. 1, 2025.

JOI International has a Website with some of the following information:

Junior Optimist International was officially formed in 1988. It is the umbrella organization which links the local Junior Optimist International Clubs and Members to others throughout the world. Much like Optimist International, Junior Optimist is governed by an International Board of Directors, as well as District Officers. From the Club level on up, Members have the opportunity to develop leadership and teambuilding skills all while helping communities. Each year there is an International Convention, which gives Members the opportunity to share in the decision-making process of the organization, meet young people with similar interests and goals, grow from training seminars.....and have fun! Participation in Junior Optimist International gives young people many opportunities for their future.

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I've been in communication with Amy Keller, JOI Chair Contact at OI for putting on a minimum of students to keep the current JOI Club as a viable club and have many responses which have been shared with Rick Thomas, STOC current JOI contact.

In the future the following decisions and options are available and need to be made by the Sauk Trails Board and included in the Board minutes:

- Each year the minimum of 8 students for \$80 PLUS the \$60 charge for remaining as a viable JOI club for \$140.
- Sauk Trails Optimist Club could choose to Disband the Club and take it off the roster to save the \$140. (STOC Decision);
- If the club is down to a minimum student club of 8, during an Optimist International Audit the end of each Optimist year, OI could find out the club's interest in keeping the JOI Club or Revoking the Club. (SWIS District Decision).

There are Pros and Cons of either Disbanding or Revoking the Club financially for the Sauk Trails Optimist Club per responses from Amy Keller, OI JOI Contact:

- If the club is Disbanded, then students CANNOT put on their future job applications or scholarship applications that they were in a JOI Club? **If a club disbands, students can still state the years they were a member when the club was active and their names were on the roster.**
- If the Club chooses NOT to disband, you had mentioned that if there is an Audit that the JOI Club could be-asked what the club's interest is in keeping the club or having it Revoked by OI. Assume that by keeping 8 'paid' members in name on the club that would NOT happen? **We would contact the club directly to see what the issue was if there are no members or minimal members before revocation.**

There has been a lot of communication with Amy Keller, and if you're interested in more of her responses, let me know and I can send you, her responses.

Bonnie Spindler, SWIS Past Governor 11-12, current STOC Board OI Foundation Rep

Below is an Article from Rick Thomas on the current projects that the Spartan Youth Service Team are working on currently in 25-26 year.

Spartan Youth Service Update

March 31, 2026

Spartan Youth Service JOI Team has continued to do multiple service activities in and around Madison over the past school year. We currently have approximately 135 students registered with the club, and they are each expected to do 10+ hours of volunteering over the course of the school year. We have continued to work with the feeder schools to Memorial and will have our annual day of service in May where 250+ students volunteer in the elementary schools that feed into Memorial. We have also continued to work with the Lussier Community Center, Aldo Leopold Center, the Clean Lakes Alliance and many other community organizations. Thank you for your continued support of the youth in our Club.

SCHEDULE of EVENTS in early 2026

SCHEDULE of EVENTS in early 2026	
January 7, 2026	Wednesday, Students of the Quarter from Memorial High School
January 21, 2026	Wednesday, Grant Recipient to be Rescheduled, Current/Future speakers
February 4, 2026	Wednesday, Grant Recipient -LUNCH: Pulled Pork with fries.
February 18, 2026	Wednesday, Grant Recipient LUNCH: Burger with fries.
February 21, 2026	SWIS 2 nd Quarter Conference, Saturday 9-3 PM
March 4, 2026	Wednesday, Grant Recipient LUNCH Fish Sandwich with Ceasar salad
March 10, 2026(Tue)	Culver’s Volunteer Fundraiser, THANKS to ALL who Volunteered
March 17, 2026 (Tu)	STOC Board ZOOM Meeting Tuesday at 5 PM.
March 18, 2026	Wednesday, Kids and Bikes Presentation LUNCH House salad with Soup.
April 1, 2026	Wednesday, Bring a Joke Day to Lunch: 4:30 PM Memorial HS, STOC Oratorical Contestants Compete
April 9, 2026 (Thurs)	SWIS ZONE Competition for Oratorical Competition (2 from STOC) Memorial High School or TBD
April 12, 2026 (Sun)	STOC Progressive Dinner, 4:30 – Klopp home, 5:45 PM See’s Home, More information in newsletter.
April 15, 2026	Wednesday, Bill Schultz, Miracle League Grant Recipient at Vintage
April 21, 2026 (Tu)	STOC Board ZOOM Meeting Tuesday at 5 PM.
May 6, 2026	Wednesday, Respect for Law Presentations
May 16, 2026 (Sat)	SWIS District Conference, Hilton Garden Inn in Milwaukee
May 19, 2026 (Tu)	STOC Board ZOOM Meeting Tuesday at 5 PM.
May 20, 2026	Wednesday, Speaker TBA

<https://sauktrailsmadisonoptimist.org>

The Sauk Trails Optimist Club Website was redesigned to support the activities and events of the club in 2023. The website is hosted by ISADIX Corporation in Stoughton, WI. As with everything else, the cost of this technical hosting has gone up recently. To accommodate that need, I used the balance of my husband Gene Spindler’s remembrance money for the 25-26 year. For the 26-27 year, starting on Oct. 1, 2026 it has been determined that the financial cost for our small club can not be sustained. As a result, the Sauk Trails Optimist Club website will be eliminated as part of the budgeting process unless funds are available. *(If you would like to specifically contribute to the cost of the current website, please indicate on your contribution).*

If you have the technical ability to work with me on creating a ‘general’ STOC Website, to accommodate the minimal needs, I can help with the design and specific information to capture the current and past historical information so it doesn’t get lost. Please let me know if you can work on this project with me before the current site is eliminated.

Thanks, **Bonnie Spindler**, STOC OI Rep and SWIS Past Governor 11-12



SAUK TRAILS OPTIMIST CLUB

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, December 16, 2025

MINUTES

PRESENT: Trish, Frank, Carole, Bonnie, Liv, Mary, Patti and Kathie

The meeting was called to order at 5:09pm.

1. There were no Agenda Additions
2. Previous Board Meeting **Minutes** – Kathie moved, Bonnie seconded minutes approval.

Motion carried.

3. Reports

A. Treasurer’s Report –Carole presented the November Balance Statement and the Operating Report.

B. Fundraising Report – Patti shared we received \$600 from the sale of 40 Bucky Books. We should have 7 free books to sell (last year we donated them to Way Forward). We will try to sell them at the meetings for \$15 each. We sold Texas

Sauk Trails Optimist Club Pathways” January/February/March 2026 Roadhouse cards and received 2 \$65 cards as “profit.” Trish bought one and we’ll give one away.

C. Service Report – Kathie reminded everyone that we have Culver’s volunteering on March 10, 2026. She will continue looking for service projects..

D. Social – Mary shared the tentative date for the Progressive Dinner as March 22nd.

4. Old Business

A. The Member Recruitment: Frank will be visiting companies after the first of the year. He met with a person from Northwest Mutual who is interested in partnering with us. We need to target recent retirees.

B. The Online Committee has not met yet.

B. Logo Contest: Rick T. said a lot of kids picked up the form. He will report back in January.

5. New Business

A. Speakers: Patti has a list of folk and shared it with Trish.

B. Lunch Menu: we should sit down with Michelle to give her feedback.

6. Adjourn: Frank moved and Kathie seconded to adjourn to Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 5pm via Zoom Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carole Klopp, Secretary/Treasurer

Foundation Addendum – Lussier Xmas Party Notes:

a. Leftover food went into their food pantry for distribution to folk.

b. About 45 gifts were leftover and Lussier took for use with other kids.

c. Cookie Room: MS kids were already in there – should have a “go-box” for next year.

d. Had a lot of JOI kids volunteering.

e. All volunteers should arrive no later than 3pm – lots to do. Need more folk to prepare the food, etc.

f. We had plenty of food with the Texas Roadhouse and Chic Filet (who also brought their mascot).

g. Lussier wants us to be out by 7:30.

h. Let 3 kids in a time to see Santa – that worked.



SAUK TRAILS OPTIMIST CLUB
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, January 20, 2026
MINUTES

PRESENT: Trish, Frank, Carole, Bonnie, Liv, Mary, and Patti

ABSENT: Kathie

The meeting was called to order at 5:11pm.

1. There were no Agenda Additions
2. Previous Board Meeting **Minutes** – Patti moved, Mary seconded minutes approval. Motion carried.

3. Reports

- A. Treasurer's Report –Carole presented the December Balance Statement and the Operating Report.
- B. Fundraising Report – Patti shared we received 2 \$65 cards as “profit” from the Roadhouse card sales. Trish bought one and we'll give one away.
- C. Service Report – No report as Kathie was absent.
- D. Social – Mary shared that she would begin organizing the March 22nd Progressive Dinner. Also, since April 1st is our meeting, she suggested that it be a “bring your favorite Joke Day” with the winner prize to be determin

4. Old Business

- A. The Member Recruitment: Nothing new – Frank is bringing the Northwest Mutual agent to lunch next week.
- B. The Online Committee: Bonnie wrote an excellent email outlining possibilities. She and and Carole will be talking.
- C. Logo Contest: Waiting for Rick T. update.
- D. Lunch Menu: members unanimously agreed that we don't like the chilli. Trish and Carole will try to meet with Michelle, but it's difficult as she also manages the Sauk Prairie restaurant.

5. New Business

- A. Speakers: Trish is working on getting the grantees in. Liv has some students she thinks would be interesting.
- B. Carole reviewed the new member process with the board, to wit: We receive the form, the Board votes on accepting the new person, and, if accepted, the new member installation occurs at one of the lunch meetings.
- C. OI is offering CARE trainings. You sign up online.

Sauk Trails Optimist Club Pathways” January/February/March 2026

6. Adjourn: Carole moved and Liv seconded to adjourn to Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 5pm via Zoom Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carole Klopp, Secretary/Treasurer

Foundation Addendum – Lussier Xmas Party Notes:

- a. Leftover food went into their food pantry for distribution to folk.
- b. About 45 gifts were leftover and Lussier took for use with other kids.
- c. Cookie Room: MS kids were already in there – should have a “go-box” for next year.
- d. Had a lot of JOI kids volunteering.
- e. All volunteers should arrive no later than 3pm – lots to do. Need more folk to prepare the food, etc.
- f. We had plenty of food with the Texas Roadhouse and Chic Filet (who also brought their mascot).
- g. Lussier wants us to be out by 7:30.
- h. Let 3 kids in a time to

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SAUK TRAILS OPTIMIST CLUB
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, February 17, 2026

MINUTES

PRESENT: Trish, Carole, Bonnie, Liv, Mary, Kathie and Patti

ABSENT: Frank

The meeting was called to order at 5:04pm.

- 1. There were no Agenda Additions
- 2. Previous Board Meeting **Minutes** – Bonnie moved, Patti seconded minutes approval. Motion carried.
- 3. **Reports**
 - A. Treasurer’s Report –Carole presented that we have \$3817.75 in checking. She will have full reports next month when Bob returns from vacation.
 - B. Fundraising Report – Patti shared we still have one Roadhouse Gift Certificate to give away.
 - C. Service Report – Kathie reported we will be having the Culvers fundraiser on March 10th. She will be emailing club members to get volunteers.
 - D. Social – Mary shared that she would begin organizing the March 22nd Progressive Dinner. She will be seeking hosts in the coming month. She reminded us that April 1st is our meeting and it will be a “bring your favorite Joke Day” with the winner prize to be determined.

4. Old Business

A. New Member Recruitment: Frank and Mary met to discuss how to approach businesses given that, since COVID, people are more interest in getting personally involved in their community. STOC can provide that opportunity. Are putting together a presentation to share info about STOC.

B. The Online Committee: We will be looking to start moving the docs on the current website to the cloud. Bonnie is hoping to recruit someone to help create the new website and be the manager. She noted that we have to keep 7 years of docs available for OI.

C. Logo Contest: Waiting for Rick T. update.

5. New Business

A. New Members: Carole presented both Walter Crow's and Cathy May's applications for membership. Carole moved to accept both into membership and Liv seconded. Motion carried.

B. JOI Communications: Bonnie indicated that the district is looking for officer names and addresses which are not on the OI website. Rick has this information and should be contacted.

C. Oratorical and Essay Contests: Rick is still recruiting and will be contacting the board as soon as he has student interest.

D. 2026-27 Club Officer & Board Elections: Elections are held in May. Mary Schwartz volunteered to be President. Carole agreed to be Secretary/Treasurer again. Kathie and Bonnie will be leaving. Liv and Patti are in their second term. We will have to recruit two new people for the board.

6. Adjourn: Carole moved and Mary seconded to adjourn to Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 5pm via Zoom Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carole Klopp, Secretary/Treasurer

The 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 you 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 time 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, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.