



Pathways



Sauk Trails Optimist Club
Oct/Nov/Dec, 2025
<https://sauktrailsmadisonoptimist.org>



Co-President's Message Oct - Dec 2025;

We started this Fall's social events with Sutter's Ridge Farm's corn maze and dinner, selling Bucky Books and Texas Roadhouse gift cards. We also have Culver's Share Night, the Lussier's Holiday Party and an ornament exchange. We also hosted one of the grant recipients, The Madison Reading Project. These events keep us engaged with our community and each other.

Trisha Lucas, Co-President 25-26

The Christmas party at the Lussier Center for a huge success. We gave approximately 160 children gifts (and our extra gifts that were not given out at the party filled a huge need as two other community centers in the Madison area lost their sponsors for their gift giving programs for their client families and our extra gifts went to those centers), Texas Road House, Chick-fil-A and Stella's bakery provided ample and excellent food for the event (and the food that wasn't served went home with attending families or was put into the Lussier Center's food pantry. All of the Optimist did a fantastic job as did the Lussier Center staff and volunteers. And a special recognition to the Spartan Youth group (Joi Club) volunteers!

Diane, Mary and I are working hard to come up with a new model for Optimist membership that focuses on active community service via the younger members of our community through our club. And I met recently with Natasha Miller-Sykes, from Northwestern Mutual who I met when she volunteered for the Christmas party and who is interested in getting the young members of her company directly involved in community service and who is willing to help us develop this new model. More on this to come soon.

Frank Rath, Co-President 25-26

**Sauk Trails
Club Officers 2025- 26**

President's:
TRISHA LUCAS
FRANK RATH

Secretary/Treasurer:
Carole Klopp

Ol Fnd Rep: Bonnie Spindler,

Past President: Kathie Newman

Board of Directors

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

Fall/Winter Birthdays

Rick Thomas	10/21
Ted See	10/28
Barb Sheerhan-Hill	12/20
Barry Levenson	12/30

SCHEDULE of EVENTS in 2025

October 15, 2025	Madison Reading Project, GRANT Recipient
November 5, 2025	Peace of Mind Seminar on Planning for Future Funeral.
November 19, 2025	Liv Sandburg, Optimist Speaker Sharing her Trip
December 8, 2925 (Mon)	Wrapping Xmas Presents for Lussier Christmas Party
December 9, 2025	Culver's Fundraising Scheduled Night
December 12, 2025 (Fri)	Lussier Christmas Party Planned
December 17, 2025	Ornament Exchange, Annual Xmas Program

Ornament Exchange ANNUAL Picture of Sauk Trails Membership

Also available on Website at: [Ornament 2025](#)





Lussier Christmas Party 2025



Well this year's Lussier Christmas Party was one of most successful ever and based upon my total experience coordinating it, the need was greater than perhaps ever. FRANK RATH

1. We had a pretty big turn out and there were a plethora of happy, smiling faces at the party – both the attendees and the volunteers. We are going to schedule a recap meeting with the team from Lussier and I will get a better idea of what the total number of participants were.
2. The food was great and plentiful (a special shout out to Patti). Left overs served a good purpose as what was already out for serving went to attendees and a few Optimist members and what had not yet been placed out on the buffet was packaged up and placed in the Center's food pantry for community members to pick up the following day.
3. We had approximately 40 extra gifts. The Center's interim director asked if we needed to return them or if he could utilize them. Two other smaller community centers in the Madison area have annual Christmas gift programs for their constituents and those centers had lost their donors' support for those programs. He asked if it would be OK to give the extra presents to those centers and of course we were very happy to oblige.
4. The Memorial High Students/Spartan Youth Optimist club volunteers were once again great! What an inspiration – seeing our often maligned youth doing good in their community.
5. Although we were not successful in securing a "grant" to support the entire party we did receive two monetary contributions – one from the One Community Bank in Middleton and one from the Walmart in Jefferson, WI (thanks to my daughter Laura's efforts). The Foundation donated \$1,200 and STOC members stepped up and made up the difference! Thanks much to all of them. The total cost for the party was \$2,400 rounded up.
6. Planning for next year's party will begin soon.

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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
February 28 th , 2026	ESSAY Winner's essay sent to SWIS Essay Chair. More information available in SWIS website at: https://swisdistrict.org/pages/essay-contest.asp
March 4, 2026	Wednesday, Grant Recipient LUNCH Fish Sandwich with Ceasar salad
March 10, 2026(Tue)	Culver's Volunteer Fundraiser, More Information Coming
March 18, 2026	Wednesday, UW Student Speaking on College Training, LUNCH House salad with Chili / Soup.
March 22, 2026 (Sun)	STOC Progressive Dinner, more information coming.



There were 3 Memorial High School Students who presented at the STOC 1st Qtr Lunch meeting on January 7th, 2026. Rick Thomas coordinated these students, and some parents attending. Carol Klopp, who was instrumental in the formation and continuation of the club previously, attended as a continuing member of the Sauk Trails Optimist Club.

GENERATING NEW OPTIMISTS

The subcommittee to explore new concepts and approaches to generate new participants in serving youth through Optimism - met and have put some beginning plans in place. To support the process is the status of the current Sauk Trails Optimist club -STOC website at: www.sauktrailsmadisonoptimist.org, and the financial and maintenance cost of time to keep it current with information. More Updates from this committee and an on-line Committee of the historical and current support will be meeting jointly in the future.

With the STOC Website 'possibly' being replaced in the future with AI, Google-Docs, and other environments there is a group of optimists who will be making some future proposals and implementing them in the current year. This is to help increase the membership and support of the club. The implementation would be BEFORE Oct. 1, 2026 in conjunction with making a decision on the STOC Website.

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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.

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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**

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- 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 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, November 18, 2025
MINUTES

PRESENT: Trish, Frank, Carole, Bonnie, Liv, Mary, Patti and Kathie
The meeting was called to order at 6:09pm.

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

3. Reports

- A. Treasurer's Report – Carole presented the October Balance Statement and the Operating Report.
- B. Fundraising Report – Patti reviewed most of the fundraising at the previous Foundation meeting. We are looking at doing the Texas Roadhouse cards again for which we should receive 10% back of the gross purchased. 5 members have already donated extra dollars towards the Lussier Xmas gifts. Carole presented a fundraising calendar for the board to track.
- C. Service Report – Kathie reminded everyone that we have Culver's volunteering for funds on December 9th and March 10, 2026. She will be chatting with the Reading Project and Bikes for kids about possible service projects.
- D. Social – Mary reminded everyone about the December 17th ornament exchange party. She will be putting together a 2026 social calendar for the club soon.

4. Old Business

- A. The Member Recruitment and Online Committees have been separated. Frank will chair the Member Recruitment Committee and Carole will lead the Online Committees. Both committees are in the process of getting organized.
- B. Rick Thomas presented the Logo Contest to the JOI team. He will report back to the Board in December.

5. New Business

- A. Ornament Exchange – the board set a \$10 limit for the ornaments. Assuming the Vintage agrees,
We will have Xmas Cookies at the December 17th party.
- B. Bonnie reported on the SWIS District conference indicating it was informative with a presentation

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From the Junior Achievement group.

6. Adjourn: Carole moved and Liv seconded to adjourn to Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 5pm via Zoom Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carole Klopp, Secretary/Treasurer



SAUK TRAILS OPTIMIST CLUB
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, October 21, 2025
5:00PM via ZOOM

MINUTES

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

ABSENT: Bonnie

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

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

3. Committee Chairs:

The President assigned the following committee chairs:
Fundraising- Patti Levenson; Service – Kathie Newman; and Social – Mary Schwartz.

Everyone accepted their assignments for the 25/26 fiscal year.

4. Reports

A. Treasurer's Report – Carole reviewed the 24/25 closing statements with a final balance of \$4042 in checking. The foundation transfer will show in the next statement. Carole then presented the 25-26 Budget showing revenues of \$7,9878 and expenditures of \$8,364.48 – where a transfer of \$386.48 from Retained Earnings is used to balance the budget. Liv moves to adopt the proposed 25/26 budget as presented, Mary seconds and the motion carries.

B. Fundraising Report – Pattie shared that we have 5 Bucky Books left to sell. Mary, Liv and Carole each agreed to purchase one, leaving 2 books to sell. With TerriLynn out of business, Pattie recommended going with Sees Chocolates as a fundraiser. Carole moves to do See's for one year as a test, Pattie seconds and the motion carries. Pattie shared she is in discussions with Roadhouse for doing the Lussier Xmas party food and selling the gift cards.

C. Service Report – Kathie reminded everyone that we have Culver's volunteering for funds on December 9th and March 10, 2026. She will be chatting with the Reading Project and Bikes for kids about possible service projects.

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D. Social – Mary reminded everyone about the December 17th ornament exchange party. She will be putting together a 2026 social calendar for the club soon.

5. Old Business

A. The Member Recruitment and Online Committee consisting of Frank, Mary, Diane, Carole & Bonnie has not met yet,

B. Lussier Xmas Party will be December 12th with gift wrapping on MONDAY, DECEMBER 8th. Please note the date change as the Vintage did not have the room available. Plan is for food from the Roadhouse, cookies from Stellas, and ask the Reading Project to distribute books. There will be NO switching of gifts and we should do tickets. Frank and Patti will contact volunteers.

6. New Business

A. The 25-26 Club Policies were distributed and reviewed. Live moves approval with a second from Kathie. Motion carried.

B. Lunch Place: Frank moves to remain at the Vintage for another year, Carole seconds, motion carries.

C. New Logo: Because we are going to update our online presence, Carole moved to have a new logo creation contest with the JOI students doing the design and art work and a \$100 winner prize, Patti seconds, motion carries.

7. Adjourn: Mary moved and Liv seconded to adjourn to Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 5pm via Zoom Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carole Klopp, Secretary/Treasurer

The Optimist Creed

Prom ise y ourself...

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 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.