Pathways

Sauk Trails Optimist Club
Oct/Nov/Dec 2026
https://sauktrailsmadisonoptimist.org



Greetings Optimists,

We are off to a fantastic start for the 2026-2027 year! Why? Because "many hands make light work" and so many of you are getting involved and pitching in. It's one of the things I love about our club.

One of our focuses this year will be recruiting more members of all ages. We've already had some guests join us for lunch meetings and hopefully they will join the club, too! More members mean we can do more community service projects. Remember, "many hands make light work."

In October, I attended the SWIS District meeting. It was the first one of those I've been to since I was last president, sometime around 2013. It was a very positive experience, and I came away with some good ideas that I will be introducing after the first of the year. Socially, a bunch of us had a great time at Wollersheim on October 10th. It was a picture-perfect day and, of course, the wine was delicious. Our next social event will be our Annual Christmas Ornament Exchange on December 16th.

November and December will probably fly by. They always do. Watch for my emails for opportunities to sign up. This includes the annual Lussier Christmas Party on Friday, December 4th and Fundraising at Culver's on Tuesday, December 8th. AND…if you haven't been to a lunch meeting lately, please come. We'd love to see you again.

Speaking of lunch meetings, our best speakers usually come from our members who have a connection – a friend, a family member, or co-worker – who is involved in interesting work, hobbies, travels, etc. Please volunteer to line up one speaker this year or come and speak yourself! Remember "many hands make light work."

Optimistically yours,

Mary Schwartz, President

608.576.5711

Sauk Trails
Current Club Officers 2026-2027

President's:
Mary Schwartz

Vice President
Liv Sandberg

Secretary/Treasurer:
Carole Klopp

OI Fnd Rep: Rick Thomas,

Past President:
Triisha Lucas, Frank Rath

Board of Directors
Patti Levenson
Mary Breunig
Cathy Mays

September Birthdays

Carole Klopp	9/4
Mark Kraemer	9/9
Cathy Mays	9/18
Mary Breunig	9/20
Dan Chart	9/22
Jacci See	9/27
Nancy Hach	9/27

Fall/Winter Birthdays

Rick Thomas	10/21
Ted See	10/28
Walter Crow	11/06
Barb Sheerhan-Hill	12/20
Barry Levenson	12/30

Newsletter Editor/Distributor

STOC Website Updates

Bonnie Spindler

SWIS 1st Quarter Conference, October 17th, 2026



The Sauk Trails Optimist Club had: Steve Bailey; Mary Schwartz, & Bonnie Spindler attending the SWIS 1st Qtr conference in Sun Prairie. There were about 30 Optimists from all over SWIS – Southern Wisconsin District attending. Great conference for all who could attend.

The district meeting was held on October 17th. The breakout tables provided a wealth of ideas for future fundraising and accomplishments. In addition, the Sun Prairie mayor attended most of the meetings. There were two guest speakers, a youth group and Middle School Care team. It was a great way to start off the 26-27 Optimist year. Future SWIS meetings:

- SWIS 2nd Qtr ZOOM meeting: February 6, 2027
- SWIS 3rd Qtr Student Honors; May 1, 2027
- SWIS 4th Qtr Convention: August 14, 2027

Visit the WWW.SWISDISTRICT.ORG website for more information.

SAUK TRAILS OPTIMIST MADISON CLUB ‘FUNDRAISERS’

FUNDCRAZR TICKETS

Thanks to ALL the STOC Optimists who bought and/or sold many of the 100 available Fundcrazr tickets. The Club STUBS and checks were submitted mid-August to compete for 2026 season games. Winners will be receiving notice and checks, during the season.

The club received $11 for each ticket sold. Total of: $1001 for the STOC Foundation.

With a newly defined and documented process, most of the 45 SWIS clubs keyed in STUB info in a pre-defined Xcel spreadsheet. This was coordinated with the ‘physical STUBS’ & Checks/cash sent to the SWIS Fundraiser Chair who then does a follow-up to Pennsylvania, where winners are determined. This process is being set-up with a Milwaukee Optimist who will be working with the current SWIS Fundcrazr Chair, in future years.

Bonnie Spindler, Fundcrazr Contact

Bucky Books Were Sold

THANKS to Patti Levenson for coordinating our Annual Bucky Book sales again this year. There were 40 to sell, and more could be acquired if needed. The price was still $35 per book, and STOC keeps $15 of each sale so that’s $600 for the club.

Each book comes with a $10 gift card to a west side eatery as a sales incentive. Anyone who sells 5 books would get a free one later this fall. Thanks to all who participated.

Patti Levenson, Bucky Book Contact 608-444-5280

GIFT Cards Pre-purchased for: Texas Road House.

Patti Levenson provided the opportunity to purchase ‘Texas Road House’ gift cards for various amounts. The goal of over $1,000 was sold, in exchange for food provided at the Lussier Christmas party scheduled for December 4, 2026,

Volunteering at Culver’s on Mineral Point Road

Kathie Newman has been the main contact for a few years to schedule and coordinate Optimists working a total of 4-hour shifts (2 hours each) about quarterly. Our next volunteering is being planned for December 8th. There has been an average of $600 - $700 earned at each scheduled date for the OI Foundation. Thanks to ALL who have volunteered to help with this great Fundraising event.

ANNUAL Sauk Trails Induction Banquet

WHERE: Johnny's Italian Steakhouse.

WHEN: Wednesday, September 23rd,
5:00 pm (Cocktails), dinner at 6:00 pm
followed by the program.

The 2026-27 Board was voted on by the membership and approved at a lunch meeting on May 20, 2026. These optimists will be continuing/starting on Oct. 1, AFTER the Annual Induction Banquet.



Special Announcement Regarding the Board of Directors' Meetings

Going forward, Sauk Trails Optimist Club will have both a STOC board meeting for regular club business and a STOC Youth & Community Foundation board meeting each month. It has been called to our attention that meeting topics such as fund raising, service projects, and grants all fall under the auspices of the Foundation, so it is better for us to have a meeting for each. The meetings are held by Zoom at 5:00 on the third Wednesday of the month. Each meeting is scheduled to last about 30 minutes. All club members are welcome to attend the board meetings, just let Carole know so that she can email you the materials and a Zoom link. Foundation board meetings were previously held quarterly.

September 16th, 2026

Molly Thomson with the Madison Mounted Police Patrol, presented about the many beautiful horses that she trains, handles, and works with on a daily basis. Following are some of the pictures that we all got to see and meet after lunch.







Horizon High School, September 30th, 2026

Sauk Trails Optimist Club continues to support Horizon High School, one of the few recovery high schools in Wisconsin. On September 30th, about a dozen members attended their annual fundraising event at the Marriott on John Nolen Drive. STOC donated $1,000 to the event by purchasing a table.

It was a wonderful program emceed by our own Jacci See. While not part of the night's program, it should also be noted that Carole Klopp has been playing an important role as a member of Horizon's Board of Directors. We look forward to inviting Horizon students and staff to a future lunch meeting to get an update on what's new with the school.

October 21st , 2026



Kathie Neman arranged for April Gardner-Taylor to speak at the meeting this week. There was previous information, which was also shared, about her goals in getting access to fresh water and provide education to various South America and Africa areas. Lots of opportunities for support both physical and financial.

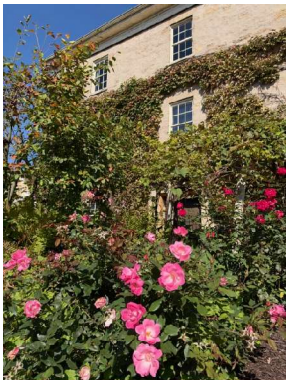
Great time on October 10th
Wollersheim Winery & Distillery

Club members enjoyed a beautiful afternoon in Prairie du Sac, at the Wollersheim Winery & Distillery. A few took a tour of the winery while others did a tasting at the distillery. Later, we soaked up the sunshine on the upper patio and enjoyed delicious snacks from the Bistro along with 3 different wines. We teased Ted, being the only guy in the group, that he must be enjoying being surrounded by women.

Afterwards, six of us went to The Vintage in Sauk City for an early supper before making the journey back to Madison. It was a lovely way to spend a Saturday!







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November 4th , 2026

Rowan Childs, with the Madison Reading Project, was the at the Vintage Kathie Newman brought in Rowan Childs to share about the Madison Reading Project she has worked with for over 10 years. She shared about all the different levels of books that are available and also about the 2nd bus that they've acquired to move books to areas that don't have transportation or access book locations.

Kathie personally has had money in the STOC Foundation which she chooses to have given to the Madison Reading Project in her name, along with Sauk Trails Optmist Club.



If you're interested in either volunteering and/or contributing to the Madison Reading Project more information is available on their website at this link:

https://www.madisonreadingproject.com/2026communitybookdrive .

November 6th BIRTHDAY Celebration



HAPPY 90th BIRHTDAY WALTER

Happy Birthday to our latest member Walter Crow who will have his 90th Birthday on Friday, November 6th.

His daughter, Cathy Mays brought a cake to celebrate her dad's birthday at our November 4th lunch meeting.

So glad to have both of you as members of our Sauk Trails Madison Optimist Club.

Lussier Christmas Party, Friday December 4th

Details Being Planned: Start about 3:00 PM

This year's Lussier Children's Christmas Party is looking once again like a big winner for all involved. Cathy, Patti and I meet earlier this week with the staff of the Lussier Center and they are very excited for the event. It always is a happy time for all – very active (appears at first glance to be almost chaotic.

This year we will again be serving a wonderful meal prepared and delivered by the Texas Road House (thank you Patti!). Chick-fil-A will again bring trays of chicken nuggets and the Chick-fil-A Santa Cow. And Stella's bakery will be baking and donating 200 of their most excellent cookies along with frosting for decorating.

We would love to have every STOC member volunteer to help and enjoy this amazing event. Laura Rath, Frank's daughter will again be ordering gifts for each child. And in the past we have been told that for some of the children attending, the gift they receive at the party will be one of only a few they will get for Christmas this year. And finally, the Memorial High School JOI club will have assisting with set up, serving, the cookie decorating room, clean up and making balloon animals for all the children. They are truly amazing young people. This is one of our annual events where the club gets to directly serve the youth in our community.

Frank Rath, Lussier Coordinator

ISADEX INFINITY UPDATE, November 2026

ISADEX formally presented their Sponsorship Website and Advertising program (SWAP) to all clubs at the Q3 and Q4 SWIS District Conferences this past year. This program offered to provide 100% free websites and digital marketing services for every participating club in the district. Continuation of the program only required enrollment from 25-50% of SWIS District's 40+ Optimist clubs, most of which had no existing online presence. The level of participation was necessary so we could present our strong Optimist presence and impact on our communities sufficiently to attract and encourage large sponsors to provide financial support in exchange for their recognition and appreciation from our clubs. The combination of presenting a consistent, professional brand across the entire district, combined with steady event/activity marketing would be a very strong incentive for larger firms to partner with our unbiased, youth-centered organization.

Thank you for participating in an potentially exciting program that could have eliminated website and digital marketing costs for clubs for the district and promoted an exciting Optimist brand across the SWIS District. Had this been successful, it would have been rolled into other districts and communities. In time, we hope clubs reconsider this opportunity and consider ISADEX as we will remain supportive.

Bonnie Spindler, STOC Contact **Tim Miller, ISADEX President**

STOC - Schedules / Events / Speakers	
Sept. 16, 2026	Wednesday Lunch, Speaker: Molly Thomson Madison Mounted Police Patrol.
Sept. 23, 2026	Annual Installation Banquet (See Article)
Sept 30, 2026	Horizon High School Fundraiser Attendance, Marriot
Oct 7, 2026	Speaker, Sharing among members, no speaker.
Oct 16-17, 2026	SWIS 1st Quarter 26-27 Conference, Sun Prairie
Oct 21, 2026	April Gardner-Taylor to speak at meeting. about their goals getting access to fresh water and providing education to countries.
Oct 21, 2026	ZOOM Board Meeting Scheduled at 5:00 PM
Nov. 4, 2026	Rowan Childs, with the Madison Reading Project, will be the speaker.
Nov 18, 2026	ZOOM Board Meeting Scheduled at 5:00 PM
Nov. 18, 2026	Students of the Quarter from Spartan Youth Service Team honored.
Dec. 2, 2026	Wrap Christmas Gifts for Dec. 4th Lussier Party. (Sign up earlier for support)
Dec 4, (Friday)	Lussier Party, Sign-up fo positions to help.
Dec 8, (Tues)	Culver's Share Night, 4-8 pm
Dec 16 (Wed)	ZOOM Board Meeting Scheduled at 5:00 PM
Dec. 16, 2026	Ornament Exchange for 2026
January 6, 2027	Speaker TBD, at Vintage
January 20, 2027	Speaker TBD, at Vintage
January 20, (Wed)	STOC ZOOM Board and Foundation Meeting
February 3, 2027	Speaker TBD, at Vintage
February 6, 2027	SWIS ZOOM 2nd Qtr Meeting
February 17, 2027	Speaker TBD, at Vintage
February 17, 2027	STOC ZOOM Board and Foundation Meeting
March 3, 2027	Speaker TBD, at Vintage
March 17, 2927	Speaker TBD, at Vintage
March 17, 2027	STOC ZOOM Board and Foundation Meeting

See the SAUK TRAILS SCHEDULE OF EVENTS on the calendar of the STOC Website at the following link:

https://sauktrailsmadisonoptimist.org/events/

SAUK TRAILS OPTIMIST CLUB
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, August 18, 2026
MINUTES

PRESENT: Frank, Trish, Carole, Bonnie, Patti, Mary and Liv
The meeting was called to order at 5:07pm.

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

3. Reports

A. Treasurer's Report – Carole shared the Balance and Operating sheets. We are on target with the budget.
B. Fundraising Report – Patti will be picking up 40 Bucky Books to sale.
C. Service Report – No Report.
D. Social – Mary shared that the August 16th pool party at the See's house was held and everyone had a great time! Many thanks to the Sees for hosting. Our next event will be at the Wollersheim Winery at a date to be determined. Mary suggested that we will go in the afternoon and then to the Green Acres supper club after for dinner. More to come…

4. **Old Business**

A. Membership Committee: goal is to recruit younger members. Mary and Carole will be meeting with past JOI club members who still live in Madison to recruit them. Committee members will also try to recruit other younger folk as well as we look to make their service dreams come true.

B. Online Committee: Bonnie is working with Isadex to move things forward vis-à-vis the website. Tim from Isadex has some thoughts regarding membership recruitment as well.

C. Annual Banquet: New this year will be a $100 room fee at Johnny's. Carole moves to pay the fee out of the operating account, Liv seconds, motion carried. Carole moves to underwrite member meals at $10 per person, Liv seconds, motion carried. Liv moves to underwrite spouse meals as well, Carole seconds, motion carried. Volunteer of the year was discussed.

5. New Business

A. New Board Transition: Trish will invite new board members to the September Board meeting. They are Cathy Mays, Jacci See and Mary Breunig.

B. Horizon High School: They are having their annual fundraiser on Wednesday, September 30th. Mary moves to buy a table for $1000, Liv seconds, motion carried.

6. Adjourn: Carole moved and Bonnie seconded to adjourn to September 15th at 5pm via Zoom. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:45pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Carole Klopp, Secretary/Treasurer

SAUK TRAILS OPTIMIST CLUB
Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, September 15, 2026
MINUTES

PRESENT: Frank, Trish, Carole, Bonnie, Patti, Mary, Liv and Jacci
The meeting was called to order at 5:05pm.

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

3. Reports

A. Treasurer's Report – Carole shared the Balance and Operating sheets. We are on target with the budget.
B. Fundraising Report – Patti has 40 Bucky Books to sale.
C. Service Report – No Report.
D. Social – Mary shared that our next event will be at the Wollersheim Winery. It was agreed to go on October 10th for the 12:30 tour and wine tasting after. Then we'll go the Vintage in Sauk for dinner. Mary will have a sign-up sheet at the next meeting.

4. **Old Business**

A. Membership Committee: goal is to recruit younger members. Mary and Carole will be meeting with past JOI club members who still live in Madison to recruit them. Committee members will also try to recruit other younger folk as well as we look to make their service dreams come true.

B. Online Committee: Bonnie continues to work with Isadex to move things forward vis-à-vis the website. We will not be paying any fee for the website, but will have to pay $35 for the domain name. Bonnie will get an invoice to Carole .

C. Annual Banquet: Seventeen people have signed up and Trish is waiting to hear from Jo'El for attendance confirmation. Bonnie will contact Vern Andren as a back-up should Jo'El not be able to make it.

5. New Business

A. New Board Time: Mary has spoken with all new members and it appears that the 3rd Wednesday works best for everyone. We will move the meetings to the 3rd Wednesday.

6. Adjourn: Liv moved and Mary seconded to adjourn to October 21st at 5pm via Zoom. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:36pm.

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 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 to 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.