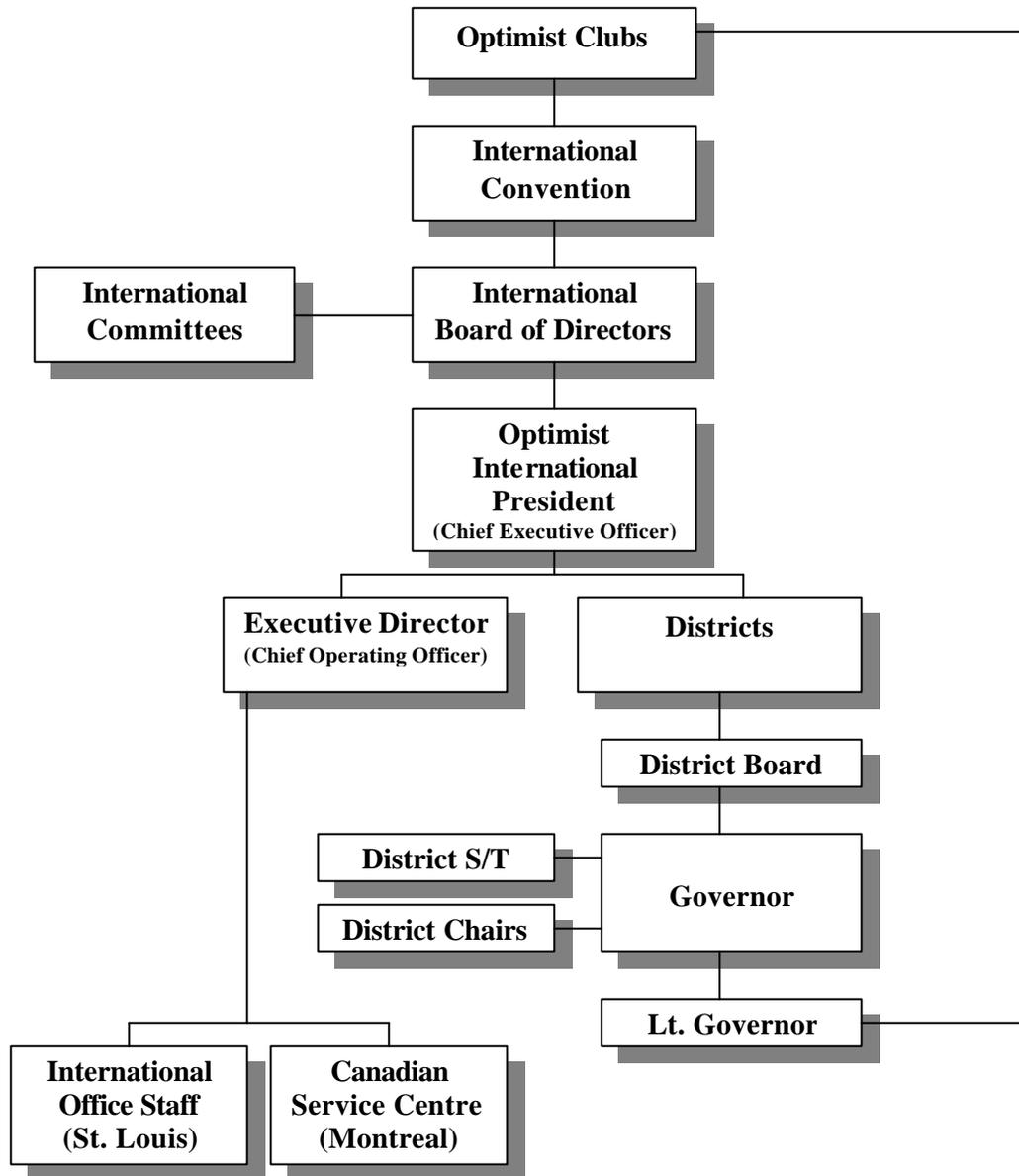


# OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURE and SERVICES



## **Optimist International’s Constitution states that “Optimist International is an association of member Clubs.”**

Clubs comprise Optimist International’s membership and guide its destiny through delegates to annual International Conventions.

Individuals are Members of Optimist Clubs.

Optimist International is not the International Board of Directors, the International Office in St. Louis or a superimposed body.

### **Purpose:**

The fundamental purpose of Optimist International is to help Clubs increase the effectiveness of their community-service activities. Each year, Optimist Clubs conduct thousands of community-service projects through which the annual, aggregate accomplishment of Optimist International is attained. Throughout its history, Optimist International has refrained from conducting activities or encroaching upon the purpose of member Clubs.

### **Structure:**

Optimist International operates under a well-integrated structure. At District meetings, Club delegates elect District officers. However, District officers do not represent Clubs to Optimist International; they represent Optimist International to Clubs. The Governor, chief executive officer of the District, appoints the Chairs required to make the programs and purposes of Optimist International effective in the District.

At each International Convention, Club delegates elect 10 Vice Presidents-Elect, 2 International Board members and a President-Elect. The International President appoints the International Committees necessary to accomplish the purposes of the organization.

### **Programs:**

Optimist International serves its member Clubs by determining the need for new service activities and helping Clubs broaden their vision and expand their community service. From time to time Optimist International promulgates certain programs. These are often referred to as “International Programs.” Usually they are activities that are nourished from isolated, local inception to widespread participation.

### **International Office:**

The International Office, located in St. Louis, Missouri, serves as a clearinghouse of ideas for Club activities. Here a professional staff devotes full time to the organization’s administration and provides services to Clubs. Aid and counsel on all phases of Club administration and community-serving activities are readily available. From the office, a planned flow of mail and email provides member Clubs and District leaders with new ideas and techniques geared to help make each Club more effective. Similar services are available to Clubs in Canada through the Canadian Service Centre located in Montreal, Quebec.

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## International Convention

**Representation at the annual International Convention should be a must for every Club.** The dividends of an International Convention are:

- qualified leaders
- effective Clubs
- meaningful community service

Time after time, Clubs have gained new life and significance because their Presidents and other delegates have broadened their horizons and gained new ideas at an International Convention.

Because Optimist International is a federation of member Clubs, it is essential that Clubs be represented in the business and decisions of an International Convention. Officers are elected and important decisions are reached through the vote of the delegates, who constitutionally control the affairs of the organization.

At Convention, Club delegates have the opportunity of meeting and exchanging ideas with other delegates, International officers and staff. They also participate in leadership conferences for Club officers and Members. The Convention offers to delegates the opportunity of visualizing, perhaps for the first time, the size, influence and character of Optimist International.

Each Club should make some financial provision for the President-Elect to attend the International Convention. The Club should pay as much of the cost as possible. Transportation, registration, room and meals should be considered in that order. Some Clubs also assist with the expenses of the future Secretary-Treasurer.



## **The District**

**A District is an administrative division of Optimist International within geographical boundaries established by Optimist International.**

**All Clubs within its boundaries are members of that District.**

**Districts do not have legislative powers or votes in International affairs.**

District meetings include conferences on effective Club administration. Optimist International frequently assigns an official International Representative to these meetings so his/her knowledge of Optimist activities will be available. Most District meetings and conferences are held on Saturdays (occasionally extending into Sunday) and usually include a luncheon or dinner.

District conventions feature the election of a Governor-Elect and a variety of training events. Clubs are represented by delegates (the number based on Club membership) who participate in the election and other District business. Every Club should provide an adequate delegation, equal to its voting strength, including President, President-Elect and Secretary-Treasurer. Conventions provide a high degree of fellowship for delegates. Many Districts also hold conferences for their Junior Optimist and Octagon Clubs. During these meetings, workshops for Club officers and an election for JOOI District Governor take place.



## **The District Governor**

**The Governor is the Chief Administrative Officer of the District.**

With the large number of Clubs in each District, it is not possible for a Governor to visit each one. If, however, he/she can visit yours, your Club should assume the role of host and invite Members and officers of surrounding Clubs.

- \* When the Governor's visit is confirmed, promptly acknowledge the time and date.
- \* Offer him/her the opportunity of being the speaker for the meeting.
- \* Be sure to publicize the visit.
- \* Urge attendance by Club Members.
- \* Make a list of questions to discuss with the officer.

The Governor's years of experience will be of great value. The President should arrange to spend as much time as possible with the Governor. The Governor gives time to perform a service to Clubs and Optimist International; make the visit as pleasant and profitable as possible.



## **Zone Meetings**

**A Zone is a geographical grouping of Clubs assigned to a Lieutenant Governor for the purpose of personal contact and service.**

It is not a tier in Optimist International's structure. Zone meetings, conducted by the Lieutenant Governor, are devoted entirely to training, counseling and motivating Club leaders. Zone meetings are occasionally conducted in conjunction with a District meeting. In some Districts, Zone meetings may be held monthly or quarterly.

## The Lieutenant Governor

**The Lieutenant Governor is the Optimist International officer responsible for direct contact with member Clubs, who can advise on Club methods, administrative techniques, youth and community-service activities. Call on the Lieutenant Governor whenever your Club needs his/her special ability and experience.**

Optimist International's Bylaws require a Lieutenant Governor to meet at least twice with each Club in the Zone. Information on these meetings follows:

### Annual Club Planning Conference (ACPC)

This meeting will be conducted by the Lieutenant Governor at a regularly scheduled or special meeting of the Board of Directors. The purpose of this conference is leadership education for the Board and discussion of Club administration. Necessary information will be gathered during the meeting. Completion of the ACPC form is required on or before November 15.

*Tips for a successful Annual Club Planning Conference:*

- A. Arrange a date with the Lieutenant Governor when all Board members can attend.*
- B. Inform Board members of the purpose and plan for the meeting.*

If no other time is available, and as a last resort, the Planning Conference can be held at the time of a regular Club meeting. However, the format should not be that of a regular Club meeting, and guests should not be invited to attend. The purpose of the conference should be explained to Members in advance.

### Club Meeting Visitation

This visitation will be between April 1 and July 1 at a regular Club meeting. The Lieutenant Governor may be invited to be the speaker for the meeting. The following will help make the visit profitable for the Club and pleasant for the Lieutenant Governor:

1. Arrange a date with the Lieutenant Governor early enough to promote the visit.
2. Let the Lieutenant Governor know, well in advance, if a speech is expected.
3. Extend a warm greeting.
4. Reserve a place at the head table.
5. Introductions should be made with courtesy and dignity.
6. If the Lieutenant Governor is not to be the speaker, allow time for a few brief remarks.
7. The Lieutenant Governor should not have to pay for the meal.