

## **FOLLOW THE LEADER**

*“Leadership is a choice, not a position,”* Stephen Covey. This was on the marquee of Lion Dr. Jennifer Gardner’s elementary school in Kingstree. Lion Jennifer is one of the best educational leaders I have ever worked with or have known. When I saw this, it reminded me that it is time for us to choose our leadership for next year. I believe that this is one of the most important acts we as Lions do. It is so important that this article will be for both the Palmetto Lion and the District 32-C Newsletter.

I have said on many occasions that I have been truly blessed this year by being surrounded with outstanding leaders on the Multiple District, District and local levels. Part of this is because of the true quality of the persons in these positions. I believe that personality and luck are involved as well as having a supporting wife who puts up with an awful from me. These people, not all are Lions, give me the advice, direction and support I need. They make me look better than I am. In turn District 32-C looks good. The support I talk about can make or break a Lion leader.

On the District level we are hurting to get good qualified candidates to step forward. There are many reasons. I’ll address a few of these.

Compared to eight years ago, the demands on the Governors three to four times more now than then. These come from LCI to the local levels. Why? I believe that Lions are picking up the slack where governmental agencies, families, and other help groups, for whatever reason, are dropping the ball. What can we do?

Support your Governor. Don’t, behind the scenes, work against him or her. They were elected to govern therefore we should allow them to do so. The Governor should be allowed to develop the budget to meet the need of his/her term. In many cases, others give the Governor a budget. The Vice Governors are seeing needs to change present budgets. Allow them to do so. Also, things happen. An example, Governor Gary Greene, from District A, has had some extremely difficult business and personal issues to deal with since taking office. He is a truly dedicated leader because he has tried to carry on when most people would quit under these circumstances. I know several persons have stepped forward to assist Gary and Monica. This is good but there is always more to be done. Governors make mistakes or make decisions that we do not like. You should respect the Governor enough by talking to them and continue to support them. In many cases, we Lions will go behind the Governor’s back and work against them and/or, if we are on the cabinet, just not do our job. This does not only hurt the Governor, it hurts our District. Also give financial support for the Vice Governors. They are expected to attend several training sessions, all Mid-Winters and the State Convention, and several Council meeting each VDG year. This could be up to \$2,000 to \$4,000 a year. The Governors get reimbursed from LCI but there is no money for VDGs. There are many more things we can do the support our Governors. Ask them and the VDGs what you can do to make their jobs easier. If you don’t like the Governors you need to encourage more qualified candidates to step up to the plate.



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On the Region, Zone and local levels, I have concerns. Most Governors have problems filling Region and Zone Chair positions. Many of us turn to PDGs and PCCs. This gives us experience but it stymies the development of new leaders. We should be constantly observing our lower level leaders and encourage them to take part in activities above the club level. These activities should be fun and worthwhile. Many clubs keep the same officers for years. Sometimes it is because of small numbers in the club and other times because no one will step forward. Either way, it hurts the club. What can we do? First, we "older" Lions can call, invite and take these potential leaders to these out of club events. We should make these events fun again and add some sense of friendly competition. We should have monies in our local budgets to pay for some of these events. On the local level, we should be willing to take part in all of the club activities. Most of us cannot attend every event and activity but we can give moral, financial and phone-email support. We should thank our leaders for their time and effort. Ask them for suggestions on what you can do to help.

In our District we have many good young leaders. I'll mention two. The first is Zone Chair Cody Mitchell from the Bethune Club. He is a lawyer, Captain in the Army Reserve, and serves both the Bethune and Hartsville communities. He is also President of the Bethune Club. The other is Lion Angela Stallings, President of the McBee Club. She has been a Lion for only three years. She has presented many fresh new ideas to me and other members of the Cabinet. Both of these Lions have impressed not only me but the VDGs, GLT, GMT, and their Zone Chairs in addition to many PCCs and PDGs. In Cody's case, we have to give him the time to learn. This may include extra support with assignment and one-on-one training sessions. Also include him in the loop knowing that he will not be able to be present at all functions. Lion Angela is an accountant and there are times that she cannot take part in activities. We should be there for her during these times and help her carry the Lions' lot. Recognize and thank them for their service. I have been extremely impressed with both. Most of the District leadership feels that they would make outstanding Governors. Lion Cody is well on the way of earning a International Leadership Medal and Lion Angela has been recommended for a Presidential Certificate of Appreciation. They are not the only potential leaders we have in our District.

Getting back to Lion Jennifer. She would make a great Governor. There is a problem. She would make an outstanding Superintendent of Education for my county. She is pulled by various factions of the Williamsburg County community to lead. Some are the Church, Chamber of Commerce, sororities, etc. She is only one person so we should respect the direction she takes and support her when called upon. At the same time pray that she can provide us some of her time.

Each club and each District have Lions Jennifer, Cody and Angela. Let's find them, support them, and thank them. These three Lions along with 937 others are making District 32-C and me look good.

***DG Randy***