

“Leadership and the Lack of Leadership”

Hello Fellow Lions!

In President Preston’s theme song this year, he wrote “Strengthen the pride through investing in training others to lead”. We (the District Leadership) believe that this line is rooted in one of the major problems in Lionism today. Although it seems we are able to identify quality Leaders at the District Level, we are not doing such a good job on down the line. Now I know that some Lions are not going to be happy with what I have to say and point out in this article; however, if we do not solve our Leadership problems, we are going to continue to lose more and more Lions. Part of the problem is that we have fewer and fewer Lions that are willing to step up to the positions of Region and Zone Chairs and when some do, it is in Name only. They fail to follow the guidelines that are written and presented to them to make the position a success and beneficial to Lions in their Region or Zone. These two positions are designed to be “Coaches” for the Clubs. Guess what happens to the Gamecocks or the Tigers if the Coaches don’t do their jobs?

Then there are the positions of President and Secretary within the clubs. If a club has the same President for multiple years in a row, how likely is that club to develop new ideas for fund raisers or new ideas for Service projects. And how likely is it that when a new member comes to the club with a new idea that the new member will hear: “We have never done it that way before, so we aren’t interested in doing things that way. Part of Leadership is inspiring others to lead. On that note, sometimes there are not too many members around that are willing to be inspired. According to our last Club Health Assessment report, out of 36 clubs, 14 out of 36 clubs have had repeat Presidents. Some for as many as 10 and 12 years and most have been stagnant or lost membership in those years. In regards to the Club Secretaries, who I consider the back bone of the club, we have several that either don’t file their membership reports on a regular monthly basis or worse yet, refuse to complete the Club Activity report for months (despite written and verbal guidance) and in some cases years on end. They may file a membership report once a year to clear the books and have no clue how to file an Activity Report and don’t care, despite the fact their club is doing several Service projects and contributing several Thousands of dollars to their communities. These same Secretaries then wonder why no one knows what they have done and why no one in their communities knows what Lions do. As I said, the Secretary is the back bone of the club and if they are not doing their job, just as was mentioned about the Region and Zone Chairs, the Club is going to struggle, not attract new members, decrease in membership, and eventually die (as so many have done over the years).

So what do we think is the solution to these problems? Simply stated, we have to find Lions that are willing to do what they pledge they will do to the best of their ability. We need to have Lions, who are passionate about what we do, to overcome their FEAR of Leadership positions and step up to help Lead our District and Lionism to new heights and greater accomplishments (such as Vision Screenings) in the months and years ahead, in fulfilling Helen Keller’s challenge to be “Knights of the Blind”! Let’s face it, if we do not have quality Leadership at all levels, how can we begin to think that we can continue to provide quality service to the members of our communities, who need our help?

I sincerely hope that every Lion in our District reads this article and understands the problem that we face, because they have to be solved! “If we always do what we have always done, we will always



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2014-2015

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get what we have always gotten” Garfield. We do GREAT service work; however, over the past few years fewer and fewer Lions have been doing that service work and we want to change that picture and get everyone involved and that means changing Leadership positions and doing what we say we are going to do!

Please don't forget, our District Convention is scheduled for February 27 & 28 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Columbia. Not far from the Columbiana Mall on Harbison Drive. We have a great International Director coming from Minnesota, Lion Michael Molenda and his spouse, Lion Linda. So please plan to join us for FUN, Blue Grass Music, Education, Fellowship, and Inspiration from ID Molenda!

Yours In Service,
Lion Rick