



Reflections & Ruminations From Ralph-IPDG



“THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES”

The famous comedian Bob Hope sang a song by that title every time he signed off his television show. Somehow, the message conveyed by that song seems rather appropriate at this time as I write the final installment of *Reflections & Ruminations (R&R)*. Over the past year, Linda and I have had the singular honor of serving as your District Governor. That experience has afforded us a unique opportunity to get to know many of you more personally and, by so doing, caused us to develop an even greater love, respect, and appreciation of and for you. We shall always remember and appreciate the many acts of kindness and words of encouragement extended to us during the year.

Although I don't know the exact hour, but about the time I began the writing of this missive, somewhere in Sydney, Australia, *District Governor Elect* Ann Young was going through a metamorphosis from which she emerged as *District Governor Ann Young*. And, right here in good old Tennessee, three other metamorphic transitions took place – Lions Lynn Wright and Mark Cook evolved into 1st and 2nd Vice District Governors respectively, while I, well I am transitioned from “who's who” to “who's he?” Very seriously, I want to again take this opportunity to congratulate Lions Ann, Lynn, and Mark for accepting the challenge of leadership in our district. District 12-I is most fortunate to have individuals with their abilities to “step up” and take on these positions of responsibility.



HOW DID WE DO?

Being an old school teacher, assessing stuff is a part of my DNA – I just can't help myself! Therefore, I would like to use a portion of this concluding issue of *R&R* to assess how we did in reaching the goals established for the 2009-2010 Lionistic year. Just for review, our goals were:

- To have positive growth in membership;
 - To develop and grow our leaders in 12-I;
 - To increase participation in White Cane;
 - To increase participation in the vision screening program; and,
 - To motivate our members to become involved in Lionism beyond the club level.
- Now, for the sake of time and space, I did not state these goals behaviorally (i.e., in an observable and measurable manner); however, most of that will be covered in the assessment:
- *To have positive growth in membership:* With the addition of 46 new members associated with chartering the Madison/Rivergate and the Old Hickory clubs (more about those two clubs later), the latest membership tally available indicates that we are up twenty (20) members over last year. I don't expect that to be the final number, however. A lot of clubs purge their rolls at the end of June. So, on this goal, I will give us a tentative “successful.”

- ***To develop and grow our leaders in 12-I:***
During the 2009-10 year we did a number of things to promote leadership development in the district:
 1. If one attended the District 12-I Fall Meeting, half the registration fee to the Lions Learning Retreat would be paid. 24 Lions in the district took advantage of that opportunity to participate in the 3-day seminar that is designed to enhance leadership skills;
 2. PDG's Patsy Milom and Thom Wilson were invited by Lions Club International to participate in a week-long Faculty Development Institute that was held in Salt Lake City, Utah. The purpose of the institute was to develop and expand the pool of skilled Lions for use in training at all levels of Lionism. There were only a total of thirty (30) participants chosen from the United States, Bermuda, the Bahamas AND Canada and District 12-I had two of the thirty!!!! What an honor!!
 3. 2VDG Lynn Wright attended the Senior Lions Leadership Institute at the Lions International Headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois. The week-long institute is targeted to Lions that have completed a successful term as club president, but have not yet attained the position of first vice district governor;
 4. Two Club Officer training sessions were held in June, 2009, for the purpose of providing newly elected officers with information needed to be more effective in performing their duties during the year.

While I can't provide empirical evidence to prove it, given the facts just cited, along with the countless incidents of individual mentoring that took place in our district last year, I would suggest that we did much to grow our leaders in the district last year and classify this goal as "accomplished."

- ***To increase participation in White Cane:***
In 2008-09, 19 clubs in the district (44%) contributed a total of \$60,267.00 to worthwhile agencies and programs serving blind, visually challenged and deaf persons. During the 09-10 year, 24 clubs (57%) contributed \$70,627.89 to White Cane projects. While I wish more clubs were involved in the White Cane program, we did show improvement last year and the trend is in the right direction. I'll take it!!
- ***To increase participation in the vision screening program:***
It looks as if we did, indeed, achieve our goal - but not by much!
In 2008-09 during the months of July-May, 20 clubs out of 43 (47%) participated in the eye screening program resulting in a total of 9,144 children being screened. In the same time period in 2009-10 - 21 clubs out of 42 (50%) screened a total of 9,178 children.

Now, here is the statistic that really impressed me: the referral rate went from 5.9% in 2008-09 to 4.6% in 2009-10! Why such a drop? Quite frankly, I don't know. I would hypothesize, however, that a significant reason for the drop is due to the folks learning to use the instrument more effectively.

While I am glad that we exhibited improvement, albeit slight, in the number of clubs participating in the screening program this year, I am saddened that only half of the clubs in our district are participating in this worthwhile endeavor. As we begin a new Lionistic year, if you are not involved in the eye screening program, resolve to start; if

you are already involved, resolve to do more. This is a program that can prevent life-long vision problems for our citizens. Will you not be a part of that effort!?!)

- ***To motivate our members to become involved in Lionism beyond the club level:*** I don't have comparative data from previous years to precisely assess our success on this goal. That means I must rely heavily upon anecdotal information to determine how we did. Judging from comments received from Lions from across the district, attendance at zone meetings, seminars and conventions was up this year. I know I personally attended several zone meetings that were well-attended; I know that 125 Lions registered for the district convention, and that was great; and, even with the state convention being held in our district, one would have to say that 55 registrants from 12-I was a good number. Also, 24 Lions attending the Lions Learning Retreat speaks of the involvement of our members beyond the club level.

So, the bottom line on this goal is this: although I don't have the numbers to prove it, I believe the anecdotal evidence will sustain my claim that District 12-I Lions were, in fact, more involved in Lionism beyond the club level during the 2009-10 year.

FINAL GOALS ANALYSIS: It is my considered opinion that we were successful in achieving the goals that were established for the 2009-10 year. I enthusiastically applaud you for that!! Even as we take a well-deserved moment to relish in our successes, the old teacher in me whispers, "You could have done better." The truth is we *could have* done a lot better! The good news is this: with the outstanding leadership we have in our district in 2010-11, and in the years to come, I am persuaded we *will!!!*



I want to take just a moment to make a few concluding remarks about the disaster relief efforts undertaken by the Lions following the floods that devastated our district in the month of May. So many of you were actively involved in working to relieve the suffering of countless numbers who were devastated by the floodwaters, I can't begin to thank you enough. Whether you cleaned out water-damaged houses, passed out WalMart gift cards, cleaned out debris-clogged drains, participated in the distribution of food, or performed any number of unknown acts of kindness, please know that you are greatly appreciated as Lions and, above all, as wonderful human beings!!

While I could mention any number of individuals from our district who truly exemplified the motto "We Serve" in their efforts following the flood, there are two that I want to mention here – PDG's Thom Wilson and Keith Lawrence! Lion Thom took on the task of coordinating the relief effort for our district. What that means is that he had the responsibility of interfacing with Second Harvest Food Bank and Districts 12-L and 12-S, and ordering the foodstuffs needed by the various food pantries.

When Lion Thom was called to the bedside of his seriously ill brother in Iowa, Lion Keith stepped in to Thom's shoes and didn't miss a beat. He coordinated the delivery and distribution of the foodstuffs to the various food pantries in the three districts and operation was flawless! On behalf of the Lions of 12-I, S, and L, and the 3,900 people who were fed by the food that was delivered, thank you, Lions Thom and Keith.

Also, I would be remiss if I failed to express appreciation to PID Allen Broughton and the staff at Ed Lindsey Industries for the Blind who assisted in the effort by allowing the foodstuffs to be stored at the facility awaiting delivery. Thank you!!



Charter applications for two new clubs were FedExed to Lions Clubs International on June 16, 2010. While the actual charters have not been received from Lions Clubs International, I would like for you to join with me in welcoming members of the *Madison/Rivergate Lions Club* and the *Old Hickory Lions Club*!! The charter application for the Madison/Rivergate Club was submitted with 20 members and the application for the Old Hickory Club listed 26 members. Officers for the new clubs are:
Madison/Rivergate: Kathleen Orr-Maddox, President; Tish Fielden, Secretary; David Lester, Treasurer; Bryson McCarley, Membership Chair. Old Hickory: Phillip Armstrong, President; Hallie Armstrong, Secretary; Sherri Price, Treasurer; Michael Barbuto, Membership Chair.

I want to express my congratulations to the members of these two new clubs and to all the Lions who worked tirelessly to make it happen. I also want to express appreciation to the Donelson Lions Club and the Hermitage Lions Club for sponsoring the Madison/Rivergate Club and the Old Hickory Lions Club respectively.



You are encouraged to attend two very important meeting that will be happening in the near future: The District Organizational meeting will occur at the State Lions Headquarters Building on July 17th beginning at 9:00 AM and the Multi-District Organizational Meeting on August 7th at the Tennessee School for the Blind. Decisions will be made at these meetings relative to the programming for the 2010-11 Lionistic year for both the state and district levels.



*Long, long be my heart with such memories fill'd!
Like the vase, in which roses have once been distill'd--
You may break, you may shatter the vase, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.*

Thomas Moore