

12. INCREASE YOUR PERFORMANCE AS A CLUB SECRETARY

Presenter: PCC Bert Nelson

Lion Bert Nelson has been a Lion for 19 years as a member of the New York Mills Lions Club. He has received numerous awards through Lions such as 100% Governor, 100% President, 100% Secretary (7 years), 20 member Key Award, 3 Honorable Mention Awards for International Newsletter/Bulletin Contest, 6 International President's Certificates of Appreciation, International Leadership Medal, International President's Medal, and he is a progressive Melvin Jones Fellow. Lion Bert has been a presenter at the 2006 and 2008 Forums. Lion Bert is happily married to Lion Pam and has three children.

“Move to Grow- Lions Leading Through Service” The Lions Clubs secretary is the Lion who can make all the difference to a Lions Club. The success of the club may depend on the dedicated effort that is put into the job by the secretary. You are that person, that leader. You can make a Lions Club grow.

I was a Club Secretary for seven years. When I first got the job, I had been a Lion for only six months. Really, I was nominated for the treasurer job, but my friend did not want the secretary's job. I said, I would switch with him. As I started the job, the previous secretary said “all you need to do is mail a couple reports to Lions Clubs International and a couple of other people.” What an easy job I thought.

18Talk about learning-on-the-job training! I learned about LCI, the District, projects and programs Lions are involved with, and most importantly, I was learning about my Lions Club.

The New York Mills Lions Club grew from a 60 members to over 100 members in seven years. We had good leadership, but by adding a personal touch in recognizing members for service through awards, we grew. The club had not taken advantage of what Lions International could provide for them through awards and information.

What is a secretary by definition from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary? **1:** one employed to handle correspondence and manage routine and detail work for a superior **2 a:** an officer of a business concern who may keep records of directors' and stockholders' meetings and of stock ownership and transfer and help supervise the company's legal interests **b:** an officer of an organization or society responsible for its records and correspondence.

So the role of the Lions Club Secretary goes far beyond the simplistic approach of taking a few notes (minutes) and completing a couple of forms. Please bear in mind that while many of you have been Secretaries or are currently filling the role, there are some that have not had the pleasure of being a Club secretary, so what I might say may be repetitious, however we can always learn something new.

As the secretary of your club, you will be greatly challenged: for the success of any Lions Club depends greatly, rendering quality service to its members and today

this is done more frequently by electronic means. The foundation for a Lions Club Secretary is outlined in the LCI Constitution and Bylaws. Your constitutional responsibilities include: i) Submitting regular monthly reports to LCI ii)

Submitting to your district governor's cabinet such reports as it may require, including regular membership and activities reports. iii) some clubs may refer to them as Visitation, Activity and Donations report, others Monthly Lions Activities report. iv) Be an active member of the District Governor's advisory committee of the zone in which your club is located. v) Having custody of and maintaining general records of the club, including records of the minutes of club and board meetings, attendance, committee appointments, elections and member information. vi) Arranging for issuance, in cooperation with the treasurer, dues statements and other financial obligations owed to the club and vii) Giving bond for the faithful discharge of duties if required by the board of directors.

With adequate preparation and skilled communications you can meet the challenge of rendering quality service to your club. With preparation, planning, communications and a sense of direction, the office of Lions Club Secretary can be one of the most fulfilling experiences.

Secretaries also work closely with the club President to set the meeting agendas and help manage the club's official business. Remember that all clubs are different so you will need to coordinate with your president and board of directors as to how your club wants to operate.

While the above outlines the general requirements, in reality, the details of the job requires communication internally within the club and externally through LCI, the Multiple District, District and others: organizing and recording data, and providing reports.

With adequate preparation, and skilled communications you will be able to perform quality service to your club. Through planning, communications and a sense of direction the office of Club Secretary can be one of the most fulfilling experiences a Lion can have.

Communication

The secretary is the point of contact for a myriad of correspondence and is responsible for directing this information to the club officers, board of directors and others. Think of it as a sorting office, what comes in goes out to others and hopefully it does not get "lost in the mail!!!" The information may include:

• • •
• •

Letters requesting donations or assistance from various groups, individuals, community associations or from the MD or District levels

Information from other clubs regarding Charter nights, special occasions or to advertise an upcoming fundraiser or community service project
Information and notices from LCI. These typically include dates of International convention, delegate forms, information on International programs (LCIF, Leadership training courses, etc.) Information will be received from other LCI groups (USA/Canada Leadership Forum) Lions Foundations and Societies, too many to mention.

Thank you notes or letters for donations received Letters of get well or sympathy. All of the above needs to be distributed in a timely manner and reported to the club members through meetings and the minutes. In addition the Secretary may be responsible for sending communications from the club to others. This could include: Dues In-voices, RSVP to invitations and Responding to organizations and charities requesting help or donation A good communicator requires good judgment. Some communication can be regarded as “junk mail.” The trick is to determine what is junk and what to keep as part of the club records. The maintenance of these communications and club actions require the secretary to be a good organizer.

19

Organization

Getting organized and having the tools to do the job is a key to success.

Quality service begins with good record keeping and maintaining the records of the club. Accurate minutes of the club and the Board of Directors meeting are an essential part of the secretary's duties. These minutes contain an accurate recording of what transpired. Minutes should include who and seconded motions, a concise description of the motion, and the action taken by the club or board of directors. When a question arises about a club action, some members may want to review past minutes, therefore having the minutes of recent past meetings handy may be useful. The Secretary should be familiar with club's constitution and by-laws, as well as the District, MD and LCI constitution and by-laws. Also, have a copy of Robert's Rules of Order on hand.

As an organizer, the secretary is also responsible for the accuracy of maintaining the following records: Membership and attendance records (Form M-33-G), Record of club members service and awards (Form M-33-SA) and Member Ledger (Form M-33-GBA)

We cannot over emphasize the importance of good records. Poorly kept records could result in members not receiving recognition for past service and efforts. Good record keeping and updates will assure that all members are appropriately recognized – an important aspect of retention. Club officers and members will often ask secretaries for forms, pamphlets, etc.

An organized secretary's survival kit might include: New member kits and Pins, New member applications, Family membership forms and member transfer forms, Certificates of Appreciation, Envelopes Stationary Postage stamps, District Directory, Dues Billing statement, Life and Melvin Jones Fellowship applications, Other application forms for awards from other Foundation, Associations, Societies, and Constitution and by-laws as mentioned above.

Good organization and record keeping will make your life so much easier in your role as a provider of information.

Provider of Information

The exchange of information is a key role of an effective Secretary can make a difference between success and failure of a club, hence my view that this position is the most important. The accuracy and timely reporting of information is what successful organizations need in order to disseminate facts on which to base their decisions. As with many positions within Lions, others are reliant on what you provide e.g. lack of data can affect membership and retention, decisions on a club's community service and fund raising programs. What information are we talking about?

- *Minutes of Club and Board of Directors meetings* Accurate minutes of these meetings are an essential part of any secretary's duties. These minutes provide a history of what is happening with the club on an ongoing basis and are often referred to when verifying information. I know of clubs that have used their minutes to help in the preparation of the history of the club for special anniversaries. Minutes should include all motions (concise description) including who proposed, seconded and the action taken by the club or board of directors. Having a copy of Roberts Rules of Order can be useful if you are unfamiliar with the correct process of handling motions and amendments. Circulate the minutes in a timely manner to all club members whether it be electronically or other methods. Retention of information can be lost if there are delays in the preparation of the minutes. I know a lot of secretaries will still use a tape recorder at meetings to make sure they have not missed an important point. Others will use a laptop computer to record notes.
- *Membership and Attendance records (M-33-G)* Keeping this record current will help identify those members who are not participating on a regular basis and the membership/retention chairpersons can follow upon. This record is also the basis for the 100% attendance award.
- *Member Record of Club Service and Award (M-33-SA)* Keeping these individual records of each member current will help others when contacting them for activities. (Name,

address, phone number, e-mail address, etc). These records are used to record service and awards given/received to each member.

- *Monthly Membership Report (C-23-A) and Monthly Activities Report* We will be spending more time on these reports in a few minutes regarding completion and filing, however, the pur-

pose of these reports are as follows:

- √ Lions Club International, Multiple District and District use numbers to calculate dues. Lack of reporting family memberships can result in paying higher dues.

- √ The importance of tracking membership cannot be over emphasized as it used for many different purposes. International develops programs to help clubs recruit and retain members. Zones, Districts and Multiple Districts are actively monitoring growth numbers and patterns to ensure resources are directed into the right areas.

- √ Credits a sponsor for bringing in a new member. Without accurate reporting, a sponsor may not receive a Key award.

- √ Activity reports provide your club and LCI with information on how the club is doing. Again, we will look at this form in more detail. LCI uses this information from over 45,000 clubs in 202 countries to show the world what we can do worldwide.

20

While all these reports can be prepared in a paper format and we have to be cognizant that there are many who do it that way, the day of electronic reporting has grown and for the majority it is a way of life.

Electronic Reporting

This is the meat of the presentation and in this section we will be focusing on the LCI web site—in particular the membership and Activity reporting. The use of electronic provides consistency in filing reports and everything you need is there at your fingertips. Almost every thing you do as a secretary can be done electronically. For those of you that are very familiar, please bear with me. Your input and knowledge will be helpful to others in this room that may not be as familiar with the subject matter. Here we go!!

Log on to www.lionsclub.org

> > > >

Click on “language” In the blue panel on the left-hand side, click “Submit Membership and Activity Report” Enter your Membership number Enter your Password

If you do not have a password, then go to the line underneath “Password” and click on “Need a Password.” Enter your membership number, submit and your password will be e-mailed to you. In order for this to happen you must have had your details

submitted to International via your PU101 (Club Officers Reporting Form). Incoming secretaries are sent their password automatically if the PU101 has been filed on time.

Other options on this page include “Training Area.” To active this section: Click, acknowledge the “I Understand agreement,” enter country, Training for Club, District and/or MD Officers. The other option on this page is Membership Reports. If you click on this, you get General data and no entry is allowed.

In the main body of this screen, there is other information that gets added that is pertinent at that time. As I write this presentation there is a reference to PU101, Passwords by E-mail and a section on how to use the WMMR site, plus 4 more links.

The welcome screen appears. Top left-hand side shows your name and that you are currently logged in. The main text outlines what you are allowed to access. For this session we will be dealing with the “Membership” and “Club” tabs. If we click on the “Membership” button on the yellow ribbon at the top of the page, a new page will open titled “Membership Activity Page.” The following options are listed:

> Select Reporting Month > ADD a Member > UPDATE a Member’s information > REVIEW a Member’s information > TRANSFER a Member > DROP a Member > REINSTATE a Member > To report NO

MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY for this month, click here

Each member who is added, transferred, reinstated, dropped or whose name/address is changed is a separate transaction. To perform a transaction, click on the appropriate button, fill the form out, remembering that certain fields **must** be completed. Click on the “submit” button and you will receive an acknowledgement “Thank you for your Submission.” Use the “Return to Transaction” button to go back to your report. *Please submit each transaction before starting a new one.*

When all this is done, you may be asking, “Where is my report?”

Click “Club” button on the yellow ribbon at the top of the page. Under report, look for “Monthly Membership Report” click, print and enter the month/year of the reported you need to print. Click “Run Report.” The completed MMR for the month in question will appear. You can print or save this file in Adobe format. To close the Adobe screen, click the red X in the top-right corner. Tip: You can create a folder to save your MMR reports so they can be easily accessed and e-mailed elsewhere.

Remember the filing dates to get your reports in on time at International. To correct errors that cannot be fixed on-line, notify Lions Club International by e-mail to EnglishLanguage@lionsclub.org. Other reports that can be accessed under the “Club” heading are: Club Roster with Address, Club Roster without Address, Club Attendance Sheet, Club Directory, Club Monthly Reporting History, Monthly Membership Report, Lions Clubs Officer Reporting Form (PU101), Family Unit

Report, Membership Date Download, Monthly/Yearly Activity Report, Forms and New Mem- ber Form.

Some final words of wisdom: Always keep a copy of everything you do, Keep your Zone chair and District Governor informed as appropriate, When sending correspondence to International, always include your Club number, Keep outgoing correspon- dence to the point, Be diplomatic, Keep good notes, Do not be the judge of what club members should see or hear