



The Lions' Roar

January 2007 -- news for the Lions of MD5M

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

90th Anniversary Calls Us Both to Cherish What Works And Change What Doesn't

*by Jimmy M. Ross
President, Lions Clubs International*

When a loved one reaches their 90th birthday, we usually can proudly say he or she has lived a rich, full life. This year we celebrate the 90th anniversary of something near and dear to all of us - Lions Clubs International, founded in 1917 in Chicago by businessman Melvin Jones. Yes, we've had a rich, full history, marked by service unmatched by any other service club. But the best is yet to come.

I witness firsthand in my travels around the world the stunning energy and vitality of Lions. In small towns and big cities, we are out in the community aiding youths and the elderly, providing vision and hearing screenings, collecting and distributing eyeglasses, offering food, water and blankets after floods and tornadoes, and teaching job skills to those with disabilities. We do serve. And we will serve for generations to come.

But we will be tested and we are facing challenges. We can't stand pat and do what we always do because that's how we've always done it. We need creativity, inspiration and ingenuity, not mere imitation or repetition. What worked decades ago or even a decade ago may not work today. Even if it works today, it may not work tomorrow. What we need is a willingness to be

flexible, to embrace a paradigm shift if necessary. We have to be willing to do is nothing less than a club renewal, a reinvention of our club if that's what's needed.

If it isn't broke, don't fix it, of course. If your club is flourishing, then be satisfied and stay the course. But if you think you or your club can serve your community better, then go ahead and raise your hand at the next club meeting and get the process of change started. The great advantage Lions have always possessed is our ability to read the signs of the times and take steps in new directions. This happens on every level of the association. You may be the one who comes up with the next great idea to invigorate your club, district or even the association as a whole. Good ideas carry their own momentum. At the least be willing to engage in open and constructive discussion at your club. The only really bad idea is the notion that change is not feasible.

I'm not suggesting a radical transformation of Lionism. We will always be Knights of the Blind. But it's the little things that count such as how clubs recruit members, hold meetings, publicize accomplishments and engage members in service. Clubs need to regularly assess their how they do business and be ready to drop less successful practices and adopt new ones after careful study and planning.

It's important to know that you are not alone in your quest for club betterment. International Headquarters, including its Membership, Leadership and International Activities and Program Planning divisions, has an array of effective, efficient programs to jumpstart your renewal and help guide it. These divisions are in touch with the challenges and obstacles faced by clubs. Our new Baby Boomer recruitment methods and Family Lions Club program are two great examples of innovative initiatives to energize clubs and districts. We're not standing still. We're moving forward. That's what it will take to keep our momentum as Lions and to ensure that we remain

vital and active.

Please don't wait for other Lions to take the initiative. The possibility of change and growth rests with individual Lions. Please read the LION and check the Web site regularly to stay on top of what's available. Chances are quite good that your specific needs can be filled by these initiatives.

We've come a long way since 1917, never resting on our laurels or settling for second-best. Lions have always put service first and that's reflected in the depth and range of our programs today. I am certain that Melvin Jones would be astounded at how Lions clubs have grown and prospered. Thanks to all the Lions who came before us, we are positioned for continued success. Let's blow out the candles, grab the piece with the extra whipped cream and then return to our lives of service.

Lions International Website receives new look www.lionsclubs.org

Oak Brook, IL – The Lions Clubs International Web site, www.lionsclubs.org, has a new look to its homepage. Links on the homepage allow users to quickly find the applicable page for information on association programs, activities and resources. Items are organized under the headings of: News & Information; Upcoming Events; Communications; Members Matter; Your Foundation – LCIF; and Shaping the Future. Adding to the user-friendliness of the new layout, the navigation on the left-hand side of each page has been streamlined and addresses both members and visitors to the Lions site. The Members navigation now includes reorganized resource sections for both club and district use. These two new sections, [Club Resource Center](#) and [District Resource Center](#), are an addition to the existing Resources section and are meant to aid Lions in finding those items frequently accessed by both club and district leaders and members.

Further into the site, visitors will find the [Lions News Network \(LNN\)](#). Launched last year, LNN is home to LQ (Lions quarterly video magazine), videos and public service announcements (PSAs), which can be viewed or ordered on LNN. LNN is also home to the Newsroom and Lions Newswire, the Lions' monthly e-newsletter.

Advancing technologically, the association now offers [Podcasts](#) (downloadable video files for computers and MP3 players) of LQ through LNN and directly from iTunes. Free of charge, viewers can subscribe through iTunes to have future editions of LQ automatically downloaded to their computer as episodes become available. RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feeds on LQ, the Newsroom, Lions Newswire, President's Message and *The Lion Magazine* will allow users with the appropriate software to automatically receive this syndicated information.

Remember to use the "Search" function located on the upper left-hand corner of each Web page for ease in locating information on the site. Users should type the keyword or name of the item they are looking for to help find the appropriate page. They can also use the "Site Map" on the lower left-hand corner of each Web page for help.

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with 1.3 million members in 45,000 clubs in 200 countries and geographical areas around the world. Since 1917, Lions clubs have aided the blind and visually impaired and made a strong commitment to community service and serving youth throughout the world.

Campaign SightFirst II News

For many around the world, January is a time for New Year's resolutions. The New Year brings with it the energy to refocus our efforts and concentrate on the most important aspects of our lives—our health, our family or our finances. For Lions, however, New Year's resolutions can be much more powerful. This January, Lions stand at the midway point between a goal declared and a goal achieved. The sight of 37 million people

depends on Lions' resolve to keep our promise, our promise to SightFirst.

When will Lions achieve our goals for SightFirst? When will your club act on behalf of the millions we can save from preventable blindness? Only Lions can answer these questions, but through leadership and dedication we can respond as International President Jimmy Ross has suggested: "Campaign SightFirst II is our first priority. Let's do it – sooner rather than later, and more rather than less."

Lions around the world have raised nearly US\$60 million toward the US\$150 million minimum goal of Campaign SightFirst II. Over the previous 18 months, Lions in each of the seven constitutional areas have responded by raising funds for CSFII in many different ways. Nearly 1,400 clubs have agreed to continue this success by becoming Model Clubs, and 44 individuals have stepped forward with Lead Gifts (US\$100,000 or more). These efforts have been tremendous, but much work lies ahead. Lions must honor their promise to SightFirst and with 18 months remaining in Campaign SightFirst II, there is no better time to act than now.



MD5M Online Discussion Board

There's a place online where you can contact Lions from around the Multiple District on our Discussion Board. All you have to do to access it is go to www.lionsmd5m.org/ and then double click on the Message Board icon. I heard something that other day that took me by surprise. There are 24,000 Lions in 5M, yet there are only 115 subscribers. It doesn't cost a thing to subscribe. Log on today and then subscribe to the 5M discussion board. Who knows what you'll find out? Let's all get connected.

5M's Marching Band is selected for Chicago Convention by PCC Keith Johnson

Winona Cotter is a small Catholic high school located in Winona, MN. The band, comprised of approximately 125 members (nearly 40% of the student body), is one of the cornerstones of the school.

If you or your club would like to support the band going to Chicago, please make your donations out to: Winona Cotter Marching Band and then send to MD5M Exec Sec. Bob Harms. 72530 CSAH 27 Dassel, MN 55325-2804.

Lions Club donation helps blind student

By Joel Stottrup, *Princeton Union Eagle* (Reprinted with permission)

A young woman who has been blind from birth has been able to find her way past some of the obstacles that blind people face, courtesy of a donation by the Princeton Lions.

The Lions got part of the money from a local

donation but most of the nearly \$8,000 that is helping the woman came from Lions Club fundraisers.

Princeton Lions and guests at the Monday evening got some idea of the impact of the assistance.

The blind woman, Kellie Hartmann of Minneapolis, who graduated from Princeton High School in 1998, was the guest speaker. The focus of her talk was the device that the Lions Club had made possible, a combination lap top computer, Palm Pilot, and global positioning unit (GPS).

The device is about as wide and long as a loaf of bread but much thinner. It's brand name is BrailleNote.

The name is a take-off on the word "braille" which is the raised-dot system that the blind use to read. Hartmann's mother Leslie Hennen, and Hartmann's stepfather Jim Hennen, both of Princeton, were with Hartmann at the banquet at Princeton Golf Club.

The BrailleNote is especially important for Hartmann because she is a student who will resume her studying at the University of Minnesota in January after some time off.

She is majoring in Spanish, French and linguistics, or language interpretation.

The BrailleNote enables Hartmann to scan pages of written material, such as books, and then puts the words into braille for her to read.

Hartmann spoke by phone last week about the BrailleNote and how it has changed her life.

"Up until a few years ago, the blind had to get someone to read audiotapes or turn the material into braille," she began.

Translating a book, for example, would take as much as two years, she said. When she waited for a service to put her course work into Braille in the past, she said, she often didn't get the material until two weeks before the final exam. Cramming for the exams wasn't good for helping retain the material for long, she said.

Now, she said, in year-end banquet she can go to a public library, check out printed material, scan it and read it in braille. She can do the same for her texts.

The BrailleNote also has a wireless receiving capability so she can search library catalogs using the wireless systems at libraries.

"That's what's really special," she said, referring to all of the BrailleNote's assistance in accessing information.

She also uses it as a word processor because the device has sets of braille dots that she punches to write.

Hartmann did have an older model of a similar device before getting this new model, which cost the Lions Club about \$7,700 at a 10-percent discount. But the old model couldn't handle large files of material, so it was limited and no longer sufficient, she explained.

The device can also be programmed to translate the Spanish and French material she is studying into braille.

The BrailleNote also has an event planner, with a contacts/address list that is synchronized with an e-mail program.

Now she reads newspapers from Argentina and gets Spanish broadcasts on line. Special software has the computer speaking to her.

The GPS part Hartmann talked as excitedly about what the BrailleNote does for her in getting around as she did about its importance in her education.

She is aiming for becoming a translator in the medical field. She would translate the medical terms spoken in English into the language of French or Spanish patients. Then, in turn, she would translate the response or questions from the patients into English.

But just getting between home and job and between home and any place has become so much easier with the BrailleNote's attached GPS unit, she said. It is accurate within 11 feet, her stepfather said.

Learning how to get around, especially in a big city like Minneapolis or St. Paul, is difficult for a blind person, she said.

There is also degree of difficulty among the blind, she says.

Part of her education beyond Princeton has been to learn what the blind call "cane travel." It means being able to judge distances and what obstacles

lie in their path by using a cane.

Hartmann's white cane, the kind universally seen being used by the blind, stood against a wall at Princeton Golf Club as she sat at the banquet's head table on Monday.

Learning cane travel meant learning to use a cane to "find curbs, stairs and sidewalks. . ." or obstacles like construction materials or manhole openings, in order to avoid falling, she said.

The goal is to navigate independently but some people have better spatial perception and sense of direction than others, whether blind or sighted, she said.

"I'm one of the other people," Hartmann confided. "I have no earthly idea [about where things should be]. It [learning cane travel] was hard for me. For some blind people it is second nature."

Hartmann mentioned a blind friend who was going to Chicago and that getting around for that person through cane travel "was a breeze."

A sighted person has an advantage over the blind, even if they are not great in spatial perception and orientations, she said. She explained how a sighted person can spot someone and ask for directions and then watch the person point the direction to go. Also, the sighted person can notice signs and landmarks that mean something, she added.

The BrailleNote's GPS function also allows the blind to key in an address and the BrailleNote will speak the directions in how to get there.

She can get into a cab or someone's vehicle and with the device tell the driver, to go right or left for such a distance, and so on, until reaching her destination.

Hartmann received her new BrailleNote from the Princeton Lions Club in November and said this last week: "It's unbelievable . . . Phenomenal. I never expected to get the upgraded version."

She explained that the state purchased the older model she had but that her case with the state for getting more assistance is closed.

She recalled going to seminars and places and hearing about the new version but thought, "No way," could she have obtained it because of its cost.

Getting the device

Lions Club member Tom Blomberg explained last week how the club came to buy the BrailleNote for Hartmann.

He explained how the club has had a connection with Jim Henchen through Henchen's business called Paintin' Place Signs.

Henchen painted signs for Lions' functions, either free or with a discount. Each year the Lions fishing contest sign would have to get an updated date, for example.

Henchen had already talked to Lions Club member Jon George about what the club could do to help Hartmann before Henchen went to Blomberg. George had mentioned the seeing-eye dog program supported by Lions clubs.

But Hartmann did not want the responsibilities of having a guide dog, said Henchen.

Henchen next asked Blomberg if there was a way the Princeton Lions Club could buy the new updated BrailleNote at a discount and then Henchen could reimburse the club for it.

Henchen recalled Blomberg answering that helping the blind is "what we do."

Blomberg knew of a \$2,000 donation that a an area woman, not with the Lions Club, had made to the club. The woman wanted the donation to be used for buying a magnified reader type device for helping senior citizens, for example, who have macular degeneration, to read printed material. But there were no recipients in mind for that and Blomberg asked the woman if she minded the \$2,000 being used to help buy the BrailleNote. She gave the OK and Blomberg approached club members, including the club's committee that deals with projects for the blind.

The response to Blomberg was not only would the club use the donated \$2,000 but it would kick in the remaining approximately \$5,700.

Jim and Leslie Henchen said between last week and early this week how happy they are that Hartmann has the BrailleNote.

Both talked about the struggles that the blind and handicapped have in general.

Leslie mentioned how Hartmann one day was opening what she thought was a can of chili at

Hartmann's apartment. Hartmann found out that it was a can of raspberry pie filling instead.

Hartmann said last week that even with equipment such as the BrailleNote, "it still doesn't equalize the playing field [between the blind and the sighted]."

"There is still a tremendous amount of education needed about the blind," Hartmann said.

She explained that there is still a stigma many have about blind people being able to carry out a job. Some of the feelings, she said, are "genuine prejudice," while some employers think about the extra cost of buying any equipment to help the blind do the job. There can be some limitations in the job, as well, such as when memos are handwritten, Hartmann pointed out.

A large percentage of the unemployed blind are highly educated, she added.

But many of the blind who are employed are working in fields that provide services to the blind and haven't found jobs outside those areas, she said.

A blind person has a better chance of getting employed if they are "very outgoing, very motivated and very creative," and only some of them are, she added.

Gratifying for Lions

Blomberg said that having Hartmann tell the Lions how appreciative she is of the BrailleNote gift, and how much it is helping her, was something unusual for the club.

Usually the club sends off money to an organization and doesn't get to see the results, Blomberg said.

This is one of the few cases where it does see the impact, he explained.

"It's very gratifying for myself and the fellow Lions to see the results," he said. "To see someone totally blind going forward, instead of sitting in a dark room and not doing anything, I really admire her for that."

Newsletter Contest winner

Congratulations to Lion Eileen Todahl of the Winger Lions Club. Lion Eileen correctly identified the exclamation point used incorrectly on page 1 of the December newsletter. Lion Eileen's name was randomly drawn from the correct guesses to win this month's prize.

For winning the December newsletter contest, Lion Eileen receives a stuffed roaring lion. Congratulations and thank you for reading The Lions' Roar MD5M Newsletter.

To qualify for the random drawing of the correct guesses, you must email me back with the location of the exclamation point that is used incorrectly.

Look for it in this issue and get your entry in today.

Email your entry to: atbailey@hcctel.net

Important Dates to remember

March 14 - 16, 2007 District Governor Elect Training

March 17, 2007 - Council of Governors meeting

April 12 - 15, 2007 MD5M Regional Leadership Institute - Mahanomen

May 18 - 20, 2007 - MD5M Convention - Willmar, Minnesota

July 2 - 6, 2007 - International Convention - Chicago, Illinois

The Last Word

If your club, district or other Lions project has something going on you feel should be in the MD5M Newsletter, send all the info to atbailey@hcctel.net and I'll get it in the newsletter for Lions across the Multiple District to read about.