



SMILE WE SERVE

DISTRICT GOVERNOR'S NEWSLETTER

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INTERNATIONAL EDITION

It has happened. I can confirm that SMILE has gone INTERNATIONAL.



The International President Dr Wing Kun Tam - Tam for short - has my postcard, as do a number of other International Directors, District Governors and other Lions from all over the world. So I achieved my object and put a SMILE ON THEIR FACES.

You can see that for yourselves with the picture taken with the International President in Seattle at the International Convention.

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Some of you may already know that his message is "I believe"

Why "I believe" and not "we believe"? The answer is simple, everything starts with an individual and therefore it is "I believe" before "We believe"

As a Hong Kong Business-man, he was moved into action following the earthquakes in China and helped with humanitarian aid. This led to gaining the trust of the Chinese Government, which allowed Lions Clubs to be formed. Lions are the only International organisation in the country.

Since then over 5 million cataract operations have been performed.

Continuing the theme of I believe, there is a difference between thinking and believing. Believing has three other key elements:

Courage, Commitment, Action.

- Courage to have new ideas taking into account risks and failures.
- Commitment to our own goals - wouldn't happen on its own.
- Action ideas are worth nothing unless action is taken - Talking isn't enough.

There are three special goals this year:

- Strengthening and retaining our membership by taking care of fellow members as if they were family, enabling us to expand service.
- Expanding our service to new heights, propelled by a special campaign to plant one million trees.
- And nurturing our future by involving more young people and Leos in all that we do.

MY CLUB, MY FAMILY

There are only two Presidents in the organisation, the International President and the Club President.

The International President believes the strength of our organisation lies with our clubs.

We have been successful in forming new clubs and bringing in new members, our problem however has been retention. Our long term successful growth is dependent upon keeping our members involved, instilling pride and treating them like Family. We must look after new members and insure that they are fully involved.

Promote clubs as an extended family. Encourage family membership.

We also need to promote ourselves in a positive way.

We are not just a social club. We are a service club.

Please circulate to all Club Members

PLANTING A MILLION TREES

On the environment, Tam wanted the District Governors to make a pledge to plant over one million trees in this coming year. He actually got a commitment to plant over 4.7 millions trees. I might add though there was a District Governor from Northern Sri Lanka in my group at training school who had already been working with the Government to plant over 50,000 trees this year.

This District's contribution is a modest amount. I would like to see if we can achieve over 1,000 trees. One tree per member is my goal. In conjunction with the District Environmental Officer Bob Dutton we are aiming to have a District-wide competition with a plaque for the club that plants the most trees.

The number of trees planted can be shown on the Membership returns that the Club Secretary completes each month. Bob, however, would also like photos of the tree planting.

How can this be achieved?

Clubs can seek out partners who are already aiming to plant trees, but may not have the manpower to complete the task. You could ask youth groups to help.

Bob is looking at District-wide contacts who may help.

You can say why should we plant trees?

I would say it is our earth, our environment and our responsibility.

I have already started as you can see here, although this does not count.

The trees planted in Seattle will be put in a park as a permanent reminder of the time that the International Convention came to the City.

OTHER INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

For those who were around at the Birmingham International Convention, you will remember the International President, KJ Habanananda. He was the District Governor Elect Seminar Chairman and is still an excellent speaker.

There were talks from Bill Gates Senior about the working of the partnership between Lions and the Gates Foundation with the aim of eradicating measles.



Keynote Speaker

The Keynote speaker was Condoleeza Rice, the former Secretary Of State.

Among other things, she said:

- The voice of democracy is better than the silence of fear.
- People want to have control of their futures.
- Doesn't matter where you came from it is where you are going that is important.

The most important thing which she said was that Democracy cannot flourish without volunteers; it delivers compassion which the State cannot give.



The International Parade was quite a spectacle with 206 countries and taking over four hours from start to finish. We did wave the flag for the UK.

I did enjoy training school, especially as a number of females were coming up to me wherever we met and giving me a hug!! These were fellow District Governors-Elect from the training school.

The last day of the Convention, and the very last thing that happens, is the induction of the District Governors for 2011-12. It is an emotional moment - made even more so by being presented with the District Governor's chain of office. That was something I was not expecting.



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MESSAGE FROM BERYL CHISHOLM

The charity I have chosen for this year's project is Christians Against Poverty – CAP.

This is a national charity which offers people in debt, hope and a solution.

CAP offers top quality debt management completely free of charge. Although CAP has a Christian ethos, its service is available to everyone.

Debt is an issue that affects many people in society today. Our circumstances can suddenly change and we can no longer pay our bills. This may be because of redundancy, an accident, bereavement, separation, divorce, depression and mental illness.

I have been supporting a family for about 15 months and they have just become debt free. This has involved all sorts of things such as getting furniture, school clothing, extra food parcels and taking Mum to hospital when she was expecting her baby.

It's this support for clients that I would like the Lions to get involved with. Warwick Lions have financially supported several CAP clients with furniture, a fridge freezer and a bike. They also provided transport for a group of young mums to have a trip on the Severn Valley Railway. The bike enabled a man to get to job interviews and a disabled lady uses her freezer to prepare meals when she is well enough to do so and then be able to use them when she is feeling less well. All these items and the transport were much appreciated.

I have already spoken to the CAP Centre Managers in our District with the idea of them contacting me when they have a client with a need. I would then contact the local Lions Club and ask them if they would help.

It might be that your Lions Club runs a Christmas party for children or a trip to the seaside or to a pantomime. Children whose parents are in debt miss out on many of the treats that our children take for granted, so perhaps you could include these children in your treats.

Another way you might help is to collect tinned food to be given to the CAP centre manager for them to pass on to a client. It's not unusual on a first visit to a client, to find that there is very little food in the house.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- Autumn Forum Sunday 9th October 2011 Holiday Inn Birmingham Airport
- District Convention Friday to Sunday 23rd to 25th March 2012 Holiday Inn Corby
- MD Convention 4th to 6th May 2012 Birmingham

CAPTION COMPETITION

At a recent Warwick Lions Club meeting we were at the local Go Karting track owned by the Club President, Alan Lettis.



Although I was one of the oldest competitors I still managed to hold my own, although most were half my age.

I am interested in whether you can come up with any printable captions.

I have a few of my own:

- Going round in circles.
- Straight round the bend.
- Up the Downs.
- Around the square.

I am certain that yours will be better.

AND FINALLY

Straight after the International Convention Beryl and I flew to Calgary in Canada to watch the Calgary Stampede and travel though the Rocky Mountains finishing in Vancouver. It was a very enjoyable adventure.

We flew home to Birmingham straight into work as District Governor, as the International students were coming in from all over the world for the International Youth Camp which this year is in Somerset. I did think the Lions were there to greet me!!!



I thought we needed a cuddly ending. This is one of nine black bears that we encountered.

I BELIEVE they can put a SMILE ON MY FACE, but you have to keep your distance.

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