

## **District A4 Club Renewal Day**

The intended purpose of the Club Renewal Day was to allow those Clubs in attendance an opportunity to present some of the challenges they are facing in a informal manner that would stimulate discussion. Much of the discussion centered on the steps that all Lions Clubs should be taking to keeping the members we have, keeping relevant to our communities and attracting potential members into Lionism.

One constant theme was that Lionism can be a life changing experience. The shared experiences that we encounter as Lions are the relationships that we have to our communities. Lions have to educate themselves. They have to be able to speak both comfortably and proudly about what they do and what it really means to them to be a Lion. In the group discussion, it was brought up that all clubs conduct a 'Club Assessment' from time to time to determine how they are performing. Are we providing what needs to be provided to our community? Clubs, and their members need to evaluate themselves and create measurable goals.

Once we have new members we need to properly train them. Through a member orientation clubs can educate both the new Lions and remind some of the long serving Lions of their roles in the clubs, their importance to the community and the meaning of "We Serve".

One of the greatest challenges that we face as Lions is our inability to exploit our successes. We do a poor job of public and media relations. When planning an event, have a media chair to write the news releases and talk the event up with the local paper and radio!

Why are Lions leaving the Clubs? We cannot loose the Lions we already have. We need to know why members are loosing interest and leaving. Keep the flow of communication open with all members, and for those who do leave for any reason, complete exit interviews. Focus the attention of the club on the three-person membership committee and pursue opportunities for growth, but do not loose sight that we must seek out quality Lions, not simply growth for the sake of growth.

The MERL Team

## **District A4 Club Renewal Day**

This article is the second in a series of articles to appear in the Governors Newsletter in regard to the November 2006 Club Renewal Day.

Dedicated Lions of District A4 rolled up their sleeves last November to begin the process of meeting the challenges they face in their clubs. On November 26th, the District hosted a Club Renewal Day to review and discuss the issues faced by clubs in retaining and leading the members they now have, as well as the challenges of inviting new members to join their clubs.

The stated goals and objectives of the Club Renewal Day were to give clubs a forum to openly discuss these issues and give the District A4 Leadership Team an opportunity to listen, learn and advise clubs on how their members can successfully meet these ongoing challenges. These challenges should be considered as opportunities ... opportunities to make a difference in your Lions club.

Convincingly, the Club Renewal Day achieved several positive results. Although this was the first Club Renewal Day, the Leadership Team gained a tremendous insight into the numerous issues and challenges clubs are facing on a daily basis. Along with discussing the challenges faced by clubs in District A4, future Club Renewal Days events will have formats modified and tailored to better suit the audience and location, while maintaining an informal atmosphere.

In all, there was participation from one-third of the clubs in the District. There was a mix of Club Presidents, Membership Chairs and Board Members. For a first time event, there was a good turnout, with some new faces not usually seen at District activities.

Here are just some of the insights that were gained during the day:

1. **Clubs need more information.** Although information is available, the resources are often not known by all members at the club level. When information does filter down to the clubs, it is not consistent. Club presidents have a responsibility to ensure that all Lions are kept completely informed. Communication is the key.
2. **Lions orientation for ALL Lions.** We need to do more to educate ourselves about Lionism. It is difficult to ask a new Lion to join your club if you are not able to comfortably answer their questions.
3. **Importance of Conflict Resolution.** As Lions, we need to have open dialogue and resolve conflict as it surfaces. It is not possible to resolve conflict by simply sweeping it under the carpet. By resolving conflict and finding solutions, we can become a more effective clubs and thus support our communities more effectively.
4. **Public Relations.** Long-standing clubs have built excellent relationships within their communities. Becoming a Lion can be a “life changing experience” that can be an influence for your entire life.
5. **Public Awareness.** We need to “talk up” our enjoyable and rewarding experiences in Lionism. We are our own best-kept secret – we need to promote our successes. Every Lion contributes to our PR image.
6. **Member recruitment.** As proud Lions, we need to simply “Just Ask” potential members in our communities. We need to really on recruitment and make Lions appealing and relevant to the community.
7. **Lions Pride.** Can we ask ourselves, “What does it mean to be a Lion?” and give a thorough answer to a member of our local community who is not a member? Don’t tell you are committed Lion ... show me!!!
8. **Club relevance.** Clubs must remain relevant to the communities to which they serve. Do we know what the community needs are? This can be achieved by completing a Lions Community Needs Assessment, and following-up on the suggestions from the community.
9. **Club planning.** Clubs need to do yearly planning and organizational sessions. Plan a Club retreat. Decide on your club goals and objectives for the coming year. Some of the questions we need to ask, “What are we going to do?” and “When are we going to do it?”
10. **New Lions.** We should accept prospective Lions on the basis of what they can give, even if it is just one hour per month. We need to remind both Lions and those in the community that service and giving of our time can result in instant gratification.
11. **What are your Lions doing?** Meaningful Lions projects will definitely assist in both recruitment and retention of Lions.
12. **Former Lions.** We need to talk to former Lions and find out if they would like to return to Lionism. Maybe we could give them a 'Returning Lion' pin, in addition to their retroactive service.
13. **Show appreciation for what Lions are doing.** Always offer praise for a job well done.
14. **Solicit support from your local business community.** Talk to local businesses about sponsorships from everything from gift certificates to raffle items. Invite them to participate in a club event or attend a club meeting, to learn more about Lionism.
15. **Women in Lions.** We need to diversify our membership. One of International President Lion Jimmy Ross' goals is to have 50,000 new women Lions worldwide this year. Lets set the A4 share of this goal at 100 new women Lions.
16. **Accept change.** Although any form of change can take time, we must be willing to embrace it.
17. **Train and retain.** As Lions it is essential that we train in order to retain. New member induction ceremonies and new member orientation is of the utmost importance. New member induction and orientation is the responsibility of the new member’s sponsor, the Club Membership Committee and all Lions.

18. **Three-Person Membership Committee.** Clubs need to be mindful of building and maintaining an energetic Three-Person Membership Committee. Their work cannot be overemphasized and all clubs should have one in place. Because of the importance of women in Lions, it is recommended that each Membership Committee have at least one female member. Each member of the club Membership Committee should focus on one task: Membership - to deal with membership recruitment, Leadership - to provide orientation and leadership sessions, and Retention - to conduct retention initiatives and exit interviews.
19. **Leadership roles.** All club members should be encouraged to take on leadership roles. Leadership development should be made available to all members. Leadership and leadership development is THE most important part of our organization. Everything follows from leadership.
20. **Exit interviews.** We must examine why members are leaving. How much seniority do they have? We must all ask, "Why did they leave?" Remember to properly conduct Exit Interviews for all departing Lions.
21. **District Conventions.** A question was asked, "Why don't we have a District A4 Fall Convention that would allow the District Governor to set out his or her goals and objectives for the Lions year which lies ahead?"
22. Another question was asked. "Should Club Membership Chairs also be part of the Zone Advisory?"
23. **Resources available from Lions Clubs International.** All types of resources available from LCI. The LCI website has a tremendous amount of information available to ALL Lions. Visit is regularly at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).
24. **Club visitations.** Clubs need to make more visits. Clubs always did this in the past. We also need to have fun in what we do. Fellowship and fun. Clubs need to rediscover that fun is an important part of everything that we do.

For future Club Renewal Days:

1. Have some protocol, but keep it at a minimum. This was attempted during this session.
2. We need to learn how to promote ourselves more effectively. Training on public recognition for Lions activities. We need to be more press friendly.
3. Continued training = stronger Lions Clubs.

Thank you for your participation and involvement during the first Club Renewal Day. We hope that you were able to take something back to your club and implement it. With your participation we were able to hear about the many challenges that clubs face. As a result, this was an opportunity to allow us to focus our efforts on assisting clubs resolve those challenges more effectively in the future.

The MERL Team