

This is the script Mary Malloy and I worked from for the January 14, 2010 Lions meeting:

Indeed, who would ever think about asking for a program about committees?

Actually, it is best called a program on “committees, co-chairs, and VEEPS”

AND, in the words of Irving Berlin, we think, “Who could ask for anything more?”

In many ways, this is a follow-up to our last regular meeting, when club member and Past District Governor Bill Clark presented a superb program meant to better orient Lions to our organizations history, purposes and structure. Throughout his presentation, all things pointed toward the Lion Motto, “WE SERVE”.

While the purpose of that program is toward helping clubs to get and retain members, the depth of the presentation moves right to the heart of what we are proposing for Winona Sunset. We think all Lions should feel motivated and pleased with what they do.

Service clubs have great aims and most do interesting projects for the community. They are great for social networking, good friends and other contacts. For some, just being a member enhances their resume. And, if routinely held to a narrow view, a time and place to meet and eat, all service clubs can look alike.

So why are we so enthusiastic about Lions? What makes Lions special? It is all individual choices. As for Lions, Lions move me to want to act. It is the largest service organization in the world. Bill reminded us of that in his presentation. Frankly, that is nice to know and be reminded of, but for me, it is all in what Lions do. Look around, see all this for yourselves and feel pride in being a Lion.

Each of you is a Knight for the Blind and Deaf. That was Helen Keller's challenge. Efforts with Diabetes are getting increasing attention of Lions. Look at Camp Winnebago, Lion names are all over local community parks, there is

emergency relief and more, much more. Each dollar we raise or hour we provide in direct service goes directly to help others in some way. As Bill showed, the list goes on and on.

Well, that has to be said, but what does all that have to do with committees? In a nutshell, you have to choose how much you want to be a part of the action. You have to take a step outside of our club meeting room in order to really appreciate what you, as a member of Winona Lions, have accomplished.

FLIP CHART

WHEN ORGANIZATIONS WANT SOMETHING DONE SOMEONE USUALLY SAYS "LET'S FORM A COMMITTEE"

MANY TIMES, THE PERSON WITH AN IDEA IS APPOINTED TO BE THE DOER

To accomplish means planning, evaluating and changing things that maybe can be done better. We've all known of groups that throw fund raisers together at the last minute, so to speak, and some of them, due to who they are and their reason, do very well. Some are comfortable operating in that way. Many think, "Nuts with too much of that organizing thing." That is a choice.

Let's look at some of these organizing things. They are called all kinds of names, but main ones are "Task Forces", "Committees", "Action Groups", and "Teams". We have all heard of and maybe been a part of some of these "things". Task forces and committees can be very influential and useful. To some organizations, governmental units and politicians, they are a superb way to get something "out of one's hair" and still be able to say, "Look at what we are doing about that".

FLIP CHART

BY DEFINITION AND NEED, COMMITTEES HAVE BROAD FUNCTIONS. WEBSTERS SAYS "...TO CONSIDER, INVESTIGATE, AND REPORT OR ACT ON SOME MATTER OR ON MATTERS OF A CERTAIN KIND."

Just as an aside, do you remember hearing the definition of committees that was made popular decades ago? It states, "A committee is a group of the unfit, chosen by the unwilling, to do the unnecessary." As with anything, all the negative connotations can be true. But, let's give this organizational thing a different look.

During Bill's presentation, he had a list of Lion Committees. I didn't get a chance to count them or even read all the names, but afterwards I was provided a list of twenty committees, not counting the Board, for the Winona Sunset Lions. That's one committee for every two members! This could be good. Things seem to work quite well for Winona Sunset Lions. We could leave all things as they are, don't worry about such things.

Something to think about: every member who does something with the club should feel pleased with what they do, have understanding and support from other members, and have an unending motivation to do more because of what Lions can and do accomplish.

Further, everything we do as a club, a goal for each project, is to educate the public through posters, hand-outs and example as to what Lions are doing. One measure of a good club is the number of people who inquire for more information about Lions and ask about how they might become a member.

Frankly, we think the committee operations can be more focused and enjoyable for members with very few changes. Think about committees formed to consider broader views of some area. Think about each specific fund raising and other project as being an action group with teams formed for specific functions.

FLIP CHART

WE DO NEED SOME COMMITTEES. BUT, WHAT ABOUT A DIFFERENT WAY OF LOOKING AT THINGS. WHY NOT MAKE SOME OF THESE COMMITTEES ACTION GROUPS.

AN ACTION GROUP HAS A CLEARLY DEFINED GOAL WITH AN END IN SIGHT.

IN REALITY, EVERY FUND RAISING AND OTHER ONE DAY PROJECT IS AN ACTION GROUP.

ALL ACTION GROUPS HAVE A PUBLIC FACE. THEY SHOW OTHERS WHAT LIONS DO. THEY MAKE THE PUBLIC WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT LIONS, POSSIBLY BECOME A PART

A couple examples:

We have a Membership Committee. Why not call it the Committee on Membership and Retention. Their job would be to stay current with the direction Lions International and Districts want clubs to go with membership and retention; to know what is happening in our club to fulfill these expectations; and to create ways that could make things better in the Winona Sunset Lions Club.

The committee may want to form action groups on things like how new members are being included in the club or how to attract young family members. The committee guides the club through what they discover to be needed.

We've just completed a very successful Chili Supper. There is a Chili Supper Committee listed with a starting and ending date. With this so recent, we will use this project as an example of how we think the club should consider committee organization.

Recently the Board approved two new ideas (1) have each Vice President responsible to oversee certain areas of club work and (2) have Co-Chairs for committees. Simply put, both of these moves are to make these positions better aware of the club and specific projects prior to becoming the President or Chair of some project.

In the District, there are Vice District Governors with specific assignments and training in preparation for becoming District Governor.

On the club level, with three Vice Presidents, only the first Vice President has an expectation, ignored by some clubs, and that is to arrange programs for each club meeting. The other two Vice Presidents are usually in name only. Winona Sunset changed that.

Now, the 1st Vice President is expected to arrange and introduce programs for each meeting; the 2nd Vice President is expected to oversee fund raising projects; and the 3rd Vice President is expected to oversee all other projects, like the Peace Poster Contest, perhaps the club's involvement in Camp Winnebago's work day, or things like the highway clean up, which has been proposed.

The 2nd and 3rd Vice Presidents are not expected to Chair the projects, each project has its own chair. They do serve as a fast link to the club in support of the project. In these positions, they are mostly learning about the many things the club does and getting to know members better, in anticipation of becoming President.

The same is true of the Co-Chair idea. The Chair is the expert who knows the project, assures that teams are named for its various functions, and educates the Co-Chairs, preparing them, so that in the future they can become Chair.

Through this format, going back to the Chili Supper, the 2nd Vice President would be seen as overseeing all fund raising events for the year in office. The club shows this as a Committee for all Fund Raising Events with the 2nd VEEP as Chair. The 2nd VEEP consults and includes whoever they want to assure a broad view and direction for fund raising in the club.

Each fund raising or other project is listed as an Action Group with a Chair and Co-Chairs. For the Chili Supper, Bhaskar and Paul were the Chairs for this project. They had members with specific functions which they had to assure were accomplished. The Chili Supper is an excellent example of how each project should work.

Master Chef Bill Clark was team leader for the kitchen crew. He had timelines to meet and had to assure all was done and ready for Dennis's afternoon team to take over until the doors were open.

All projects should be divided into functions with specific expectations and time lines. The Action Group Chair for the project assures Team Leaders are named for each function. Team Leaders assure they have a team.

Rigidity is the bane of organizations. None of the proposal was viewed as making policy. It is more a proposed way of doing things.

Another side note. Any project, like the Chile Supper takes member time. Getting meetings together is not always easy. BUT did you know that there is now a club that was formed and operates on the internet. When Bill Clark, Joyce and I toured the Lions Eye Bank and Hearing Center, there were some very busy doctors wearing Lion pins. They are very enthusiastic and active Lions. We live in an age with all kinds of options.

At any rate, parts of the above proposal have been tried in clubs and have worked very well. Of course, and as it should be, changes in officers can always impact direction. For these ideas to be successful, they have to be “by the will and support of the club”. Having clear direction and room to create, makes being an officer, chair or worker involved with a project fun.

Think of the Chairs as being teachers of the Co-Chairs. 2010-11 will be a good year. New member Chris Strub already volunteered to Co-Chair the Chili Supper. He

needs to be allowed time to learn the ropes before becoming chair. For something like the Chili Supper maybe there should be two co-chairs. Chris standing forward is good news for the club.

Members allowed time to be trained into Chairmanships and Offices, serve better and definitely have more fun.

Winona Sunset, in a few months, will be inducting a new administration. The club needs officer candidates and persons willing to serve as chairs and co-chairs. To have all these positions filled as soon as possible is a step forward. Winona Lions is an active club and time moves fast.