



Focus

A Publication of the Northwest Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center
"Changing Lives. One Pair of Eyeglasses at a Time"

DECEMBER 2014

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Founder

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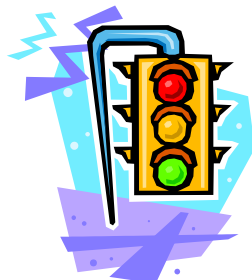
Holiday Greetings from President Don

Our Lions year is half over and it has been pretty eventful so far.

Personal issues with some of our staff resulted in some changes. Secretary Hope and I ended up in positions somewhat, shall we say, unanticipated. Pat Bucknell stepped up and took on the duties of Operations Manager. These folks are getting it done, and **thank you** to all of our LERC staff and volunteers for your help and support.

Another significant loss is District D Director Russ Fineman. He was a valued Director and longtime member of the LERC team. As a person and team member he will be missed. District D Governor Frank Karas has appointed PZC Carl Montgomery to replace Russ as District D Director. PZC Carl is a 44-year Lion who recently transferred from Des Moines to Wenatchee Central. From all of us on the LERC team — **welcome** — we look forward to getting to know you and working with you. *(See article on p. 3)*

There are several new faces in essential positions of the NW Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center. As we newcomers get more comfortable and confident in our jobs, you may hear some new ideas and see some changes. In my opinion, some of these changes are because LERC is "coming of age" or maturing. As times change, demands on LERC, our staff and our volunteers change. I am sure we will all work together to achieve any changes needed to ensure a long successful future for the Northwest Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center.



Each month, right here on the front page, we'll display a traffic-light color to signify our current inventory of glasses received for processing.

- Red** = we need more glasses right now
- Yellow** = our supply is dwindling
- Green** = our storage is full

Hopefully it will easily signal our inventory needs so you can help us maintain a steady supply.

Inventory



Keeping Up

Mission Feedback — Malawi

*Excerpts from a report by Larry Otten, O.D.
Action International Ministries mission, October 16-28, 2014*

Malawi is located in the southeastern portion of Africa. It is famous for the well-known phrase "Dr. Livingstone, I presume". Malawi is the poorest country in Africa and possibly the world. Life expectancy is less than 50 years and 50% of the population is less than the age of 15. The village people do not celebrate birthdays and many are uncertain of their age. Aside from the paved two-lane highway connecting a few of the major cities and towns, the remainder of the country is served by dirt roads. There are very few cars. One can travel by foot, bicycle, and oxcart. I have always wished to travel back in time. One can still do this by visiting Malawian villages, where life has changed very little for hundreds of years.

On October 18th, after traveling 11,200 air miles, we arrive in Lilongwe, Malawi. We now embark on the final 3-hour leg of our trip in a mini-bus. For the next 8 days we will visit 13 or 14 villages.



On Sunday, as lunch is being finished, I set up the first eye clinic in the same village church where we earlier attended a service. I see more than 100 people eagerly waiting their turn to see me. They sit patiently watching every move I make. I saw the blindness that comes from the disease Trachoma, young children's blinding scarred corneas have taken its toll. Corneal transplant surgery is forever unlikely. The concept of eyeglasses is entirely new to these people. Their expression of amazement lights up as they are able to read. They give me a glance of thanks.

After several days of clinics, we visit the blind school. Prior to examination of the kids, I could see deviating eyes, compensatory head tilts, ocular nystagmus, scarred corneas, and albinism. Albinism creates glare and reduced vision, and sunglasses were very beneficial. One girl had a substantially advanced eye disease called keratoconus, which results in a distorted near-sighted state. I have a friend, Clare, who donated her high-powered eyeglasses for this trip. I put these glasses on this girl. She looks outside and says something like "I can see some things". I took the glasses away from her, only for her to firmly take them back. Vision was far from perfect, but gave her something. Sometimes that is all we can do. This clinic was truly a humbling experience.



On Thursday we are off for a two-day safari in Lengwe National Park, where we see large monkeys, impalas, warthogs, water buffalo, elephants, hippos, and a multitude of birds. We're assigned tents for the overnight. I crawl into the bed, making sure I will know where my light is, and let the mosquito net cover me. I fall asleep...then I hear grunts and snores and heavy hooves just outside of my tent. I later learn that a hippo herd came through my part of the camp. We finish our safari the next day with a river cruise, coming very close to a herd of elephants. They were lazily grazing and not concerned with us at all.



We now have only two more days of clinic and village outreach. We travel 90 minutes on the dirt roads into the bush. It's estimated that 700 people are there to welcome us. Our last entire day here is October 26. As I prepare for my final clinic, and probably my 800th patient, I scan over my depleted inventory. With creativity, I can make this work.

Our adventure now concludes. Our driver arrives early Monday morning for our return to Lilongwe's airport. Our travel time from the mission house to home was a sleep-deprived 41 hours.

Welcome District D Director Carl Montgomery

Director Carl submitted his "Lions bio":

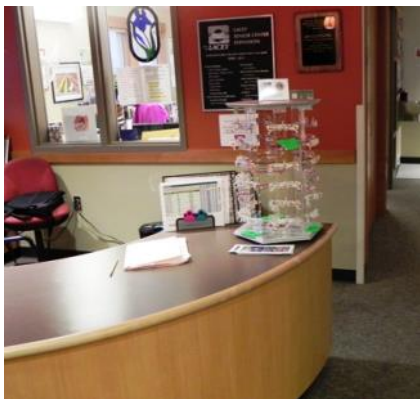
I was inducted into the White Center Lions on July 1, 1970. At the end of December, the elected Secretary/Treasurer left town and the President asked me to serve the January to June 1971 time period, which I did. I was elected to this position for the year of July 1971 to June 1972. I was next elected President for the 1972-73 year. In the first 15 years I was in Lions, I served as President 3 times, Secretary/Treasurer 5 times, and all other elected positions in the club at least once.

In 2003 I was awarded a Melvin Jones Fellowship by the White Center Lions. In May 2007, the White Center Lions Club turned in their charter and I transferred to the Des Moines Lions Club. When Zone Chairperson Donna McMillen visited the club, I announced I would like to run for Zone Chairperson. I attended the Northwest Lions training session in Wenatchee in February 2008. I served as Zone Chairperson from July 2008 to June 2009. I received a 100% Zone Chair pin and placed second in the contest for top Zone Chairperson for zones with nine or more clubs.

By 2011 I had sponsored 2 individuals into Lions and received a Key pin. For the period of July 2008 to June 2014 I served on the District Governor's cabinet six times; once as Zone Chairperson, four times as CARE chairperson and once as Diabetes chairperson. I have served as club secretary or treasurer too many times to list. I have also been certified as a Guiding Lion. In June of 2014, District B Governor Steve Brooks presented me with his Certificate of Achievement and a Certificate of Appreciation from Lions International President Barry Palmer.

My wife and I moved to Wenatchee this past summer, and I transferred to the Wenatchee Central Lions Club in District D. As of July 2015, I will have been a Lions member for 45 years.

New Reading Glasses Project in District C



Last month a display stand was set up at the Lacey Senior Center that allows people to pick out a pair of free reading glasses. This is currently a trial program; if it's successful, it may be expanded to other areas.

Just one more way the NWLERC is helping folks with their vision needs!

Send me your news for the FOCUS

Thanks to everyone who makes my job easier by sending me information, articles, and photos for the monthly *Focus*.

Please send submissions to Jacq.Lion@comcast.net or call me with your ideas at 360.791.8789.

Editor Jacqueline



Russ Fineman — We'll Miss Him

Russ Fineman, District D Director for 6 years, passed away on November 10th. He was a long-time and ardent supporter of the NWLERC. Way back in 2004, when the NWLERC was first started as a Lions District 19C project, Russ (a member of the Gig Harbor Lions Club) signed on as the Zone C-1 Director. He moved to Moses Lake in August 2005, and recruited Jeannie Phillips to take his place on the LERC Board.

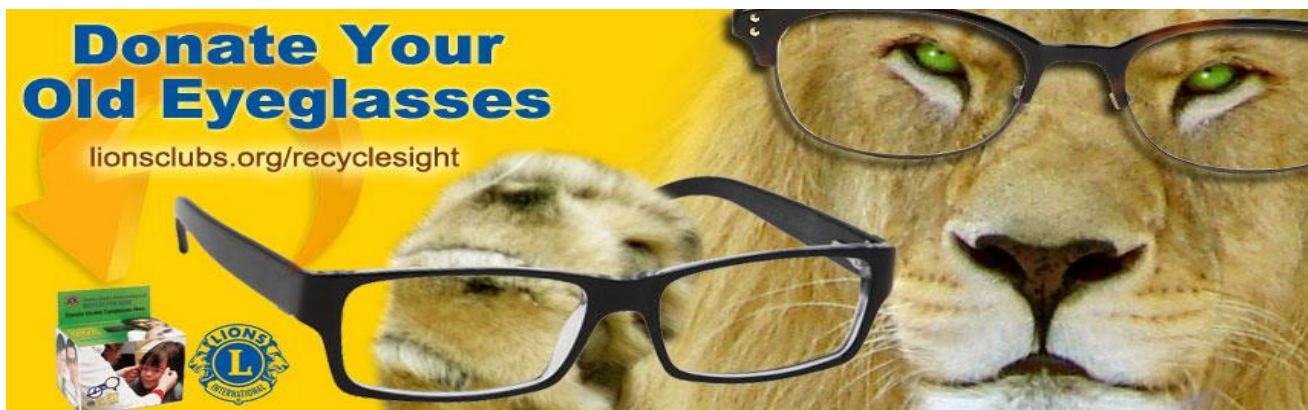
Just because Russ was no longer in the area didn't mean he had severed his LERC ties. He continued to promote the program on the east side of the state as a member of the Moses Lake Lions Club. He was instrumental in setting up the first "eyeglass collection hub" (later named a satellite) in Moses Lake in September 2006. He had already been making presentations to the local Lions Clubs and had a collection worksite available by then.

In 2008, when the NWLERC was officially recognized as a Multiple District 19 project, Russ was at the front of the line to become a District Director. He was easy to work with on the Board of Directors; he was a self-starter and didn't need prodding from the West Side to make District D a great advocate for NWLERC.

A few years ago, we heard the news that Walmart had decided to centralize their donated glasses distribution to, of all places, Arizona, bypassing our WA state collection efforts entirely. Russ would have none of that. He went to the local Walmart and struck a deal with the manager to make sure all their glasses were packed up for NWLERC, with only a few left in the Walmart collection bin so as not to arouse suspicion!

Russ always read the *Focus* from front to back, and made sure it was shared with his local Lions Clubs. He also kept the editor on her toes, lightheartedly teasing about typos or other slip-ups, and passed along any suggestions or comments he received from other Lions.

He was also especially passionate about providing eyeglasses to children in need. Russ not only believed, but he lived, the Lions Clubs International motto: "We Serve".



NWLERC's Trailer at Ocean Shores

Thanks to all of you who brought boxes and bags of used eyeglasses to the MD-19 convention in October.

The final total received was 19,700!

That really helped replenish our supply.



Upcoming Events



Wednesday, Dec. 10 NWLERC Exec./Staff Meeting, 10:00 am

Holiday Closures: Dec. 25th and Jan. 1st **SEASON'S GREETINGS!!**

5th Week Closures: Mon-Wed, Dec. 29-31



Executive Committee & Staff

Don Schmidt
President

ZC Pat Bucknell
VP-Operations

vacant
VP-Outreach

Sue Madsen
VP-Admin. (Stats)

vacant
VP-Satellite Operations

Hope Ramsdale
Recording Secretary

Lyell Clark
Treasurer
Procurement

vacant
Communications / Website

PZC Bob Pinson
DG John Kirry
Senior Advisors

Pat Baron
Immediate Past President

Cliff Brandsma
Volunteer Coordinator

ZC Pat Bucknell
Facilities Manager

Jean Cook
Berta Fender
Mission Coordinators

Jack Ford
Site Manager Training
Quality Assurance / Training

PZC Bill Miller
Homeless Outreach Programs
VOICE Program
Youth Volunteer Coordinator

Mission shipments, November 2014:

Pierce County Homeless Connect - 107 pairs

Ecuador - 400 pairs for Hazel Dell Lions Club

We're still experiencing "technical difficulties" with the monthly Key Statistics. We'll get them up to date as soon as we can.

<i>Key Statistics, Sept. 30, 2014</i>	THIS MONTH	THIS YEAR	PRIOR YEARS	SINCE 2004
Raw Eyeglasses Received	9,636	40,524	1,618,930	1,659,454
Eyeglasses to Missions	792	4,817	183,585	188,402
Volunteer Hours	547	1,606	48,546	50,152
Missions Supported	1	5	217	222
Mission-Ready Inventory	9,650			

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www.lionsnwlerc.org
admin@NorthwestLERC.comcastbiz.net



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