

North Carolina Lions Incorporated  
Board of Directors Meeting

Holiday Inn Wilmington  
Apollo

November 13, 2016  
9:05 AM

**Call to Order:**

**Charles Holleman, President**

The meeting of the NC Lions, Inc was called to order November 13, 2016 at 9:05 AM at the Holiday Inn Wilmington, Wilmington, NC by President Charles Holleman.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Sandy Scarlett, Second Vice President**

Second Vice President Sandy Scarlett led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to our nation's flag.

**Opening Remarks**

**Charles Holleman, President**

President Charles Holleman thanked everyone for attending the Board of Directors Meeting.

**Introductions**

**Charles Holleman, President**

President Charles Holleman recognized Past International Director Harvey Whitley and Endorsed ID Candidate Gwen White and neither had comments. He asked Immediate Past President Paul Bledsoe to introduce Hannah Earnhardt, the new Development Director for NCLI. Hannah gave a brief overview of some of the things that she is working on currently and will be starting in the future.

**Reading of Minutes**

**Gary Steele, Secretary**

Approval of minutes posted online from the August 14, 2016 Board of Directors meeting held at the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley.

**First Vice President George Suggs made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2016 Board of Directors Meeting as published online. The motion was seconded by First Vice District Governor Curtis Erickson. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Roll Call:**

**Gary Steele, Secretary**

All members were present except:

1<sup>st</sup> VDG George Culp  
PDG Robert Carroll  
2<sup>nd</sup> VDG Susan Dailey  
1<sup>st</sup> VDG Karl Ernst  
1<sup>st</sup> VDG Don Eggert

**Appointment of Parliamentarian:**

**Charles Holleman, President**

President Charles Holleman appointed Past District Governor Keith Peedin to serve as Parliamentarian.

**State Council Chairperson's Report**

**State Council Chair Tim Williams**

See Attachment "A"

**Executive Director's Report**

**Steve Walker, Executive Director**

Executive Director Steve reminded everyone about the next meeting in February and explained that this is a change of date from the original meeting date due to a conflict with the hotel. There has been an ad hoc committee formed to look at the matching funds program. The committee consisted of President Charles Holleman, Treasurer Skippy Jackson, PDG Mary Boehm, and PID Harvey Whitley. A presentation was given at the Executive Committee meeting and we will be soliciting feedback from across the state to be looked at by the Executive Committee at the December meeting at Camp Dogwood. Most of the work at the waterfront has been completed and the plaque for the Frank Brooks Memorial Waterfront will probably be installed in the spring. Executive Director Steve reminded everyone that this would be his last official Board Meeting as the Executive Director. He thanked everyone for allowing him to work in this position and for all the help that he's received over the years.

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

**1. Communications**

None

2. **Treasurer's Report** **Skippy Jackson, Treasurer**

See Attachment "B"

**A motion was made by Past District Governor Wayne Faber to accept the Treasurer's report and Audit report as presented. Motion was seconded by District Governor Erwin Siegelwax. Motion passed unanimously.**

3. **Recommendations from Executive Committee**

None

4. **Report from Ad-Hoc Committee**

Past President Herb Justice gave a report on the Strategic Planning Committee.

See Attachment "C"

5. **Committee Reports:**

**Nominating Committee**

**Carlton Metts, Chairperson**

See Attachment "D"

**COMMITTEES OPERATING UNDER SECOND VICE PRESIDENT SANDY  
SCARLETT**

a. **Clinical Eye Research**

**Marti Henry, Chairperson**

See Attachment "E"

b. **Properties**

**Robert Carroll, Chairperson**

See Attachment "F"

c. **Public Information & Education**

**George Culp, Chairperson**

See Attachment "G"

d. **Sight and Hearing**

**Mary Boehm, Chairperson**

See Attachment "H"



**1<sup>st</sup> Vice District Governor Curtis Erickson made a motion to accept the committee reports under the First Vice President George Suggs. District Governor Butch Conrad seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Other Business:**

President Charles Holleman asked First Vice President George Suggs to cover an upcoming event. Vice President George informed everyone that in July we will be opening a time capsule at Camp Dogwood that is under one of the flag poles. We will make an event out of this. We are considering putting another time capsule back under the pole when we dig up the old one. It was buried 20 years ago. People with suggestions about what to put in the new capsule, please contact Vice President George. It will also be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Camp Dogwood.

**Adjournment:**

The meeting adjourned at 10:36 AM.

Next Board Meeting will be February 5, 2016, at the North Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh, NC.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gary Steele, Secretary



**Holiday Inn – Wilmington**  
5032 Market St., Wilmington, NC – 910-392-1101  
**Friday-Sunday, November 11<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup>, 2016**



### Report of the Council Chairperson:

Greetings from the 2016-2017 MD-31 Council of Governors. Lionism is alive and well in North Carolina!

On Saturday, October 8, Hurricane Matthew slammed eastern North Carolina dropping more than fifteen inches of rain and causing rivers and creeks in the eastern and central counties to flood. Three districts applied for and received emergency assistance grants from LCIF. Many of our clubs in areas that were not directly affected have donated funds to the relief efforts. The cleanup is ongoing, but, as they were on October 9, the Lions are still there.

There was some concern that the Hurricane, coming when it did, would harm the VIP Fishing Tournament, but those responsible for the event pulled everything together, and, like always, it was a great and highly successful endeavor.

According to the October District Health Assessment...

- Year-to-date, across the state, we holding steady at 303 clubs, having gained one club and lost one club. But it is my understanding that we are about to gain another club, and all of our District Governors are committed to adding new clubs in their districts.
- Current membership is: 6,319. Although this is down forty-seven over the last twelve months, it is up fourteen from the July total, so it looks like the Governors have righted the ship, and we are moving in the right direction.
- While we continue our expansion efforts, we can't forget to strive to add new members to our existing clubs. Although, statewide, the average number of members per club is twenty-one, 57% of our clubs have less than twenty members. We need to work to add new members to those clubs, and that may mean changing the way we think about members and offering new prospective members options, like associate memberships, that may appeal more to them than traditional memberships. After all, attending meetings isn't nearly as important as having another set of hands on a service project.

So, we do face challenges, but we're meeting them, and together we WILL make this another banner year for the Lions of North Carolina!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Williams', written in a cursive style.

Lion Tim Williams  
Council Chairperson

**North Carolina Lions Inc.**

Attachment  
B

**Holiday Inn**

**Market Street**

**Wilmington, N. C.**

**Friday-Sunday November 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**Treasurer Report**

**An independent audit of the financial records of North Carolina Lions, Inc. for the 2015-2016 year has been conducted. The Audit Committee met with the accountants on October 11, 2016.**

**No discrepancies were found in the corporation's records as all assets, expenses and cash flows were found to be in accordance with accepted accounting principles.**

**Please note that the books have now been closed for the Fiscal Year 2015-2016, and, with the Net Assets reflecting current values, the Statement now balances. This is indicated by the matching amounts of \$5,943,208.83 under TOTAL ASSETS and TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS.**

**Under PERMANENTLY RESSTRICED ASSETS, investments show a total of \$1,898,303. This is an increase of \$ 497,794 compared to last year same time.**

**If you look at the Income Statement Summary on page 5, you will notice that the expenses exceed our revenue by \$ 48,080. This is normal for this time of year and is actually better than the year to date budgeted amount of\$243,041. It is also \$ 141,095 better than the same time last year.**

**Looking at the relationships between the Unrestricted Revenue and the Unrestricted Expenses, the total under Unrestricted Revenue shows that the actual amount is \$160,957 greater than the budgeted amount. Under**

**Unrestricted Expenses the budgeted amount exceeds the actual spending by \$ 76,270. So, to this point of the year we have taken in more funds and we have spent less than we budgeted.**

**The one thing that will jump out as you go this Financial Statement is on Page 12, Line Item 4610, Pest Control. As most of you probably already know we have had a Bed Bug problem at Camp Dogwood. This was an unforeseen situation that has cost us extra money. To be exact, \$26,500 over budget.**

**The last item I would like to bring to your attention is found on page 11. This being the total for Office Expenses. \$ 9,944 under Budget. I feel we need to give Steve and all his staff a big thank you for this.**

**Respectively Submitted,**

**Skippy Jackson, Treasurer**

**NCLI**

**North Carolina Lions, Inc. Strategic Planning Committee Report to the  
NC Lions Inc. Board at Wilmington on November 13, 2016**

The Strategic Planning Committee has not met since our last report, but we did have a Conference Call on November 1 so as to update the members on what has occurred since August.

We received 8 resumes' for the Development Director and after reviewing them, the Search Committee had a phone conversion with 5 of the 8 followed by a face to face interview with 2 of them. Hannah Earnhardt was offered the job as Development Director and she accepted. Hannah Earnhardt currently lives in Durham but will soon be moving to Charlotte. She is married and has a 1 and ½ year old son. She has been on board since October 24. She is currently in training and as part of that training, she is interviewing a number of Lions to learn what their experience as a Lion has been and what they think her job should involve. I had an interview with Hannah and was very impressed with her enthusiasm and how she was approaching the job.

With respect to the Executive Director's job. It was advertised and we received 18 resumes'. These are currently being reviewed by the Search Committee and interviews with be scheduled in the near future. We still plan to have this individual on Board shortly after the first of the year.

Our future plans are to have a meeting of the Committee sometime after the first of the year in January, where we will start considering the Committees that come under the North Carolina Lions, Inc. and their make up as well as considering if they are still needed. Some of our recommendations regarding these may require changes to the By-Laws. In addition to this we will be looking at how we can make training by the NC Lions, Inc. more meaningful and effective for our Committees and others. We also hope to have the new Executive Director on Board so that he/she can participate.

Respectfully submitted by:

PDG Herbert A. Justice

**Nominations Report 11.12.15**  
**Submitted by PDG Carlton Metts**  
**Statewide Nominations Chair**  
**Revised 11.13.16**

Attachment D
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The list that I have been notified running for office at the Mid-Winter Conventions are listed below:

**District L:**

DG Curtis Erickson, Mill River Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run
1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Alan Lake, Black Mountain Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run
2d VDG Leon Pryor, Hendersonville Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run

**District I:**

DG Elect George Culp, Concord Lions Club	Elected at Mid-Winter Conv.
1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Elect Carolyn Sprinkle	Elected at Mid-Winter Conv.
2nd VDG Elect Lion Jimmie Myers	Elected at Mid-Winter Conv.

**District O:**

DG Karl Ernst, Siler City Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run
1 <sup>st</sup> Susie Dailey	Endorsement and Intent to Run
2d VDG ----	----

**District N:**

DG Don Eggert, Shallotte Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run
1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Rahim Shomari, Jacksonville New River Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run
2 <sup>nd</sup> VDG David Cox, Lumberton Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run

**District S:**

DG Steve McLarin, Raleigh Host Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run
1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Nathan Medlin, Warrenton Lions Club	Endorsement and Intent to Run
2 <sup>nd</sup> VDG Mark Bateman, Lake Gaston	Endorsement and Intent to Run

**NCLI Officers:**

President NCLI George Suggs	Endorsement and Intent to Run
1 <sup>st</sup> VP NCLI Sandy Scarlett	Endorsement and Intent to Run
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP NCLI Chris Headley	Endorsement and Intent to Run
Treasurer Skippy Jackson	Endorsement and Intent to Run

**NCLI Board of Directors:**

**District L:**

DG	DG Curtis Erickson, Mill River Lions Club	Automatic
1 year	1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Alan Lake, Black Mountain Lions Club	Elected (2018)
2 year	2 <sup>nd</sup> VDG Leon Pryor, Hendersonville	Intent to Run

**District I:**

DG	DG George Culp, Concord Lions Club	Automatic
1 year	1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Carolyn Sprinkle, Sparta Lions Club	Elected (2018)
2 year	Vacant	

**District O:**

DG	DG Karl Ernst, Siler City Lions Club	Automatic
1 year	1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Susie Dailey	Elected (2018)
2 year	Vacant	

**District N:**

DG	DG Don Eggert, Shallotte Lions Club	Automatic
1 year	1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Rahim Shomari, Jacksonville New River Lions Club	Elected (2018)
2 year	2 <sup>nd</sup> VDG David Cox, Lumberton Lions Club	Intent to Run
	(Still open to the floor at the Mid-Winter Convention)	

**District S:**

DG	DG Steve McLarin, Raleigh Host Lions Club	Automatic
1 year	PDG Wayne Faber, Apex Lions Club	Elected (2018)
2 year	1 <sup>st</sup> VDG Nathan Medlin, Warrenton Lions Club	Intent to Run

**2017-2018 Council Chair Candidates are:** Interviews are scheduled December 10, 2016 at Camp Dogwood.

PDG Johnny Berry, 31L  
DG Irwin Siegelwax, 31-N  
PDG Marti Henry Hill, 31-L  
PDG Gary Steele, 31-I  
DG Max Bumgardner

**2107-2018 State Secretary Treasurer Candidate,**

PDG Rhett White, 31-S was approved by the 2018 Council to serve 2017-2018,  
Which will be his final year.

PDG Carlton Metts, State Nominating Chair  
carltonmetts@embarqmail.com

**CLINICAL EYE RESEARCH UPDATE**

NC Lions and Lions International have agreed to provide funds for the purchase of two state of the art pieces of equipment for the UNC Dry Eye Center. The equipment will be used to purchase a Lipiflow Thermal Pulsation System, that will heat the inside and outside of the eyelid to remove any blockages causing dryness.

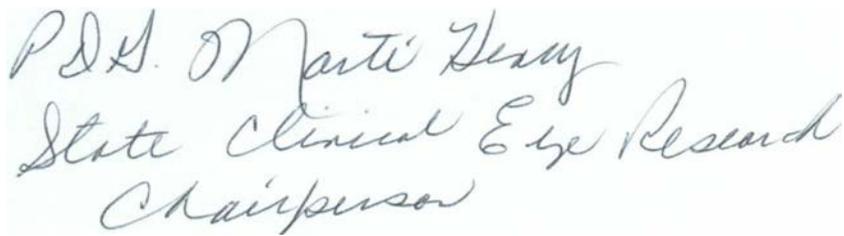
The Lipiview Ocular Surface Interferometer takes and stores pictures of the eyes lipid layers and uses an intense Pulsed Light that is a procedure that closes blood vessels and has been shown to reduce inflammation in the eyelid oil glands that cause the most common type of dry eye called evaporative dry eye.

The receipts of payment for the above two pieces of equipment have been received from UNC Eye.

The Lipiflow Thermal Pulsation System cost \$58,780.00

The Lipiview Ocular Surface Interferometer cost \$44,900.00

**Total: \$103,680**



P.D. Marti Hermy  
State Clinical Eye Research  
Chairperson

Lion Gary

I will not be at the meeting this week end because I am trying to get my shop ready to pour the concrete Monday or Tuesday while I have some free help. I plan on meeting with Lion Steve Walker and Lion Jamie Chandler in the near future to-look over the camp to see what we need to plan on this spring when we have volunteer week on April 9 through 12, 2017. Lion Gary if you will give me my report I thank you.

Robert H. Carroll  
PDG.

Lion George Culp, Chair November 12-13, 2016

GOALS COMMUNICATION SHARING WHAT LIONS DO

..."everyone's primary duty is to communicate effectively and efficiently to every Lion member in our state and tell our story in a way that defines the people we serve."

Paul Bledsoe NC Lions, Inc President 2015-16

### NCCOG Report

#### 2016-17 Goals

Enhance communication within NCLions and the ability to reduce time and travel for meetings through the use of online collaboration tools.

Support NCLions Districts and Clubs efforts in Social Media

Respond sensibly and timely to the request of the NC Lions Council of Governors.

Issues\_ None

All websites are being maintained by the individual districts.

Current Activity

Maintaining Websites within each District.

We have been requested to make the state's six websites more Low Vision Friendly both for those of us with declining vision and for those with severe vision loss. The district website's use of low contrast text and small text size creates a problem which, for an organization supporting the visually impaired should not be an issue. The use of light colored text (light blue) on a white background is difficult for anyone to read, but nearly impossible for an individual with low vision, who needs large, high contract text for best visibility.

Committee members are using tools to rate our websites for accessibility and are testing and offering solutions. We should reach a consensus soon and will suggest that each district webmaster implement the changes. This will lead to all six websites in compliance with our goal of uniformity within the sites.

GOTO Meeting

GOTO Meeting is available for use by anyone in our state. Please feel free to contact your district Information Chair to schedule an online meeting.

Future Activity: Continue working on email solutions.

Request updated email list from each District for state database.

NCLI Report  
Current Activity

Insights to Brighter Vision      Published monthly

The Advocate –

Future Activity: Due to budget restrictions, Past President Paul Bledsoe, Development Director Hannah Earnhardt and I will examine the production of digital issues of The Advocate.

Newsletter – The monthly Newsletter is being published monthly on or around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

I have met with Development Director Hannah Earnhardt regarding Public Information and Education for NC Lions Inc. Hannah has already requested some modifications to the monthly newsletter. We were able to get them in the November issue, including a link to “Donate” to Brighter Vision. I look forward to working with Hannah on future issues.

She and I will continue to review our social media that is in place and discuss improvements. Past President Paul Bledsoe will continue to take an active role with our efforts

The newsletter is being emailed using a new database of NC Lions. See below Email Services.

Education      Our committee has been asked to focus on providing more education to both Lions and the general public about the benefits of supporting our program of Brighter Visions. New efforts will be discussed with Hannah and Paul.

Communication

Email services – We continue to monitor the statistics of the number of email being opened and read.

Online meetings and seminars      GoToMeeting - Is available to NCLI.

Respectively submitted:

Lion George Culp



# **Pin Recycle Program—Over \$ 156,490.00!!**

By: Lion Dave Butler, PCC

Attachment

I

President Charles, fellow Lions and guests. Since my report to you in August, we have had no sales. Lion Lou Creel is at the professional swap in Winchester, Virginia this week and hopefully he will have some luck with pin sales there. I will have pins at the District 31-L Fall Convention next weekend and hope to raise some funds for this program.

We have a good supply of **NC State, District, Club, and Personal pins** available at this time. Send me an email or give me a call for any of your pin needs. There is a good chance I will be able to help fill the gaps in your collection.

Thanks, again, to everyone who has played a part in the great success of this project for our North Carolina Lions, Inc. Eye Research Programs.

REMEMBER! IF IT WASN'T FOR EYE RESEARCH, MANY OF US WOULD BE BLIND TODAY AND MOST OF US WOULD BE FACING A LIFE OF BLINDNESS IN THE FUTURE.

**Amount raised to date is: \$ 156,497.86 .**

Thank You

Lion Dave Butler, PCC

## Camp Dogwood Raffle

As of November 11, 2016 we have sold \$18,550.00 worth of raffle tickets. Two districts have clubs that have sold 3 or more books per member. District L has one club that has sold 3.35 books, and District I is in the lead with total sales of \$12,829.00 and 6 clubs selling 3 or more books per member.

1. 4.47 Books

2, 3.27 Books

3. 3.17 Books

4. 3.14 Books

5. 2 clubs are tied for 4th place.

As the weather is turning colder, we need to tend to preventative maintenance at Camp Dogwood to prevent damage from this winter. I encourage you and your Lions Club to continue selling tickets even if you have reached the goal of 3 books per member. That \$1.00 can make a difference in the life of our VIPs. Plus you can be the winner of the car or one of the 2 gift cards given away at each of the District Conventions.

As the holiday season approaches, you can purchase camp dogwood tickets and use them as stocking stuffers or place them in each Christmas card you mail. Can you imagine the look on their face if they win a car or a \$200.00 gift card.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Headley PDG

State Camp Dogwood Chairman

NCLI COUNCIL & BOARD MEETING

November 13, 2016

Fellowships & Partners.....Howard R. Wallace

- A. Jack Stickley .. - All Fellowship funds will be placed in an endowment fund, with the interest going into NCLI general operating fund.
  - 1. Fellowships may be obtained for a \$500 contribution.
  - 2. Fellowships are available to Lions & non-Lions
  - 3. Funds help NCLI provide more services to those in need.
  
- B. William L. Woolard - Funds the program & services of NCLI
  - \$100. is to the Founder award
  - \$200. is the next level and years "supporter"
  - \$250. is the "Patron" level; etc.
  
- B. Sid Scruggs Beacon of Hope - These contributions go to support Camp Dogwood Summer Program attendees
  - 1 - 5 Levels...\$200ea. level - up to 5 levels

No of <u>MEMBERS</u> (9/15/2016)	<u>SHICKLEY</u>		<u>WOODLARD</u>		<u>SCRUGGS</u>	
	9/16	11/8	<u>9/16</u>	<u>11/8</u>	<u>9/18</u>	11/8
L 1,251					- 1=-1,000	
I 1,311	\$1,000	\$1,100	\$ 100.	% 300	\$ 900	900
O 1,278	500	500.			600	600,
N 1,251	500			250.		
S 1,214			400.	400.		_____
6,305	2,000	1,600	500.	950.	1,500	2,500

GOING FORWARD

- A. Money - Historically, most comes in during Spring
  
- B. District Governors - . ' remind/encourage Club president/Zone Chairs to ensure participation - early as possible
  - o. Let/have Lions let public know of our deep interest in helping those within our immediate communities, 1.State, Nation

## Deaf- Blind Challenge

Attachment

L

### Support for Brighter Visions

A blond, a redhead, and a brunette were all lost in the desert. They had just about given up hope of making it out alive when they found a lamp and rubbed it. Funny enough, a genie popped out and said they could each have one wish.

The redhead wished to be back home and poof! She was back home.

The brunette wished to be back home with her family. Poof! She was back home with family!

The blonde said "AWWWWW, I wish my friends were here."

A young brunette goes into the doctor's office and says that her body hurts wherever she touches it. "That's impossible," says the doctor. "Show me." She takes her finger and pushes her elbow and screams in agony then she pushes her knee and screams again, pushes her ankle and screams and so it goes on, everywhere she touches makes her scream. The doctor says, "You're not really a brunette, are you?" She says, "No, I'm really a blonde." "I thought so," he says, "Your finger is broken."

A guy got home from work one evening and found his blonde girlfriend painting the walls. She was wearing a new fur coat and also a nice denim jacket. Thinking this was a little strange, he asked her why she was wearing them rather than old clothes or an overall. She showed him the instructions on the paint can: "For best results, put on two coats."

We can laugh at these women with their "hair color challenges". If you don't like the jokes because they are "blondies" insert your own choice of hair color! The point is, that occasionally we all have felt challenged in our lives or actively face challenges. Have you ever considered how the deaf and blind person is challenged?

Deaf Blindness refers to a person with both hearing impairment and vision impairment significant enough to cause communication and educational difficulties. It is especially difficult for children who are growing up deaf-blind as they have a harder time learning and accessing language.

You know that Helen Keller is the most recognized name when it comes to Deaf-Blindness. Do you know Laura Bridgman and Julia Brace? They came before Helen Keller. They managed to accomplish quite a bit at a time when the odds seemed to be against them.

Julia Brace lost her vision and hearing around age 5. In later childhood, she began a long and happy life at a northern Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, in the 1830s. She was really treated as a celebrity because she was able to do so much in spite of not being able to see or hear.

Laura Bridgman was younger. She was the Helen Keller before Helen Keller! She was born in 1829 on a rural farm in Hanover, New Hampshire, she was a lively, intelligent, and extremely curious child who was talking quite plain at 18 months and learned a few letters of the alphabet. But when she was 2, she suffered a bout of scarlet fever that left her blind, deaf, and no sense of taste and smell. Laura was left with no form of communication other than crude gestures, and her early childhood resembled that of Helen Keller in scope and emotion.

When she was 7 years old, Samuel Gridley Howe who had heard Laura's story, persuaded her parents to let him take her to his asylum in Boston and after working with her for several months, he succeeded in making her understand the meaning and reason of language. She was visited by the novelist Charles

Dickens who wrote a romantic description of his meeting with her. He wrote about her early childhood and illness and the efforts that were made to teach her. Bridgman was the subject of both educational publications and a children's book, *Child of the Silent Night*. Bridgman became an international celebrity, attracting thousands of fans who clamored for her autograph and locks of her hair. People came from all around to watch her read and write, and little girls plucked glass eyes from their dolls, renaming them "Laura". She was a rock star!

Both Brace and Bridgman paid the price of being pioneers in deafblind education—neither was able to live an independent life outside of the institutions that they called home. Laura Bridgman was, as far as the records show, **the first deaf-blind** person to be successfully educated. For a blind-deaf person such as Bridgman, the letters of the alphabet were formed with the fingers and pressed into the palm of the "listeners" hand.

Consider the facts: As a very small child, she suddenly became unable to see, hear or communicate, in the early years she lived like a household pet. At the age of 7, she was taken from the only place in the world that was familiar to her and delivered to an asylum 130 miles away, where she found herself at the mercy of complete strangers for reasons utterly unknown to her. The sole way for her to express her feelings was to spell them out with her fingers to those few people able to understand that language. Her own parents never properly learned the manual alphabet.

Toward the end of her life, Anne Sullivan stated that she had "always believed Laura Bridgman to be intellectually superior to Helen Keller." Keller herself said that if Bridgman had had Sullivan as a teacher, "she would have outshone me."

Yet despite her remarkable intellect, Laura Bridgman lived out the rest of her years in obscurity, abandoned by her teacher and by society, a lifelong resident of the Perkins Institution, doing monotonous needlework and reading embossed books, a shut-in as she had been as a child.

Why am I sharing with you this bit of obscured history about Julia Brace and Laura Bridgman? I want you to be aware that our deaf-blind community has existed for a long time. Anyone who lives with this disability truly has an amazing story to tell. It amazes me that our deaf-blind VIPs have achieved incredible things.

An annual retreat at Camp Dogwood is offered by NCLI to the deaf-blind community to enjoy the amenities just as our campers do during the summer.

Does your club use the matching funds provided by NCLI . . . are you giving back to NCLI with your financial support so that a program such as this opportunity for the deaf-blind can continue? We ask you to insure your districts encourage its clubs to join the Brighter Visions fund drive and help promote the services of NCLI and support NCLI with your fundraising specifically for Brighter Visions. Please insure that your club shows that support with a monetary contribution.

I am pleased to report the following :

District L 25 clubs out of 73 have contributed 30.16%

District I 39 clubs out of 63 have contributed 25.71%

District O 25 clubs out of 65 have contributed 28.83%

District N 27 clubs out of 61 have contributed 29.77%

District S 25 clubs out of 64 clubs have contributed 15.03%

For a total donation of \$178,125.37 which is 25.91% of our goal.  
(\$687,500)

Helen Keller said: There is no better way to thank God for your sight than by giving a helping hand to someone in the dark.