



# The Tale Twister

## Cullman Lions Club

August 18, 2025

### Program

Lion Scott Starosta was our speaker tonight on the subject of his recent visit and tour of Leader Dogs for the Blind facility in Detroit, Michigan.



Lion Secretary Scott Starosta, along with Lion President Delane Ray, displays one of the stickers from the Leader Dog organization that Lion Scott picked up from his trip to the Leader Dog training facility.

Lion Scott represented our Club in an offer for one of our members to visit the Leader Dog organization at its training facility in Detroit, Michigan. Lion Scott said that it was a great experience to see the great impact that a trained leader dog has on the life of a blind person. Scott explained that the first thing that a potential guide dog owner is to learn to navigate with a cane and feel comfortable with it. After that the potential owner has to spend about 3 weeks training and bonding with the dog. While he was at their training site, he got to use a leader dog while blind-folded and experienced eating a meal blind-folded, also. The dogs respond to a great many particular commands. Starting about 7 weeks after they are born, most of the facilities dogs are first trained by

cooperating prisoners, most of whom are serving life sentences. These inmates are carefully vetted and selected for the program, and there are eight prisons that are participating. The dogs are trained there for a year, learning basic commands, actually sharing the cells of these prisoners. Some of these prisoners have trained over a couple dozen dogs. Then, the dogs go back for more training at the leader dog facility, as are potential owners. Finally, they go to the home of a designated foster parent. The dogs they normally use for leader dogs are black, yellow, or blond labradors because they have been found to be the easiest to bond with a person. Scott noted that after identifying a particular chair to the dog, it would take the owner to that chair, no matter where you placed it, later, upon command to the dog. Lion Scott said the only mode of transport that such a dog cannot manage for the owner is an escalator. So, as long as an air terminal has an elevator, air-travel is not out of bounds for a blind person with a leader dog. Given the proper command, the dog will find an elevator in a building and can press the right button with its nose. Scott said that the facility currently places around 170 dogs per year. This is done at no cost to the recipient, funded entirely by philanthropic support—covering travel, room and board, equipment, meals, and training.

Leader Dogs, for the Blind began in 1939 when members of Detroit's Uptown Lions Club sought to assist their blind friend. Over the years, it has enabled 14,500 guide dog partnerships. This facility certainly falls under the Lions challenge from Helen Keller to be "Knights of the Blind." Lion Scott gave us an encouraging presentation that should make us all proud as Lions.



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### Other Business

Lion Scott advised us that our BOD approved making a contribution to Helen Keller-Ivy Green by purchasing 3 memorial-walk bricks in the memory and honor of 3 of our Lions: Wendell Copeland, Gordon Boyd, and Gary Murphree. Likewise, our Branch Club also made a decision to honor with brick purchases their Lion of the Year, Linda Cotten, and Immediate Past President, Lion Stephanie Lawson. He also noted the BOD purchased an 8-person table for the North-Alabama Agriplex for its fund-raising dinner, as well as a separate significant funding Agriplex contribution. The BOD also made a contribution to the Cullman County Veterans Hall of Fame.

Lion James Howard had gall bladder surgery and after a few extra days of recovery at the hospital, he was moved to rehab for a few days, also. Lion Javon Daniel continues recovery and stabilization from heart related issues and is able to work several hours a day or two each week at Cullman Caring for Kids. He said he misses our Club and expects to be able to attend meetings eventually. Bill Wilt was told to get a few days of bed rest to recover after hospitalization following his episode of heart enzyme disfunction. He is in good spirits. Lion Ron Seybold is taking a break from the latest series of his cancer treatments until September 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Lion President Delane Ray announced years-of-service anniversaries for two Lions: Steve Murphree – 33 years, Steve Rogers – 3.

Lion Randy Kraft announced dates for the Alabama Association of Fairs which our Club is sponsoring for the second year in a row. Those dates are February 19-22, 2026. Last year there were 78 attendees; this year they have more

associates and expect around 100. Lion Randy invited Club member to visit during this event to gain appreciation for this organization and the problems faced by many fairs throughout our State.

The next New Lions' Roundtable Discussions will be on September 22. The subjects will be on Board of Directors and Committees.

**See initial Cullman Fair assignments on page 3.**

### Upcoming Programs and Events

August 25: Our speaker will be Mr. Mike Mullaney from Goat Island.



September 1: No meeting due to Labor Day.

October 4: Fair Parade.

October 9-18: Cullman County Fair.

### Tale Twister Input

If you need something special or to report a correction in the *Tale Twister*, see Lions Carey Thompson or Don Smith at the meetings. Lion Carey can be reached at 256-739-0580 (H) or 256-426-3207 (C). Lion Don can be reached at 256-737-7433 (H) or 256-426-7722 C.



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### FAIR WORK ASSIGNMENTS 2025-V1 Published

			E	GATES			H	PARKING					
A	AG EXHIBITS			1	Scott, Tim		1	Roberts, Samuel				Not assigned	
1	Mitchell, Brad		+Gates	2	Willingham, Barry		2	White, Richard			1	Galin, Jerry	
2	Murphree, Steve			3	Bryant, Jeremy		3	Aker, Adam			2	Grier, James	
3	Garrison, Phillip			4	Byrd, Jeff	+Ind Ex	4	Clay, Claude			3	Howard, James	
4	Krigbaum, George			5	Doggett, Douglas		5	Duke, Kelly					
5	Osborne, Fred			6	Earnest, Michael		6	Fromhold, Michael	+Security				
6	Ray, Danny			7	Gadow, Craig		7	Hogue, Matthew		8	Gentry, Matt		
7	Spradlin, Doug			8	Gambrill, Chad		8	Gentry, Matt		9	James, Patrick		
			9	Gudger, Garlan	9		James, Patrick	10		Lawson, Jeff	+Security		
			10	Hamm, Mark	10		Lawson, Jeff	11		Mangum, Mike			
			11	Horton, Jimmy	11	Mangum, Mike	12	Manning, Andrew					
			12	Jacobs, Woody ?	12	Manning, Andrew	13	McSwain, Steven					
			13	Jackson, Quinn	13	McSwain, Steven	14	Monk, Brian					
			14	Johnson, Lee	14	Monk, Brian	15	Parrish, Milford					
			15	Murphree, Steve	+Ag Ex	15	Parrish, Milford						
			16	Peek, Rickey		16	Ponder, Eric						
			17	Pfeifer, Tom ?		17	Ray, Joshua						
			18	Rodgers, Steve		18	Rainwater, Clark						
			19	Scott, Don		19	Ruffner, Sam						
			20	Smith, Jerry		20	Sivilli, Joseph						
			21	Sumner, Dewayne		21	Spaeth, Brian						
			22	Waldrep, Bo									
			23	Walker, Alan									
			24	Wilhite, Terry			I	Security					
			25	Williams, Raymond			1	Gentry, Matt	+ Parking				
			26	Wren, Jeffrey			2	Lawson, Jeff	+ Parking				
C	CONCESSIONS												
1	Bussman, David		+Theater										
2	Gurley, Richard												
3	Cartee, Steve												
4	Crocker, Champ												
5	Hampton, Ory												
6	Odell, Frank												
7	Pinyan, James												
8	Poulin, Quinten												
9	Roden, Tyler												
10	Starosta, Scott			+ Office									
11	Tielking, Jason												
12	Wiggins, David												
13	Williams, Jeff												