



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

Aug 8, 2022

Program

Lion Steve Cartee introduced Lion Barry Elliott, Executive Director of Alabama Lions Sight. In his introduction Lion Cartee began by reminding us of the words of Helen Keller in 1925 to the Lions convention, "Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much." Since that point, for nearly 100 years the Lions have dedicated themselves to a cure and to prevention of blindness. In 1944 several Lions Clubs in the Birmingham area put together funding for a non-profit organization dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases and eye injuries for indigent Alabamians. This organization was Alabama Lions Sight (ALS) and in 1963 it worked to help with the founding of the Callahan Eye Hospital. Lion Barry Elliott took over as Executive Director of ALS in 2018. Under Lion Elliott, ALS has had tremendous progress. Lion Steve also called up our Sight Committee Chairman, Lion Bill Ruehl to tell us what we are doing locally for sight.



Lion Bill Ruehl speaks about the Club's Sight Committee recent activities.

Lion Ruehl explained that we have been coordinating to get glasses for around 20 kids a year, collaborating with school counselors, and working with the Good Samaritan Clinic for other indigent citizens to get glasses or

treatment through ALS; the paperwork to make this happen has been reduced dramatically.

Lion Elliott noted that when he looked back at those first years of partnership with the Callahan Eye Hospital, it agreed to cover the eye surgeons' services for free if ALS would agree to pay the bills associated with only the hospital, itself. Today in continuing partnership, ALS only has to pay a \$35 co-pay. Since its founding 75 years ago, over 500,000 indigent patients have received operations and other vision care through the UAB-Callahan Eye Hospital in Birmingham. ALS helped build the hospital and has given \$Millions to help keep it in operation.



Our speaker tonight, Executive Director of Alabama Lions Sight, Lion Barry Elliott accepts token of appreciation from 1st Vice President Lion Chris Brooks.

In 2018 ALS began a partnership with the Department of Public Health in opening 4 clinics and are increasing to 17, and plan to have 50 clinics, total, within the next five years. Lion Elliott said that other partnerships are on the horizon. One involves a vision medical data collection pilot program that has proven itself in Mexico that can be used in conjunction with the Lions Mobile Clinics. This pilot has the potential to provide a grant from LCIF to expand our mobile eye clinics.



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

Also, ALS has been lobbying State Senators and Representatives for a grant of \$700,000 to support our mobile clinics if hearing testing/screening can be incorporated into our Lions mobile clinics; plans are proceeding to make this happen with a state-of-the-art hearing screener addition to one of our mobile eye clinics. Right now, ALS had been able to serve 23 counties for their indigent, underserved, and uninsured citizens with one mobile clinic that required \$42K in repairs last year. So, a second mobile eye clinic is badly needed and thus, far, \$30,000 had been raised. When ALS gets the State grant that it is seeking, the number of counties served will double to 46. In anticipation of getting the State grant in October, ALS was able to secure a loan of \$125K in order to get a new truck & chassis for its existing mobile clinic and to purchase, at auction, an existing mobile US Navy Dental Clinic; this mobile Navy clinic had only 5,000 miles on it and can be economically converted for eye/hearing screening. Although the value of the Naval truck was estimated to be \$500K, ALS procured it for a \$63K auction bid. The total \$700K grant is nearly all earmarked for these mobile clinics and the equipment required to outfit them fully. Lion Elliott says that the State will be looking for accountability with the grant funding being provided. If things work out as planned, he plans for us to go after an annual ALS appropriation from the State. He appreciated the fact that our Club coordinated to get the mobile eye clinic to come and give eye screening to prisoners at our county prison. He noted that Covid had slowed down the use of the mobile clinic in schools, but that is not an obstacle now.

Alabama Lions Sight appears to be well-positioned to continue to make great progress under Lion Barry Elliott's leadership.

Other Business

Fair workdays are Sept 26, Oct 3, and Oct 10.

Lion Frank Odell reminded us of a series of round table discussions for new Lions who became members in the last three years. He will lead these meetings on Aug. 22nd, Oct. 17th, and Nov. 28th, at Freddy Day's Catering, following regular Club meetings on those dates. Lion Frank is sending out email with more details to these newer Lions. They will learn more about their Club and what Lionism is all about.

President Lion Milford Parrish has Covid, but symptoms have been generally mild.

Our meetings are being recorded and can be seen live, or you may view past meetings at the following Facebook web site: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1106236123576541/?ref=share>.

If you have any problem getting to the site, contact Lion Craig Gadow at 256-736-8361.

Upcoming Programs and Events

August 15: Ms. Jaidyn Quillen, who played the part of Annie Sullivan in the "Miracle Worker" in the summer of 2022, will speak of her experience in this role.



Ms. Jaidyn Quillen
- Actress -



The Tale Twister

Cullman Lions Club

August 22: TBD.

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).