

Hi Fellow Lions,

I am Lion Neil Lander and was recently elected to be your District Governor for 2023-24. I have a long Lion history so I have outlined it and then will give you a brief overview of my other life.

I started my Lions life in October 1983 some 40 years ago. I joined the Martinez LC in California, not because of their great community service, but because my boss asked me to. My company wanted to be more involved with the community. It didn't take long before I became engrained in their community service and loved it. Also, I got on board playing bocce ball in this Italian community as it was the mainstay of almost everyone and a great place to present our club.

It was just in a short few years, when my boss told me I had another great opportunity in Houston. Not an easy choice to make (liked to think I had one) because, through my Lion club experience, I had become tied to the community and not to mention the frown on our kid's faces.

Settling in Kingwood in December 1989, one of my top priorities was to join the local Lion club. I found a sponsor and joined the Houston Central LC (later named Houston Downtown LC and now Houston Founder LC). So much for vest, it was a coat and tie group then. The large service project was providing rewards for Houston ISD athletes that exhibited outstanding sportsmanship, which meant I had the tough duty of attending many of their football games.

There was a period of time of almost ten years when I faced the family/work/service balance. My job required such a large amount of travel that I couldn't attend meetings and be as active, but I kept in touch and paid my dues.

When I retired, I joined the Humble Noon LC as there wasn't a Kingwood LC at the time. There had been a lot of service activity including vision care (screening and providing eye exam/glasses), support for autism community and special needs projects. The club has developed a great relationship with Humble ISD.

I also became involved in our District serving as Zone Chair, GMT-D and GMA-D. I have to admit that it took several "no thank-you's" before I agreed to be SVDG on my way to my current position of DG. I will have to say that being involved with our District and, now at the MD state level, has been very rewarding and I have met many great Lions.

My corresponding Non-Lion life was also active. This is a summary of it.

I was born and raised in Michigan and graduated in Chemical Engineering from Michigan Technical University where literally 25 feet of snow can fall in a season and -40oF can happen. From there, I joined an oil company in sunny, warm Martinez, Ca. It was the start of a wonderful career that lasted over 40 years with most of it based in Houston. However, as mentioned, it did at times present a challenge to my Family-Work-Service balance.

While being on the West Coast, it is extremely easy to enjoy outdoor activities with most being at your finger tips. I enjoyed backpacking, skiing, bocce ball, softball and, most of all, distance running. It started with 5-10Ks, but then elevated to marathons, completing 71 of them using a ton of running shoes. I even had the opportunity and ran the original one that started in Marathon, Greece. One of the key elements that fascinated me with distance running was my ability to do “free-wheel thinking” where I solved a lot the problems I faced. It was like shower time on steroids. It is obvious to anyone seeing me today, that I have retired from running. I do enjoy hunting on my lease and timber property, but probably most of all having more time to serve.

Not listed in priority, I do have a wonderful wife, Karen. She is a Veterinarian and still works (probably until 85). This is mostly the reason we have one cat and ~~four~~ five rescue dogs, one of which is sitting on my lap now. Karen and I have done a lot of traveling, but after a fantastic Alaskan Cruise, we have done a lot more cruising....something at one time, we didn't think we would enjoy. Covid stopped travel for the time being.

I am excited and really looking forward to continuing my District 2-S2 service as DG. I will be a good listener. However, one of my severe drawbacks, other than not being able to lead a Lion roar like PDG Rick, is remembering names after brief encounters. So, please help me out and lets have longer, meaningful conversations to get to know each other and maybe determine how to enhance our service, our communications and our District....thanks.

Lion Neil