



The Governor's Message

By Nebraska-Iowa District Governor Dale Doudna

Last month, I shared the prediction of the groundhog for an early spring. The groundhog appears to have been correct. In Des Moines, February only had three days with a temperature below average. My crocuses are blooming and the daffodils are near blooming.

There is an old story about blind men trying to describe an elephant by experiencing one part of the elephant. One man touched the trunk of the elephant and described it as a thick snake. One man touched the ear and described it as a fan. One man touched the leg and described it as a tree trunk. One man touched the side of the elephant and described it as a wall. Obviously, none came close to describing an elephant.

Just so you can say you learned something, this earliest known telling of this story, The Parable of the Blind Man and the Elephant, occurred about 500 BC. It has been found in the writings of religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

This story relates to Kiwanis, not because we are blind, but because Kiwanis is so large and diverse it is nearly impossible to experience Kiwanis by our own limited experience. Our initial experience with Kiwanis probably relates to our experience at our local club. That experience may be good or bad.

Regardless, describing Kiwanis by what our local club does, will not be an accurate description of Kiwanis. The description probably would include something about fund raising to provide services to children and the community. It might describe fellowship opportunities. It might describe a large club or a small club.

After your club experience, you will be able to describe a part of Kiwanis.

The next level of experience that may change your perspective of Kiwanis is visiting and/or learning about other clubs. When I was new in Kiwanis, we had a lot of inter-clubs. These inter-club experiences taught me about what other clubs did and how they operated. One of my early inter-club experiences was to visit the Algona Club at Christmas. I learned about how the club and City of Algona interacted with German prisoners of war during World War II. More recently, I visited the Daytona Beach, FL Kiwanis Club. This was a far different experience than what I was used to. I heard how that Club raises \$80,000 a year at their annual golf event.

Since becoming a Nebraska-Iowa District officer, I have visited a number of clubs. Each is different. I visited the Ottumwa Kiwanis Club and helped them celebrate 100 years as a Kiwanis Club. This small club provides vital services to their community. I visited the Mason City-River City Club. This is the largest club in the District. They meet at 6:30 on Friday mornings. I had never experienced a large club that met in the morning. They enjoy their meetings and have great attendance. I visited the Lincoln Northeast Club. This medium sized club, has a lot of enthusiasm and has produced a large number of District and International Officers.

Visiting other clubs will change your description of Kiwanis.

The next level of experiences that might change your description of Kiwanis is Division level events. Division Council meetings and division projects. These activities give you an opportunity to meet other Kiwanians, learn what other clubs are doing and become involved in bigger projects. I have been invited to several Division Council meetings. These events reinforce my belief in working together. I have also been invited to several division projects such as the Teen Maze Project in Division 11. Teen Maze requires cooperation of all the clubs in Division 11 and impacts all of the seventh graders in a three county area.

Participating in division events will change your description of Kiwanis.

The next activities that may change your perspective are District events such as the Leadership Development Day, held each March, and the District Convention, held the first weekend in August. These events expose you to the many activities of the District and allow you to interact with Kiwanians from all over the District.

The 2024 Leadership Development Day is March 16 in Johnston, IA. Registration is closed for this event for

this year, but if you would really like to go, contact District Administrator Lisa Brichacek to see if a spot has opened up.

Last year at the Convention, Kiwanians got to meet and interact with Kiwanis International President Katrina Baranko, Kiwanis International Trustee Cathy Tutty, and Past Kiwanis International Presidents Steve Siemen and Jane Erickson. That was in addition to all the educational sessions, social events and meeting great Kiwanians.

This year the District Convention is Aug. 2-3. We are not quite ready to announce all the speakers and breakout sessions, but you can be sure it will be educational and fun. You can also be sure you will meet lots of Kiwanians. Be watching for registration for the convention.

Attending the District Convention will change your description of Kiwanis.

In July, the Kiwanis International Convention will be held in Denver, Colorado. The Kiwanis International Convention will give you another perspective of what Kiwanis International is all about. It still won't give you the complete picture, but it will change your perspective. My first International Convention was in Orlando, FL, in the late 1980's. My Johnston Club provided me with financial support and I used the convention as part of a family vacation. Of course, we visited Disney World. I learned a whole lot about Kiwanis. I have attended additional conventions through the years and each year my vision of Kiwanis changes.

If you want a better picture of Kiwanis, consider joining us in Denver. As encouragement, your District Board has voted to use some specially designated funds to provide \$500 grants to five Nebraska-Iowa Kiwanians who have not attended an International Convention. Your board obviously thinks you will benefit from the experience. You can find more information on how to apply for the \$500 scholarship drawing in this newsletter.

Attending the Kiwanis International Convention will change your description of Kiwanis.

I encourage each of you to consider how you can improve your description of Kiwanis. Just like the blind men, you will never have a complete description of Kiwanis, but the more you participate, the more complete and accurate your description will be.

