FROM THE LIONS’ DEN. March, 2014.

“Did you know that women are the fastest-growing group of members in Lions Clubs International? Women now represent 25 percent of Lions club members worldwide..” I have purloined that quotation from a memorandum that has just reached me from the Lions Clubs International president, announcing that LCI is designating April as “Family and Friends Month”. Within living memory, the Lions Clubs used to espouse the prejudices of male chauvinism. Not any more. The percentiles record a major gender shift. There are no more weaker vessels. On Mayne Island, the Lions Club has already inducted two new women members this year. They are Millie Leathers and Maya Jordan. Millie Leathers is a familiar face on the island: she is chair of the Silver Maynes and president of the Mayne Island Chamber of Commerce this year. Maya Jordan is a long-time resident, and the picture attached to this little essay shows her induction at the February meeting this year.

An induction ceremony is a moment of pomp and circumstance, though it does not last long, for the Mayne Island Lions are no great admirers of long-winded speechifying. Maya Jordan simply took her oath of allegiance to the Lions Club ideals, flanked by a small group of the club’s megastars, and answered “I do” to the appropriate questions. I was reminded of the old-fashioned Anglican marriage ceremony, where the bride is asked if she will love, honour, and – if so inclined – obey her husband, and once she has said “I do”, her newly-minted husband is given permission to kiss her. All that is all very outdated now, when partners simply text each other by iPhone, but a small echo of the ritual subsists in the Lions induction ceremony, except that the osculation is reduced to a mere handshake. The picture shows the moment when Maya Jordan became one of the Lions.

The first week of each month is a busy one for a Lions Club secretary, for the club is part of a world-wide organization, which issues and collects reports and press releases and undertakes new initiatives. March is Eye Donor Awareness month. Thanks to the efforts of Lions member Bill Liversidge, our club has taken part in the Lions eyeglasses recycling project which supplies needy persons with impaired vision with eyeglasses that they cannot afford to buy themselves. Since the beginning of the year, the Mayne Island club has collected and donated 12 pairs. Now the Lions Eye Bank takes corneal donations too. The Mayne Lions also support the Lions Foundation of Canada’s Dog Guides program which trains guide dogs to guide the blind, alert the hearing impaired or even provide watchful care for diabetics.

But your secretary’s last few days have been unexciting: I have watched the Olympics in Sochi on TV, alternating with reports of snow storms in eastern Canada and the United States, and flooding in the U.K., walked my dog who is *no* candidate for dog guide training, attended some fitness sessions in the Community Centre in a losing effort to become buff, went to a Community Choir practice for an equally failing effort to hit the high notes, had breakfast at the Church House with the little group of men that gather there on the second Friday of each month, took some photos of Active Pass bathed in the morning light with my Blackberry Z10, which I have come to respect, and dropped into the Community Centre to see the plans for Mayne Island’s proposed new firehall. I survived Valentine’s Day without incident, though some academic friends reminded me that the date coincides suspiciously with the Roman feast of the Lupercalia when young men ran naked through the streets of ancient Rome, carrying whips made of wolf skins. That would never do on Mayne Island, where we have no wolves.

Then there was Lions business needing attention. At the request of the Ag Society, the club has offered to fund the cost of a stove in the renovated kitchen planned for the Ag Hall, instead of the dishwasher which we originally offered. We are still working out plans for the Lions 222 draw, which will take place at the Salmon Bake on Labour Day weekend. And nearer at hand, Lions Clubs International is planning a “World Lunch Relay” for April 4th.  Clubs, starting in New Zealand will follow the time zones around the world as they gather with friends and family at noon for lunch and amiable greetings. Let us hope that in those parts of the world that are gutted by civil strife, the combatants will pause long enough to have lunch together.

Our Lions web page, <http://e-clubhouse.org/mayne> has a new web master, Cliff Kiyooka, and I want to express the Lions Club’s thanks to the man he replaces, John Campbell. John has left the club, which we regret, for he set up the web page and tended it, and we are grateful for his help. The Lions telephone directory for 2014 is currently making its way through the press, and the little committee headed by Toby Snelgrove who are guiding it from conception to delivery deserve our gratitude. It is the advertisers in the telephone directory who have made it possible, and if any readers want to know who they are, they should check our web page, where their names are listed. We are grateful to all of them, and when Mayne Island aficionados want goods and services, they should check the advertisers in the Mayne Phone Directory.

    James Allan Evans