



Local Lions attend 80th celebration of Imperial Club.

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

As the Imperial Lions Club celebrated its 80th year of service Saturday, members and guests were encouraged to make the changes the club may need as it looks to the future.

Bob Drabek of Rapid City, S.D., who served on Lions Clubs International's board of directors from 1985-87, was guest speaker at the celebration.

He addressed 55 Imperial

Lions and guests at the evening banquet and program at the Eagles Club.

It was an early celebration for the Imperial Lions' 80th year, which formally arrives Dec. 10 of this year.

On that date in 1931, the Imperial club received its charter listing 26 members on its first roster. Glen Brewer was the club's charter president.

Prefacing his remarks, Drabek said, "We are at a crossroads with Lionism today."

With that, he said, he would propose several challenges "that may surprise you and frighten you."

Drabek grew up on a farm, about 100 miles east of Rapid City, where the family raised pigs, chickens, milk cows and some crops, mostly for their own sustenance.

He noted the changes in farming from when he was a boy with no electricity, no running water or telephones on the farm. He recalled how his dad plowed a straight row—driving straight at a white flag on a pole at the other end of the field.

His other recollections of farming a number of decades ago drew nods and smiles from many in the audience.

Fast forward to today's farming practices.

"If you have horses on the farm today they are hobby horses, not working horses," he said.

Most of the pigs today are raised by corporations, not family farms.

Dairies are specialties, and "eggs come from the supermarket," he smiled.

While the eggs and chickens they raised on their farm were used to help pay the family's grocery bill, "now we use credit cards," Drabek said.

"And, GPS works better than a flag," he said.

"Most of the improvements I've talked about required change, didn't they?" Drabek asked.

"Your willingness to change has made you who you are today," he said.

Pointing that out, Drabek asked if "we old Lions" recognize the expectations of the younger

potential Lions in our communities.

“There is a generation of young adults who want to be in service to their communities,” he said. However, the current way Lions clubs operate may not interest or attract them.

He said many young adults today have no time or desire to be at meetings, “but, they will be at the service projects.”

Generally, they also don’t like spending months discussing a project and how it will go. Rather, “they just want to get it done.”

Some Lions clubs currently meet entirely on the internet, “and yet they are in service to the communities where they live.”

“Do you realize you may have to be the ones who change?” he asked.

Drabek said the younger generations he talked about are the future of service in communities.

“So how do we harness their energy, tenacity and ideas into what we believe Lions should be doing?” he asked.

He said every club should have a mission statement.

“Sit down and plan where your club is going,” he said, keeping the younger generations in mind.

At the conclusion of his address, Drabek and his wife, Bev, were presented a Husker-related gift from Club President Nick Schultz.

Drabek said their son, a surgeon, is a “rabid Husker fan” and a granddaughter attends the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Schultz also announced the Imperial Lions will be making a donation to Lions Club International Foundation in Drabek’s name as a thank-you.

The club also presented a special gift, a Lion coffee mug, to Dean Mitchell, who has been a 40-year member of Imperial’s club. He joined in February 1971.

Winners of door prizes were Marvin Large, Jayne Henry, Sylvia Humphreys, Dean Mitchell, Letitia Munson, Miles Colson, all of Imperial; Fred Russell of Gordon and Mike Long of Grant.

Several district and state Nebraska Lion officers attended, along with Lions from a number of other Nebraska clubs. State and district Lions offices attending included Larry Seger of Wallace, Lions state council chairman; Jim Smith of Wallace, 2011-12 District L Governor; Chris Gentry of Hyannis, 1st Vice District Governor; and Ron Patrick of Grant, 2nd Vice District Governor.

Other special guests included representatives of other local organizations that contributed to the Lions’ restroom construction project at Campbell Park.

Imperial City Council President Chad Yaw provided a welcome to the group.

Paul Gaschler, a 2011 Chase County graduate, now a freshman at Concordia University in Seward, provided entertainment after the dinner.