

*Please enjoy the article below which features some 2018 District Convention Highlights as experienced by **Lion President Kaloa Robinson**, Akaka Falls Lions Club and Convention Planning Committee Member.*

DG Blayne Hanagami

A “Rockin’” 2018 District Convention in Hilo

The 2018 District 50 State Convention was a memorable event, to say the least, probably something attendees will refer to in years to come.

I don't think the full agenda of events, and experiences, disappointed anyone. Beginning with golf at the only course across the street from their hotel on the East side of the island, or a smoothly run Cabinet meeting, or rides to the evening Flag Ceremony event...but the food – THE FOOD, was “some 'ono”!

Okay, backing up a bit, the Convention's events officially began with the Annual D50 Convention Golf Tournament. Lion Wes (Waikoloa Lions Club) organized a Convention Tournament that was enjoyable and offered great prizes. Even those who don't golf envied the golfers and the fun that was had! Next was a Cabinet meeting that ran smoothly, and provided a transition from DG Blayne to 1st VDG Bob. So, by the time everyone gathered at Auntie Sally's Lu'au Hale, participants could definitely feel the energy rising for upcoming events in the next 2 days.

Did I mention the food? Yah, again, “some 'ono” was an applicable description for the work, attention to detail, and end result of a Hawaiian menu that was most delectable. The Waiakea Lions were in force that evening, and earlier through the day, to insure the meal would turn out flawless. The Hilo Crescent Lions Club provided a solemn Flag Ceremony which served our Lions with respect and honor. Everyone returned to their hotel rooms with a full opu, ready for a restful slumber, with an early start to the next morning's events.

Friday morning's General Session was led by DG Blayne (Akaka Falls Lions Club), as he again welcomed all Lion participants to Hilo, introduced our dignitaries, and established the Order of Protocol for the event. The audience was able to get a glimpse of guest performer Billy Riggs, and his “Dis”illusion show (okay, did the soda can really wrinkle, regain its original shape, and close itself again – before our eyes?! Hah?!! How can?!!”). Even those of us who wear contact lens endured dry eyes by not wanting to blink in case we missed something, but we still couldn't figure it out. Lion Melissa (Hilo Lions Club) provided a respectful and somber Necrology Service which emblazoned the memory and paid respect to our Lions who have since left this world. PDG Kelvin Moniz's plea for Lions to kokua his island of Kaua'i, and the flood damages experienced weeks before the Convention, were heard loud and clear as the Parade of Checks offered Clubs and individuals the ability to truly show a Lion's Heart.

As Lion members returned to their rooms for a brief break, an earthquake shook the hotel grounds like a prize-fighter inhaling smelling salts right after he took an uppercut to the chin. I was on the 7th floor as the tower swayed, and it still felt like it was swaying moments after it ended (was Billy Riggs responsible for that illusion of swaying towers?). Yes, the event motivated me to get to the ground floor asap! The Keynote Speaker Luncheon featured International Director Nicolas Xinopoulos, and his inspirational message to our Lion audience. However, as lunch was ending and just before the speaker was to begin,

the Lions experienced another earthquake – this one longer and stronger than the first! It was unsettling to say the least (okay, where's Billy Riggs?!), and International Director Nic provided his speech effortlessly, not letting a record-setting earthquake over-shadow his message. So what do Lions do when they're feeling uncomfortable? They WORK

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The D50 Legacy Work Project provided a nice event to work off a full lunch and calm nerves. There quickly formed a sea of teal-green shirt wearing Lions who made light work of gravel to be hauled, spread, and leveled at the last parts of the Legacy Project area. All Lions were encouraged to place their “white rocks” at the white-rock stream of the Legacy Project's newly landscaped garden, and many Lions did it with care and pride. Appropriate blessings conducted in both Hawaiian and Japanese were performed, bringing a heart-felt pride to another Lion's project to be successfully completed.

Dinner that evening was highlighted by Jennie and Kanoa, who sang both local and classic tunes. And the dinner's event showcasing “Dis” Illusionist/Comedian/Motivational Speaker Billy Riggs gave the Lion audience much to think about and ponder. His show featuring rubik's cubes, disappearing and reappearing milk, and a mind-twisting card trick kept Lions puzzled for quite some time.

Saturday morning's General Session's highlights included numerous Resolutions which were announced and humbly accepted by its recipients. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee discussed measures which needed to be addressed and were deliberated upon as necessary. Nominations and Demonstrations by the DGs, the Elections, and their Acceptance Speeches were heart-felt and well received. The indoor parade is always a fun event, and had another earthquake taken place – no one would have noticed! Lions know how to support their Leaders and have a great time!

The Awards Luncheon recognized the hard work and achievements of outstanding Lions Clubs, which was followed by the Centennial Service Walk to Queen Lili'uokalani Park. Meeting outside the hotel grounds, and led by 2 taiko drummers, the leisurely walk was enjoyable (Lions sure like parades!). The walk ended at the omiyage and mini Craft Fair. Lions could purchase special craft items, or Hawai'i Island made snacks, to take home to share with their 'ohana, friends, and neighbors. The Taiko drummers joined their full troupe and performed several numbers which showed their skill and endurance of the drummers. Shortly thereafter, the Lion audience was treated to a VIP performance of big-band *KA HULANUI!*. This 9-piece band got Lions to tap their paws, wag their tails, and roar “*HANA HOU!*” to the full slate of this band's music. The weather, treats, and music made our Lions feel like VIPs for sure!

The District Governor's Banquet Saturday evening made the Grand Naniloa Crown Room feel like the Royal Hawaiian Hotel's Crown Room! The lighting, musical performance by 'ukulele virtuoso Kris Fuchigami, and the Certificates of Appreciation and Special Awards were humbly received by all. And as appropriate as the exchange of gifts between DG, PIDs, and ID took place, the icing on the cake was DG Blayne's heartfelt appreciation and special recognition of his Mother and family who were in the audience, and his special performance of “*THAT'S ALL*”, sung to CIS Linda.

Again, it was a memorable “rockin’” D50 Convention in Hilo, and another epic Lions event successfully accomplished! On behalf of DG Blayne, D50 Convention Chair Lion Diane and the entire Planning Committee, mahalo to all the Lions who attended this year’s State Convention! ROARRR!!!
JOB WELL DONE LIONS!!!

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