

Letter To The Editor Guadalajara Reporter - August 10, 2024

Dear Sir,

As many know, Lake Chapala Society (LCS) elections are on August 20 for a new president of the LCS Board of Directors.

And I am one of those running for president. The reason that I decided to run was because of strong encouragement from an LCS board member.

So who am I and why did I throw my hat in the ring?

I first moved to Lakeside in 2008, leaving in 2014 and returning in mid-2022. My current observations and changes that I think are necessary for LCS going forward are similar to those of Terry Vidal but I would like to add some issues.

A few easy examples: I am running for a position without a job description. Yes, the LCS constitution contains a few references to the president, but no list of responsibilities where one can say, Yes I can do the job, or not. Yet the strategic plan from LCS2.0 recommends that job descriptions be created. That was in 2019. This is 2024. The president's position still lacks a job description.

I guess no one thought it was important to do.

For all nonprofits, a strategic plan is a tool to define where it wants to go and what actions are needed to achieve those goals. It is also a dynamic document that should be updated every year. And what is the status of LCS2.0? Although some actions have been taken, the online LCS2.0 Strategic Plan hasn't been updated for five years.

I guess no one thought it was important to do.

Another issue is the volunteer area. The lifeblood of LCS is volunteers. Without the outstanding efforts of so many volunteers, LCS would not exist. Yet if you want to volunteer it can be an extreme challenge. Two weeks ago I asked the person at the info table across from the library where I could get a volunteer form. She cheerfully replied, "The volunteer applications are in the office." At the office, they said: "No, we can't help you, volunteer applications are on the website."

This is how LCS currently works. Or doesn't work. What is missing is a simple process to monitor and manage the volunteer application process, and make it easy to volunteer.

I guess no one thought it was important to do.

These are just a few simple examples.

So why me? What do I bring to the table? The answer is years of very successful management and project management experience. At IBM, I was one of the first women managers in their Field Engineering Division. That was followed by Data Center Manager positions for California banks, with titles such as bank Vice President. For another company, as a project manager, I managed the relocation of computer data centers from one city to another for companies such as Apple Computer. In between, I managed an H & R Block Tax Office. In the late 1990s, I opened a retail store and e-commerce site. I designed and maintained my e-commerce website also selling products on Amazon. Sales mostly on the website generated several million dollars in revenue until I retired.

And what is going to happen with LCS going forward? Some things will be easy to fix; some not so easy. Some questions are: what needs to happen to sustain and improve LCS's role as a vital asset to the community, what steps should LCS take to restore membership growth, what steps need to be taken for long-term financial stability and transparency, what management practices need to be put in place to support and improve volunteer and member support and participation, and what does LCS need to do to stop the ongoing attrition of talented, respected and needed volunteers.

Shortly many of you who are LCS members will be given an opportunity to vote. The choice is yours to make.

Shelley Edson