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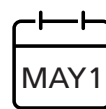
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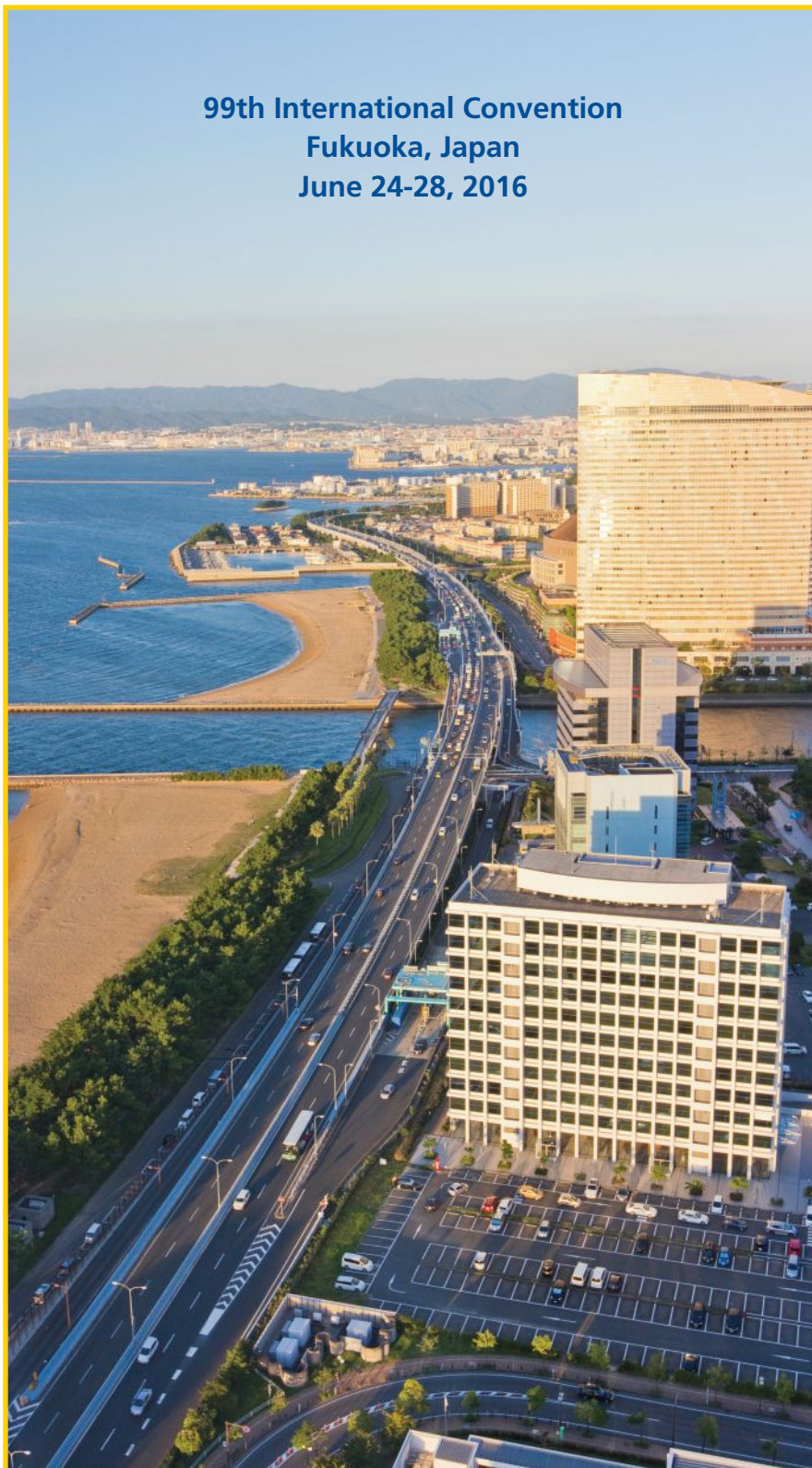


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Harmony among Lions can help foster harmony in the world.

Our Roar Should Cross Borders

Droves of swallows arrive in Japan each spring. We welcome these seasonal visitors. In Japanese clothing a v-shaped tail represents the swallow—a symbol of good luck, fidelity in marriage and fertility. Where do they fly from? Well, I'm not sure. It doesn't matter. The world is interconnected; it's a good thing to be open to newcomers and outsiders, who enrich our lives.

This year I am encouraging Lions to undertake or support global projects, which increase the harmony among nations. Donate to LCIF. Aid refugees. Support our measles initiative. Back projects that help needy children. Consider getting your club involved in the Lions' Twinning program, which matches clubs from two nations.

The Lions of Japan and Lions of Philippines exemplify international cooperation. For years they have partnered particularly on improving impoverished schools. It's wonderful to provide service to our own communities. Yet remember that pockets of the world would go completely untouched and its people in dire need without the helping hand of people such as Lions.

To be a Lion is to be part of an international association, to embrace the ideal of global harmony. It cannot happen unless individual Lions like you decide to take action.

Sometimes even encouraging words can bridge a gap of distance and cultures and unite us. Take a look at Facebook and other social media. Not long ago, Agra Mahan Lions in India posted a photo of their cataract operations for the elderly and poor people on the Facebook page of Lions Clubs International. "Wow! That is wonderful. The gift of sight is truly a blessing. Thank you, Lions," Machel Davis James of the Gold Canyon Lions Club in Arizona posted. If the world now is a global village, then Lions are chiefs and elders of harmony and understanding. Be a Lion whose roar is heard across borders and whose heart of service is large enough to encompass a world of need.



山田 實純

Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada
Lions Clubs International President

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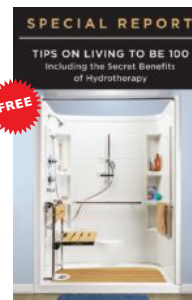
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- Inflammation

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[The Big Picture



Pensive Pageant



Little Fair Princess pageant contestant Blakely Bagett looks nervously at another contestant as they get ready to go onstage at the Cullman County Fair in Alabama. Lions have run the fair since 1954. See the story on page 22. Photo by Jeronimo Nisa

[The Big Picture



Air and Water Show



Since 1987, the Lions Club Balloon Festival and Fair in Highland Village, Texas, has lifted spirits and generated tens of thousands of dollars annually. The Highland Village Lions Club uses the funds for the Texas Lions Camp, Leader Dogs, LCIF and other causes. Photo by Michael Nguyen

CENTENNIAL PLANS GATHER STEAM

The U.S. Mint will sell a Lions centennial commemorative coin in 2017, the centennial year. The design will be unveiled soon. Other centennial plans of LCI are moving ahead. A statue of Melvin Jones will be erected at LCI headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois. The first batch of pins for Membership Awards, signifying a new member has remained in good standing for a year, has been mailed. Large banners are being prepared both for board members and 2016-17 district governors to gather Lions' signatures on smaller pieces during their travels before being reassembled. Lions in various nations are working with government officials on commemorative stamps. Most of the 865 Lions districts and multiple districts worldwide have a centennial coordinator. The 100 Touchstone stories (see page 21) can be read or downloaded from Lions100.org, the source of current centennial information.



This centennial mug sells for \$6.95. A variety of LCI centennial items including shirts, hats, pens, rings, signs, decals and calendars are available from Club Supplies at Lions100.org and lcistore.org.

View a centennial timeline that highlights the important milestones in Lions' long history (October 2014 LION).

VIDEO MAGAZINE DEPICTS INTERESTING PROJECTS

Lions in Oregon collect cans to help kids, clubs in California empower deaf children at Camp Pacifica, and halfway across the world, Lions in Italy started a university for senior citizens that offers affordable courses on history, the arts and technology. These successful,



interesting projects are featured in the latest LQ, the Lions Quarterly Video Magazine. Also included is "Peace and International Understanding," the next in the series of centennial videos. The video covers the International Peace Poster contest, the relationship between Lions Clubs and the United Nations and other topics. Be sure to "like" and share LQ on social media. LQ is available on the LCI website, YouTube, iTunes and DVD.

Watch the latest LQ.



Overheard

"They were soaking wet, dripping from the rain, but they never stopped hammering. ... I really felt like the Queen of Sheba. All I had to pay for was the wood. I can't believe how nice these people are."

—Jane Pisarski on the ramp and deck built at her home by the Hazel Park Lions Club in Minnesota. From C & G Newspapers.

"It's not just for money but for support. Acknowledging him when you see him out there on the streets or in school. 'Hey, Johnny! How ya doing?' Simple as that. It's all he's really looking for."

—Lori Speelman, grateful after York White Rose Lions in Pennsylvania donated proceeds from their annual all-star basketball game to her family. Johnathon, her 12-year-old son, is going blind from retinitis pigmentosa. From WPMT Fox43.

"It takes a lot of self-determination and self-esteem—wanting more, realizing I'm not my disability. I'm not my blindness."

—Tiffany "Spivey" Mpofu of Three Rivers, Michigan, who completed her master's degree, works and got married. Blinded by an infection at age 9, she completed high school thanks to a close circuit TV donated by Lions. From The Three Rivers News.

MASSACHUSETTS CLUB RECALLS HISTORIC SEA RESCUE

Fairhaven Lions in Massachusetts recently bestowed a perfect gift on a Lion visiting from their town's sister city in Japan: a clock depicting a 19th-century whaling ship. The gift was in memory of Manjiro Nakahama, the first Japanese person to live in the United States. In 1841, Captain William Whitfield of Fairhaven rescued the 14-year-old Japanese boy from a desert island 370 miles south of Japan. Fairhaven, a sister city of Tosashimizu, Manjiro's village, holds a Manjiro Festival every other year with Japanese and American music and food, martial arts demonstrations and taiko drummers. At the last festival Bill Moniz, president of the Fairhaven Lions Club, gave the ornamental clock to Lion Takamitsu Isowaki, deputy mayor. Manjiro and three others had been shipwrecked by a terrible storm. Japan's borders were then closed, and leaving (or returning) was punishable by death. So

after sailing to Honolulu Manjiro accepted the captain's invitation to return with him to Fairhaven. He eventually returned to Tosashimizu, by which time his nation's policy of isolation had ended and he was valued for his fluency in English. He later accompanied the first Japanese delegation to America and became a samurai.



Manjiro Nakahama

STOLEN BELL CAPER SOLVED

The heist of a Rotary club bell in a small town in Arizona nearly 50 years ago finally has been solved. The culprit was a fun-loving Lion who was an Episcopal rector. "No one suspected that a priest would steal a bell," says Lion Serge Wright of the Sedona Oak Creek Canyon Lions Club. The story was told recently in the Sedona Red Rock News under the headline "Ding Dong, Cold Case Solved." It turns out that the Rev. Robert Greene was the one who pilfered the bell in 1968 and just as mysteriously returned it a few weeks later. "Our club liked to pull pranks on other Lions clubs—usually not Rotary," says Wright, an optometrist who became a Lion in 1973 and knew Greene for many years as a fellow member. Greene died a few months ago, and a youth from Greene's church who had been sworn to secrecy decided to come forward. "I've had a few Rotarians [as patients], and they had a good laugh about it," says Wright.

[First Roar

By the Numbers

5 Rank of the Bacon Mac & Cheese in a Cone, a creation of Agawam Lions, in a poll of new fair food at the Big E festival in West Springfield, Massachusetts. (The Maple Bacon Waffle Sundae of Amy's Sweet Treats finished first.)



60

Minutes it took for St. Clair Township workers to dig up a red, white and blue-colored time capsule buried by Calcutta Lions in Ohio in 1976 to mark America's bicentennial and scheduled to be opened in 2076. The school where the capsule had been was to be demolished, so Lions agreed to have the capsule reburied at a park.

2

Teams of Venturer Crew Scouts, sponsored by Bogalusa Lions, that competed in a dragon boat festival race with 38 adult teams on the Tchefuncte River in Madisonville, Louisiana.



155

Boxes of apples packed and sold by Lakewood First Lions in Washington to raise funds for Camp Leo, serving children with diabetes.

32

Twin mattresses (and eight box springs) given to the Bellingham YWCA, the county's largest emergency shelter for women, by Bellingham Central Lions and Wilson's Furniture in Washington.

15,000

Cars parked by Fargo Lions in North Dakota last summer for concerts at a local amphitheater, raising \$3,800 for a sight mission to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

87

Dictionaries given to third-graders at Hardin Elementary in Texas by Hardin Lions in the memory of former teacher Ruth Davis, whose husband, James, and daughters, club president Bonita and Jackie, are Hardin Lions.

140

Chicken halves served per hour (along with 300 corn fritters per hour) by Fairborn Lions in Ohio at its Sweet Corn Festival. The club also sells more than 8,000 ears of corn at the two-day event.

8,000

Pounds of barbecue served by Dumas Noon Lions in Texas at their 69th annual Dogie Days.

50

Players competing in the Sudbury Disc Golf Club Ace Race at the Lions' 18-hole disc golf course in Ontario, Canada.



60 Years Ago in the LION



APRIL 1956

Residents of Milton, Kentucky, relied on balky wells or cisterns for water for their homes. Then Lions in the town of 700 on the Ohio River financed a \$100,000 water system and installed it themselves by digging trenches for the 30,000-foot line of pipes and erecting a 67,000-gallon tank. Milton became the only town in the county with a water system. (Photo) Lion Wilbur Wood, the town board chairman in Milton, checks the pressure of a new fire hydrant.

Read "They Built Their Own Waterworks" from the April 1956 LION.

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Kevin Frost

Orleans Lion, Ontario, Canada

An elite speed skater, Kevin Frost, 48, races at speeds up to 32 miles per hour despite being almost completely blind and deaf. He credits his astounding success to having a positive attitude, training hard and helping others.



Kevin Frost is a three-time World Blind Champion in short track speed skating and ranks 13th in the world against able-bodied skaters. Lions have sponsored Frost in many competitions.

Compound Loss

I've worn hearing aids since I was 11 years old. When my night vision got bad when I was 27, I found out that I have Usher syndrome type 2, which causes hearing loss first and vision loss later. I currently have 9 percent of my hearing and 2.5 percent of my vision.

Hitting Rock Bottom

I had been a workaholic and was married with three kids. I lost my job and my driver's license. My marriage ended. I had refereed over 20,000 hockey games, and my dream was to be an NHL linesman. I had to give that up.

Finding Hope

I had to put my energy into something. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind gave me the tools to get back into society. I received my first miracle guide dog, Nemo. Then I tried skating.

Therapeutic Sport

When I'm speed skating, it feels like I'm driving again and I have my sight back. It's pure freedom.

Tenacity and Strategy

It's hard work. I've had a lot of falls. People ask how I do it. I count strides, learn the oval [rink], communicate with my coach

Created the nonprofit Visually Impaired Speed Skating Association to help the sport become a Paralympics event

Has conducted hearing aid missions to Mexico for 15 years

Has given more than 300 motivational talks around the world

through a wireless receiver on my hearing aid. I can't hear the starting gun so I feel for it. An orange flag is waved at the end for me.

More than Medals

I've won medals and set world records, but that's not why I do it. I'm working toward creating a movement for visually impaired skaters. It also enables me to help people—the young boy in Mexico who was transformed after helping him receive a hearing aid. The girl who overcame her embarrassment of using a white cane after I took her around town with our canes. And the girl who overcame her fear of dogs, thanks to Nemo.

Secret to Success

My childhood was tough. I was bullied and teased. When I speak to schools, I talk about turning a negative into a positive and succeeding no matter what. It's about karma: the more you give, the more that comes back to you.

Learn more about Frost at deafblindspeedskater.com.

Watch a video about Frost produced by Accessible Media, Inc.

Do you know a Lion who you think has a great story or deserves a bit of recognition? Email us a brief description of the Lion and the reason you're making the nomination to lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org. Please include "One of Us" in the subject line.

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[Service



Carol Kearns gets the camera rolling as Harry Schuh interviews District 23 B Governor Steve Daigle at a luau fundraiser.

Cable Show Connects Lions and Communities

Harry Schuh and Carol Kearns took their show on the road in 2013, and they haven't stopped yet. The duo's cable television show focused on all things Lions is seen by thousands in 36 communities on four cable franchises in Connecticut.

Schuh and Kearns, both Harwinton Lions, were thrust into the cable television spotlight when another Lion, Peter Ciancolo, retired from the show he hosted. Shortly after, the cable studio where they hosted the show closed for renovations for three months. “It turns out that that was the best thing that happened to us,” Kearns says. It got the pair, both world travelers who've been married for 36 years, out of the studio and into the communities they cover. They never went back to the studio.

The “Lion Around Connecticut with Carol and Harry” show is a 35-minute mix of entertainment and news about Lions, club activities and their community projects. Among the many Lions' events they cover are fishing derbies, pediatric eye screenings, pin trading, concerts, pancake breakfasts and a Halloween “haunted” barn and hayride. “We're both outgoing, so the show is really fun for us,” says Kearns. “We like telling Lions' stories and how they change people's lives.” In addition to Lions, they talk to people they meet onsite.

Nothing is scripted. They like the spontaneity of on-the-spot interviews. “One of our funniest moments was at the Terryville Fair when we tried to interview our friend, Past District Governor Len Johnson of the Terryville Lions Club. We didn't know it, but he was judging the skillet toss contest at the time,” says Kearns. “He happened to be dodging a flying skillet tossed by his wife, Lani, another Lion. It had a happy ending, though. She won the skillet toss in her age group, and we got our interview with Len afterwards.”

The show occasionally takes a more poignant turn, says Schuh. “A woman saw us in our Lions vests, carrying our TV camera and tripod. She asked if she could please tell us her story,” he recalls. Lions had saved her daughter's sight years ago by helping her get treatment and surgery.

They spend several hours each week shooting, editing and producing videos. “People come running over to us when we're out shopping to say, ‘Hey, I recognize you! I watch your show every week,’” he points out. “We just love what we do,” adds Kearns.

Puppy Love Lessons

Samantha Dalton admits she's a little shy. But when she and her Leader Dog, Natsumi, walked into a class full of excited, talkative kindergartners, Dalton's shyness quickly disappeared. She and Natsumi were there to provide a teachable moment at the request of the Roosevelt STEAM Academy in Indiana. STEAM schools offer accelerated science, technology, engineering, arts and math studies.

The visit was arranged by Dunlap Lion Jeanine Juel, who was asked by a school staff member if she knew of anyone with a Leader Dog to help kindergartners learn about the five senses for a science lesson. In fact, Juel knew exactly who to ask: Dalton, 23, a college student studying accounting and a member of her husband Marty's Elkhart Lions Club.



Elkhart Lion Samantha Dalton and her Leader Dog, Natsumi, visit with two kindergartners who learned about the pair's partnership at Roosevelt STEAM Academy in Indiana.

"I was very nervous at first," Dalton says. "I didn't know that I could even talk to a class full of kindergartners. I wanted to teach them something about what it's like not to have your sight, but still be able to relate to the world in a different way. I told them that Natsumi and I are partners when we're out together anywhere like at school or walking around, and she was a working dog only when she had her harness on.

"I think they were worried that Natsumi never got to play. At the end of my talk, I took her harness off, and the kids were so excited and happy to see her be a normal dog. Without her harness, Natsumi's just like any other dog and she loves to play. She gave kisses to every kindergartner there. They didn't want to say goodbye to her."

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FINLAND

This Huge, Four-Day Fair is Excellent

The largest agricultural fair in Finland spreads out on 56 acres at the Oripää Airport and features a wide range of farm animals, machinery, handicrafts and fairground rides.



The Oripää Lions Club has run the OKRA Agricultural Fair for nearly 35 years.

The four-day event showcases the latest innovations in agriculture, forestry, farm machinery, energy technology, cattle breeding and dairy and poultry production. It draws industry experts, government officials such as Finland's agricultural secretary, European Union administrators and 500 exhibitors from several nations including Italy, Croatia and Sweden. Last year 82,000 visitors came.

The 39-member Lions club partners with 30 other local groups to run the fair, which requires a staff of 350. The club gives each group 20 euros (US\$22) for each work hour. The networking is true to the theme of District 107 A: "Together we can reach our goals." Yet Lions are sure to emphasize their leadership role: children at the fair are given balloons with the Lions logo. The next OKRA Fair is in July.

This cow won a top award at the OKRA Fair.

ROMANIA

Blind Now Use the Internet

Hundreds of blind people in Romania are now using the Internet thanks to software developed and distributed by Lions clubs. The innovative BatPro software allows those with vision impairments to surf the Internet using the four arrow keys on the keyboard.

"It's very easy to use," says Radu Cristea of the Cluj-Napoca Transylvania Lions Club. "We had a blind person try it for the first time, and in two minutes they knew exactly how to use it."

The clubs were supported by a US\$50,000 grant from the Orange Foundation, established in Romania in 2012 to assist the blind and others not fully participating in digital communication. The clubs purchased more than 100 computers, installed the BatPro software and distributed the computers through associations for the blind and visually impaired.

The Arad Lions Club hired a programmer to design the software. The text-to-speech mechanism was developed and donated by a Lion from a company that designs software and hardware for the visually impaired.

Lions in Romania are devoting many volunteer hours to making BatPro accessible. They visit the homes of those with vision impairments to train them how to use it. The software can be downloaded for free as well.

"There was nothing like this in Romania," says Cristea, 40, a past club president and zone and region chairperson. He is the co-author of "Faces of Freedom, Lives of Courage," which details (in English) the hardships suffered by Romanians under communism and the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Cristea says the software is



Clubs in Romania are helping the blind use computers and the Internet.

superior in at least one respect to software for the blind available in the West. "The beauty of BatPro is the fact you only need four keys," he says. "Younger blind people get used to computers or have smart phones. We're targeting blind people over 45 that are captive in their home and only have the radio for information."

Part of Lions Clubs International since 1990, Romania has 1,186 Lions in 58 clubs.

NORDIC NATIONS

Multination Symphony Hits the Right Notes

As many as 1,000 students from throughout the Nordic nations compete each year to be selected for the Orkester Norden. The 90 members of the orchestra live and practice together for two weeks and then hit the road to play concerts for a week in Nordic and Baltic nations.

Making the orchestra is an honor. Being in it is intense, fun and highly advantageous to pursuing a musical career. “They get great instruction. World famous conductors manage the orchestra,” says Norwegian Lion Erik Evang, a retired teacher who helped begin the orchestra as a Lions project in the early 1990s.

The orchestra is an interesting collaboration of Lions from five nations: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. Along with support from the Nordic Council Cultural Foundation, the Lions share the costs—and share the orchestra. Every five years the musicians assemble in another Nordic nation. The current host is Alborg, Denmark.

Aside from the Nordic shows, thanks to its stellar reputation, the orchestra also often plays at prestigious events. It heralded the opening of the Nordic embassies in Berlin, celebrated the centennial of the birth of U.N. Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and toured China with expenses footed by its Ministry of Culture.

GHANA

Relief After Floods and Fire

Floods deluged Accra, the capital, drowning residents and destroying homes. Compounding the disaster, the rushing waters swept stored fuel at a gas station into a nearby fire. The huge explosion took the lives of people who had taken shelter from the rain.

Working with the Red Cross and bolstered by a \$10,000 Emergency grant from LCIF, the Accra Golden Lions Club distributed goods at a church auditorium to those in need. Two hundred sixty households received buckets, mosquito nets, blankets, soap, rice, cooking oil and water.

“The community was appreciative—especially because the distribution was orderly and stress-free,” says Abigail Amoah, region chairperson and a past club president. “For most, this was their first contact with Lions. They heard who Lions are and what we do.”



Rolf Gupta, a renowned conductor, led the Orkester Norden when it was based in Kristiansand, Norway.

Nearly a third of orchestra alumni now play for professional orchestras. Many develop lifelong friends. For some, such as a young woman from Latvia whose parents' lives were affected by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the orchestra is a turning point. Elina won a stipend to study music at the highly regarded university in St. Petersburg.

The Mississippi All-State Band is invaluable for youths (May 2007 LION). Read the story.

SOUTH SUDAN

Lions Counter Polio

Beset by a civil war, South Sudan, declared polio-free in 2009, saw two new cases of polio that led to paralysis in 2014. The Juba Host Lions Club, founded the year before as the nation's first club, has taken on polio.

Two Lions are nurses who have experience in vaccinations. Several members also received training from a World Health Organization specialist in administering vaccines, finger marking and tallying. The Lions travelled to a Juba nursery school and vaccinated 15 children. “The Lions vaccinated only 15 children because the rest were immunized,” says President Loku Abiya Awule.

The club will do more vaccinations during National Immunization Days. The club also holds blood donations, helps deworm schoolchildren and gives supplies to those affected by floods.



LIONS QUEST



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Lions Recycle the Earth

Lions can be found on the front lines of local recycling projects all around the world, reclaiming everything from scrap metal and old newspapers to medical devices and used cell phones.

The recycling effort Lions are best known for is the Recycle for Sight Program, which collects millions of used eyeglasses yearly for distribution in developing countries, where eye care is unaffordable or inaccessible for many people.

Simple and effective, the pioneering program that started in the 1930s remains a high-profile and frequently praised symbol of Lion practicality and service to others. “Unwanted or outdated eyeglasses, tucked away in drawers or closets, can make a tremendous difference in the life of someone in need,” Abigail Van Buren told readers of her syndicated “Dear Abby” column in 1996. The Lion eyeglass initiative is a “wonderful program,” she added.

Building on the success of that initiative, Lions in the early 2000s launched the Hearing Aid Recycling Program, which similarly collects and refurbishes donated hearing aids for distribution to those who lack funds to buy them.

Over time, however, Lions have taken up more conventional recycling chores, often led by Lions Green Teams. Around the globe, Lions Green Teams regularly gather and recycle huge quantities of scrap metal, paper and other reusable projects. Each April, Lions dedicate a month of service to protecting the planet as part of the Protecting Your Environment, an element of the Global Service Action Campaign. The campaign’s recycling efforts help save energy, reduce the amount of trash sent to landfills and conserve dwindling natural resources.

In Turkey, the Bursa Koza Lions Club collects plastic bottles for recycling “in order to prevent pollution of the environment and nature,” says club member Nuket Tuzlaciglu.

Recycling has another attraction for some clubs: Besides their environmental benefit, recycling programs often generate revenue that Lions can use to fund other good works.

In Arizona, the Prescott Noon Lions Club has collected and shipped nearly 53 million pounds of recyclable



The Boracay Malay
Amity Lions Club in the Philippines organized an environmental awareness campaign to make separating trash from recyclables fun.

newsprint and other paper. By collecting newspapers and magazines in bins all around town, the club has raised more than \$200,000 to support local charities.

“If the paper is recycled, that means we don’t cut down as many trees,” explains Prescott Noon Lion Bill Parker.

In India, the Aldona Lions Club launched a garbage reduction program in local schools. Officials noted the plan was “converting waste to wealth,” as the schools benefited from funds raised by the sale of recyclable materials. In Penn Yan, a village in upstate New York, local Lions asked neighbors in the Finger Lake region to “help us help others by donating your scrap metal so we can recycle it and turn it into cash.”

Recycling work can be difficult, but the benefits to the community and the earth make the effort worthwhile.

Read the rest of the 100 Touchstone stories written for Lions’ centennial at Lions100.org.

The King of Fairs: Cullman County

BY JAY COPP | PHOTOS JERONIMO NISA

Motor past the fertile fields of northern Alabama, pass the rigid rows of sweet potatoes, the broad swaths of hay fields and the rectangular pens of grazing cattle, drive through tidy downtown Cullman, the prosperous county seat with a population of 15,000, park at the fairgrounds with its four permanent exhibit halls and its open-sided theater and then saunter through the fair on a pillow-soft Southern night with a swollen harvest moon keeping vigil. You've come to a place you know, even if you've never been here. The people who have been here at least once certainly know the place and the people here. It's a home that's not home, a public space that becomes lodged in personal memories, a place where commonality with others is a blessed given.

The fair is a party for the senses, a warm rush of sights, sounds and smells, a dreamlike landscape simultaneously fresh and shopworn, disorienting and steadying, comfortingly familiar and enchantingly exotic. It's the bustling midway, the pride-at-stake canning contests and the highly anticipated Miss Cullman County Fair competition. It's bright lights and roaring sounds, cotton candy and corn dogs, goodhearted needling among old friends and robust bear hugs among buddies, shy first romances between teenagers and clumps of parents toting children and soaking up enduring memories. It's grimacing kids tugging sturdy but often stubborn livestock, rides that tilt, whirl and spin and talent shows, dog shows and rabbit shows, each unexpectedly hilarious or achingly winsome.

The fair is a celebration of the rich black soil and the bruising toil that produce huge bounties of sweet potatoes, and it's a salute to the industriousness and savvy that generate gazillions of poultry and cattle. It's where everyone is welcome and it's the one certain place, an autumn fixture, where an extended Alabama community can transcend backgrounds and occupations and social status and merge into a casual, spread-out assembly united by a sense of shared experience. A fair is "where America meets," National Geographic magazine once asserted in distilling the essence of the Cullman County Fair.

The Cullman Lions Club has run the 10-day fair since 1954. Attendance tops 40,000. Nearly all the club's 116 members as well as Leos and Lionesses work the event. Funds raised from the fair support Alabama Lions Sight, Cullman Caring for Kids (a food bank), eyeglasses for the needy and other causes. The club is able to distribute nearly \$90,000 annually.

The stature of the fair is commensurate to the success of the county's agriculture. Cullman County typically ranks among the nation's top three in poultry production. It's first or second in Alabama in acreage and production of sweet potatoes and hay and usually first in head of cattle. If America fancies itself as in some way still rooted in the soil, a land whose virtues and way of life can be traced to the glories and triumphs of farming, the Cullman County Fair has every right to strut its stuff, to make merry and to take gleeful stock of another year of bulging silos and kitchen tables laden with sustenance.

Renewed a few years ago, the Lions have a 50-year lease on the fairgrounds with the county. The fair is a harbinger, a promise not of change but of permanence. The fair has basically remained the same year after year even as the community has evolved. Cullman County was once bereft of industry. "The first [industry] was the King Edward Cigar Plant in the '50s," says Lion Jerry Bonner, the fair manager. Factories that make car parts for Japanese cars sprung up later. Bonner, who grew up on a farm and worked for Monsanto before retiring, has volunteered at the fair since he became a Lion in 1964. He knows not to mess with success or alter history, which not only unfolds in textbooks in school but also becomes revealed in the sights and sounds of the fair. Traditions soothe and exalt. "People come to see and remember the things they saw as kids," says Bonner.

Watch an excellent video of the fair.





Region Cervantes stands among the carnival lights at the Cullman County Fair.



A girl enjoys a ride on the merry-go-round.



Brothers Mason, 4, and Jackston, 2, Forester look on in amazement as Tone-Tone the Clown makes a balloon animal. Their parents, Lindsey and Dustin, look on.



Scarlett the cow tries to lick Campbell Caver's hand.



Fair manager Jerry Bonner talks to fairgoers.

The fair is a party for the senses, a warm rush of sights, sounds and smells.



Some competitors have entered the best canning contests for nearly half a century. Neighbors relish outdoing neighbors. "The ribbon is more important than the prize money," says Lion Jerry Bonner. "They'll misplace their ribbon and come to us. They're not worried about the money."



Heather Williams (left) and Debbie Maddox take pictures of an enormous watermelon.



Dalton Baldwin, right, and Donovan Holmes climb the ropes of one of the attractions.



Pete the lamb meets Haleigh Cheatham, 5.





(Left) Noah McCullar, 9, manages to get hold of his lamb after he ran loose.



Jay Conway hands out ribbons at the Junior Lamb and Sheep Show.

...kids tugging sturdy but often stubborn livestock, rides that tilt, whirl and spin and talent shows, dog shows and rabbit shows, each unexpectedly hilarious or achinglly winsome.

(From left) Steven Cartee, Dave Gratz and Phillip Sessions have their picture taken at the Rabbit Show with May Dawsey and her rabbit.



May Dawsey brushes one of her rabbits before the Rabbit Show.



(Opposite) Ashlyn Smith waits for the Junior Fair Princess pageant to start.

A pageant contestant is shielded from the rain as she arrives at the fair.



Caroline Bryant hugs Grandpa Cratchet.





Terry Slaten works the door of one of the exhibit halls.



Fuller Smith performs gate duty.

The Cullman Lions Club has run the 10-day fair since 1954. Attendance tops 40,000. Nearly all the club's 116 members as well as Leos and Lionesses work the event.



Charlie Childers works at the registration window.



Gordon Boyd and Lioness Dottie Henke work at the fair office.

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THE BIONIC EYE *is a REALITY*

Thanks in part to Lions, about 150 people, once blind, are benefiting from an ingenious device.

BY ANDREA APPLETON

Anthony Andreottola, 55, has been blind for more than a decade. The mental health therapist has retinitis pigmentosa (RP), an inherited eye disease that slowly deteriorates the light-sensing cells of the retina. Most of the time, Andreottola gets around reasonably well with a cane. But last winter was one of the harshest on record in Boston, where he lives. More than nine feet of snow fell.

"I had a miserable winter, the worst in my life," Andreottola says. "Even relying on Uber or taxis, I couldn't get where I needed to go. They were leaving me in places where I couldn't navigate with a cane."

So when Andreottola's ophthalmologist mentioned the "bionic eye," a new technology specifically for people with RP, he was intrigued. The device, officially dubbed the Argus II, consists of an electrode array that is surgically implanted in the eye. In concert with external components, the array stimulates the retina with electrical pulses. The visual gains that result are modest, by the standards of the sighted. But, like the roughly 150 people who'd undergone the procedure before him, Andreottola thought it sounded worth it.

"Basically my realistic hopes are that I can use it to navigate downtown Boston without getting hit by a bus," he said in October, a few weeks before his surgery. "Anything more than that is extra."

About 100,000 patients in the United States have RP. Only those in the late stages—about 10,000 people—stand to benefit from the Argus II.

"It's a rare disease but it's also the disease from hell," says Gislin Dagnelie, associate director of the Lions Vision Research and Rehabilitation Center, a division of the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore. Night blindness is one of the early symptoms, followed by a slow nar-

rowing of the visual field. Tunnel vision eventually gives way to blindness. "These patients find out when they're in their teens, their 20s, that they're going to be blind. And they're going to be blind little by little. Every time they adjust to a new level of vision loss, it gets worse."

Dagnelie, who is also an associate professor of ophthalmology at Johns Hopkins, has worked for decades on developing the bionic eye. His early work on the project was supported by the Lions Vision Research Foundation, which created a \$4 million endowment fund in 1994 to finance the research center he helps head. While raising the endowment, the foundation paid the center \$200,000 a year for pilot projects. "I'm always really happy to see the support that we get from the Lions," Dagnelie says. He became a member of the Suburban Lions Club in 2013.

Dagnelie and his colleagues began testing how electrical currents affected the vision of RP patients in the early 1990s. Robert Greenberg, co-founder of Second Sight, the company based in Sylmar, California, that makes the Argus II, was in medical school when those experiments began. He recalls an early example. "I'd never been in an operating room at the time so I was very excited," he says. A surgeon held a probe over the eye of a patient under local anesthesia and applied an electrical current. "The patient said, 'I see a spot of light,'" Greenberg says. "With the second wire, the patient saw two spots. From then on, I was hooked."

At the time, Greenberg estimated it would take about a million dollars and a year to build a product. The FDA approved the Argus II for consumer use in 2013, nearly 25 years and \$200 million later. "I didn't really understand what the challenges were going into it," Greenberg laughs.

(Opposite) Anthony Andreottola has received the "bionic eye." Alongside him is Lion Gislin Dagnelie, associate director of the Lions Vision Research and Rehabilitation Center.

'Basically my realistic hopes are that I can use it to navigate downtown Boston without getting hit by a bus ... anything more than that is extra.'

About a dozen medical centers in the United States and a number in Europe currently perform the surgery to implant the device. (Retinal surgeon James Tahara Handa, a professor of ophthalmology at the Wilmer Eye Institute, performed Andreottola's surgery and many others.) A pill-sized implant embedded with an array of 60 electrodes is attached to the surface of the retina. Post-surgery, the patient dons a pair of glasses with a miniature video camera attached. The video camera sends video to a processor on the wearer's belt, which reduces the image from normal resolution to a crude version the 60-pixel array can handle. The processor then sends that data to an antenna coil on the glasses, which beams it into the eye wirelessly. The signals go next to the electrode array, which emits pulses of electricity. The pulses stimulate the retina's remaining healthy cells. These transmit the visual information to the brain much as they would in a healthy eye.

The design of the retinal implant was inspired by the cochlear implant, which also uses an electrode array to

transmit signals to the brain. Like early versions of the cochlear implant, the Argus II has major limitations. The most obvious is the vision itself.

"The quality of the image is best described as moving shadows," Dagnelie says. "It's gray, light and dark gray, and things are moving." Details like facial features are impossible to make out.

Getting the most out of the Argus II also requires a good deal of dedication. In the days after his surgery, Andreottola was hopeful but struggling to interpret the odd flashes of light the electrodes deliver.

"It's hard to come up with words to describe what I see," he says. "You know when you're dancing in the nightclub and they put on the strobe lights and it looks like everything's in slow motion? It's kind of like that." Early on, Andreottola had been able to avoid walking into a closed office door because he detected the shimmer of the glass panel, and he'd seen the shapes of cars and people and doorways. But images often seemed to vanish unexpectedly,



Gislin checks Andreottola's vision with assistance from Michael Barry, a graduate student.

and a given scene didn't look consistently the same from one moment to the next.

It can take a year of training to learn to get the most out of the Argus II. For instance, implant recipients must learn to move their heads regularly to refresh the image they see rather than moving their eyes. Otherwise the brain misinterprets the signals it's receiving, and stationary objects appear to move.

"Most of the patients who are successful with this are already successful blind people," Dagnelie says. "So it's not like this is a fundamental change of their lives."

But the Argus II does give users a sense of their spatial environment, and that can make a big difference in daily life. They can generally see the white paint of a crosswalk, the crude shape of a chair in their path, the contrast of a white plate on a dark tablecloth.

"I can avoid hitting things or walking into a wall," says Nancy Tate, 69. Tate got the implant in 2007 as part of a clinical trial. "It gives me more mobility and I can pick up speed a little more than I otherwise would be able to with a cane."

At the moment, the procedure is limited to those with around \$180,000 to spend or the tenacity to take on their insurance company. As yet, there is no national policy on coverage of the Argus II, though Dagnelie suspects one will take shape over the next couple of years. (Andreottola succeeded in getting coverage from his insurance company, but not without the intervention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Health Policy Commission. "It was quite the battle," he says.)

Meanwhile, researchers are continuing to improve the Argus II. "One of the nice things about it is that it's software updatable," Greenberg says. He is confident that future software updates will provide users with some color vision, among other improvements. Dagnelie, for his part, hopes the device will soon be able to record how the retina responds when it is electrically stimulated. With that feedback, researchers should be able to gain a better understanding of a particular patient's retinal degeneration and tailor the processor's signals to match.

One glaring limitation of the technology is, of course, that it is designed for a tiny subset of the blind. That may

soon change. "The vision for the company was always to treat all blindness," Greenberg says. "We started with RP because of the nature of the disease."

Those in the late stages of RP have a more or less intact retina, but next to no vision. This made it a good candidate for early experimentation with electrical stimulation. Unlike, say, macular degeneration, which preserves some peripheral vision, patients with advanced RP had little to lose. Now that the device appears to be safe, researchers are expanding their horizons. A small study using the Argus II with age-related macular degeneration patients was launched this year.

Because of its design, the Argus II will likely always be limited to those who have an intact retina that is attached to the back of the eye as well as a functioning optic nerve. This excludes patients who have had severe eye trauma or suffer from diseases affecting the optic nerve such as glaucoma. But Second Sight is working on developing a similar technology they hope will help virtually any blind person. The Orion I functions much like the Argus II, but bypasses the optic nerve and the eye entirely, connecting directly to the visual cortex of the brain. Animal trials are ongoing, and the company hopes to launch a human trial by late 2016.

Greenberg may have greatly underestimated how long it would take to produce a bionic eye, but he continues to dream big. "The Six Million Dollar Man," a TV show from the 1970s starring a man with a technologically-enhanced body including a bionic eye equipped with a zoom lens, is one source of inspiration. "My dream would be to get to a point where the vision is actually better than normal," he says. "I think we can, but it's going to take a lot of effort."

In the meantime, early adopters of the Argus II appear to be getting some slightly more modest benefits. "It hasn't opened a new world to me, but it's giving me a couple of peeks," Andreottola says. "And if it keeps me from falling in one subway pit, then it's worth a million dollars."

Andrea Appleton is a freelance journalist based in Baltimore.

The "bionic eye" works thanks to a pair of glasses with an attached miniature video camera and a processor on the wearer's belt.



THE NEW BEN-HURS

The ancient sport of chariot racing still rumbles in Wyoming, thanks to Saratoga Lions.

BY JOSH RHOTEN

Hand-lettered signs guide you up to the quarter-mile race-track just outside the town of Saratoga.

The words “Chariot races” are neatly printed on each one and a red arrow points helpfully. The road takes you past the city's famous hot springs and across a ridge over Lake Saratoga, opaque in the winter cold, save for the red dots of ice fishing huts.

On the right, one last sign points up to the Buck Springs Rodeo Arena, a windswept patch of land that has hosted the Saratoga chariot races for 34 years in the shadow of the Snowy Range.

The track was gouged out from soft dirt, then pounded flat and smooth. The paths around it are muddy from a snowstorm that has long since left for Laramie.



Cars, mostly bearing the Carbon County No. 6 license plates, are pulling up to the track, their tires sinking slightly as they come to a stop.

Passengers climb out and begin unfolding chairs and unloading coolers, heavy with cans bearing blue and silver labels. Tailgating is a constant here, just as it is at the modern gladiator sport of football.

Down the track at the finish line, the volume is suddenly turned up on the PA system, then down again, its operator searching for the right level. An auctioneer is working hard for every bid on the first race of the day, his voice drifting in the wind.

The bids trail off as the teams, two horses apiece, trot down the track to the start. Rounding the chutes, they hold for three seconds before exploding from gate with a metallic crunch as the doors swing on their hinges. The powerful creatures are on full display as they tear and rip at the earth beneath them, each fighting for purchase as they bound forward.

Their breath is hot steam.

The noise is deafening.

The crowd's roar of approval is whipped up and away by the wind.

Just over 22 seconds later, the sprint has ended. The 34th annual Donald E. Erickson Memorial Chariot Races have begun.

Any question you may have about the races, Joe Glode is the man to see for just about everything at the races. A former racer himself, he now heads up the Lions club's efforts to put the event on each year.

The two-day event serves as a fundraiser for the club and it's held every President's Day weekend. Before this track was built by the club, chariots ran at the Saratoga Airport.

"But it was sort of a hassle to get that track flat and maintained every year, so we figured we could make our own and keep it up a lot easier," Glode says. "You would be amazed how much of a difference even a little extra dirt on one side or the other of the track can make to the overall times."

Competitors come from across the state and, occasionally, from Colorado. Saratoga is one of the few places in Wyoming still hosting an event, and the sport has been in a steady decline for a variety of reasons.

"It wasn't unusual for us to get 60 teams in here in the past, but we are down to 21 this year," Glode says. "A lot of people with the time and resources to train horses are more likely to do something like team roping or barrel racing because they pay out more and there are more opportunities to do it."

Lions ask for donations in the community leading up to the races and collect a \$5 entry fee at the gate. The club also gets a portion of the "Calcutta" betting that goes on before each race and in the evenings downtown. Another \$4,000 comes from the Carbon County Visitors Council to help with marketing and filling up hotel rooms.

"Take away our costs and the \$8,000 we pay the winners, and I would say about \$5,000 goes back into the community for things like scholarships and other activities for kids," Glode says.

Stacy Crimmins, the executive director of the Saratoga/Platte Valley Chamber of Commerce, says out-of-town guests to the city were actually rather common for the races.

"We advertise it regionally and across the state, and we find that people come from all over for this," she says. "Pretty good for something that started as a way to keep busy in the winter."

After the races, Calcutta betting is the main attraction. Using an auction-based betting style, it's popular in college basketball pools, horse racing and golf. Entrants bid to "buy" teams. The payout of the pool is based on the results of the race.

In Saratoga, bids for teams normally range from \$100 to \$300, though when things were good it wasn't unusual to see bids reach \$1,000.

On this Saturday morning, many mill around the auction block, flicking bid cards and sipping drinks. Their attention is split until the last call when the chariots come trotting by, headed for the gate. That's when everything comes to a stop.

Chariot racing was an extreme and dangerous sport in ancient Rome, with the very real possibility of drivers' deaths hanging over every race.

Held at the Circus Maximus with 200,000 spectators, racers would make seven laps of the oval, often with 12 chariots at a time. In a collision, drivers were often bucked off, falling to the earth, where they were lucky to not get trampled.

The classic scene from "Ben-Hur," as brutal as it is, probably sells the sport short in terms of danger, but not excitement.

There are few differences between the chariots used thousands of years ago and the ones used today. They are still open-backed and light. Drivers often lean way out to flick at their teams with whips. They are not strapped in for fear of being dragged down the course.

There is one constant debate as the horses thunder past: How fast are they going?

*There are few differences
between the chariots used
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and the ones used today.
They are still open-backed
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They are not strapped in
for fear of being dragged
down the course.*

(Opposite) The chariots rumble close to 40 mph.

Photo by Michael Smith

Lower estimates put the speed of the chariot at about 30 mph, though some drivers put it closer to 40 without a hint of exaggeration. Still, that's a high speed for something weighing about 60 pounds, balancing on smaller wheels that appear to belong on a bicycle.

For 30 years, Ron Garretson drove a chariot in these races and others around the state before retiring from the sport a few years ago. He remembers when this race was one of the biggest on the circuit and attributes the dropoff in attendance to the cost of the hobby.

"Of course, all hobbies are expensive; that's the point," he says. "But you have to buy the horses and equipment. Then you have to get them here and there, give them a little food and maybe feed yourself something. That is a lot of money when you start to look at it."

The chariots and tack cost about \$1,500, while the horses can run anywhere from \$2,500 to \$5,000 apiece. The breeds most often associated with the races are Quarter Horses, Painted Horses and Appaloosa because of the short racing distance. There are occasionally thoroughbreds in there as well, and Garretson says most drivers are just trying to find a good pairing.

Some teams travel from as far away as Star Valley, the birthplace of the Wyoming races. Farmers in this area along the western part of Wyoming border began racing their

horses with sleds and skis, also known as cutters, around 1920. The small town of Thayne in that area claims to have hosted the very first race and now features a museum dedicated to the sport.

The switch to wheeled chariots came around 1980, just as the Saratoga races were hitting their stride. Wheels meant less friction and removed the need to truck in snow in a dry winter.

Roy Morgan of Guernsey has been racing since 1984 and brings several teams to the few events left in the state. His father raced before him. He calls the event a good "family sport" but stressed that it was struggling to stay viable.

"There are fewer events, which means fewer people come out. That means fewer young people are seeing it and becoming interested in it," he says. "That, plus the rising cost of everything from gas to feed, has really hurt things for us."

Morgan declined to talk about wrecks that he had been in personally but says the sport wasn't that dangerous. What he would say is that it is an adrenaline rush like no other.

"Everyone I have ever taught how to do it or let do it has wanted to try some more," he says. "It's unreal."

The paying crowd may drift toward the finish line, eager to see the beasts in full stride, but the old hands know the action is at the starting gate.

There are few places on the track where you can feel the horses' energy and power quite like the chutes.

"They are supposed to stand in there for a three count before being open, but man, am I glad I'm not responsible for that," says Lion Randy Raymer. "It is so close with these guys that anything off with that makes people a little grumpy."

Raymer heads up a group of club members and other drivers who climb on the chutes as the teams pull in. They do whatever the driver needs them to, from steadying the animals to raking over the three-inch divots the horses leave in the ground when they burst from the gate.

Teams come and go about every 15 minutes, launching themselves two abreast down the track. The pattern resets with the next teams pacing to keep warm during bidding, trotting up to the gates, holding, then flying. With the last run of the day over, everyone pulls out to head for a nap or break before meeting again for a community dinner and fresh round of Calcutta betting in the evening.

Sunday's weather promises to be warmer. "The second day is always better I think," Raymer says. "That's when the horses know they are racing. That's when they really get going."

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The spirit of Ben-Hur (aka as Charlton Heston) is alive at the races.

View a video of the 34th annual
Donald E. Erickson Memorial Chariot Races.



✓Yes



✓Yes



xNo



✓Yes



✓Yes



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Over 51,000 Lions have made an impact in their community this year by inviting a new Lion to join their club.

It's simple to expand your club's service, just ask a family member, friend or neighbor to join you as a Lion.

Ask one to become a Lion today!

Visit Lionsclubs.org/AskOne for ideas, resources and more!



Apparel 23,945 *

Vests	8,249
Headwear	7,052
Shirts	1,987
Aprons	1,613
Neckwear	1,306

International President Commemorative Items 9,587

Commemorative Lapel Tacks	6,253
Key Rings	622
Mens' Neckwear	404
Ladies' Scarves	351
Hats & Caps	213

Lapel Tacks 44,224

Member Lapel Tacks	32,043
Club Lapel Tacks	8,695
Charter Lapel Tacks	1,389
Titled Tabs	956
Stick Pins	393

Writing Supplies 16,607

Pens, Pencils & Sets	15,060
Note Cards	906
Paper Pads	641

Personal Accessories 5,782

Miscellaneous	4,321
Holiday Ornaments	600
Flashlights	340
Umbrellas	311
Pocket Knives	300

Ladies' Jewelry & Accessories 7,854

Pins & Brooches	6,395
Necklaces & Pendants	382
Purse Holders	332
Earrings	313
Bracelets	285

Top Selling Lions Clubs International Club Supplies

Grand Total: 630,885

*Because several "other" categories are not included, the individual department totals do not add up to the grand total.



5,752 Drinkware

2,673 Coffee Mugs & Cups
1,675 Can & Bottle Holders
723 Sports Bottles
681 Glassware

39,133 Patches & Emblems

24,223 Decals
8,348 Embroidered Emblems
3,347 Officer Tabs
1,483 District Embroidered Emblems
729 Emblem Seals

81,328 Awards & Medals

52,891 Attendance Awards
15,540 Certificates & Holders
5,663 Medals
3,280 Ribbons
3,245 Monarch Chevron Awards

19,449 Leo Supplies

11,289 Officer Lapel Tacks
6,400 Leo New Member Kits
454 Emblems
435 Decals
277 Certificates

81,285 Club Meeting Supplies

24,784 Calendars
14,381 Name Badges
11,638 Peace Poster Contest Kits
8,343 Business Cards
6,592 Party Supplies

5,772 Plaques & Awards

1,139 General Purpose Generic
1,106 Lion of the Year
849 Appreciation & Thanks
592 President's Service Recognition
472 President's Appreciation

pieces sold last fiscal year



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USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum

Service and Smiles in 'Must See Omaha'

BY PAMELA MOHR

When you think of Omaha, your first thought may be “beef.” Omaha’s stockyards became famous in the 20th century as the world’s largest meatpacking district. Sure, beef is still big here, but there are now several Fortune 500 businesses and finance, tech and insurance companies headquartered in the greater Omaha metropolitan area. Omaha, which once served as the gateway to the American West, now will be a gateway to learning as an estimated 2,500 Lions attend the 40th annual USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum from Sept. 15 to 17.

With the theme of Leadership for Service, the forum offers attendees the opportunity to not only learn exciting new ways to serve as a Lion, but they’ll also be able to actually serve as part of the Centennial Acts of Service. Three large projects are scheduled for “Hands On Saturday.” Lions can participate in KidSight screenings, make

100,000 meals to feed the hungry and recycle both eyeglasses and metals.

“We want to better equip Lions to accomplish the goal of the Centennial Service Challenge—100 million acts of service. We’re dedicating a large part of the forum to giving Lions more tools to help serve those in need,” says Dr. Gary Anderson, forum chairperson. “Each attendee will be given a PAWS device to keep, which is an electronic ‘fob’ that accesses the Internet through Wi-Fi. It has an app that shows the convention center layout with all room locations. Every seminar handout is downloadable, and it can scan an exhibitor’s promo material and evaluations on all seminars and the whole forum.” Attendees can read all downloaded material on their synced phone, iPad or electronic device.

Forum organizers call this city “Must See Omaha” because it’s so rich in history, culture and adventure. There are countless things to see and do. Walk across a swinging rope



(Opposite) Omaha's riverfront provides beautiful views as well as recreational opportunities.

bridge suspended over a tropical rainforest at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium or step aboard historic train cars at the Durham Museum. Explore more than 100 acres of botanical beauty at the Lauritzen Gardens, where you'll even see a majestic lion (the four-legged kind) fountain presiding over a pool of water. Discover 11,000 exquisite works of art inside the Joslyn Art Museum, one of Omaha's premier attractions for more than 80 years. Admission is free for most exhibits and you can enjoy a spacious café, gift shop and outdoor sculpture gardens.

Lions will be surrounded by public art. The 250,000-square-foot CenturyLink Center and arena where the forum is scheduled is hosting a \$2 million, 40-piece art exhibit called "Illumina." The center is connected to the AAA-rated "four diamond" Hilton Hotel, just one of the 11 designated forum hotels Lions can book through their online registration.

Omaha's central U. S. location, across the Missouri River from Council Bluffs, Iowa, is what makes it such a

Sharpen Your Leadership Skills

You can begin your forum experience on Thursday, Sept. 15, by participating in the annual Strides Walk for diabetes awareness at noon. Later that evening, enjoy the first of four compelling presentations. Billy Riggs, a world-class illusionist, interacts with his audience during his motivational, inspirational talk. Friday's luncheon speaker is Jay Blake, a Barnstable-Yarmouth Lion in Massachusetts who was profiled in the July/August 2015 issue of LION Magazine. He lost his sight and sense of smell and taste when a tire exploded and now motivates people to "follow a dream," which, not coincidentally, is the name of the race car he owns and works on as the pit crew's chief mechanic. The Chevy Camaro hot rod will be on display throughout the forum in the exhibit hall.

The highlight of Saturday's luncheon is First Vice President Robert E. "Bob" Corlew, who'll detail his theme and programs for Lions' exciting and eagerly-anticipated Centennial Celebration during his 2016-17 presidential year.

Omaha, which once served as the gateway to the American West, now will be a gateway to learning as an estimated 2,500 Lions attend the 40th annual USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum.

convenient city to visit. First it drew pioneers, and then tourists. In 1883, William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody brought in more than 8,000 paying customers to see his famous Wild West Show. The city hosted the 1898 Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition, a World's Fair that drew more than 2.6 million eager visitors, including U. S. President William F. McKinley, for the five months the exhibitions were open.

Omaha is definitely a city for foodies, with restaurants to please any palate and pocketbook. Of course you'll enjoy top-notch burgers and steaks, but there are pizzerias, seafood and ethnic restaurants, and the usual fast food chains and homey pubs. Trip Advisor ranks vegan restaurant Modern Love No. 18 on the list of more than 1,200 Omaha eateries to visit. Try the homemade root beer sarsaparilla, so you can actually taste a little bit of the Old West. It's what cowboys ordered in saloons when they weren't sampling something stronger. And if you still crave a "cheeseburger," try the lentil patty with smoky cashew cheese.

If you like your burger topped with ham and a fried egg, try Dinker's, a small neighborhood bar and grill open since 1965. Its Haystack is one of Midwest Living Magazine's "best burger" winners, but there are plenty of different burgers and specials to try. Most of the menu's meals are well under \$10. Check out Omaha's historic Old Market District for more great restaurants and shops.

Saturday evening's concluding banquet's keynote speaker is Dick Abel, a retired Air Force brigadier general, who'll emphasize all the ways in which leadership skills can improve every aspect of life.

Seminar chairperson Terry Graham says that young Lions and Leos will find seminars and activities specifically geared toward them. "Seminars are dedicated to Lions of all levels," he says of the more than 60 presentations. "You can learn how to effectively serve your club by recruiting new members, manage projects, and work with local and social media and form new partnerships."

Panel discussions are planned on Lions Quest, environmental projects, planning successful overseas mission trips, organizing and working with Leo clubs and initiating a KidSight screening program. Discover innovative approaches to recycling and attend the "Gizmos and Gadgets for Low Vision" seminar to learn about the latest advances in helpful products.

GMT and GLT coordinators will share ideas on how to promote membership and goals. Attendees will also learn about legal and ethical issues, LCIF and how to use MyLCI to report on membership and service activities.

Come to Omaha to find inspiration and motivation to meet the Centennial Service Challenge to serve 100 million people by June 2018—and learn how to lead Lions into the second century of service. Visit lionforum.org to register and learn more about what awaits you.

Watch a video on Omaha and the forum.

Help and Hope are Just a Phone Call Away

BY CASSANDRA ROTOLO

Will Jackson was only 18 years old when he was diagnosed with glaucoma. He came to terms with his poor vision, and for more than 30 years he has lived a relatively ordinary life. He has two sons and a fiancé, loves to cook and has mastered using public transportation to travel around Baltimore.

But recently, Jackson found it increasingly difficult to do everyday activities such as reading the newspaper, reviewing bills and writing checks. When his ophthalmologist recommended he seek low-vision rehabilitation services at the Lions Vision Center within the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute in Baltimore, Jackson didn't think there would be much they could do for him. He had adapted to living with glaucoma so well that he had never sought assistance outside of his eye doctor. Nevertheless, he made an appointment to see a low-vision specialist.

A few days later, Jackson received a phone call from Past District Governor Ken Chew. He called on behalf of the Low Vision Rehabilitation Network (LOVRNET), an initiative of the Lions of Multiple District (MD) 22 and a partner of the Lions Vision Center. Lions LOVRNET is a model for a new community-based health-care program to address the current shortage of low-vision rehabilitation services in Delaware, Maryland and the District of Columbia. The program creates a single referral resource for both eye care providers and patients and coordinates care by matching patients to appropriate trained service providers in their area.

The phone screening interview with Chew took about an hour. Jackson learned about tasks that he could



The Lions Vision Center at the Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute provides important rehabilitation services to people who are blind or visually impaired throughout the greater Baltimore area.

Photo courtesy of Lion Marie Chew

get help with and tools that were available to him. Special cameras, magnifying glasses and even a talking watch could help him remain self-sufficient. With the help of adaptive tools from the Lions Vision Center, Jackson hopes to one day be able to watch a football game. “The experience has been personal. I get to talk to people and laugh with them,” he explains. “It’s more than just filling out forms at a doctor’s office. I feel like a person, not a number.”

The Lions of MD 22 received a US\$567,647 SightFirst grant to establish the Lions LOVRNET. In addition to developing a single referral resource, Lions LOVRNET also trains and supports local optometrists, ophthalmologists and other eye care providers so they can offer high quality and effective low-vision rehabilitation services as part of their practices.

The LOVRNET project was inspired by a previous collaboration between MD 22 and Johns Hopkins to develop a public education program

on low vision and blindness. That effort, supported by an LCIF US\$200,000 Core 4 grant, mobilized local Lions to educate the community on eye health and low-vision rehabilitation.

The unexpected value for Lions, according to Chew, is connecting to people on the other end of the line. “I have been a Lion for almost 25 years. My club is great at raising money and writing checks—and that’s important. But connecting with people is important, too,” says Chew. “Seeing a patient’s journey is a reminder of the impact we’re having. We have the potential to do a lot of good.”

Jackson’s eyesight may be impaired, but his vision of living a self-reliant life is thriving. With Lions and LCIF on his side, his future is bright. To find out how your district or multiple district can help address the need for low-vision services in your area, visit lcif.org. To learn more about Lions LOVRNET, visit lovrnet.org.

Lions in Zimbabwe Help Vaccinate More Than 5 Million

BY ERIC MARGULES

Hidden in cities and villages across Zimbabwe, many beyond the reach of modern technology, more than 5 million children under the age of 15 face the threat of death from devastating diseases. Many of these diseases, such as measles, can be easily prevented by a series of inexpensive vaccinations.

Luckily, where there's a need, there's a Lion.

Lions knew something had to be done, but stopping the spread of a disease such as measles requires resources and collaboration on an almost unimaginable scale. That's why, since 2013, Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) has partnered with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, to meet the challenge of measles in Zimbabwe—and around the world—head-on.

Last September, LCIF, the Lions of Zimbabwe and Gavi partnered with Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and Child Care to begin a massive five-day catch-up campaign to provide 5.2 million children with the measles-rubella vaccine and vitamin A supplements. With the Ministry of Health and Child Care coordinating the campaign, Gavi supplied millions of the vaccinations and vitamin supplements, while Lions took to the streets to mobilize volunteers and spread the word about the campaign.

With the help of a \$100,000 grant from LCIF, Lions in Zimbabwe blanketed the airways, roadways and even cellphones with reminders about the campaign. To spread the word to families without access to television or radio, Lions and Leos teamed up to canvas marketplaces and other public spaces with fliers.

"There has been huge participation from Lions clubs, and the response from the community has been outstanding," says Jonah Machaya, second vice district 412 governor. "We've sent out SMSs. We've done billboards. We've sent out radio feeds. We've sent out cellphone feeds. We have been in touch with most of the community of Zimbabwe."

According to Zimbabwe's Ministry of Health and Child Care, who reported that all of the target population received vaccinations and nearly 90 percent received the vitamin supplement, it's clear that Lions' efforts were successful.

"We saw an advert in the newspaper and we felt that it's our duty as parents to make sure [our] kids are vaccinated against the measles," says one parent whose children received their vaccines during the campaign. "It has benefited us immensely because it is just a short distance from where we stay and also it is free of charge. The support is fantastic."

The success of the measles-rubella campaign demonstrates what Lions and partners can accomplish when they come together for the good of their communities. Much still remains to be done to combat measles around the world. As a part of their partnership, LCIF and its volunteers are raising \$30 million to help Gavi fund similar campaigns in some of the world's poorest countries. Funds raised by Lions will be matched by the United Kingdom's Department for International Develop-

ment and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to bring the total to \$60 million. To learn more about how LCIF and Gavi are working together to combat measles visit lcif.org/EN/our-work/humanitarian-efforts/measles.php.



Lions in Zimbabwe prepare a child to receive the measles-rubella vaccination at a school outside Harare.

A Club Catches the Wave of the Future

Twelve years ago, the 28 aging Kamehameha Lions in Hawaii were feeling stagnant, tired and stuck in the past. But before calling it quits, they decided to implement some radical changes. "Our club had so much history, legacy and pride that it was worth taking a shot to save it," says Jim Bryan. Today, the vibrant, busy club on the island of Oahu boasts 197 members and a median age under 40. How did they do it? Bryan shares four of the club's biggest changes that led to their success.

Families First

"LCI had just introduced the family dues discount program. It was a no-brainer. Most spouses joined immediately, doubling our ranks. Then they started bringing in their friends as members. All of this new infusion of members spurred new ideas and opportunities in community outreach and networking."

Less Meetings, More Service

"Our de-emphasis on meetings occurred when a young professional member left the club after being scolded by a senior Lion for missing meetings. It was an immediate eye-opener. In full agreement, we developed online resources to keep our membership informed and engaged without having them attend meetings. As our Lions realized the rewards come from 'We Serve' instead of 'We Meet,' the participation level kept increasing."

Going Online

"We have many members who have never been to a meeting, yet they contribute time and talent to our projects all the time. We use an internal website to keep members informed. Members can check the site and fill out forms to RSVP for projects. This electronic process has increased service project participation by over 25 percent. We also not only have a Facebook page, but we encourage members to share posts on their personal pages to further our outreach."

The Leo 'Ohana'

"Our four Leo clubs are not separate from our Lions club, but rather our equals in everything we do. In Hawaii, the word is 'ohana,' meaning a great extended family. There are no projects the Leos do without our Lions participating, and vice versa. As a result, it's an easy transition for them to become Lions because they already feel like Lions. We have 44 Leo-to-Lions so far. We've also made sure dues are never an obstacle for joining by creating a Leo-to-Lions endowment fund. We're all in this wonderful world of service together!"

Sacred Hearts Academy Leos (from left) Kennedy Cambra-Cho and Ally Montiel and Kamehameha Lion Whitney Miyahira jump into volunteering as PGA marshals for the Sony Open, an annual project of the Lions and Leos.



Class is in Session

Whether you need to rebuild your club or give your membership a small tune-up, find guidance on membership concerns through LCI's monthly membership webinars. Led by Lions and LCI staff, webinars provide a chance to learn from



experts and take inspiration back to your club. Search for "membership webinars" at lionsclubs.org and register for the upcoming session or access the archives, which includes past webinars such as "Lessons in Fishing: How to Reel in Younger Members" and "Share the Pride of Serving! Invite Members through Service."

Avoid Service Interruption

Help your Leos continue serving by inviting them to become Lions when they graduate. Find out about the dues discount, download the Leo to Lion Certification Form and find more ways to support former Leos in the Member Center at lionsclubs.org.

A California club "reaches the top" through a carefully planned membership and projects strategy. Read the story from the July 1937 LION.

Club News



Shelton Lion and professional chef Treacy Kreger empties cans of clams into pots of his award-winning clam chowder in **Washington**. Kreger, a member since 2007, says that when he joined the club, "I asked Lions if I could cook the chowder for their OysterFest fundraiser. The rest is history." Last year, Lions made \$3,800 from selling bowls of soup at the annual seafood festival. The funds help pay for eye care for those in need, support a homeless shelter and meal program, and other service activities.

Pembroke-Pettawa Lions in **Ontario, Canada**, gave \$5,000 to a hospital's equipment campaign to purchase a new MRI machine.

The **Auburn Host Lions Club** in **California** sponsors four Leo clubs. The school-based clubs are **Placer High School, Chana High School, EV Cain Charter Middle School** and **Bowman Charter School**. Eleven Lions serve as advisers to the clubs, which have more than 100 members total. Projects include food drives, visiting Alzheimer's care facilities to entertain patients and waiting tables at Lions' community crab feeds with tips donated to charitable organizations.

The **Keene Lions Club** in **New Hampshire** donated a \$50,000 pavilion to a park. The Keene Lions Club Pavilion is one of many improvements Lions have made to Fuller Park.

Grafton Lions in **West Virginia** helped arrange for teenager Colton Young to have surgery in Toronto since the specialized "crosslinking" surgery he needed is not yet available in the United States. Travel and other arrangements were covered by the West Virginia Lions Sight Foundation.

The **Rhode Island Lions Sight Foundation** held its annual VIP Fishing tournament for approximately 36 blind and sight-impaired adults.

Boone Lions in **Iowa** donated \$650 to Boone County Freedom Flight, a program that helps fly veterans to Washington, D.C., to see national war memorials.



A father holds his anxious son as **Minisink Lion** Cathy Metschulat screens the boy's vision at the North Pocono Community Library in **Pennsylvania**. Lions screened 41 patrons during the event and plan to repeat the screening project next year.

Sun Lakes Lions in **Arizona** teamed with a church to provide holiday gifts for children in the Maricopa County foster care system.

Members of the **Sylvania Lions Club** in **Pennsylvania** annually paint the community swimming pool, a job that takes at least 20 volunteers to power wash and then use 20 gallons of paint to recoat the surface. In 2015, **Troy Lions** donated funds to the effort.

Bedford Lions in **Michigan** gave a \$5,000 donation to Habitat for Humanity to help build a house for a family in a nearby community. The money was raised from the club's popular resale shop, the Lion's Den, which has been operating for 30 years. Another recent \$5,000 donation from the club helped rehab a school playground.



Lions in **Virginia** work together packing boxes of food for senior citizens in need at the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank. Members of the **Aquia Evening, Greater Falls Run** and **Stafford County Lions clubs** filled enough boxes to help feed 1,550 people.

In **Minnesota**, members of the **Spring Lake Park Lions Club** gave \$2,000 to Cars for Neighbors, which helps repair vehicles for people in need.

Sterling Lions in **Colorado** logged more than 4,600 hours in service to their community during the past year. Included are Lions who volunteer to read to children as part of a Head Start program, hosting an Easter egg hunt and collecting groceries for the hungry.

The **New Jersey Lions Eyeglass Recycling Program** donated \$12,500 in new reading eyeglasses to the Flemington Area Food Pantry. Registered users will be able to obtain a pair of readers at no cost. The food pantry serves more than 1,300 families in the area.

Continued on page 55



Delegate Form Instructions for the International Convention

Are you serving as the Delegate for your club?

If yes, complete the Delegate/ Alternate Delegate form and return the top portion to Lions Clubs International Headquarters, to the attention of the Member Service Center before **May 1, 2016**. Bring the bottom portion of the form to the convention and present it when you arrive to certify at the Certification area in the convention center.

Before sending the form, be sure a club officer (Club President, Secretary or Treasurer) has signed the form and printed their name on both halves as indicated on form.

Mail form to:

Lions Clubs International
ATTN: Member Service Center
300 W. 22nd Street
Oak Brook, IL USA 60523-8842

Signed, scanned forms can be sent to:

Email: memberservicecenter@lionsclubs.org
Fax: 630-571-1687

To certify for the election, you will also need to bring a government-issued photo ID with your signature.

Are you serving as the Alternate for your club?

If yes, **do not mail your form**. Bring the entire form to convention. You will only need to come to the Certification area in the event you are replacing a delegate. If you are replacing a certified delegate, you will need your signed International Convention Delegate/ Alternate Delegate Form (alternate and officer signatures are required on the form) along with the delegate's gray copy of their Credential Card. If you do not have both of these items or are replacing a delegate who was not certified, you need to bring an authorized

signer with you to the Certification area. A government-issued photo ID and convention name badge will be required for the alternate and officer.

If you have questions regarding this process, contact the Member Service Center.

Email: memberservicecenter@lionsclubs.org
Phone: 1+630-203-3830 • Fax: 1+630-571-1687

International Convention Allowable Club Delegate Table

Membership	Delegates Allowed	Membership	Delegates Allowed	Membership	Delegates Allowed
1-37.....	1	263-287.....	11	513-537.....	21
38-62.....	2	288-312.....	12	538-562.....	22
63-87.....	3	313-337.....	13	563-587.....	23
88-112.....	4	338-362.....	14	588-612.....	24
113-137.....	5	363-387.....	15	613-637.....	25
138-162.....	6	388-412.....	16	638-662.....	26
163-187.....	7	413-437.....	17	663-687.....	27
188-212.....	8	438-462.....	18	688-712.....	28
213-237.....	9	463-487.....	19	713-737.....	29
238-262.....	10	488-512.....	20	738-762.....	30

Delegate count is based on the club's membership as shown by the records of the international office on the first day of the month last preceding the month in which the convention is held as provided in Article VI, Section 2 of the International constitution and Chapter XVII – Membership, Paragraph B.3., of the board Policy Manual.



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International Convention Delegate/ Alternate Delegate Form (Mail to LCI before May 1, 2016)

Lions Clubs International Convention - 2016 Fukuoka, Japan

(Print clearly for quick processing)

Club Identification Number: _____ District: _____

Club Name: _____

City: _____ State _____ Country _____

Select one: ☐ DELEGATE OR ☐ ALTERNATE DELEGATE Member Number: _____



Print Delegate/ Alternate Delegate Name

Signature of Delegate/ Alternate Delegate

The undersigned hereby authorizes that the above named person is an active member and a duly selected Delegate/Alternate Delegate of said Lions Club to the stated Convention of The International Association of Lions Clubs.



Print Officer Name

Signature of Club Officer

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After May 1, bring form to the convention

EN

DELEGATE / ALTERNATE DELEGATE COPY



International Convention Delegate/ Alternate Delegate Form

(Bring this copy to the Convention)

Lions Clubs International Convention - 2016 Fukuoka, Japan

(Print clearly for quick processing)

Club Identification Number: _____ District: _____

Club Name: _____

City: _____ State _____ Country _____

Select one: ☐ DELEGATE OR ☐ ALTERNATE DELEGATE Member Number: _____



Print Delegate/ Alternate Delegate Name

Signature of Delegate/ Alternate Delegate

The undersigned hereby authorizes that the above named person is an active member and a duly selected Delegate/Alternate Delegate of said Lions Club to the stated Convention of The International Association of Lions Clubs.



Print Officer Name

Signature of Club Officer

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Anniversaries

April 2016

95 Years: Breckenridge, Texas; Burlington Host, Iowa; Clear Lake, Iowa; Columbus Noon, Neb.; Cushing, Okla.; Eaton, Ohio; Fairfield, Iowa; Richmond, Calif.; Sioux Falls Downtown, S.D.; York Downtown, Pa.

90 Years: Healdton, Okla.; Highlands, N.J.; Lakeland, Fla.; Mission, Texas; Oakes, N.D.; Plainfield, Ind.

85 Years: Coos Bay, Ore.; Kilgore, Texas; McDonald, Kan.; Napa, Calif.; Pacific, Mo.; Plains, Kan.; Richmond, Ky.; Vinita, Okla.; Woodstock, ON, CAN

80 Years: Berrien Springs, Mich.; Carmel, Ind.; Chester, Ill.; Dixon Noon, Ill.; Lebanon, Ind.; Savannah, Tenn.; West Point, Ga.; Windsor, Colo.; Woodbury, Conn.

75 Years: Altus, Okla.; Ankeny, Iowa; Bement, Ill.; Farnam, Neb.; Grand Island, Neb.; Hurricane, Utah; Lincoln, Ga.; Livingston, Texas; Millen, Ga.; Neon Community, Ky.; New Roads, La.; Oxford, N.C.; Paoli Berwyn Malvern, Pa.; Raceland, La.; Sharon, Conn.; Sullivan, Ill.; Wrentham, Mass.

50 Years: Alsask, SK, CAN; Avon, Minn.; Barrow, Alaska; Bishops Falls, NL, CAN; Blackie, AB, CAN; Catawba Kennan, Wis.; Cluny, AB, CAN; Ganado, Texas; Green Valley, Ariz.; Houston Westbury, Texas; Jamaica, Iowa; Kremlin, Okla.; Lafleche District, SK, CAN; Lewisburg Mill Creek, Ky.; Long Point, Ill.; Muscoda, Wis.; Ortonville, Mich.; Rib Lake, Wis.; Rochester, Mass.; Rowlett, Texas; Short Gap, W.V.; Townsend, Mass.; Virginia Beach Thalia, Va.; Wadena, SK, CAN; Wahkiakum, Wash.

25 Years: Applegate, Mich.; Cedarville, Ill.; Lake Seminole, Ga.; Orange County Costa Rica, Calif.; Greater Wenatchee Sunrise, Wash.

Anniversaries are based on the official records of Lions Clubs International. The recorded charter date at LCI sometimes differs from local club records.

View the Higher Key Awards.

In Memoriam

Past International Director Yancy L. Watkins has died. A member of the Murray Lions Club in Kentucky since 1970, Watkins served on the international board of directors from 1988 to 1990 and was a board appointee from 1990 to 1991. He also served as president of the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation and was a member of the Kentucky Lions Hall of Fame.

For the Record

As of January 31, Lions Clubs International had 1,388,393 members in 46,481 clubs and 743 districts in 210 countries and geographic areas.

Convention Countdown

- 2016 Fukuoka, Japan
June 24-28
- 2017 Chicago, Illinois
June 30-July 4
- 2018 Las Vegas, Nevada
June 29-July 3
- 2019 Milan, Italy
July 5-9
- 2020 Singapore, Singapore
June 26-30

Continued from page 51


The **Mt. Lebanon Lions Club** in **Pennsylvania** distributed \$7,000 in funds to several organizations, including public libraries, LCIF, Lions Beacon Lodge Camp, Leader Dogs for the Blind and the Historical Society of Mt. Lebanon. The funds were raised through the Lions Farmers Market, White Cane Days and a trash bag and broom sale throughout the year.

Noblesville Lions in **Indiana** gave a \$1,000 college scholarship to a graduating high school senior who's planning to become an elementary school teacher.

The **Adams Lions Club** in **Massachusetts** gave more than \$14,000 to help fund a child's eye operation and also partners with another organization to send donated eyeglasses to Sudan.

Chillicothe Evening Lions in **Ohio** donated 55 stuffed animals to police and fire departments. The donation is part of an Ohio Lions' project called "Comfort Cubs," in which Lions distribute the stuffed toys to first responders to use to comfort children in crisis situations. Members purchase the toys using their own money; no club funds are used.

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Photo by The Courier, Ballarat

Honorable Service

A Lion since 1978, Chris Rigg displays one of the 3,000-plus poppies to be placed at memorial plaques by schoolchildren along the Avenue of Honour in Ballarat. Begun in 1917, the first of its kind in Australia, the memorial row of trees represents the men and women who served in World War I. Australia now has 547 such avenues. Riggs' club, the Haddon & District Lions, and several other Lions clubs organized the placement of the poppies in advance of Anzac Day, a national day of remembrance in Australia and New Zealand celebrated on April 25. "Australia is a free country because of the sacrifices," Rigg told a local newspaper.

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