

**Club Rebound**  
From four members to full bore.

**Rising Up**  
Freak accident doesn't break  
21-year-old's spirit.

**Rattling Good Project**  
Texas Lions hold rattlesnake  
roundup.

# LION

## This Doctor Makes Den Calls

**New President  
Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada  
of Japan and his  
wife, Dr. Toshiko**



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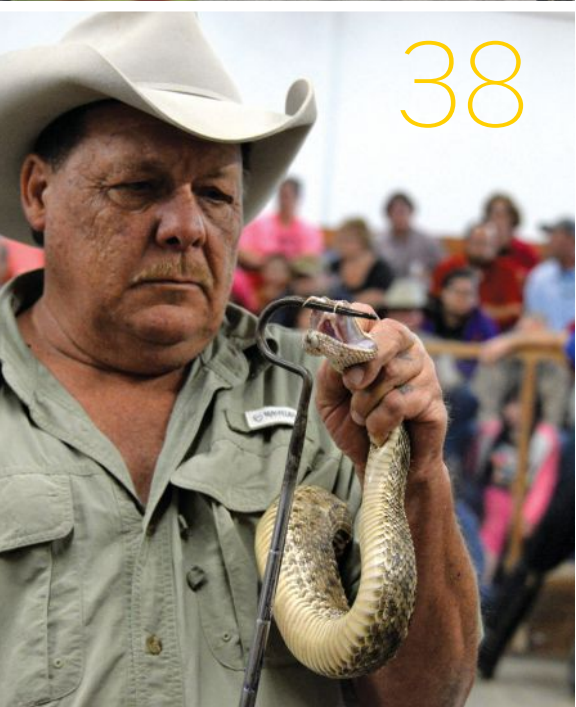
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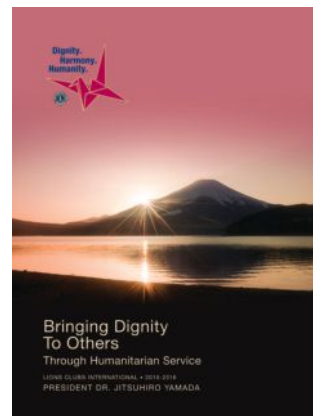
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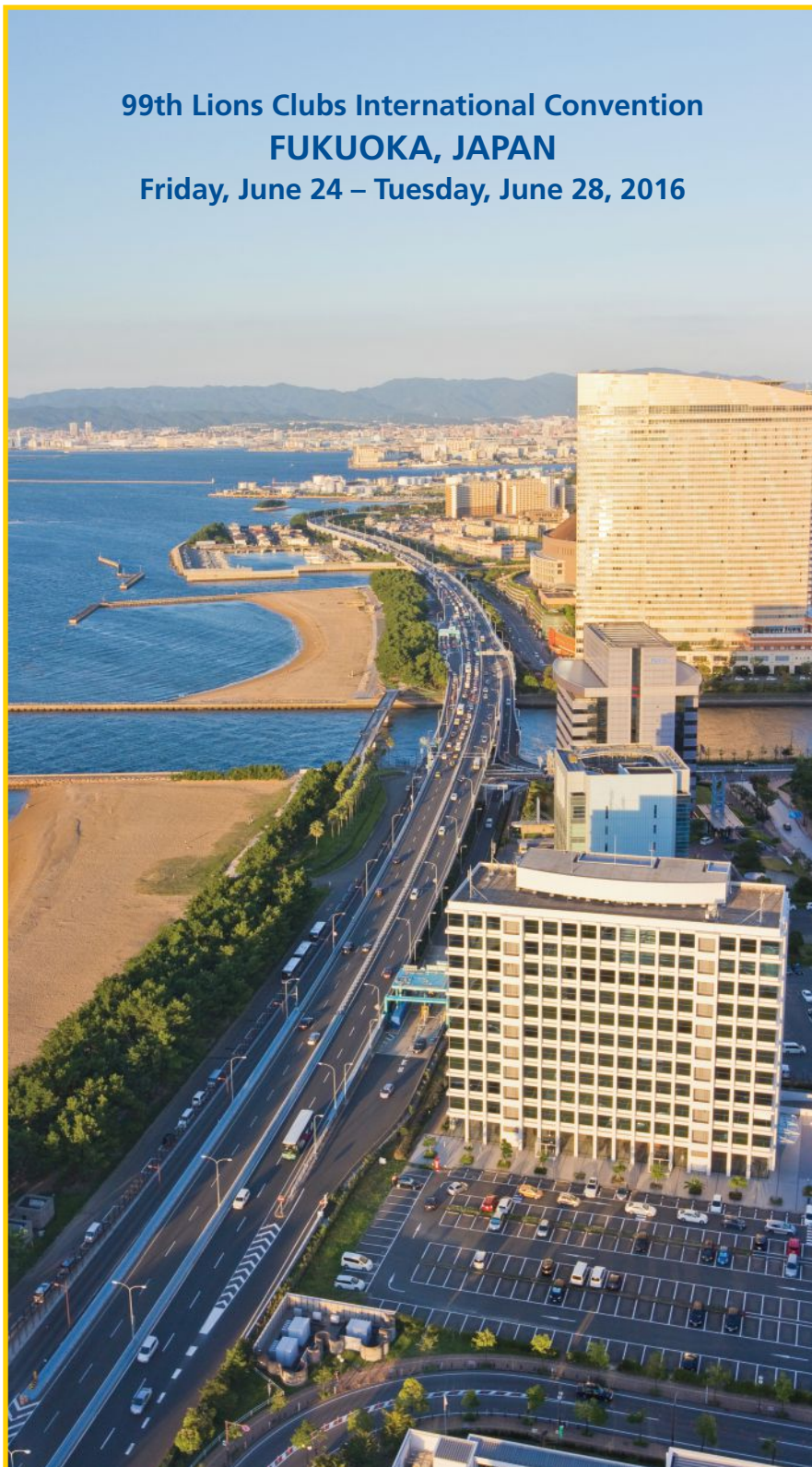
## On the cover:

Cover photo by Daniel Morris



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**99th Lions Clubs International Convention  
FUKUOKA, JAPAN  
Friday, June 24 – Tuesday, June 28, 2016**



# WE SERVE

## MISSION STATEMENT OF LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL:

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volunteers to serve  
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meet humanitarian  
needs, encourage  
peace and promote  
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through Lions  
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### CONTACTING THE LION

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WE SERVE in action: Multiple District 300 Taiwan Lions distribute blankets to nursing home residents.

## No Translation Required: WE SERVE

皆さんの国際会長を務めることを、大変光栄に思います。

These Japanese words mean “I am honored to serve as international president.”

素晴らしい奉仕の1年となることを楽しみにしています。

That means “I look forward to a year of great service.”

So how do Lions in Japan say “We Serve”? Well, it’s “We Serve.” Our motto is not translated. Lions throughout the world proudly proclaim “We Serve.” The universality of our motto underscores that despite language and cultural differences we Lions share a common purpose. And although I am the 99th international president, each of my predecessors having had their own priorities and approaches, international presidents have shared a common commitment to service.

So I hope my year as president is like any other as Lions continue to serve with tremendous enthusiasm and impact. Yet I also hope to make a difference in how we serve. My theme is Bringing Dignity to Others Through Humanitarian Service. That’s something that has been inherent in Lions’ service since Melvin Jones first gathered Lions together. But by intentionally focusing on my theme and keeping it in the forefront we can be sure to maintain and even improve our commitment to service. Learn the complete details of my program by reading the story on page 25.

As a doctor, I have always been dedicated to healing, and to do so while treating patients in a dignified manner. A good doctor not only treats illness but pays attention to the entire person—their worries, their concerns, their struggles. If you had asked me after many years as a doctor if I treated the whole person, I would have said, “Of course.” But it took a serious illness for me to re-evaluate my approach as a doctor (see story on page 20). Likewise, as Lions we are dedicated to service, but reassessing our approach and focusing on the dignity of others in all we do will take our service to a new level.

I ask each of you this year especially to bring dignity to children. Through a project or program I ask you to make their lives better. Working together, 1.4 million Lions can help the next generation prosper and secure good health, find opportunity and achieve happiness.



山田 實紘

Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada  
Lions Clubs International President

Many nations, many backgrounds, a shared commitment to service: see the list of our 99 international presidents.





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## [The Big Picture



A Life of Healing and Serving





New International President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada of Japan is a neurosurgeon, hospital director and a longtime Lion. He's shown volunteering in Japan at a senior citizens' home, planting trees and working as a doctor. (Story on page 20.) Photos by John Timmerman. Photo of Yamada wearing a mask by Daniel Morris.



[The Big Picture



Uncowed





Tomakomai Chuo Lions in Japan have treated schoolchildren with special needs to a trip to Heidi Farm in Naganuma since 1986. The farm's founder and president, Kanji Kanagawa, is a member of the Hayakita Lions Club. Lions accompany the children to the farm. "Feeding and petting animals works like magic to the soul—for adults and children alike," according to a story in the Japan LION. Japan is a bastion of Lions with 124,200 members in 3,156 clubs.



## CHILDREN'S SERVICE WEEK SET

Lions' Children's Dignity Week is Aug. 30-Sept. 5. International President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada encourages Lions to aid children that week and to report the service to Lions Clubs International. Meal programs for homeless students, literacy programs for hospitalized children and sports programs for young refugees are just a few ways a club can assist children. Also consider the Reading Action Program or the Lions Children First and Leo Spotlight on Children programs. (Information on them is at [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org).) Report the service on the online MyLCI Service Activity Report to earn a Centennial Banner Patch, to get your club's name on the online Centennial Ticker and to count toward the Centennial Service Challenge of Lions serving 100 million people.



Photo by Sun Media/The Intelligencer

Dave Sicker of the Belleville Lions Club in Ontario, Canada, tests a young girl's vision. Children's Dignity Week is Aug. 30-Sept. 5.

## LIONS AID NEPAL AFTER EARTHQUAKE

Supported by a \$100,000 grant from Lions Clubs International Foundation, Lions of Nepal aided victims of the devastating earthquake in April. Lions distributed food, water, clothes and sanitary items after the disaster, which killed nearly 9,000 people and injured tens of thousands. Many Lions clubs worldwide raised funds for relief and some sent supplies. Lions in England dispatched a plane full of water purifiers. "Every day we are saving lives in Nepal. We are giving hope for a new life," 2014-15 International President Joe Preston of Arizona wrote in his blog a few weeks after the earthquake.



Lions in Nepal distribute food to earthquake survivors.



## By the Numbers

### 'BIRTHDAY LION' DIES SHORT OF 100

Robert Schwartz was born to be a Lion. He entered this world on June 7, 1917, the same day Lions Clubs International (LCI) was born in Chicago at a meeting organized by Melvin Jones. Schwartz, a member of the Durand Lions in Illinois, died on May 29, just nine days before his 98th birthday. He had hoped to celebrate his 100th birthday along with LCI. He became a Lion in 1990 after farming for 50 years. A few months later, the district governor gave a brief history of the founding of Lions on a visit to the club. "He said, 'That's my exact birthday.' He didn't know it," recounts Past International Director Russ Sarver, a club member who was at the meeting. "He was very proud of it." Schwartz served as a Lion Tamer, worked Candy Day and the club's beef dinner and planted trees. He bowled until he was 90 and also enjoyed cards, fishing and horseshoes. Coincidentally, Durand is 100 miles from Chicago.



Past International Director Russ Sarver honors Robert Schwartz at his 90th birthday party in 2007.

American flags replaced at a flag workshop of Liberty Lions in Texas.

The club puts up about 1,200 flags on 14 flag routes on patriotic holidays.

60



66

Worn American flags replaced by Olney Lions in Maryland. The flags are displayed on streets on national holidays.

200

Quarts of oysters sold in less than a month by Stanley Lions in Virginia.

3 Active shooter response bags, consisting of helmets and vests, purchased

for local police by Forty Fort Lions in Pennsylvania.



29:19

Length in minutes of "Carnival Man," a humorous, quirky, affectionate movie about the 80-year-old carnival of Rolla Lions in Missouri.

Watch part of the amusing "Carnival Man," a tribute to summer and community, disguised as a film about a Lions' carnival.

20+

Students from the Oklahoma School for the Blind who helped Sapulpa Lions with their annual bean and chili dinner.

World War II veterans honored at a Memorial Day celebration sponsored by the Eden Evening Lions in North Carolina.

32



8

Goldfish who competed in an eight-laned race staged by the North Bend Mount Si Lions and Leos in Washington to benefit a nonprofit equestrian farm.



## Overheard

**"The little girl was fitted for glasses and on the drive home, she asked her mom, 'What are those big round things?' When her mom figured out her daughter was referring to trees with leaves, she said she started to cry. She had no idea her little girl was not seeing these things."**

—Barb Cogdill of the Sioux City Lions in Iowa on a screening she did as part of Iowa KidSight. From the Catholic Globe.

**"Otherwise you run into them at weddings and funerals."**

—President Gene Gohmann of the Kimball Lions in Minnesota on the drawing power within the community of his club's decades-old pancake breakfast. From the St. Cloud Times.

**"At one point I decided to sing along. I just grabbed the mic and went for it."**

—Melanie Saucier, 19, a seasoned classical singer, recalling her stage debut as a 2-year-old as her father, Lion Gary, sang "Daddy's Little Girl" at the Fort Kent Lions' Pride of the Lion show in Maine. From the Bangor Daily News.

## LCI LAUNCHES INTERNATIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Mark Twain wrote, "Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising." Imagine then the impact of advertising with a "big thing" such as Lions Clubs International. LCI has launched a three-year global advertising campaign to raise the visibility of Lions, encourage new members to join and promote its 100th anniversary in 2017. The campaign features the centennial slogan, "Where there's a need, there's a Lion," as well as real Lions from around the world. The first year of ads includes digital airport displays in Rome and Seoul, inflight magazines in Brazil and Japan, digital billboards in Beijing and Hong Kong, business magazine ads in Hawaii and India, public service announcements for U.S. television and movie theaters and train station ads in Sydney and Brussels. Centennial ads can be downloaded from the Toolbox section of [Lions100.org](http://Lions100.org).



## BILL PROTECTING CLUBS ADVANCES

A bipartisan bill that protects volunteer groups such as Lions clubs from liability was introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives in May. The Volunteer Organization Protection Act of 2015 amends a law from 1997 to afford the same liability protection to volunteer groups and organizations already provided to individual volunteers. Lions Clubs International (LCI) worked with Rep. Steve Chabot of Ohio on the legislation. Also supporting the bill are Rotary, Kiwanis, the YMCA and other prominent groups that rely on volunteers. The bill is part of a broader effort by LCI to advocate for the interests of the association. The 2015 Lions Day on Capitol Hill was held in May; Lions leaders including international officers, board members and past international presidents met with members of Congress and federal agencies on legislative and regulatory issues that impact Lions clubs.





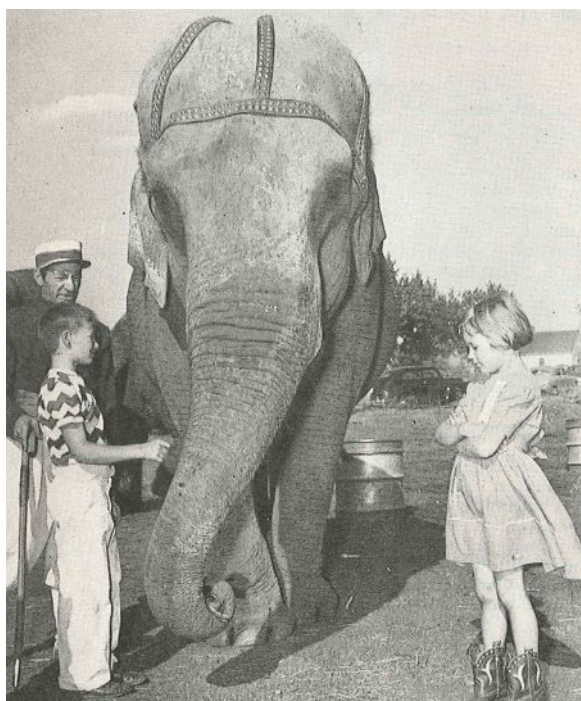


This ad appeared on buses in Hawaii.

## LIONS AT CONVENTION SAVE MAN'S LIFE

Lion Bill Fitch, 54, slumped over in his chair at the Idaho Lions State Convention in Sun Valley in May. Seated in the row ahead of him, Lion Gary Rohwer rushed to his side. "He had no pulse," says Rohwer, who quickly started CPR. Fitch took three breaths, but he still had "no detectable pulse."

Meanwhile, Lion Shery Schwartz had the staff grab the hotel's defibrillator. Lions Patty Frison and Scott Bloxham did chest compressions before paramedics arrived and took him to a hospital. Fitch had suffered a heart attack and underwent triple-bypass surgery. His recovery is expected. "My fellow Lions knew what to do and acted without hesitating," Fitch says. He's looking forward to serving again for the Rigby Lions Club—with a new perspective. "I've already noticed more compassion in myself. Some of the small things that might have seemed important are not so important," he says.



## 63 Years Ago in the LION

### JULY 1952

Two orphans meet a circus elephant during an outing sponsored by Spokane Lions in Washington. The LION ran a cover story on tips on holding a circus to raise funds.

[Read the complete story.](#)



# Calamity in a Distant Land Not Distant for Me

BY STEVE KINSKY

Probably just like you, I saw on television the grim images of Nepal after the recent earthquakes there. But I and my wife, Lion Susy Osorio, looked very intently for people we might know or places we had visited. Last November we had traveled to Kathmandu to lead vision screenings and distribute eyeglasses.

The Denver Lions Club and the Kathmandu Gliese Lions Club are twin clubs. Our club has screened thousands of schoolchildren in Colorado. I'm 65 and retired from my work as an actuary and health insurance broker. So I had the time to travel to Nepal and the experience of doing screenings.

The three flights to Nepal took 21 hours. We had with us 1,200 pairs of eyeglasses, provided by the Sterling Lions Club, a Nikon autorefractor to screen patients of any age and a Colorado Kidsight Plusoptix machine to screen children. Our first adventure was at the airport. Customs officials insisted we needed a letter from Nepal's Ministry of Health authorizing our mission. Two things helped us gain entry. Our colorful Lions polo shirts apparently gave us credibility. Also convincing was a letter explaining the mission I had obtained beforehand from the Kathmandu club.

After a friendly meal with our Lions hosts, we headed to Balkhu, a slum in Kathmandu. We knew about the nation's poverty. Nepal ranks as the world's 19th most impoverished country, worse than Rwanda, Honduras and Ecuador, three nations where our club also has done missions. The poverty was evident—the clothes, the buildings, what was and wasn't in homes and shops. It was no wonder that eye care was desperately needed.

But poverty does not describe or define Nepalis. They are resilient and upbeat. When we smiled at them, they inevitably smiled back. They especially enjoyed it when we hailed them with "namaste," their customary greeting that means "I bow to the divine in you." Nepalis are people who respect other people.

They also are funny, unpredictable and idiosyncratic. The children especially charmed us. One little boy told us his eyes teared up from time to time. Determined to diagnose his condition, we asked him a series of questions. He eventually admitted his eyes watered when he yawned a lot.



Balkhu residents wait in line for their vision screening.

We had a lot of help with the screenings. With us were a number of Lions, several ophthalmologists and optometrists and college-age youth volunteers. In four days we saw 850 people and distributed 360 eyeglasses, 200 we had bought and 160 we had custom-made.

The Nepalis had to wait in line under a hot sun for the screening and then wait again for their glasses. But they were obviously pleased with their glasses and their improved vision. They are accustomed to doing without. That's why the earthquake seemed particularly devastating—and why after the disaster our club quickly donated \$3,000 to LCIF for relief and held two fundraisers—one at a Nepalese restaurant—that raised another \$3,600.

Through a flurry of emails and text messages, we discovered that our Lions friends in Nepal are safe. But many now live in tents because their homes were damaged. We know their resolve and grit will get them through this crisis. Please keep them in mind and support the people of Nepal. Namaste!

*Kinsky is the second vice district governor for District 6 C.*



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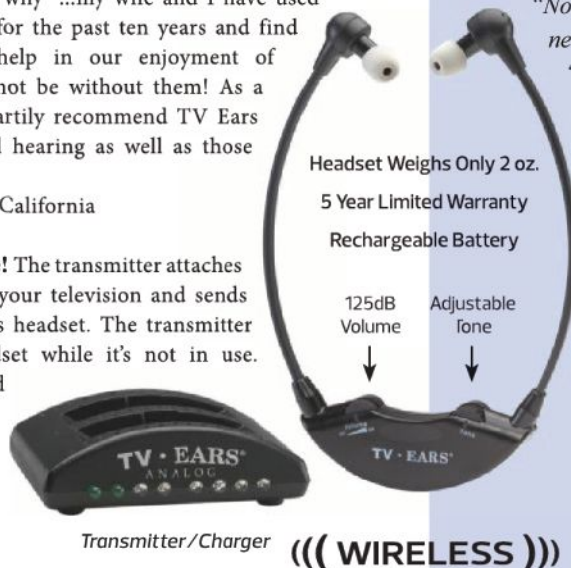
- Darlene and Jack B., CA

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- Robert Forbes, M.D., California

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- Darlene & Jack B., CA

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## Jay Blake

### Barnstable-Yarmouth Lions Club, Massachusetts

*A terrible work accident blinded Blake. Then a trip with a friend to a drag-racing event changed his life again as he eventually became the owner and chief mechanic of a National Hot Rod Association race car team.*

### Making a Life-and-Death Choice

I was an automotive technician with a wife and kids. In 1997, I was working on a forklift when the wheel and tire assembly exploded. We never knew why. I was flown to Massachusetts General Hospital, and surgeons worked for over 10 hours to rebuild my face. I don't remember any of it, but I do remember waking up inside something like a cloud. It was very bright and peaceful. A male voice said to me, "Do you want to stay, or do you want to go?" I replied, "I have two children; I have to go back." I believe I was given a choice. I woke up in the hospital, and my brother was at my side. I had lost total sight, smell and taste.

### A New Road

I received rehabilitation. There were bad days and good days. A buddy invited me to a drag race in 1998, because I had always loved it. When we arrived at the racetrack, my body came alive. I realized that even though I couldn't see, I could still enjoy the sport. I decided that weekend I was going to find a way to start my own race team, and I did.

### Instinct Plus Experience Equals Success

My true enjoyment is working with my hands. With my Permatex/Follow a Dream racing team, I physically work on the race car

His team car is a Chevy Camaro.

FOX Sports profiled him.

His iPhone "talks" to him aloud.



and our truck and trailer. It's all a sense of touch and building the image inside my mind. I was sighted for 31 years, so I remember what things look like. I also "borrow" people's eyes, ask what I'm looking at.

### Words to Live By

I speak at Lions clubs, corporations, schools and many other venues. I talk about a positive attitude, education, passion,

determination and teamwork—five tools to help you reach your goals and your dreams. I don't like being blind, but we have to work through difficult challenges in life. Once not long after the accident, my little girl ran up and hugged my legs. She said, "Daddy, I am so glad you are alive, even though you are blind." And ever since that moment, I knew I made the right choice in coming back.

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](mailto:lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org). Please include "One of Us" in the subject line.



## The Sounds of Joy

When 15-year-old Brooke McArdle of Brookfield, Wisconsin, wanted to earn the Gold Award, attained by only 5 percent of Girl Scouts, she knew where to look—about 147 miles northwest to the Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt. With the help of family and friends, she created an interactive sensory play wall where blind and visually handicapped campers can bang and clang away on a variety of recycled household objects like pots and pans.

“I selected this project because I was born blind in my left eye and am visually impaired,” says McArdle. “I know the struggles trying to overcome a physical disability every day.” She hasn’t attended the camp, but family friends have a cognitively disabled daughter who has been a participant. Brooke and her mother, Joyce, were familiar with the camp’s service to children and teens of different abilities.

“We made two trips to the camp totaling 912 miles,” says Joyce McArdle. “The actual project installation took five volunteers and Brooke 30 hours to complete. It was a lot of physical labor, but using that power auger was so much fun!” The sensory wall is 6 feet high by 8 feet wide and cost a little less than \$500 to build.

“We try to promote greater self-confidence and independence here,” says Rosholt Lion Cecily Filtz of the camp. “We all thought the wall could bring a lot of joy into



Campers make joyful noise at the sensory wall Brooke McArdle built at the Wisconsin Lions Camp.

campers’ lives. We didn’t assist with any funding. It was all Brooke.” The wall gives campers a chance to feel and hear what they touch. “It’s a lot of clanging noises, mixed in with some wind chimes and many other sounds. The kids all love it,” she points out.

Lions invited Brooke back to see how campers are making use of her project. “A young blind girl stood up with her cane in hand and politely said, ‘Brooke, you’re amazing! I love you for making this for us,’” recalls Filtz. “She asked Brooke if she could shake her hand. Then she grabbed her and pulled her in for a huge hug.”

## Clean Stream Team Tackles Tough Jobs

Nancy Messmer, Multiple District 19 environmental chair and a Clallam Bay-Seki Lion, says the trick to successful environmental projects in the Pacific Northwest is to have “lots of volunteers”—and maybe a little hope in their hearts for clear skies and sunlight. “It’s often cold, wet and arduous,” she says about Washington’s notoriously fickle weather. Fortunately for the environment, Lions aren’t easily deterred by a few showers when it comes to taking environmental action, one of the association’s four Global Service Action Campaigns.

Last fall, 42 Lions worked with Girl and Boy Scouts and other volunteers to restore Silver Creek in Puyallup. Lions from 18 clubs throughout District 19 C were part of the work party. “We lucked out on the weather,” says Lacey Sunrise Lion Judy Bergval. “The rain stopped, the sun actually came out for a few minutes and we took off the rain coats and rain pants. We planted some good-sized trees and pruned blackberries and hauled them to the road for pickup. We attached bamboo stakes to all the trees and planted 400 willow cuttings.” In addition to taking on new environmental projects to restore area streams and creeks, District C Lions and volunteers from the Pierce conservation district are still nurturing cedar tree seedlings planted by district governors during the 2011 international convention in Seattle.

The Lions’ “Clean Stream” team has been working for more than seven years to restore creeks and watersheds to help salmon return. Partnering with the city of Puyallup and Pierce Conservation District, Lions first started out as a group of nine in 2007 to clear the steep banks of Meeker Creek of invasive grasses and weeds. “It’s an ongoing project that’s grown over the years,” says Messmer. “A growing number of Lions work a day in the fall and one in the spring, alongside all the volunteers we can get together.”



Clean Stream Team members haul out invasive blackberry vines.



## Masters of the Grill

It's not an easy job, but for 40 years, Fenton Lions in Michigan have been grilling chicken to serve for Fenton's Freedom Festival, a Fourth of July celebration. "Lions who've cooked the chicken for many years always brag that we're a special breed and that joining us is by invitation only," points out Dick Edwards. "The reality of this matter is that nobody wants to cook the chicken, standing over hot charcoal and breathing the vapors." Wearing his sun visor and waving away smoke, he cheerfully tells people who do inquire, "Anybody can join in the fun—just sign up to be a Lion!"

Lions raise an average of \$3,500 from this one event. They provide scholarships, buy hearing aids and eyeglasses, and support holiday fireworks and other projects. They first began grilling when they helped out at another festival in nearby Manchester. "They enjoyed it so much and saw what a great community outreach program it was that the club decided to bring it to Fenton," says Melanie Hein, whose husband, Warren, is also a Lion. In 1981, the club built a barbecue pit in a park to expand their rapidly growing concession.

"Fenton is a fairly small town of about 11,000. It's a close-knit community, and a lot of people come out on any occasion to socialize. Even in our 100-degree summer heat, we still manage to sell chicken," says Melanie Hein.

## Flag-Waving Fun in Canada

The kids are wriggling in their seats with excitement when Comox Valley Monarch Lions in Courtenay, British Columbia, Canada, step into each class of first-graders during the club's Project Pride. "They're actually really excited to see us, maybe even more excited to see Lions than the Mountie," says April Dyck. Lions arrive bearing gifts of small Canadian flags and personalized certificates bearing each child's name to help the 6-year-olds learn about Canada's history. A Royal Mounted Canadian Police community constable also accompanies Lions to hand out temporary tattoos to the children, but it's Lions who hold their attention as they quiz eager students. The children are invited to enter a drawing to win one of four bikes Lions give away during a community-wide Canada Day celebration.

Because Canada Day is July 1, Lions visit the classes in June before school lets out for the summer. Lions ask the children if they can name the capital of Canada (Ottawa)

and their country's official symbol (a maple leaf). They also quiz the students about Canada's history and currency. "It takes us about a week to visit nine classes. We're a Monarch club, which means we're a little older," she says with a laugh. "But even though we may move a little slower, we usually stay longer than the 30 minutes scheduled for each visit because we're all having so much fun. The kids love it and so do we. It keeps us young."



First-graders in Courtenay, British Columbia, Canada, wave their new Canadian flags just given to them by Comox Valley Monarch Lions.

## Fencing Them In

Dixie Lion Robert Carr says that long before Talledega became home to its famous speedway and a star on the NASCAR circuit, there was another, more compelling destination in Alabama. The Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) has been helping people for 150 years. Lions have supported AIDB's mission to educate, train and employ its clients for decades, volunteering where needed.

Last year, Lions helped build a fence around a horse pasture. "The Equestrian Center maintains horses not only for recreation, but also for the wide range of therapy that they can provide," Carr explains.

Lion Richard Penton says that the pressure-treated lumber donated by a business would have cost Lions between \$1,600 and \$2,000. In addition to Lions, volunteers included a small group of visiting students from Vanderbilt. "Several of them were from northern states, and they got a kick out of us sharing some of the finer points of Southern culture and language," Penton points out.

The 400-foot fence was installed on a cold, damp day. Lions came back a second day to finish up and gave the wood a few months to age before they painted it. Penton hopes club members were able to do more than show the Vanderbilt students how to install fencing. "They showed a lot of interest in Lions. We told them about some of the things we do locally and internationally. We may have laid the groundwork for gaining some future Lions," he says.



## AUSTRIA

### Elvis Lives!

“Elvis Lebt!” was the headline in the Austrian LION after the Lions’ concert. U.S. audiences are accustomed to Elvis tribute artists, but the King can still pack a house even in Austria, even among an audience more comfortable with centuries-old classical music than with classic rock n’ roll.

The Wien (Vienna) Ostarrichi Lions Club held a concert starring the “world’s best Elvis tribute artist—Rusty.” Besides many Lions, the audience for the sold-out concert in the venerable Vienna Metropol Theater included prominent politicians and business leaders. Also attending was Dagmar Schellenberger, the artistic director of the Seefestspiele Mörbisch, the world’s biggest operetta festival.

The event directly raised 5,500 euros and another 5,000 euros were donated later. Lions gave the funds



Elvis had not left the building yet in Vienna.

(US\$12,500) to the Order of St. Francis for its work among for the home-

less and for typhoon victims in the Philippines.

## NORWAY

### A Different Kind of Singing

Lions in Norway can rap as well as serve. “Vi er Lions” (“We are Lions”) features ultra-hip Norwegian rap star Oral Bee, a catchy musical score and swaying, singing Lions. The Lions of Norway released the dazzling video to promote their Red Feather campaign, their largest fundraising drive.

The campaign raised 24 million kroner (US\$3 million). Lions went door to door in neighborhoods with donation buckets or stood outside stores. Also spurring contributions were newspaper ads, television and online advertising and an online fundraising site promoted through social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The funds will be used for Lions Quest. “It is better to build children than to repair adults” is the slogan of Lions Quest in Norway. Norwegian

Lions emphasize the effectiveness of Lions Quest in reducing bullying, a major concern in schools.

Lions gave donors a red feather attached to a pin. In Scandinavia especially, a red feather is a humanitarian symbol. Swedish Lions first used it in the 1960s in raising money. Lions had noticed it on Japanese during the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964, and its origin is American. U.S. occupation forces introduced the symbol to the Japanese after World War II, according to Vibeke Aasland, editor of the Norwegian LION.

Watch the rap video.

## INDIA

### Women Honored

Ujjain Lions honored 50 parents who have daughters to call attention to female feticide and the need to empower women. Lions who spoke at the meeting “emphasized that women must realize their own potential. ... It is important that women become self-reliant and be able to protect their own rights,” according to The Free Press Journal.



Yamada returns to Ajisai Nursing College, where he taught.  
Photo by John Timmerman

# The Doctor Is In

Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada of Japan, our 99th international president, promises to advance the health of the association.

BY JAY COPP

For 45 years Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada has donned surgical scrubs and, as families anxiously paced in the waiting room, operated on the brain, neck or back. Neurosurgery has not been his only occupation. Yamada also served as a hospital director, a job with a huge impact, not only on individual families, but on an entire community.

Now Yamada serves all Lions, taking the oath as the 99th international president of Lions Clubs International on June 30 in Honolulu.

His work in medicine requires a steady hand, a keen eye for detail and the ability to make tough decisions by quickly synthesizing reams of information. Granted, the

presidency is not brain surgery. But he needs to keep rallying Lions around the measles program, our sight efforts and other life-saving or life-changing major initiatives, strengthen membership and retention, and keep the centennial celebration on course.

So how will he lead our association of 1.4 million Lions?

Yamada can draw on lessons learned from a frightening cancer diagnosis and shoddy care from a physician. He can muster the gumption and ingenuity that led him, as a hospital director, to pioneer new forms of care. Or, a leadership based on personal experience, he can recall what it





- Watch a biography of Yamada.
- Learn about Yamada's presidential theme.

is like to be a regular Lion or even the disaffected Lion as he once was, so lacking in enthusiasm he nearly quit his club.

Maybe he'll even invoke a story about a possible Martian invasion. He did just that in marshalling support among Lions for a bold plan to save the Great Wall of China.

Ultra-focused in the operating room and duly serious in hospital staff meetings, Yamada, 71, often surprises acquaintances with his geniality and humor in more relaxed situations. He may surprise Lions, too with his approach. He promises not a major operation, not an overhaul—nor, on the other hand, a cursory checkup but instead a thorough, decisive and empathetic bedside manner as top Lion.

“My philosophy with medicine and Lions is to leave things in a better state than how I found them,” he says with conviction. “That’s why we ‘treat’ and that’s why ‘we serve.’”

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Yamada has a doctor-like presence. “Dr. Yamada is the quintessential brain surgeon,” says Masako Kawai, who met him 20 years ago when they volunteered together to promote tourism and commerce in Gifu Prefecture, where Yamada lives. “He’s always calm, warm-hearted, focused and ready to make a good decision that has a big impact in a split second. He always has a keen eye for details and always keeps the big picture in mind.” (Some of the quotes in this story were translated from Japanese.)

Medicine has enveloped Yamada's life. His father was a doctor. As a boy, Yamada was entranced by the TV show "Ben Casey." Here was a man who did what his father did and wore a shining white coat to boot. Certain of his calling at an early age, he earned his medical degree from Nihon University in 1968.

Not surprisingly, medicine even was the context of his courtship, marriage and now, for decades, his smooth, loving partnership with his spouse. He met Toshiko in medical school. They traded lunches, shared lecture notes and in time shared a life. Yamada fondly—and modestly—recalls their days together as medical students. "She took good notes. I did not," he says, unconvincingly.

"I knew from the beginning he was a gentle and honest man," says Dr. Toshiko Yamada. "He's truly a big thinker. He thinks about things many years into the future."

Yamada had what it took to prosper as a neurosurgeon. His healthcare colleagues attest to his coolness under pressure in the operating room. Those qualities are a prerequisite for a neurosurgeon. But his innovative track record as a hospital administrator sets him apart. Yamada added a rehabilitation center to Kizawa Memorial Hospital. Many patients came out of surgery with disabilities or other medical challenges. "I built the center because I knew the importance of good post-op rehabilitation. It's the difference between going home in a wheelchair or on your own two feet in many cases," says Yamada, who still serves as CEO of a medical/social service group and still directs the Japanese Hospital Association.

Yamada didn't stop there. An encounter with a patient from years ago stayed with him. He told a post-op patient

who was making good progress with her physical therapy, "Looks like you're almost ready to go home." She burst into tears. "Please don't send me home," she pleaded. Still partially paralyzed, she did not want to be a burden on her family.

Japanese law then drew a strict line between medical institutions and elderly-care facilities. Yamada visited facilities in the United States and Australia to learn about integrated care for the elderly. In 1988, a pioneer in Japan, he helped establish the Sawayaka Nursing Villa, and the system of nursing and retirement homes now includes more than 30 facilities.

Yamada's daily experiences as a doctor swayed him to be bold and innovative as a healthcare leader. His sudden own terrifying illness as a patient transformed him as a doctor and jolted him into a heightened understanding of the preciousness of life and the obligation to give back. In the summer of 1983, at just 39 years old, he was shocked to learn he had liver cancer. He underwent an emergency operation. "I thought I would die. It's an indescribable feeling," he says.

A year later, still fearful of dying, he saw his doctor again. "Why am I still alive?" he asked. The doctor matter-of-factly replied, "Your tumor was benign." Yamada was incredulous. And furious. Post-op biopsies take a couple weeks or even days. "Why didn't you tell me?" he demanded. The doctor stood his ground, however shaky. "I was waiting for you to ask," he curtly responded.

Yamada resolved to henceforth provide the kind of care he expected for himself. Something else came alive inside him. No more would he take life for granted or take

The Yamadas often gather for meals with their children and grandchildren.





from life all the good it offered without trying to make life better for others. "I was so thankful. I felt there was a God. I wanted to serve. I wanted to give back," he says.

The next year Yamada became a Lion. The timing was perfect. His father, who had been a Lion, had just passed away. His uncle, a district governor, encouraged him to fill his father's shoes and join.

Of course, you can be a Lion without serving others. You can be there for the social hour, the conviviality and the hollow satisfaction that comes from membership alone. A three-month rookie, Yamada hurried to a meeting in his scrubs after a hectic day of surgery at the hospital. An older Lion took offense at his appearance. "Change into a proper suit and don't forget to wear your badge, too," he scolded him. Yamada was enraged. He even typed a resignation letter for his uncle, the district governor.

Yamada cooled off, and his passion for service heated up. The lever for change was his acceptance of a leadership role in the club for a cause near and dear to him. The club promoted organ donation, and Yamada took on the role of donor-patient coordinator. As a neurosurgeon, he saw how organ donations saved lives. "I often deal with brain-dead patients. When I talk to parents and families I tell them their loved ones can live on through an organ donation," he says. "One patient gave kidneys to two people. The families who received the donations came back to the hospital with flowers for the family [of the deceased] to thank them for saving the life of their loved one. It was very touching."

Yamada flourished as a Lion after he became the organ donation coordinator. "That was a turning point for me as a Lion," he says.

As a club president, district governor and international director, Yamada championed a multitude of successful projects. Integral to his leadership has been a willingness to take chances, to stir the pot, to step outside the box, doing so in fanciful way if that's what it took to quell doubt and rouse support. His district governor sought to do a large-scale service project when he was serving as zone chairperson. He had an idea. Why not protect the Great Wall of China? Erosion was wearing it away, and a forest of trees would provide a protective shield.

His proposal landed with a thud. How could Lions of Japan overcome tensions between the two nations and summon the technical expertise and manpower for the project to succeed? That's when Yamada, out of the blue, concocted a tale of an earth at risk of Martian invasion. "What if space aliens were looking down at the Earth for sign of an advanced society? The Great Wall is supposedly visible from space," Yamada told the Lions leaders. "If Martians saw the wall was crumbling they'd think humanity was in decline—ready to be conquered. We need to protect the Wall."

It was poppycock, a silly story. Yamada knew it. The Lions knew it. (His wife knew it, too. "Maybe you are one of the aliens," she dismissively told him when he recounted the story to her.) But the tale shook Lions from their dead seriousness, their doldrums and their inability to see beyond the obvious and the easy. They agreed to take on the landmark tree-planting project.

Many hurdles remained. Chief among them was the problem of "iron trees." The Lions soon realized that any trees planted soon would be chopped down by villagers desperately reliant on firewood to cook their meals. A Lion

remarked that the only tree left standing would be an iron one. The solution was a tree more valuable standing than one cut down. Lions would plant chestnut trees, highly valued as a source of nutrition.

Another daunting obstacle was finding a respected, resourceful partner in China to help circumvent a host of political and practical barriers. This is where luck—the residue of design—came in. Yamada happened to read a newspaper story about a Chinese professor leading tree planting in Inner Mongolia to combat desertification. Yamada called him on the phone, and the professor told him that "the perfect person to help you just happens to be in Japan now." Adds Yamada, "The pieces just fell into place." In three years, with the help of local Chinese volunteers, Lions planted 68,000 trees. The Martians stayed put.

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Yamada leans back in his chair in his office at international headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois, and ponders the question whether as Lions' president he will favor innovation and risk as he did as a healthcare leader. As president, he won't be in Oak Brook often and won't have the luxury of time. This year he'll travel all over the world, meeting Lions at clubs, conventions and forums to inspire them, learn from them and collect information from the boots on the ground that are essential to making decisions and shaping policy.

"Expect the same thing," he says. "There will be some changes. ... My expectations are always high. I'm idealistic. I set high goals."

It promises to be an eventful year, a fun year, a year of turning corners with one foot in yesterday and one in tomorrow. "We're about to turn 100 years old. I think we've reached a turning point. We want LCI to last another 100 years."

"We need to look back at what we've accomplished and look ahead to what we can do. Some things that are no longer relevant we want to leave behind. It's like the Lions logo that looks two ways: forward and backward. That's how we will move ahead."

Our early presidents set the bar high for Lions.

- As Lions Clubs reach its 10th anniversary, President William Westfall calls on members to "re-consecrate ourselves to those two great major activities: the handicapped child and the blind" (September 1926 LION).
- President Roderick Beddow is "heartily in favor of expansion in Canada and Mexico" (August 1933 LION).
- President Frank Birch predicts new streamline trains, electricity for farms and the popularity of television while asserting that "the prosperity of Lions will come from improving our 3,000 clubs" (June 1938 LION).
- See the list of our 99 international presidents.

## 28th Annual Lions International Peace Poster Contest

# Share Peace



*Sponsor a Lions International Peace Poster Contest and join clubs worldwide in sharing children's visions of peace with your community.*

### How the Contest Works

Only a Lions club can sponsor the contest in a local school or organized youth group. The contest is open to students 11-13 on November 15, 2015. Participating students are asked to create posters visually depicting the contest theme, "Share Peace."

One winner for each contest sponsored by a club is chosen to advance to the district governor for judging. On the district level, one winner is selected to go on to the multiple district competition and from there one winner is forwarded to International Headquarters for the final judging. Entries are judged at all levels on originality, artistic merit and portrayal of theme.

During the final judging, 23 merit award winners and one grand prize winner are chosen to represent the many entries submitted from around the world.

### Awards

Artists of posters advancing to the final international judging are recognized as follows:

- **International Grand Prize Winner** receives a trip to an award ceremony where he/she will receive a cash award of US\$5,000 (or local equivalent) and an engraved plaque. Two family members (one being the winner's parent or legal guardian) and the sponsoring Lions club president or a club member (as designated by the club president) will accompany the winner to the award ceremony.
- **23 Merit Award Winners** each receive a cash award of US\$500 (or local equivalent) and a certificate of achievement.

Mail or fax your order to: LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL  
CLUB SUPPLIES SALES DEPARTMENT, 300 W 22ND ST.  
OAK BROOK IL 60523-8842 USA; Fax 630-571-0964

Peace Poster Contest Kit (PPK-1) \_\_\_\_\_ Qty. @ US\$11.95/each \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Language Required \_\_\_\_\_ Tax \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Available in all official languages.) Postage & Handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
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The protection of your payment data is important to us. Your credit card\* purchases of Lions merchandise must be made directly online at [www2.lionsclubs.org](http://www2.lionsclubs.org). Please do not include your credit card number in any written communication or correspondence. \*Visa, MasterCard, Discover.

PR 785 11/14

### How to Enter

Lions clubs must order a Peace Poster Contest kit from the Club Supplies Sales Department at International Headquarters. Available in all 11 official languages, it costs US\$11.95, plus shipping, handling and applicable taxes. Each kit contains everything your club needs to sponsor one\* school or organized, sponsored youth group:

- **Official Club Contest Guide & Rules**
- **Official School or Youth Group Contest Guide & Rules**
- **Participant Flyer** may be duplicated and given to each participating student to take home
- **Sticker** to place on back of winning poster
- **Certificates** for contest winner and school or youth group

*\*Clubs can sponsor more than one contest in either the same or multiple school(s) and/or youth group(s) by purchasing more than one kit. Clubs will send one poster per each contest sponsored to the next level of judging.*

The Lions International Essay Contest entry form is also included in this kit and on the LCI website.

**Kits are available January 15 – October 1, 2015.**

Purchase your kit early to allow adequate time for shipment and contest planning.



To order the Peace Poster Contest kit (PPK-1) submit the form below, order through the online Lions Store (Item search: Peace Poster Kit) or call Club Supplies at (630) 571-5466 or (800) 710-7822 (U.S., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada only).

Visit [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) [search: Peace Poster] for more contest information, deadlines, to send a Peace Poster e-card and view past finalists' posters.

### Ship order to:

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### Sales Tax:

We are obligated to charge sales tax in Illinois and Canada.



**Dignity.  
Harmony.  
Humanity.**



# Bringing Dignity To Others

## Through Humanitarian Service

LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL • 2015-2016

PRESIDENT DR. JITSUHIRO YAMADA

**EVERY YEAR**, thousands of small cranes cross over the Himalayas at an altitude of 8000m in V formation for their seasonal migration. They are known as demoiselle cranes and they are the smallest species in the crane family of birds. During the summer, they reside in the steppes of Mongolia. As winter approaches they form groups and begin their southward journey to India. At 8,000 meters, the temperature is minus thirty Celsius and the oxygen saturation is only one third of the terrestrial oxygen level. Those brutal conditions make their migration a life or death journey in the truest sense.

This grueling route would be impossible for a small number of birds. By flying in a large V formation, each bird can make use of the backflow of air over the wings of the other birds in front of them and by doing so, reduce the total energy expended. The leading bird expends the greatest amount of energy so it is necessary to continually rotate new birds into the position. The demoiselle crane depends upon the cooperation and harmony of every other member of the flock. While each bird is small, every bird has great dignity.



Demoiselle cranes seasonal migration over the Himalayas

The determination demonstrated, as well as other characteristics like teamwork, and their family structure, have endeared the crane to multiple cultures. In Japan, the crane has traditionally been a symbol of long life. In the Japanese art of origami, the crane is the most basic and representative form that all children learn how to make. There is a custom of folding cranes and giving one to a loved one who is suffering from disease or injury as a way to say, "we wish you a quick recovery and long life." The folding of origami cranes is a meditative act that shows the heartfelt wishes of friends and family for the ill to become well again. But the crane has also become known as a symbol of peace – not only in Japan but around the world.

We Lions have been fostering international peace and harmony through service, giving hope to all people, and giving opportunity to live with dignity. As a medical doctor, I made a career out of fighting for the dignity of human life. A doctor might be able to save 10,000 lives over the course his career. By working together, our association can save tens of millions of lives each year through our programs.



Japanese Origami





Peace, hope, determination, teamwork  
and uniting people through service are  
central elements of my presidential theme –

“Dignity. Harmony. Humanity.”





Childhood should be a happy time

## Bringing Dignity To Others Through Humanitarian Service

*“What should move us to action is  
human dignity: the inalienable  
dignity of the oppressed, but also  
the dignity of each of us.  
We lose dignity if we tolerate  
the intolerable.”*

*Unknown Author*

There are many questions, scientific and otherwise, to which we may never have answers. But one thing is certain – human dignity should not be a privilege. One of the basic tenets of human dignity and self-respect is the ability to provide for oneself and for one's family. Imagine being a parent, watching your children go to bed hungry, or having a child diagnosed with a treatable disease but with no means to afford proper medical treatment. Millions of people here on earth wake up each morning wondering if they will be able to feed their children that day, or provide for their healthcare. They face an uncertain future, with little hope of bettering themselves or giving their children a life of certainty.

Childhood should be a happy time, filled with pleasant memories – vacations with family, celebrating holidays, familiar and delicious aromas coming from the kitchen, favorite stories shared with friends. It should be a time dedicated to study and preparing for the future, with a support network in place.

But for many children, there is no school. There is no support network. There are 2.2 billion children in the world today, and nearly 1 billion of them live in poverty. Poverty has devastating effects on children. It is linked to substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate nutrition and food insecurity, poor academic achievement (even when education is available), lack of medical care, and so much more that most of us take for granted. And it isn't only in developing countries.



Children of course are our future and tomorrow's leaders, yet they are in the most desperate need of our help. So service to children will continue to be a main focus area this year. Thousands of children die each day from treatable disease, hunger, and lack of fresh drinking water. Parents often watch helplessly because they don't have the financial resources, nearby reliable facilities, or both, to save their children. I want to help alleviate the needless suffering of children. No – we can't save every child. But just by strengthening or expanding our existing programs for children, we can make a difference. That is why I am introducing this year the Children's Dignity Initiative. Under this initiative, I am encouraging Lions to expand service to children by:

- Supporting and brightening the outlook of children in hospitals
- Responding to the needs of children in refugee camps
- Addressing the needs of hungry children
- Continue and expand the Reading Action Program



Those are only a few of the many services opportunities that address the needs of children. You can read more about the Children's Dignity Initiative on the [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org) web site.



Serving others. Those are not just words to Lions. Our organization was founded on that very principle. Our tradition of service continues, and in fact has grown to meet the needs of our communities and a changing world. But we don't just serve. We don't simply provide food, shelter, or address the immediate need. We provide hope. We provide the promise of a brighter tomorrow. And yes, we restore dignity.

The question is "can we do more?" We MUST do more. Our 100 year anniversary is approaching. The centennial service challenge is an ambitious undertaking. In order to reach our goal of serving 100 million people in the areas of youth, vision, hunger and the environment between now and June 30, 2018, it will be necessary to triple our output of service in those areas. I know we can do it. Lions have shown time and time again their willingness and ability to exceed challenges when it means others less fortunate will benefit. We asked Lions to plant 1 million trees, and they exceed that ten-fold. There are countless other examples.



Service to others is changing the world. Think about it. As we serve others, we are sowing the seeds of harmony, understanding and peace. Our service programs –restoring sight, protecting children from measles, feeding empty stomachs, planting trees, and so much more, are strengthening humanity and forming bonds of mutual understanding.



**Children of course are our future and tomorrow's leaders**

## Harmony: Mutual Understanding Through Service

Anthropologists have identified hundreds – if not thousands – of cultures. But it doesn't take an anthropologist to point that out. Just in our own world of Lions, we know we have many outward differences. But as a neurosurgeon, I can tell you beyond all reasonable doubt that in spite of any outside characteristic like skin color, hair color, different features, the way we speak, or other factors that identify culture, on the inside we are basically the same. A heart is a heart. We all function in the same manner. That shouldn't be just a scientific approach; it should be the human approach – to dignity, to harmony and to humanity.

In this rapidly changing world, where cultures and people circulate and interact on a daily basis, those people who know how to communicate effectively across cultures, in both personal and professional contexts, will have a crucial advantage over those who do not. Cultural sensitivity requires empathy, curiosity and respect for other people's opinions and beliefs

Culture is a strong part of people's lives. It influences their views, their values, their humor, and their hopes and aspirations. People learn how to function and maneuver within their own culture from the day of birth. Sometimes people mistakenly draw the conclusion based on their own perspective that all cultures are alike, that if they understand their own culture, they can easily operate in others. Not so.



## Global Projects For Harmony

It is important to understand and appreciate cultures unlike our own. There is no better way to cultivate better understanding and appreciation than through joint service projects at the district and multiple district level. I encourage district governors and council chairpersons to reach out to each other internationally. I have seen this international cooperation work first hand in projects between Lions of Japan and Lions of the Philippines. International joint service projects provide a different perspective to their routine and an appreciation for other cultures. Bringing people together to address the needs of others creates true harmony within the international community. This type of activity is at the heart of the Third Purpose of the Association – “To create and foster a spirit of understanding among the peoples of the world.”

Clubs can also get involved in international cooperation. Clubs that participate in our Twinning program gain a unique understanding of another culture. Interacting with members from different cultures and with different points of view can go a long way in broadening our outlook and provides inspiration for activities in our own community.

*“If we have no peace, it is because  
we have forgotten that we belong  
to each other.”*

*Mother Teresa*



Bringing people together to address the needs of others



Lions serve with sincerity,  
they serve with passion

## More Members Equals More Service

Our members and our clubs are the heart of our organization. Lions serve with sincerity, they serve with passion, and they serve unconditionally.

We have enjoyed a lengthy period of membership growth. We have shown an increase in worldwide membership for seven years in a row. There are a number of reasons for our success; we have a dynamic Global Membership Team, effective marketing strategies coupled with easy to implement membership growth programs, dedicated leaders beginning at the club level and unprecedented outreach to women and family members, to name only a few. Together, we have built our membership to nearly 1.4 million members. I want to continue that growth. More members equal more service.

## Club Presidents Hold The Keys To Our Success

Our association's energy radiates from each club. So naturally, club presidents are at the heart of our success. They have the power to succeed. They have the power to affect change. They have the power to transform the way we do business. So I am asking club presidents to transform the atmosphere of their club. Transform the club to one in which members feel confident, and to one which works in unison with the community it serves, thereby garnering respect. Wouldn't it be wonderful if new members came to us instead of the other way around?

I have come up with 7 points of excellence for club presidents.

## "Ask One" Begins At Home

Lions volunteering with family is a great way for families to have fun and feel closer. It is even better when family members become Lions! If you ask one, you should ask your closest friend, the person you trust most – your loving spouse and partner. Share your commitment and enthusiasm for Lions with your family members. Families that serve together as Lions establish a family tradition of serving others.

The Ask One membership campaign starts at home. If Lions families are on the front lines serving their communities, the word will spread wider and faster. We will gain the recognition we deserve as the greatest service organization in the world.

## Humanity - Bringing It All Together

If clubs are at the heart of our community service, then LCIF is at the heart of our worldwide service. LCIF grants create goodwill, eliminate human suffering, and restore hope and dignity for people around the world. LCIF programs and partnerships enable us to treat preventable blindness; provide free medical care and medical training for doctors and nurses; teach life skills to school children; and so much more. This year I am asking Lions to take every opportunity to support LCIF with your generous donations and Melvin Jones Fellowships. Your support underscores our ability to combine dignity and harmony while serving humanity.

Photo Credit: Dan Morris



### *Club President Keys To Success*

1. Increased value in being a member (*better education for new members*)
2. Making clubs that members are proud to be in (*improving club satisfaction*)
3. High quality service projects (*relevant to the actual needs of the general community*)
4. Serving with family members (*because "Ask One" starts at home*)
5. More female members / young members (*the ideal man to woman ratio is 1:1*)
6. Being leaders in the community (*more leadership training*)
7. Thinking outside the box (*reform of inefficient practices, customs and policies*)



## Conclusion

As we approach our centennial celebration, we would do well to remember and meditate upon the words of our founder -

*“You can’t get very far until you start doing something for somebody else.”*

*Melvin Jones*

We have demonstrated throughout our history the ability to bring people together for a common cause. We have shown time after time that national boundary lines are nothing more than dots on a map. In spite of conflicts and disputes throughout the world, we work beyond differences – a grassroots coalition of peace through service.



**Bringing people together  
for a common cause**



*“Be kind. Be open. Be curious. Be strong.  
Be generous. Be sincere. Be loyal. Be honest.  
Be a Lion.”*

*Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada*

## Dignity

As we strive to serve the needs of others, let us always remember to respect the dignity of those we serve.

As we reach out to others with hands of service, let us always remember it is not a handout.

## Harmony

As we build others up, let us always remember serving others isn't just an act of kindness; it is also a means to build understanding and harmony.

## Humanity

As we show empathy for the less fortunate in our respective communities, let us extend empathy to all who are suffering around the world.

And as we continue to serve human kind, let us remember that serving humanity is not a duty, it is a responsibility.

I am immensely proud and extremely humbled to be the president of the global leader in humanitarian service – Lions Clubs International. I wish you 1,000 cranes. But most of all, I hope the service you bestow on others brings you tremendous love and fulfillment, and fills your heart with joy and peace.







Lions bring  
**hope** and  
**help** to children...

one child at a time.

## Join Us for Children's Dignity Week

August 30 – September 5

Promote children's dignity and help us reach our Centennial Service Challenge goal of serving 100 million people by hosting a service project benefitting youth in your community.

Visit [lions100.org](http://lions100.org) for Children's Dignity Week resources and start planning your project today!

[lions100.org](http://lions100.org)

# RISING UP

A tree limb crushed a 21-year-old's spine but not her spirit.

BY JAN GOODWIN

Life was good. It was a gorgeous Memorial Day weekend in 2013 at Strawberry Lake in bucolic northern Minnesota, famed for its pristine waters, eagles and loons. Samantha Schroth was chatting outside her friend's cabin. They were about to put in a boat to go sailing. The next thing she knew she was lying on the ground with her friend staring down at her. The 21-year-old had been felled by a massive dead branch as it broke away from a tree. The tree limb was so heavy it took two people to lift it off her. That was her last memory for nearly a month and a half.

An ambulance rushed Schroth to the nearest clearing where a helicopter could land. From there she was airlifted to the closest trauma center in Fargo, North Dakota, some 64 miles away. Her mother, Darlene, at the family home in Greenville, Wisconsin, took the phone call and could only pray that her middle daughter would survive. What she didn't know then was that her daughter's spinal vertebrae had been pulverized at mid-chest level, her ribs broken and a lung had collapsed, plus she had a mild brain injury from being smashed backward. It would take 10 hours of surgery just to stabilize her thoracic vertebrae 7 and 8. She needed a tracheotomy and a TLSO spinal brace, which resembles a bulletproof vest or chest plate, for the compression injury.

Exactly a week earlier, Schroth, who seemed only to have one speed—zoom—had graduated from college in three years, instead of the customary four. A lifelong lover of animals, she had been accepted at veterinary school, which she planned to start in the fall.

The upbeat young woman, 6 feet tall and model slim, with her trendy, spiky hair and a fondness for dangling earrings, had always grabbed life with both hands. Rarely still, she'd been valedictorian and class president at her high school, sang in the choir, played in the jazz band, performed in musicals and plays, competed on the debate team and served as president of the Spanish National Honor Society. She'd won a college scholarship from Lions because of her community service. In her "spare time," she was also training to run in her first marathon that July. Now, the damage to her spinal cord caused communication problems

from her brain to the rest of her body. Schroth was paralyzed from the mid-chest down.

"In that moment at the lake, all I had ever known and planned for myself had changed," says Schroth. While she was in critical care, doctors told her family that had the branch hit her an inch higher or lower she would have died.

To all outward appearances, Schroth's once very promising future appeared severely curtailed. But anyone who thought so did not know this young woman. It also helped that after Fargo, she was transferred to the renowned Craig Rehabilitation Hospital in Denver, Colorado, whose motto is "Redefining the Possible." Or that on her medical team was a doctor in a wheelchair, William Scelza, a paraplegic himself since 1988. At Craig, she would learn to do many of the things that had come naturally before: how to open a door, how to dress herself—putting on pants can be quite a challenge for a paraplegic—how to get her wheelchair into a vehicle before driving.

From being the girl with the seemingly golden life, she also had to come to terms with what had happened to her. Her down-to-earth mother, a stay-at-home mom, was frank with her from the beginning. "I'd tell her she was paralyzed, but that everything was going to be okay," says Darlene. "I said life would be a little bit different, but the Lord would still be by her side. For those first few weeks, there was no response. Sam was calm. I didn't know if she was taking it in. I think her lack of memory in those early weeks was protecting her from the trauma she'd been through."

As Schroth's mother spent time with her at the hospital, her father, Paul, a corn and bean cash crop farmer in his mid-50s, got busy at home. In the frigid Wisconsin winter when the land is frozen, he spends the season "getting ready for spring, fixing and repairing." So he had the skills to prepare their home for their daughter's return. He built a long wheelchair ramp to their ranch-style home and made other adjustments inside to accommodate his daughter and her wheelchair.

Once her daughter "woke up," Darlene says, "her physical therapy could kick in." And the PT at Craig was





2015 Ms. Wheelchair America

grueling: 10 long weeks, starting at 7 a.m. and continuing until 5 p.m. with a too-quick hour for lunch. "It was tough, but I needed it," says Schroth. "I'd always had a lot of body strength from being a big runner. But I didn't have the upper body strength I needed now, especially for maneuvering a wheelchair." There was also speech therapy necessary for her mild traumatic brain injury.

"My daughter has always set herself high goals that she works very, very hard to obtain," says Darlene. "She's a special young woman, a go-getter. If she wants to do something, she'll do everything in her power to achieve it. What happened to Sam was hard to accept, but it became the new normal, for her and for us. She's very independent, and wants people to realize that just because she's in a wheelchair she's still the same person as she was before the accident."

Schroth agrees. "People deal with you differently. There are all these preconceptions about people in wheelchairs and what they can and cannot do. I probably had some of them myself. The pity glances—like disabled people can't ever amount to anything. But that is definitely not the case. I just have to think of ways of making the world work for me. Sure, stairs are not my best friend, but I don't focus on what I can't do, but on what I can. Disability does not define you."

chair, to thank us for our support and to tell us that she was transferring from veterinary medicine to human medicine. She stays in touch to let us know what is going in her life—which is a great deal."

Schroth views herself as "differently abled." Currently, she is studying business at the University of Wisconsin Fox Valley. She works part-time at the University of Minnesota, researching metagenomics of bacteria, the study of genetic material recovered from environmental samples. She recently applied to medical school. "I'd like to become a doctor specializing in a field I'm now extremely passionate about—spinal cord injury medicine. I want to help people thrown into situations like mine," explains Schroth, now 23.

Her volunteer spirit remains entirely intact. She mentors new spinal cord injury patients at a local hospital and tutors at a middle school. She also restarted her training for a marathon, but this time in a racing chair. "They are amazing things—custom-built for each athlete. They fit on your body pretty snug. You are tucked inside them like an egg," she says. "It takes a lot of work, but they can go very fast. I've gotten up to 18 miles an hour in mine so far."

It's clear that although a tree branch fell on her, it came nowhere close to breaking her spirit. She was recently crowned Ms. Wheelchair America 2015, which involves educating and advocating for the more than 54 million Amer-

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'I'm very blessed to be living the life I currently have in my awesome lime-green wheelchair. My life isn't easy, but it's worth every single moment.'

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Schroth's accident affected two families: her own and the family among Greenville Lions. Schroth's father is a Greenville Lion.

Wayne Dorsey, 51, the immediate past president, lives one block from the Schroths. "The Schroth girls, Sam and her two sisters, are very smart, did very well in school. It was so tragic. All the Lions were stunned, shocked. When you heard about it, you turned inward, thinking of your own kids. Mine are 18 and 14. It could have happened to anybody."

Greenville Lions assisted with one of Sam's early benefits called "Life Ain't Bad." "After the accident, her family had a lot of medical bills piling up. We are always raising money all over the place. We helped run the raffle at the benefit," says Dorsey. "Sam is such a special person, so outgoing. And always has been, even after the accident. When one of our own gets hurt, we are there."

The club also helped with a benefit to buy her an adapted vehicle. "Sam is an amazing young lady," says Riley Fieser, a charter member. "She has such an awesome attitude, a strong faith. After the accident her spirit has been unbelievable. She went through this terrible accident but has not let it affect her outcome in life."

Schroth visited Lions meetings both before and after the accident. "She came the first time to thank us for the college scholarship she received. Then to tell us how her first year in college was going," says Fieser. "Since the accident, she returned to talk to us about being in a wheel-

icans living with disabilities. The day after her interview with the LION Magazine, she and her mother flew to Arkansas for the Ms. Wheelchair organization to speak to kids with disabilities and help out at a fundraiser. She diligently fundraises to pay for most of her own expenses for this activism and for her mother to accompany her.

Schroth had been in Greenville shortly after she won the Ms. Wheelchair award. Lions hold an annual Parade of Checks to present donations to the fire department, civic club, first responders and others. Schroth was the parade's guest of honor, riding on the float.

That was one of the few times Schroth could be found sitting still since her recovery. Where does her energy and drive come from? "Most people are motivated. I'm just remarkably nuts," she says with a chuckle. Schroth's sense of humor combined with a deep curiosity of the world around her—especially science—is ever present. So it isn't surprising to see her Ms. Wheelchair crown sitting on top of a stuffed toy microbe in her bedroom.

As if her calendar was not already crammed, Schroth also recently started helping out at "The Ave," a place for high school students to socialize and to meet for Bible study. "Sam is a volunteer leader," says Pastor Zach Gebert, youth and outreach pastor at Bethany Lutheran Church in nearby Appleton. "Her joy, optimism and excitement about life are impressive. She always has a smile on her face. There is no bitterness about the accident, no despair about what has happened. Instead, she has an



amazing positivism. She understands in a vivid way that although her life has changed, God has a plan for her.

"She's working with 40 to 50 kids. And she's really good at reaching out to them and letting them know they are valued. Her disability does not get in the way, and it certainly doesn't slow her down. When she first meets one of these young people, she's likely to make a joke about it, to put people at ease."

Schroth's deep religious faith underlies her positive attitude. On her blog, which she titles "Never Sitting Still," she wrote: "Why does someone get injured in a freak accident, changing their life forever in a split second? Why? To be completely honest with you that really isn't a question I've struggled with since all this happened. I guess I've always had this belief that everything happens for a reason. That God knows the direction he wants us to go in, and he has our lives all figured out, even when we don't know."

But she admits that naturally she misses some things: "I miss being 6 feet tall. I miss being able to get things out of a cupboard. I miss being able to stop and not have to worry about still moving [in her wheelchair]. I miss going up stairs without help. I miss doing situps. I miss feeling the weight of a pet on my lap." She misses, too, the last time she felt waves lapping against her legs, the sand between her toes. There is more to miss: "the last time I descended a set of stairs. The last time I walked."

But she is just as quick to say, "I don't want to be portrayed as an object of pity or a girl who wants to walk again, and that's the only way I'll ever amount to anything. Don't get me wrong, it'd be great. But I'm very content and will make a difference in my wheeling form. More importantly, I'm very blessed to be living the life I currently have in my awesome lime-green wheelchair. My life isn't easy, but it's worth every single moment."

Schroth admits she has bad days. "But then, who doesn't?" she says. "Everyone has bad days. And they pass." And that while some doors may have been closed to her, "so many more have been opened in places I never could have imagined when I started this journey." One new opportunity is her passion for medicine. She intends "to pursue that with every fiber of my body (even the nonfunctional ones.)" Her injury also opened "the doors that have allowed me to learn about the disabled community and educate those around me. Or advocacy."

Change is constant in her life these days, continually learning how to adapt. "I live in a world made for people who walk," she says. "But I believe that life is what you make of it. I plan on making mine awesome, even if I have to do it from a seated position."



Schroth often tells her story to schoolchildren.

# RATTLING GOOD PROJECT

Texas Lions don't get rattled by their unusual fundraiser.

BY SONIA SMITH

The first thing you notice is the dense sound. The hum and buzz of hundreds of rattlesnakes shaking their tails drown everything else out inside the auditorium at the Oglesby Community Center, a white brick building in the center of town. A pungent, earthy smell hangs in the air, emanating from the pulsing, coiled mass of snakes that would make Indiana Jones weep. Welcome to the Oglesby Rattlesnake Roundup, a weekend of kitschy fun, brushes with danger and encounters with eccentric characters.

The roundup is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Oglesby Lions Club. The central Texas town of 474 near Waco quadruples in size for two days each February. Pickup trucks park on the grass and motorcycles line the streets, as families come out to marvel at the western diamondback rattlesnakes, *Crotalus atrox*, on display in a custom-made plexiglass and wooden pit.



Jack Bibby (left), the "Texas Snake Man" and star of Animal Planet's Rattlesnake Republic, has run the roundup in Oglesby for three decades.

Texas was once home to dozens of rattlesnake roundups each spring, but that number has dwindled to only seven across the state





(Clockwise from left) David Gay of the Heart of Texas Snake Handlers displays a snake, and colleague Landon Cook does not flinch as snakes crawl around and over him. A snake handler shows how rattlesnakes can be milked for their venom.





today. The event in Oglesby is the first one of the year. Each January, ambitious rattlesnake hunters fan out for a hundred miles around central Texas for several weeks ahead of the roundup, capturing the snakes and keeping them under heat lamps until the time comes to drop them off.

Many of the Oglesby Lions Club's 30 members give the snakes a wide berth, preferring to help take tickets, sell T-shirts and help with setup. That's the safe approach of John Barnes, 88, who returned home to this sleepy farming community 21 years ago from Houston, where he worked as an accountant for Texaco. "We just prepare for the snake show," says Barnes. "We leave the work in the pit to the professionals."

That's not the case with Bruce Pomeranke, the new mayor of Oglesby and a 20-year Lion. He performs the painstaking task of weighing and measuring each of the more than 500 rattlesnakes that hunters haul in over the 48-hour period. "This is the biggest weekend of the year here in town. It's something we look forward to, but it is two days of very hard work," he says.

This year, the longest snake measured 62.5 inches and the shortest came in at a mere 13.75 inches. A snake broker paid hunters \$6 for each pound of snake they bring in. The

Lions chipped in a \$3-a-pound bonus for snakes turned in early Saturday morning. Some of these snakes end up in other roundups, but most will eventually be harvested for their skin and meat.

Pomeranke, a jovial, mustachioed man who wore a camouflage fleece under his yellow Lions vest, is well-suited for his hands-on role. He's something of an amateur herpetologist who keeps seven ball pythons as pets. (Pomeranke also has a puckish sense of humor. Halfway through our interview he took a small albino snake named Sunshine out of his pocket and placed it in my hand without warning.)

In his youth, Pomeranke brought his own quarry to the roundup. "When I hunted I started in October or November and kept going until February. At one point I had 286 snakes in my garage," he says proudly. When asked how he tracked down all those snakes, he simply says, "After you start hunting, people will start calling you to say that they have a snake on their property that you should come catch. It's really just word of mouth."

As we spoke, James Burt, a snake hunter from nearby Valley Mills, came holding a white bucket containing a couple of snakes he had caught on a bluff the previous

A hunter removes a rattlesnake from a bucket so it can be measured.







The roundup attracts colorful characters. (Below) James Smith and a woman pose with two of his taxidermied creations.



afternoon. His catch weighed in at 2.5 pounds, and wasn't a contender for length either. After recording his measurements in a binder, Pomerence handed the bucket to Jack Bibby, who poured its contents gently into the pit.

Bibby, the eccentric star in the Animal Planet show "Rattlesnake Republic," has been running Oglesby's roundup for more than 30 years. Over the course of the weekend he emceed five snake-handling shows each day, wearing dapper black Chippewa snake boots and his signature snakeskin fedora. Each show began with a safety demonstration, with the handlers passing around gory photos showing how a snakebite can ravage human tissue and reminding kids to listen for the distinctive rattling sound and look for the black-and-white section of the rattlesnake tail when they're out walking.

David Gay, another employee of Heart of Texas Snake Handlers, walked around the inside of the pit showing how a snake can be milked for its venom. He let kids pet the tail end of a snake. Gay's job has left its mark on his body, from the rattlesnake tattoo on his left forearm to the scars from bites on his legs to the indentation in his pinky finger where the tissue died after a snakebite. "Most of us tend to fib when we're asked how many bites we've had," Gay tells me, adding that he's had six serious bites and 10 or 12 "nicks" over his 30-year career as a snake handler. "If they don't take me to the hospital, they don't count."

Bibby's bites are even more of a cautionary tale: the 64-year-old has been bitten 12 times in the 46 years he's been handling rattlesnakes. In 2012, doctors were forced to amputate his right leg after a particularly bad bite. Prosthetic leg and all, he still keeps getting back into the ring.

As Bibby launched into his performance, curious children smashed their faces up against the plexiglass walls of the snake pit, and older onlookers stood on the bleachers, gasping and snapping photos with their smartphones. "The stunt I'm about to do you may have seen in the Guinness Book of World Records. Or you may have seen them on Jay Leno," he says into his microphone. "This is called 'Snakes in the Mouth.'" His assistants gathered a dozen snakes together by their tails, stuffing the rattle ends in Bibby's mouth. There the creatures dangled, for several tense seconds, before he let them drop to the floor. Raucous applause erupted.

"Jack Bibby brings a lot to this. People follow him around the country," Lion Ed Newman explains to me Saturday morning as he staffed one of the exit doors in the auditorium. "This is the biggest event of the year in Oglesby. Nothing else comes close," he says, not even the club's annual seed-spitting contest, which draws in a few hundred people each fall.

This year's roundup drew more than 2,500 people, raising \$12,500 for the Lions. They'll use the money mostly to fund scholarships and to buy eyeglasses, according to

John McClure, secretary-treasurer.

Groups such as Center for Biological Diversity and the Humane Society of the United States oppose the rattlesnake roundups. They argue that the roundups are cruel to the animals and drive down their numbers. They also say that the technique some hunters employ, gassing snakes in their burrows, is harmful to the larger environment.

But Newman, a former prison guard and now a pastor in Waco, isn't swayed by that line of thinking. "The naturalists keep talking about what we're doing to the environment, but I've never seen grass growing around a rock without seeing a snake," he says. Rattlesnakes can be burdensome for those who live in the country. "They harm our livestock, and they harm us. I know a show goat that got bit this year," Newman adds.

A Lion for five years, Newman actually has a much longer history with the roundup. In 1969, his junior high school agriculture teacher, a Lion named J.J. Owens, picked Newman and three classmates to build the roundup's first snake pit out of plywood. Newman helped out with subsequent roundups while in high school.

Bibby's show at the roundup is hardly the only attraction. After each show ends, attendees made their way past tables of vendors hawking all sorts of snake-related kitsch, from rubber reptiles to snakeskin headbands to baby food jars with rattlesnake heads inside, buoyantly suspended in fluid. Burly, bearded James Smith of Randal's Wildlife Creations offered passersby a chance to pose with a particularly large

stuffed rattler around their neck. For those looking to pick up a live souvenir, a pop-up pet store, Tony's Turtles and Reptiles, had a wide range of offerings, from quarter-sized, red-eared sliders to hulking savannah monitors.

Complete with funnel cakes, carnival games and pony rides, the weekend has the feel of a small version of the Texas State Fair. For anyone hungry, a range of standard festival fare could be devoured, from barbecue to turkey legs to pie by the slice. More adventurous eaters could tuck into a plate of "southern fried rattlesnake," a bargain at \$5.

Don Jones, a rancher and county commissioner, was among the Lions cooking up the 100 pounds of snake meat, which quickly sold out on Saturday. "I've been frying rattlesnakes the last few years, but I've never tasted it," he says. "It's a dark-looking meat. It comes to us frozen and then we throw it in buttermilk and cayenne pepper and soak it overnight." Lion Ray McEnroe acknowledges that he's tasted the snake. "I try everything I cook," he says. "It's a novelty, eating snake. A lot of people love it, but I prefer to cook fish."

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*'This is the  
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Oglesby.  
Nothing else  
comes close.'*

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# Changing Lives

We support the compassionate humanitarian service of 1.4 million Lions in more than 200 countries and geographic areas by providing grant funding and developing programs that improve lives around the world. Please join us in bringing hope and change to communities every day, everywhere.



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# FROM FOUR TO FULL BORE

Down to just four members, a club in a small North Dakota town rebounds thanks to Facebook and an old-fashioned, father-and-son chat.

BY CHRIS ERICKSON | PHOTOS CHRIS ERICKSON

On the eve of last year's Super Bowl, a large crowd gathered in the Beulah Civic Center in North Dakota for the Lions' "Souper Bowl." Fourteen varieties of soup vied for votes. Beulah Lions donated \$1,500 to Leader Dogs thanks to the fundraiser.

The fundraiser was routine. But the fact the club still exists and today thrives is the real story. Down to four members, the club in the small city of 3,400 was set to give up its charter.

The turnaround began with a father-and-son talk last year. Facebook fueled the rapid rise in membership. And at the heart of the revival were young families who saw a Lions club as a vehicle to improve their community and enhance the lives of their children.

Beulah comes into view as drivers crest a hill on Highway 49. The city's size belies its economic strength. The surrounding hills and valleys are rich with grain and cattle. And power plants. Known as the "Energy Capital of North Dakota," Beulah boasts a vibrant energy sector with coal mines and coal-fired power plants.

Yet the club lost members, stagnated, lost even more members and dwindled to almost no one. The decline started with the best of intentions. Dave Czywczynski had served as a district governor in 1991 while a member of the Bowman Lions Club in North Dakota. He became a Beulah Lion when he moved into town because of a job transfer. As president, he advocated more participation in programs of Lions Clubs International. "I could feel a quiet resistance from some of the members," he says.

A family with many friends in the club quit. "It started a domino effect," says Czywczynski. "We were a club going south, and no one was willing to work at saving the club."

That's when Czywczynski and his wife, Lion Linda, sat down for dinner with his son, Derek, and his wife,

Heather. Derek had worked as an optometrist in Omaha, Nebraska, and he was well acquainted with the service of Lions both from his job and his parents. Derek wanted to serve the community but not as a Lion. His plan was to start a service club.

His parents detailed to their son and daughter-in-law the advantages of being part of an international association. The Beulah Lions Club itself was primed for further service—"fundraising assets such as our chuckwagon for food vending, a post office box and bank accounts to handle club dues," Czywczynski told his son.

Derek was sold. "It was always something that I knew I would get into," he says. "Given my background and my interests, it would have been kind of ridiculous if I didn't."

"So I reached out to some of my friends who I thought might have a similar interest in it. It started to grow."

He recruited Brant and Katie Keller, who have two young children. He works at a local power plant and she works at the elementary school. Brant also serves on the Beulah City Council. But he and Katie saw Lions as another way to give back to Beulah. The two reached out to other young professionals. "Much of our initial recruiting was done through Facebook Messenger," Katie says.

Four new members joined. That swelled to 12 by the next meeting. About three months after the first push, 20 new members had joined. In less than a year, the club counted 30 members. The average age of a new member was 33. Most had young children, and many were professionals.

"We sat down and said, 'What do we want to do?'" Derek says. "The overwhelming majority said that we should be improving our city in whatever way we can—walking paths, planting trees, anything to improve it for the future."





Derek Czywczyński helped engineer the rebirth of the Beulah Lions Club after a talk with his father, Dave, a past district governor. The resurgent club finished repairing a gazebo, a club project that had stalled.



Brant and Katie Keller stand with their children, Brady and Emalee. The Kellers were one of the first couples the Czywczyńskis approached in rebuilding their club.

'The overwhelming majority said that we should be improving our city in whatever way we can—anything to improve it for the future.'

The club spruced up a park the elder Czywczynski's generation had built. The Lions painted the shelter, picked weeds and planted flowers. That initial act helped the group feel an immediate ownership of the club and the community.

The club also tackled a Lions' project that had stalled: a gazebo at the Knife River Care Center Memorial Garden. The finished gazebo now provides an enjoyable gathering point in the garden. The club also places American flags throughout the town on holidays such as Memorial Day, Flag Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, 9/11 and Veterans Day.

"I never figured that the interest would be that great, but we got something going," Derek says. Part of the appeal was that the club wasn't a stickler about attendance. Meetings were not mandatory. The club also emphasized the value of community service and carving out a niche for members. "If you take the time to belong to something and devote some time to it, you will find that your life becomes

more rewarding," says Derek. "The biggest thing can be making sure everyone feels appreciated. Everyone has a focus, and if there's a project where someone's expertise can come in, include them."

In the end, the club succeeded because its new members took charge but also used the sage counsel of longtime members.

"Having Dad there to help guide us has been instrumental," Derek says. "He and the others have helped guide us, shown us where to go and how to do it when we needed certain resources. It has helped so much having him around and I'm thankful for that."

On the verge of extinction, a club in Connecticut rebounds. Read the February 1991 LION story.

Beulah is sustained by agriculture, coal mines and coal-fired power plants. The Beulah Lions place flags throughout town.





## Heavyweight Match: Destructive Tree Bug vs. Crowdfunding

By 2018, the Brookfield and La Grange Park area in Illinois is expected to lose at least 900 trees due to the emerald ash borer—a type of beetle that feeds on ash trees. But the Brookfield-La Grange Park Lions Club is taking action with a crowdfunding campaign. President Jason Vitell said the club aims to raise \$45,000 to purchase 100 trees.

Crowdfunding, an online tool for attracting donations from large numbers of people, was a logical choice, Vitell says. “People are communicating daily, not just on Facebook, but also on local ‘connect’ sites, regular email, Twitter, etc.,” he says. “Since we draw from two villages, word-of-mouth and friend-to-friend contact becomes exponentially important. This is where social media can do the heavy lifting for us.”

The club has received support for the project from the villages of Brookfield and La Grange, and also is reaching out to schools, businesses, garden clubs, park districts, libraries and other sources. More information about this campaign is available at its IndieGoGo crowdfunding site, website or Facebook page.



## Dinner in the Dark ... for Dogs

When Lion Therese Wheaton was put in charge of raising funds for Leader Dogs for the Blind, she had an inspired idea. She planned a “Dinner in the Dark,” in which guests eat dinner blindfolded. Then she advertised the event on Facebook. The evening was a success: some 115 guests attended, raising more than \$10,000 for the Michigan-based guide dog group. “We had a blast,” says Wheaton.

Lions clubs in District 14 F in northwestern Pennsylvania took part. A coach at each table instructed diners on how to sit down, pass condiments, locate the right silverware and dine successfully. Eventually, the blindfolds came off, and guests discussed the challenges of limited vision. They also listened to several speakers including a blind man who received a guide dog that Wheaton had raised from puppyhood. She says everyone appreciated the message. “These dogs do so much,” she says.

Wheaton’s Facebook posts advertised the event with photos of volunteers wearing sunglasses. This piqued interest beyond the Lions clubs. More than 60 percent of the guests were not Lions. “We got one to two dozen new members from the event,” she says. “And it keeps growing. It turned out fabulous.”

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Email us at [lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org](mailto:lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org) to submit a comment or make a story suggestion for our editors.

## LCIF Provides Sight and Hope in Colorado

BY MARIE ANNE SLIWINSKI

"I'm sorry, but you are going blind. We can't do anything about it."

For many people diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration (AMD), these words can stir fear, anger and confusion. For 80-year-old Maurine Sanford, they spurred defiance. "I'm not going to let that happen!" Sanford vowed.

While Sanford's blue eyes may look healthy, her sight is mostly blurry and dark. She has geographic atrophy, a late stage of the dry form of AMD. When Sanford's good friend Mary Duncan, who lives with low vision due to glaucoma, learned about Sanford's condition, she recommended that Sanford visit the Ensign Skills Center for Visual Rehabilitation in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Ensign is the only nationally accredited, low-vision clinic in Colorado that offers a complete set of services to assist people who have low

vision to improve their life skills, independence and self-confidence. The Fort Collins Lions Club has been a major supporter of Ensign since the clinic was established in 2001. In 2013, Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) awarded a US\$200,050 grant to fund a three-year SightFirst project to expand low-vision mobile services throughout Colorado. As the implementing partner, Ensign purchased a van and equipped it with eye exam tools and devices.

For the past two years, the On-site van has traveled around rural Colorado promoting low-vision care, educating the local Lions and the community about tools and techniques available for people with low vision and providing low-vision evaluation and rehabilitation services. More than 100 Lion volunteers have participated in low-vision evaluation

and education events, provided logistical support or taken the lead in information sessions. More than 290 low-vision patients have received rehabilitation services and follow-up consultations including home visits.

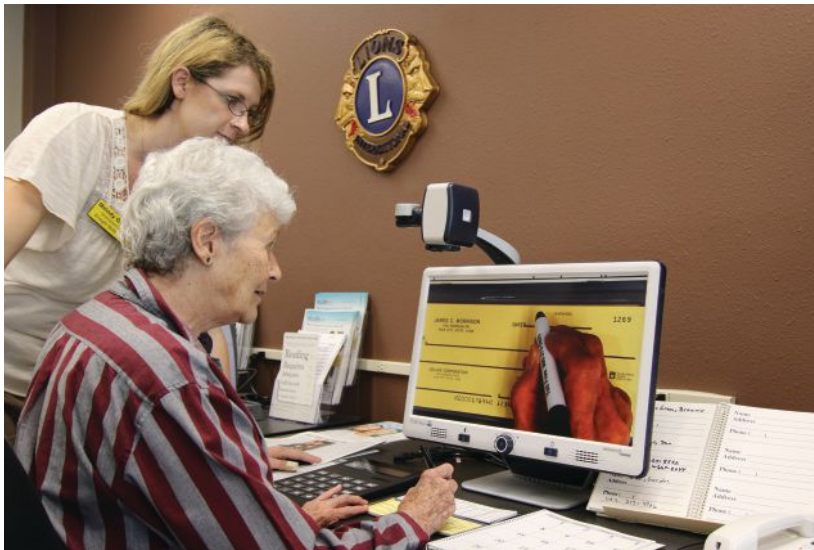
Over the past two years, Sanford has met regularly with an occupational therapist and an optometrist, who have helped her identify ways to better use her remaining vision such as turning her home into a low-vision friendly space. Low-vision patients like Sanford are assessed simultaneously by therapists and optometrists, who provide a personalized plan of action including follow-up care such as phone calls and home visits.

Sanford is grateful to all who have helped her along the way. "Before, I walked around hunched down, not wanting to do anything for fear of being hurt. But thanks to Ensign and the Lions of Colorado, I am able to stand up straight and move forward to the next phase of my life," she says.

District 6 NE Governor Bob Kitchell and Ensign Board Chairperson Lion Doug Hutchinson believe that the SightFirst project has successfully reached out to an underserved population who were not only losing sight but losing hope as well. Hutchinson, who has low vision, says, "I am amazed at how minor adjustments in actions and behavior can have major positive results in my day-to-day life. As a Lion, I proudly support our initiative and we look forward to helping more people in Colorado."

For information on SightFirst programs and grants, visit [lcif.org](http://lcif.org).

Photo by Wayne Crownhart



Melody Bettenhausen of Ensign shows Maurine Sanford how to use a closed circuit monitor/desktop video magnifier to write a check.



# Special Playground Brings Joy to Kids

BY ERIC MARGULES

With the help of your community anything is possible. For proof, look no further than Belton, Texas, where the smiling faces of children brighten a new handicapped-accessible playground made possible by the efforts of local Lions, the community of Belton and Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF).

The story of the inclusive playground began in 2012 when city officials and the Belton Lions decided their town needed a place where all children could play, regardless of physical ability. As always, finances presented a challenge, but after raising US\$50,000 from the community over two years—along with matching funds from the city of Belton—Lions were awarded a \$75,000 Standard grant by LCIF to cover the remaining costs. After years of fundraising and hard work, the playground began to take shape.

Over the next several months, Lion planners worked with the Texas-based We Build Fun, Inc. to build the playground and assemble the equipment. In December 2014, the community of Belton came together to celebrate the partnership that made the playground possible. The project cost \$180,000.

“This is another great day in Belton,” City Manager Sam Listi told the Belton Journal at the opening of the park. “Both the Belton Lions Club and [LCIF] were a major part of this project, and local citizens contributed over \$50,000.”

The playground, which measures 5,400 square feet, features handicapped-accessible equipment including slides, a merry-go-round, monkey bars and more. Multiple ramps allow wheelchair access to the full park, so

special-needs individuals such as parents and guardians can observe the children. Padded turf adds further accessibility by forgoing the gravel and sand found in most playgrounds for a material much friendlier to wheelchairs.

“With the help of individual donations from Lions members, the City of Belton and [LCIF], we were able to fund the playground. It was truly a joint community project,” says Robert Jones of the Belton Lions

Club. “Wheelchairs can access all areas of the playground because of the artificial padded turf and multiple access ramps. The equipment is for all children, and is used daily by visitors, special field trips by local child care centers and Belton school special needs field trips. It is just an amazing facility.”

For information on Standard grants and to find out how your Lions club can apply, visit [lcif.org](http://lcif.org).



Padded turf on the new playground in Belton, Texas, makes it easy for children in wheelchairs to access the park.

## [ Club News

Lions in **Multiple District 4 in California** collected more than 50,000 eyeglasses during a one-day project that included 15 districts from the state's border with Oregon to the Mexican border. A total of 220 clubs and 800 Lions participated in the Lions Eyes Across California project. Lion Richard Davis says the project's purpose was twofold: "Our true goal was to promote Lions to the public and also internally because our membership is so large."

The **Brooklyn Stuy Park Lions Club in New York** collected and donated more than 300 pairs of shoes for Cherished Feet, which provides footwear to children and families in need in the United States and developing parts of the world.



**McKeesport Lions** Bobbie Billsborow and Hank Gostkowski pick up litter along Eden Park Boulevard during an Earth Day project in the **Pennsylvania** community of 20,000 people. They clean the parkway twice a year. Lions were also on hand at a fire station Earth Day collection for used eyeglasses and old flags for proper disposal.

**Oregon City Lions in Oregon** were recognized on air by a radio announcer for donating a check for \$3,000 to radio station 1190 KEX's fund to provide eyeglasses, hearing aids and surgeries for children in need. The on-air report credited Lions in Oregon for also helping meet these needs in 16 counties in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

**Seal Beach Lions and Leos in California** helped take more than 200 people and 14 guide dogs for an ocean outing during a day of sailing for the blind and visually handicapped sponsored by the Women's Ocean Racing Sailing Association. Lions also donated a device to each guest that assists with signature signing.

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The Stockdale Lions and Leos in Texas planted two Live Oak trees on Arbor Day, both in front of schools in their community. Leo David Martinez (pictured) digs deep to help Lions plant one tree at a preschool.



Bradford Lions in Ontario, Canada, gave \$15,000 to a conservation effort to provide and plant 450 trees along a canal to prevent erosion. Dozens of community volunteers helped, and Lions served a barbecue lunch.



NBA Hall of Famer Bill Walton (the big guy in the back) and his wife, Lori (in black dress), joined the **Del Mar Solana Beach Del Sol Lions Club in California** at its summer social and installation party. The service interests of Walton overlap with the club's. The Lions support cycling events for the Blind Stokers Club, a San Diego-based group that promotes recreational cycling for those with vision impairments, and also work for bike safety. A bicycling enthusiast, Walton heads Connect SD Sport Innovators, which facilitates growth in the sports economy of Southern California. Chartered in 2010, the Del Sol Lions have completed more than 100 service projects. Pictured are (from left) Lions Wayne Label, Chuck Dumbrell, John Page, Linette Page, David Cain, Gayle Valentino, RosaLinda Ramirez and Kristen Peterson-Salgado.

Continued on page 55

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC  
APRIL 13-16, 2015

1. Singapore, Singapore, was selected as the site for the 2020 International Convention.

### AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. Approved the engagement of Crowe Horwath LLP for the external audit and tax services of The International Association of Lions Clubs and Lions Clubs International Foundation, for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2015, through June 30, 2017.

### CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

1. Reviewed ongoing disputes and litigation in District 321-A3 (India) and established a three-year moratorium on district governor, first vice district governor and second vice district governor elections beginning with elections for 2015-2016 fiscal year officers.
2. Removed District 301-A1 (Philippines) as a district. Clubs within the former District 301-A1 will be provided the opportunity to transfer to other districts within the Manila area of Multiple District 301.
3. Revise Chapter III, Paragraph A.2.b.(2) and Paragraph B.4. to replace the phrase "twenty (20)" with the phrase "ten (10)."
4. Adopted a resolution to change the title of Chapter XV, Paragraph J, of the Board Policy Manual to "Dispute Resolution Procedures."
5. Revised the Standard Form District Constitution and By-Laws to establish standardized and mandatory district constitution and by-law provisions for election procedures effective July 1, 2016.
6. Effective July 1, 2016, revised the Board Policy Manual to adopt mandatory provisions of the Standard Form District Constitution and By-Laws.
7. Revised Chapter XV, Paragraph J.4., of the Board Policy Manual to establish a new District Governor Suspension Procedure.
8. Adopted a resolution to be reported to the 2015 International Convention to amend the International By-Laws to permit payment of dues up to 15 days prior to the close of credentials at district (single, sub- and multiple) conventions effective July 1, 2016.
9. Adopted a resolution to be reported to the 2015 International Convention to amend the International By-Laws to revise redistricting procedures.

### DISTRICT AND CLUB SERVICE COMMITTEE

1. Changed the deadline date for the 2015-2016 Excellence Awards from September 30 to August 31.
2. Appointed Past District Governor Robert Fassouliadjian to serve as Coordinating Lion for the Republic of Armenia effective immediately through the 2015-2016 fiscal year.
3. Appointed recommended Lions from provisional districts to serve as district governors for the 2015-2016 fiscal year and Past District Governor Robert Talley to fill the vacancy of district governor-elect and to serve as district governor for District 30-S (Mississippi) through the 2015-2016 fiscal year.
4. Revised the District Governor Expense Reimbursement Policy for 2015-2016 to simplify the process and to give more flexibility to the use of funds.
5. Revised the policy regarding Publications and Information Available to Certified Candidates for the Offices of Second Vice President and International Director to allow data to be shared in an electronic format.
6. Changed the name of the "Club Excellence Process" to "Club Quality Initiative" (for English version) to alleviate confusion between the program and the Club Excellence Awards.
7. Revised the policy regarding the Priority Club Status to include new, cancelled and status quo clubs, and changed the name to "Priority Club Designation."
8. Revised the Redistricting Policy to ensure effective communication and club support of redistricting proposals that are reviewed by the International Board of Directors.
9. Requested that a Constitutional Amendment be drafted that would allow a multiple district to approve a redistricting proposal (without the approval of affected full sub-districts) during the multiple district convention when the proposal consolidates one or more sub-districts of which one or more sub-districts has fewer than 35 clubs and 1,250 members.

### FINANCE AND HEADQUARTERS OPERATION COMMITTEE

1. Approved the FY 2015 3rd Quarter Forecast, reflecting a deficit.
2. Approved a revised Retirement Income Plan Investment Policy Statement.
3. Approved that the exchange rate for the Lions of Venezuela to pay for new clubs and new member fees be 6.30 VEF per USD through June 1, 2015, and then transition to the SICAD 1 rate published on a monthly basis. Additionally the board approved the exchange rate for the Lions of Venezuela

to pay for dues at 6.30 VEF per USD through June 1, 2015, and then transition to the SICAD 1 rate published on a monthly basis.

4. Approved crediting clubs in sub-districts O-1 and O-3 in Argentina the 35 percent tax imposed on credit card usage in Argentina when used to pay club dues and fees through March 31, 2016.
5. Determined that the international president may authorize Lions serving on special committees attending the board meeting to fly business class when total flying time for round-trip travel exceeds 10 hours, not including time on the ground for connecting flights. All travel expenses must be within the budgets allowed for board meetings.
6. Approved a housekeeping revision to Chapter IX and Chapter XXII deleting an outdated chart regarding the claim submission dates.
7. Approved adding Jason Cobb, Manager, Financial Reporting and Analysis, and Christine Hastings, LCIF Manager, Financial Planning & Analysis, as signers on all association bank accounts.
8. Determined that the Finance and Headquarters Operation Committee must approve a bank account in any country, unless the association currently maintains a bank account in that country or the account is temporary to support the operations at the international convention.

### LCIF

1. Approved the report of the LCIF Finance Committee.
2. Approved the plan for a revised LCIF governance structure and will review policy changes at the June meeting, noting with thanks the contributions of the LCIF Governance Ad Hoc Committee.
3. Approved a grant in the amount of US\$450,000 to fund a low-vision research award in collaboration with Research to Prevent Blindness, with funding from the foundation's designated sight account.
4. Approved a grant in the amount of US\$47,376 for a Lions Quest project in collaboration with the NoVo Foundation, with funding from the foundation's designated youth account.
5. Increased the humanitarian grants budget for the current fiscal year by US\$2 million.
6. Approved 102 Standard, International Assistance and Core 4 grants totaling US\$5,173,980.
7. Tabled one grant.
8. Approved a grant in the amount of US\$73,581 for a joint sanitation project with the Sujana Charitable Trust.
9. Approved a grant in the amount of US\$25,000 for a Lions Quest project with the Sujana Charitable Trust, with funding from the foundation's designated youth account.
10. Approved a pilot block grant in the amount of US\$200,000 for KidSight USA programs, with funding from the foundation's designated sight account.
11. Nominated three individuals for the 2015 Humanitarian Award, with the final selection to be determined by the international president.
12. Closed the foundation's designated humanitarian needs account, due to its redundancy, and approved that funds available be used to fund future disbursements for measles grants.
13. Amended the LCIF Operations and Policy Manual to reflect: a) housekeeping updates necessitated by a title change, b) an addition to the standard grant criteria, c) changes made to the International Assistance Grant approval process in order to streamline it, d) the inclusion of a description of the grant controls process, e) revisions to the Lions Quest awards and recognition, f) housekeeping updates to the Statement of Investment Policy related to investment manager performance measurement benchmarks, and g) revisions to the Forms of Recognition to include new programs for club recognition and major donors.
14. Amended the Board Policy Manual to reflect housekeeping updates necessitated by a) a title change and b) previous omission of a word.

### LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

1. Approved a 2015-2016 Faculty Development Institute for qualified Lions of Constitutional Areas I and II.
2. Approved a 2015-2016 Emerging Lions Leadership Institute for qualified Lions of Constitutional Area VI.
3. Approved curriculum and funding support for a 2015-2016 Emerging Lions Leadership Institute for qualified Lions of Africa.
4. Increased the participant registration fee for Faculty Development Institutes to US\$150; increased the participant registration fee for Advanced Lions Leadership Institutes and Emerging Lions Leadership Institutes to US\$125. Both adjustments will take effect at the start of 2015-2016.



# [Anniversaries

## MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. Approved a processing fee of US\$100 to be assessed to club charter applications not approved by LCI, effective July 1, 2015.
2. Approved the advance payment of US\$30 for adding any additional charter members effective July 1, 2015.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Made name badges featuring the centennial logo available for purchase through Club Supplies.
2. Authorized the addition of 100 medals each of the Leadership Award and Presidential Award for Lions Year 2015-2016.
3. Made various changes to Chapter XXI of the Board Policy Manual to reflect current practices.

## SERVICE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

1. Selected the Top Ten Youth Camp and Exchange Chairperson Awards for 2013-2014.

For more information on any of the above resolutions, please refer to the LCI website at lionsclubs.org or contact the International Office at 630-571-5466.

## JULY 2015

**95 Years:** Rocky Ford, Colo.; Hamilton Central, ON, CAN; Dayton, Ohio.

**90 Years:** Childress, Texas; Pendleton, Ind.; Fortville, Ind.

**85 Years:** Iowa Falls, Iowa; Oneonta, N.Y.; Palisade, Colo.; Moab, Utah; Gadsden, Ala.

**80 Years:** Luray, Va.; Great Neck, N.Y.; Belton, S.C.; Edgefield, S.C.; Manistique, Mich.

**75 Years:** Clinton, Tenn.; Clay, W.V.; Seminole, Texas; Red Bank, Tenn.; Westville, Ill.; Youngwood, Pa.; South Pittsburg, Tenn.; Bexley, Ohio; Hillsville, Va.

**50 Years:** Rochester, Ill.; Denver, Iowa; Willow Lake, S.D.

**25 Years:** Foley, Ala.

**85 Years:** Hermann, Mo.; Germantown, N.Y.; Mount Hope, W.V.; Guntersville, Ala.; Dumas Noon, Texas; Wood River, Ill.

**80 Years:** Lake Chelan, Wash.; York, ON, CAN; Greenburg East Hempfield, Pa.; Tupper Lake, N.Y.; Swampscott, Mass.; Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.; Jackson County, Colo.

**75 Years:** St. Joe, Ind.; Oxford, Miss.; Jonesville, Va.; Rhinelander, Wis.; Brooksville, Ky.; Pleasant Hill, Ill.; Brunswick, Mo.; Calais, Maine; Rusk, Texas; Manning, S.C.; San Pablo, Calif.

**50 Years:** Devils Lake, N.D.; Markesan, Wis.

**25 Years:** Brampton Township Days River Area, Mich.; El Cajon Heartland, Calif.; Onalaska Greater, Texas; Kamloops Paddlewheelers, BC, CAN.

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

## AUGUST 2015

**95 Years:** Oak Park-River Forest, Ill.; Toledo Host, Ohio; Stockton Host, Calif.; Hannibal, Mo.

View the Higher Key Awards.

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## Information

### In Memoriam

Alex Grieve, who served on the international board of directors from 1974 to 1976, has died. He was a Life Member of the Timaru Suburban Lions Club and spent his career as the Harbor Master of Timaru in New Zealand. A Melvin Jones Fellow, Grieve received numerous recognitions and awards as a Lion and during his maritime career.

### For the Record

As of May 31, Lions Clubs International had 1,408,492 members in 46,863 clubs and 755 districts in 210 countries and geographic areas.

### Correction

The South Carroll Lioness-Lions Club is in Maryland. It was incorrectly identified in the May issue. The LION regrets the error.

## Club News Continued

Continued from page 51

In Illinois, the **Algonquin Lions Club** gave a \$4,000 donation to a food pantry. The funds were raised from a bean bag tournament Lions sponsor every year.

**Greensboro Lions in Maryland** gave \$1,000 to Friends of the Library to purchase a LEGO Duplo-building table and LEGO blocks for children to use during monthly LEGO building programs the library sponsors.

An insurance company denied payment for a baby's special helmet to shape her head even though doctors deemed it a medical necessity, so **Deptford and Westville Lions Clubs in New Jersey** donated money. With an additional grant from the District 16C Charitable Fund, the \$2,500 helmet was purchased for the child, whose father is in the military.

**Francis Scott Key Lions in Maryland** sponsored a yard sale that raised more than \$400. Items that didn't sell were donated to organizations that help people in need.

The **Brewster Lions Club in Kansas** collected eyeglasses, hearing aids and old cell phones at a high school basketball game.

## Blind Leap

Charlotte Brown, who is blind, clears the bar in the pole vault competition in Texas. As a senior at Emory Rains High School, Brown finished third in Class 4A in May with a vault of 11'6". She counts her steps down the runway, and electronic beepers along the infield also help guide her down the track. She was diagnosed with infant cataracts as a baby and gradually lost her sight. She spoke to Emory Lions about her life. "She is quite extraordinary," says Nathaniel Hooten, 2014-15 president. "We were part of her 'training.' She made it to our lunch meeting from the school using public transportation."





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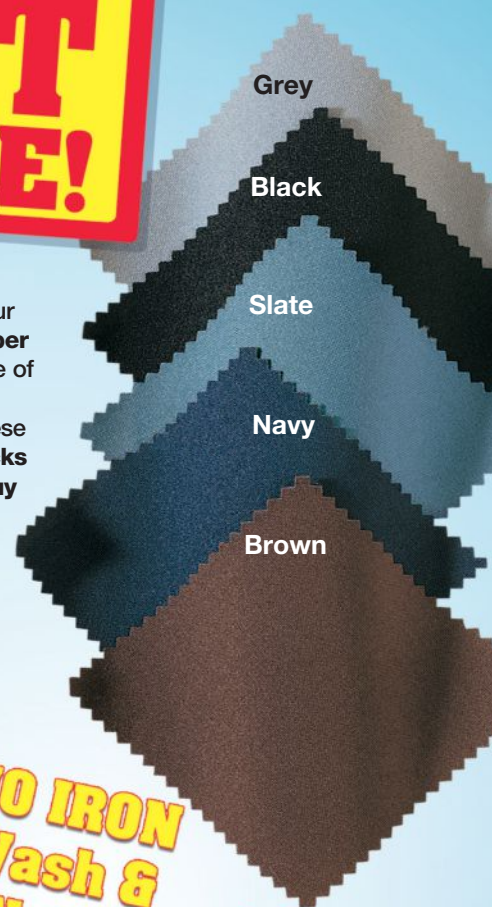
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