

# LION

## A Shot at Healing

**Idaho club responds after  
a Lions' family tragedy**



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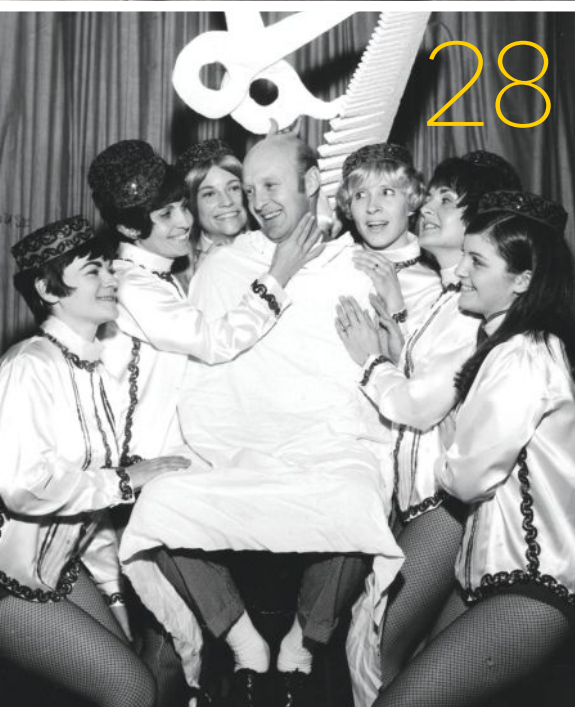
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Her life seemed hopeless until a gift from Lions.



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Cover photo by Jodi Parrish

**September 2015**

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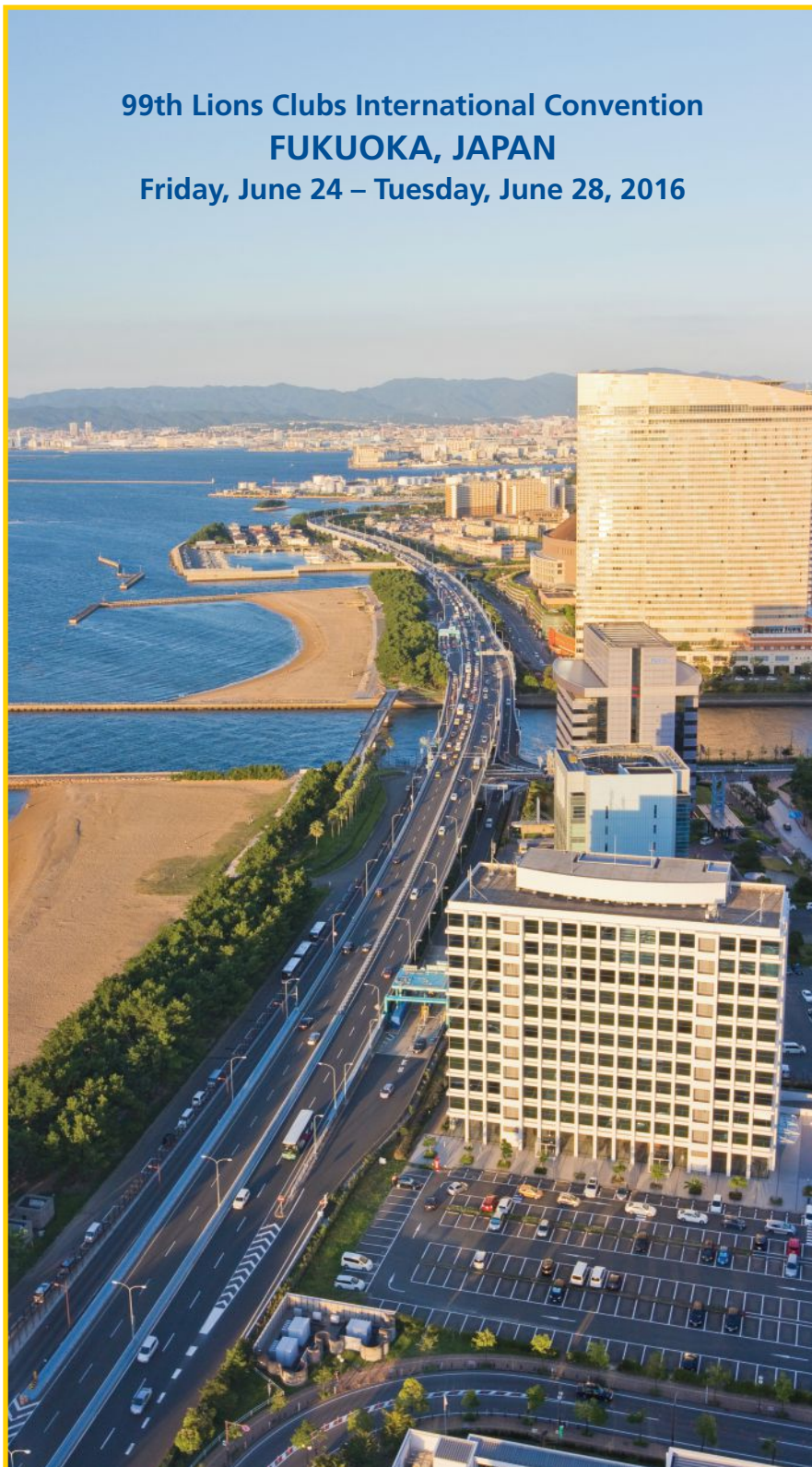


The 98th International Convention in Honolulu was a great success.



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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:

*“To empower  
volunteers to serve  
their communities,  
meet humanitarian  
needs, encourage  
peace and promote  
international  
understanding  
through Lions  
clubs.”*

### CONTACTING THE LION

For change of address, non-receipt of the magazine and other subscription issues, contact 630-468-6982 or stats@lionsclubs.org. For all other inquiries call 630-571-5466. Have a story idea or photo? Want to comment on a story or make a suggestion for LION editors? Contact the LION at lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org or at 630-468-6909 or 630-468-7023.

### POSTMASTERS

Periodicals postage paid at Oak Brook, Illinois 60523 and additional mailing offices. Subscription price, US\$6.00 year, US\$12.00 year mailed outside North America; Single copies, US\$1.00.

Send notices of undeliverable copies on form 3579 to LION, 300 W 22nd St Oak Brook IL 60523-8842. "Canada Post Publications Mail No. 40029736 Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to: LIONS 2835 Kew Drive, Windsor, ON N8T 3B7."





Most conspicuous at the parade at the international convention, the diversity of Lions helps the association prosper.

## Our Diversity is Our Strength

In Japan, our society owes a lot to bushido, the code of conduct of the samurai. Samurai have positive and negative sides, but samurai uphold stability and ensure peace. Other positive traditional values of the bushido are respecting one's elders, protecting the weak and valuing fairness and honor.

Every culture has its own wonderful virtues, and each of the 210 nations and geographic areas that are part of Lions Clubs International contributes to the strength and vitality of the association. The multicolored fabric of Lions owes its durability and flexibility to its disparate individual strands.

In other words, our diversity is our strength. We are not a cookie-cutter association. One size does not fit all. Clubs are free to choose their own projects and recruit their own members. The more we value diversity and model that in our clubs the more we will prosper.

So this year I urge clubs to continue to reach out to women, younger people and middle-aged people to diversify our ranks. A club gains new perspectives and renewed energy with a diverse membership.

By the same token, don't hesitate to try new projects. We can't grow stale. We don't eat stale bread or rice and we don't want a stale club. We must have the courage to turn our clubs into fresh, young and vibrant ones.

We also must work together. An ancient story illustrates the power of teamwork. A powerful samurai lord, Mori Motonari, took aside his three sons and easily snapped a single arrow. But when he held three arrows together the well-muscled man could not break the bunch. The moral is clear. Americans even have their own saying for it: united we stand, divided we fall. When the 1.4 million Lions family is united, we can deliver the light of service throughout the world.

So this year let's embody the samurai spirit. Lions, be samurai. But when you go on your service activities, please keep your sharp swords at home and carry with you only the samurai spirit!



山田 實統

Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada  
Lions Clubs International President

[The Big Picture



Beautiful Sight





Lions in eastern India set up an eye camp in Calcutta to do eye exams and distribute eyeglasses. The camp served many pilgrims headed to a religious ceremony. Lions Clubs International is holding a Worldwide Week of Service in Sight Oct. 4-10. Clubs are encouraged to collect eyeglasses and hold vision screenings and educational programs.



# [The Big Picture



Page Turner





Berri Lions in Australia took advantage of the beauty of their rural location by creating and selling an annual calendar featuring stunning photos. In seven years the club donated an astounding AUS\$200,000 (US\$158,000) for a new bus for a senior care center and a portable ultrasound machine and wireless baby monitor for the maternity ward at Riverland General Hospital. Berri has 7,000 people and 33 Lions, and Riverland in South Australia is a wine region. Local artist Italo Vardaro took the calendar photos for Lions for free.



## INDIAN ELECTED 2ND VICE PRESIDENT

An Indian business leader will serve as international president in 2017-18. Past International Director Naresh Aggarwal of Delhi, India, was elected second international vice president June 30 at the 98th International Convention in Honolulu. (Full coverage of the convention will be in the October LION). A member of the Batala Smile Lions Club for 41 years, Aggarwal has received the Ambassador of Goodwill Award and 21 Presidential medals. He will become the third president from India: Rohit Mehta served in 1992-93 and Ashok Mehta in 2005-06. Aggarwal will follow current International President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada of Japan, and First International Vice President Chancellor Bob Corlew of Tennessee, who will be president in 2016-17.



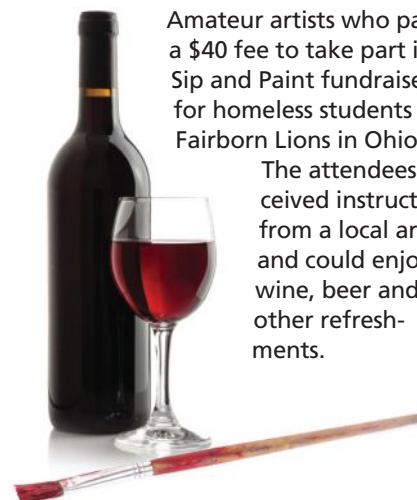
Gathered with his family, Naresh Aggarwal (front) of India celebrates his nomination as international second vice president at the international convention June 29 in Honolulu.

## By the Numbers

30+

Amateur artists who paid a \$40 fee to take part in a Sip and Paint fundraiser for homeless students by Fairborn Lions in Ohio.

The attendees received instruction from a local artist and could enjoy wine, beer and other refreshments.



7

Fish hooked by Tyler Greene in 90 minutes at the Bradenton Lions Club Annual Fishing Tournament for the Blind in Florida.

1,000



Pounds of nonperishable food collected by Brockport Lions in Ohio for a food pantry.

3

Minutes allotted for contestants to eat the most shrimp in the Shrimp-Eating Championship at the Fort Myers Beach Lions Club Shrimp Festival in Florida.



# 106

Children at three schools who were given fingerprint kits to take home to parents as a safety measure by New Waterford Lions in Nova Scotia, Canada.

# 2,800



Service hours Conroe Noon Lions in Texas worked at the Montgomery County Fair and Rodeo.

# 150

Third-graders in the Hayward area who took part in a Water Habitat Study Day at a lake thanks to Chequamegon Lions in Wisconsin.

# 6

Community needs assessment meetings run by local officials and hosted by Bellbrook Lions in Ohio.



# 4

Days a week Mowrytown Lions in Ohio operated a candy store during the holiday season.

## VIDEO MAGAZINE DETAILS LIONS' PROJECTS

Want to see a fun, quick-moving, 120-second overview of Lions' history? Then watch the current edition of LQ, the Lions Quarterly Video Magazine. The 16-minute video magazine also profiles a special peace camp in Norway begun by Lions after a horrific shooting spree at a youth camp, a blind sailing competition in Wisconsin, the Arizona Lions Vision Center and a community garden in Hawaii that counters hunger. Send your story suggestions to [LQ@lionsclubs.org](mailto:LQ@lionsclubs.org). Be sure to "like" and share LQ on social media. LQ is available on the LCI website, YouTube, iTunes and DVD.

Watch the latest LQ.

## LIONS ROAR AHEAD ON CENTENNIAL SERVICE CHALLENGE

One year is on the books, and Lions are off to a great start on the Centennial Service Challenge. Lions clubs reported to Lions Clubs International (LCI) that 40 million people have served as of June 30. Lions served 15 million youths, benefited 10.5 million people through environmental projects, provided food for 7.5 million and assisted 7 million through vision services. The goal is for Lions to serve 100 million people from July 1, 2014, to June 30, 2018. To qualify, the service must be reported to LCI via the Service Activities Report on the online MyLCI system.



Noah Kiefer, 14 months old, uses an iPad given to him by the Lawrenceville and Loganville Legacy Lions clubs in Georgia. Noah had open heart surgery, and his therapists recommended an iPad with apps that assist him in developing his speech and fine and gross motor skills. Helping children is one of the centennial service goals.

# First Roar

## LIONS IN INDIA HOLD RICE BUCKET CHALLENGE

Playing off the ice bucket challenge, Lions in Kolkata, India, sponsored a Rice Bucket Challenge to feed the hungry. District 322 B2 collected from Lions 2,500 packages of 5 kilograms of rice, enough to provide 100,000 meals. They distributed the rice to senior citizen homes, schools for the blind, homes for those with disabilities, street children and beggars. Flushed with success, the district appealed to Lions again, and this time raised 18,000 packages, enough for 720,000 meals.



The Rice Bucket Challenge was tremendously successful.

## TWO SPECIAL GUESTS AT MEETING

John Simpson brought along his pet turtle when speaking on hearing loss to his club in Texas. A member of the Cleveland Lions Club, Simpson



John Simpson did not come alone to his club meeting.

## 35 Years Ago in the LION



### SEPTEMBER 1980

Canada's first Lions club celebrates its diamond jubilee (60 years) with the dedication of a multimillion-dollar residence for the elderly and the blind.

[Read the complete story.](#)

is a hearing instrument specialist who owns hearing aid centers. Some patients cry after hearing for the first time in years a family member speak. "I can't think of a more rewarding occupation," he said, according to Houston News. His turtle, Mr. Blue Jeans, was named by his daughter.





The Gardens by the Bay is one of Singapore's top attractions.

## SINGAPORE PICKED FOR CONVENTION

Singapore is exotically modern. "The Singapore cityscape looks like it was ripped from the pages of a science fiction comic book," says TripAdvisor. Lonely Planet has dubbed Singapore the world's top travel destination. The city boasts multicultural diversity, green urban spaces and unforgettable food and places—such as the 250-acre Gardens by the Bay and its futuristic biodomes. In 2020 the bustling Asian city will teem with Lions: it will host the international convention. The board of directors made the choice in the spring. In June Lions met in Honolulu at the 98th International Convention. Lions gather in Fukuoka, Japan, in 2016, Chicago in 2017 (the centennial for Lions Clubs), Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2018 and Milan, Italy, in 2019.



## Overheard

**"I thought I'd never be able to do this."**

—Sixth-grader Dylan Ono on being eye-to-eye with a stuffed leopard at the home of a Kealahou resident, who has a huge collection of stuffed animals and animal artifacts, on a "sensory safari" for youths with visual impairments organized by Kona Lions in Hawaii. From West Hawaii Today.

**"Working with the Lions club is important to develop and foster professional relationships between the George Washington, the U.S. Navy and Japanese locals."**

—Lt. j.g. Cole Yoos, referring to the sailors of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington who took part in a beach cleanup with Zushi Hayama Lions in Japan. From the Imperial Valley News.

**"It's so secret. I don't even know it, and I've been president of the club for four terms."**

—Brian Fox of the Pickerington Lions in Ohio on his club's perch fry recipe. From This Week News.

## Randy Pierce

Hudson Lions Club, New Hampshire

*In 1989, 22-year-old athletic and outgoing Randy Pierce was starting his dream career as a hardware design engineer. When a neurological disorder swiftly took his sight in two weeks, he went from being on top of the world to feeling brutally knocked down. Thanks to Lions and surrounding himself with the right people—and canines—he rose again, quite literally.*

Placed first in his division at the 2014 USABA Marathon National Championship

Was named New England Patriots 2001 Fan of the Year

Is climbing Mount Kilimanjaro this month



Pierce and Quinn relish the 4,802-foot summit of Mount Moosilauke in New Hampshire's White Mountains.

### Loss of Sight, Not Vision

I thought everything fun or important in life was over. The good news is that wasn't the truth, but it felt like it at the time. I realized I had to change my life from "can't" to "can." The first step? Finding those who already solved the problem I was trying to solve.

### The Right Resources

The New Hampshire Association for the Blind taught me life skills. Guiding Eyes for the Blind gave me my freedom with a guide dog. I learned I could do anything as long as I take the right approach and build the right team.

### Another Setback

When I was 39, the neurological disorder damaged the balance center in my brain. I ended up in a wheelchair. It was my choice to give up or push for my peak potential. After

two years with experimental surgeries and many hours of physical therapy, I was out of the chair.

### The Great Outdoors

As I got back to walking, I noticed that my guide dog, Quinn, loved being in nature. We tried a gentle trail. Quinn loved it. That led to bigger hikes, and then climbing mountains. When I climb a summit I smell the differences, hear the changing wind patterns. Vision is 20 percent sight and 80 percent imagination.

### Hiking Companions

In 2010 I set a goal to climb all 48 of the 4,000-foot peaks in New Hampshire. Thirty-seven months later we had done them all twice—in both winter and spring. Shortly after the last hike I found out Quinn was ill. I'll always remember how content he was on that last summit.

### Inspiring By Example

I founded my nonprofit, 2020 Vision Quest, to give back to the two organizations that changed my life and inspire others. I've spoken to 42,000 students on how life is about how you choose to respond to adversity. I've never had a presentation when someone didn't tell me the difference I made in their life. No matter how many mountains I've climbed or marathons I've run, that's what matters most.

*Find out more about Pierce and 2020 Vision Quest at [2020visionquest.org](http://2020visionquest.org).*

Watch a trailer for a documentary about Pierce and Quinn's hiking journey.

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.



## Leos Lose Hair for Shear Fun

When the idea was first proposed by Fort LeBoeuf High School Leos Eli Miller and Donovan Owens to have athletes shave their heads during a school American Cancer Society Relay for Life campaign, adviser and teacher Angela Tarr says she had some doubts. "I wasn't sure we'd find 11 students to volunteer," admits Tarr, a member of the Summit Lions Club in Pennsylvania.

Not only did Leos find 11 male athletes to submit to having their heads shaved in front of the entire school during an assembly, they also had two teachers volunteer. Both Miller and Owens were among the group getting buzzed by volunteer stylists from a salon recruited by Miller. "I changed my look to help change someone's life," Miller says.

"I was so excited to get my head shaved that I was counting down the



Fort LeBoeuf Leos and their fellow student-athletes in Pennsylvania receive buzz cuts to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

days," adds Owens. "Then when the assembly came, it hit me like a brick wall. I was nervous to see what I'd look like. In fact, the week I got my head shaved, I found out that my friend's mom had cancer, and it felt great that I did something to help her."

Each agreed to get either a buzz cut or a Mohawk and had their names attached to buckets so that classmates could donate cash and change. Leos raised nearly \$2,500 to fight cancer, with Waterford and Summit Lions also donating to the club's effort.

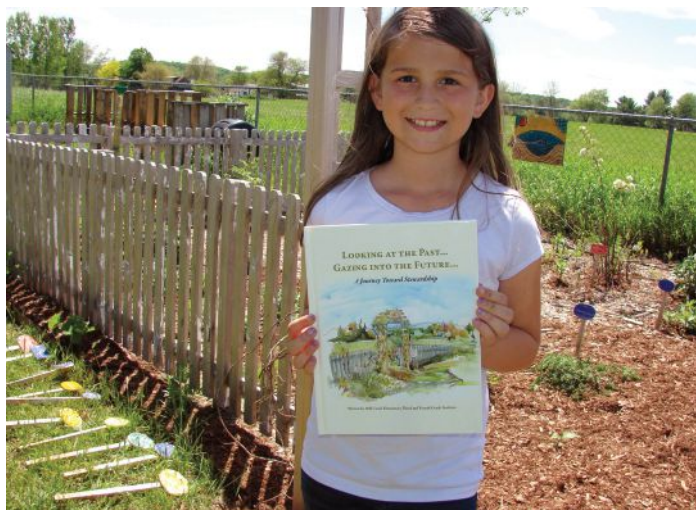
Leo Kevin Stebick, whose father, Matthew, is a Waterford Lion, calls it "a little nerve-racking" to lose his hair in front of the entire school. "I usually keep my hair short, but not this short! Even though I've never known anyone with cancer, this felt like the best thing I could do to help people," he says.

There was only one slight snafu, says Tarr. "We were originally going to shave heads the day of the relay, but the girlfriends of the volunteers didn't want bald dates for the homecoming dance the next week. We changed the date."

## Children's Book Promotes the Environment

Teachers at Mill Creek Elementary School in Williamsburg, Michigan, including Elk Rapids Lion Kim Ranger, wanted to create for children an easy-to-read publication about native plants. What began as a simple idea for a collection of photocopied pages soon grew into a beautifully-illustrated book that is now sold locally and has been shipped to eight other states.

Funded in part by grants from Elk Rapids Lions, the book shows children how to be good stewards of the environment. The first Lions grant for \$800 was soon followed by another for \$1,500. Third- and fourth-grade students released a hardcover book that grew into a narrative tale complete with watercolors by fourth-graders created under the guidance of a local artist. The classes also turned their paintings into notecards that also helped raise money for publication.



A student holds a copy of the book Lions helped publish to promote environmental awareness.



## Going the Distance

When 80-year-old Marjorie Lewis joined the Chilliwack Mount Cheam Lions Club in British Columbia, Canada, in 2009, Jim Cumyn says he knew she'd be a great addition to the club because of her commitment to helping others. He just didn't know how far she'd be willing to go—or more accurately, plunge. Lewis rappelled down a 20-story building to raise \$10,425 for Easter Seals. One of 70 who participated in the BC Lions Society Easter Seals Drop Zone fundraiser in Vancouver, Lewis was the oldest and the second-highest fundraiser.

Lewis' most ardent supporters were her club and her seven grandchildren. "One arranged for a day off work and bought a plane ticket as soon as she heard what I was doing. Two of them offered to rappel with me, but I wanted to do this on my own," she says.

Heights don't scare her. "I was just afraid I'd do something stupid and have to be rescued. I trained on a one-story building, and it was just stepping off backwards. But I was shocked when I learned I had to climb a fence to start the descent," she says.

The rope's weight also surprised her. "I never considered that 20 stories of rope weigh more than I do," she



Marjorie Lewis begins her journey down the side of a building in Vancouver to raise money for Easter Seals.

says. "I was about three stories down when I realized I wasn't going to make a fool of myself. I was going fast enough that I felt the warmth in the glove of my rope hand as I was rappelling."

She made the descent in less than 15 minutes. Lewis says she wouldn't mind rappelling down a building again for charity: "Yes, in about 10 years."

Watch a video about the Easter Seals' Drop Zone adventure.

## Lions Find Strength in Numbers

Strasburg Lion Mike Antonacci knows many clubs sponsor chicken and pork chop dinners, 5K runs or even tractor pulls, which his own club in central Illinois does. He's also village president, and knows well both his community of 467 people and a club crowd pleaser when he sees one.

The club's Strong Man or Woman contest consisted of four events—a tractor tire flip, the "farmer's carry," the Atlas stone lift and pulling a truck. Twelve women and 16 men competed in three divisions.

Lions Brian and Lisa Shelton first organized the contest four years ago during the club's Homecoming Days celebration, a tradition for 58 years. "We have a lot of people who work with their hands since we're a farming community," Brian explains. "I thought this would be a good way to showcase their abilities, so we just sort of ran with it."

Lions may have been running the events, but contestants did all the heavy lifting. Women's overall champion Mollie Adams, a crossfit trainer who grew up on a dairy farm, says farm life prepared her for events like the farmer's carry. "It's exactly like carrying a five-gallon bucket of grain—you can feel the burn in your shoulders," she explains. "You just have to grit your teeth and tell yourself you aren't going to drop it." For the women's portion, the

weight was 70 pounds on each arm. Men carried 110 pounds. Both had to carry their loads for 90 seconds.

Homecoming Days raises approximately \$5,000 annually from concession sales and contest entry fees. The money helps fund vision and hearing programs and pay for park and community building upgrades. "Our club really supplements services in the community that the village can't quite afford," says Antonacci.



A contestant tries to flip a 300-pound tractor tire.



# Iowans Feed the Hungry

When West Branch Lions decided to feed people in need overseas and in their own state as part of the Hoover Hunger Project, Lion Jerry Fleagle, executive director of the Hoover Presidential Foundation in West Branch, asked them to think even bigger. "I just thought we could do more," he says simply. "Instead of the 15,000 or 20,000 we were first thinking about doing, we put together close to 85,000 packages." Half the meals were donated to food banks in three countries to help Iowans in need; the rest were shipped to West Africa.

The Hoover Hunger Project, sponsored by Lions and the foundation, commemorated the 50th anniversary of the president's state funeral in West Branch, which drew more than 75,000 mourners. A West Branch native, Herbert Hoover helped launch food assistance programs in Europe.

"The raw ingredients were delivered the night before our packaging event. Each meal that volunteers package costs only 25 cents," explains Lion Andy Corr. Lions donated \$22,000 to Outreach, Inc., which bought rice, soy protein, dehydrated vegetables, vitamins and minerals for international recipients. In the United States, food bank recipients receive packages that also contain macaroni and cheese, protein and vitamins.

Corr says he was at first concerned how the event would go. "We had solid commitments from only 75 to 80 volunteers, including Lions." Again, Iowans came through. "We had 212 volunteers show up. The whole packing process was completed in less than three hours," he recalls.

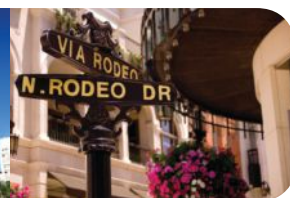
Celebrate this New Year with a 127-year old Tradition!



## Rose Parade & Mexican Riviera President's Cruise 13 days from \$1,499\*

Departs December 29, 2015. Fly into the "City of Angels" including full city tour of Los Angeles, Hollywood and Beverly Hills. Attend YMT's own VIP presentation on the history and traditions of the Rose Parade, plus an exclusive, pre-parade, after public hours, float building and viewing at the Rosemont Pavilion with included dinner. Then on Friday, January 1, 2016, observe the **127th Rose Parade** from your reserved YMT grand stand seats! This tour also features included visits to the Nixon and Reagan Presidential libraries, before embarking on **Norwegian Cruise Line's Jewel** where you will have the exclusive opportunity of meeting **YMT's President - Jerre Fuqua**. Unwind and admire the beautiful pacific as you sail to the Mexican ports of: Cabo San Lucas; Mazatlán and Puerto Vallarta. On board, enjoy freestyle cruising, time to relax and a variety of entertainment options before you disembark.

*\*Per person, based on double occupancy. Based on inside stateroom, upgrades available. Plus \$299 tax/service/government fees. Add-on airfare available.*



## Rose Parade & Los Angeles Tour 5 days from \$699\*

Departs December 29, 2015. Fly into sunny Southern California and the "City of Angels." Enjoy a full city tour of Los Angeles, **Hollywood** and Beverly Hills. See the Chinese Theatre, the Hollywood Walk of Fame and where the stars shop on Rodeo Drive. You may also wish to join an optional tour to the J. Paul Getty Museum or the Reagan Library. Attend YMT's own VIP presentation on the history and traditions of the Rose Parade, plus an exclusive, pre-parade, after public hours, float building and viewing at the Rosemont Pavilion with included dinner. Then on Friday, January 1, 2016, observe the **127th Rose Parade** from your reserved YMT grand stand seats!

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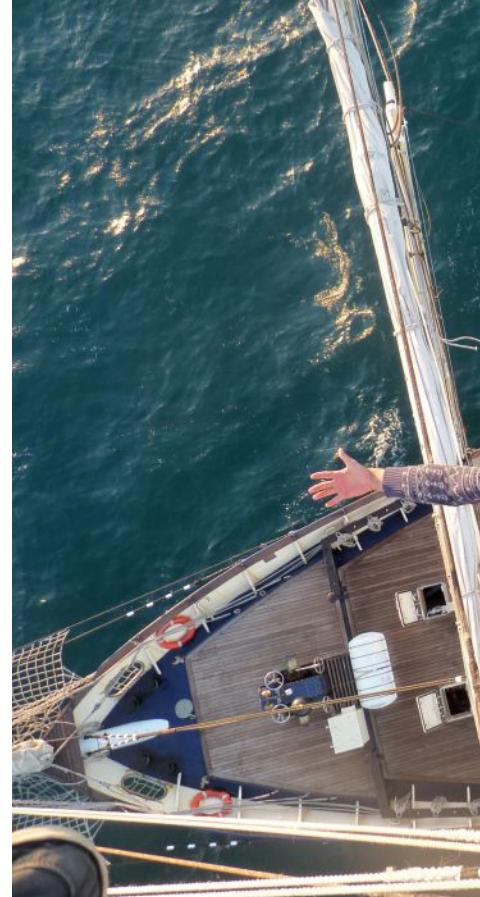
Lions Club International not responsible for losses incurred.





Photo courtesy of Fairfax NZ

In the photo that led to many donated eyeglasses, comic actress Su Pollard and Lion Andy Blaikie inspect glasses for flaws.



## NEW ZEALAND

# Comedian Makes a Spectacle of Herself

Never underestimate the power of a celebrity to garner attention and get people to do what you want them to do. Comedy actress Su Pollard is popular in New Zealand for her British sitcoms “Hi-de-Hi!” and “You Rang, M’Lord?” She’s known for her flamboyant dresses and glasses as well as for her abrupt, startled, slightly off-kilter persona. Think of Carol Burnett in one of her wacky sketches.

Pollard was in New Zealand to promote an upcoming tour of the musical “Annie,” and her agent shrewdly approached the Ferrymead Lions Club, which runs an eyeglass recycling center in Christchurch. She met with Lion Andy Blaikie, who brought along a bag of eyeglasses. “So I tipped them out on the table, and she started to play with them,” Blaikie recounted for the South Pacific LION. The

photo taken by a newspaper photographer for Fairfax NZ, a media giant, proved to be pivotal. “Since the article, we have had a flood of glasses coming our way,” said Blaikie.

Since 1987, Ferrymead Lions have recycled glasses for distribution in the Pacific Islands by the Volunteer Ophthalmic Services Overseas.

## ZAMBIA

# No More Tossing and Turning

Ndola Lions in Zambia wished sweet dreams for students with visual impairments when they donated 100 comfortable mattresses to a boarding school in Hillcrest. Jumble Zulu, an 11th-grader, told the Lions, “We are grateful to the Lions club for this gesture as we can now say goodnight to uncomfortable nights.” Chartered in 1962, the Ndola Lions Club has 34 members.





Michael Dunn climbs the mast of the STS Leeuwin II.

## AUSTRALIA

# Taking to the Sea for Lessons to be Lived on Land

Landlubber Sacha Clark, 18, took to life on the sea as a crew member on a tall ship like, well, a fish to water. Without hesitation, she climbed the soaring mast of the majestic STS Leeuwin II and unfurled the huge sail. “It was so awesome,” she described her exhilarating sailing stint to an Australian newspaper.

For 30 years the Leeuwin Lions Club has sponsored youths for the weeklong sea adventure where they learn responsibility and boost their self-esteem. Some love sailing. Some are disadvantaged economically. Some are right in line with youths often helped by Lions: the STS Leeuwin II is the only tall ship in Australia to host youths with a physical, sensory or intellectual limitation that prevents them from being part of other mentorship sailing programs.

Dr. John Williams, the charter president of the Leeuwin Lions Club, is a longtime close friend of Dr. Malcolm Hay, an orthopedic surgeon and avid sailor who gathered the funds needed to build the tall ship and launched the youth sailing program. More than 40,000 young people have participated. The Lions sponsor as many as three youths a year. “Many of our youths have shown an amazing change in attitude and personality,” says Williams.

The club, incidentally, is not named after the ship but after the landmark Cape Leeuwin, the most south-westerly mainland point of Australia. But the ship does happen to have a striking Lioness on its bow.

The LION features Lions in Australia, the “most far-flung world sector of Lionism” (January 1967 LION).

## ITALY

# Guide Dog Center Opens

Since 1959, Lions in Italy have trained guide dogs for the blind. More than 2,000 dogs have been placed. The future of the program was recently solidified when Lions built a new guide dog facility in Limbiate, located near Milan.



Guide dogs are trained in Italy.

The facility has room for 76 dogs. It includes a veterinarian office and four apartments for those with vision impairments to stay while learning to handle their dog.

The facility is not only a training place but will function as an advocacy center for those who are visually impaired. Lions in Italy now are focused on promoting the dignity and rights of those with vision impairments.

Italy's guide dog program provides “a new sense of freedom” (June 1985 LION).

### JAPAN

## Lions in Japan Get it Write

As in the United States, teachers in Japan bemoan an unfortunate consequence of the ubiquity of smartphones and computers that shows up most obviously in the classroom: the decline in penmanship. The neatness and precision of students' writing, often problematic even years ago, have taken a decided turn for the worse as students endlessly use their fingers punching keypads.

Noogata Lions' novel approach to bad penmanship centers on a traditional practice thousands of years old: calligraphy. For five years the club has sponsored a calligraphy competition at a community center in the city of 60,000. Last year 176 students from third to eighth grade wrote calligraphic letters on official calligraphic paper with large traditional ink brushes. The best work was on par with that of accomplished adults, according to the Japanese LION.

A senior citizens group that practices calligraphy has helped the Lions with the competition, first staged in 2010 to mark the club's 50th anniversary. The event was originally held only for younger students. Lions expanded it when students in junior high told them they missed practicing the ancient art.

The competition is helping fuel a growing interest among youths in calligraphy. The high school calligraphy club displays its work at a local crowded shopping mall, where the art from the Lions' event also can be found. The lasting visibility of the Lions' project has pleased Lions, who sometimes find that their activities fall into a "pay and forget" rut. The colorful, complicated art leaves a solid impression.



Students in Noogata take part in the calligraphy competition.

### ENGLAND

## Reason to Smile At Last

Rosie Sheaf, a dental nurse from England, traveled to small villages in Zimbabwe on a medical mission. Many people had never had dental care. "Every day without fail we saw children and adults whose teeth are literally rotting," she says.

Sheaf and the other dental professionals fixed dental problems, passed out toothbrushes and explained the fundamentals of oral health. "It was so rewarding to see the relief of our basic pain-relieving dental treatments," she says.

Dentaid, based in Salisbury, sponsored that mission and many others. Lions clubs throughout the United Kingdom have supported Dentaid since 2001. Lions collect and recondition dental equipment and pay for travel costs. Dentaid is active in 11 nations including Cambodia, Colombia, India, Nepal and Romania.

Sheaf spoke to the Gillingham, Mere & Shaftesbury Lions Club upon her return to thank members for their support. Her trip was "humbling but hugely inspiring. Human beings can experience so much hardship but at the same time be so stoic and happy," she told the Lions.



Rosie Sheaf poses with children in Zimbabwe she helped.



## FRANCE

# Diners Treated Like Kings

To celebrate their club's 60th anniversary Lions in France and supporters gathered in a 700-year-old castle. They walked the halls where Joan of Arc was blessed by the archbishop before departing with her army to defeat the English. They dined on a feast prepared by top chefs. They left knowing they helped cancer patients, those with vision impairments and young entrepreneurs.

The Blois Doyen Lions Club held its benefit dinner at Blois Castle, a 564-room marvel that seven kings and 10 queens of France called home beginning with Louis XII in the 15th century. Local suppliers provided the meat, fish, vegetables, wine and chocolates including the renowned Sologne caviar. More than a dozen chefs volunteered in the kitchen. After

watching a sound and light show and ascending the swooping main staircase, the 250 guests ate in the sumptuous Gaston d'Orléans wing. Thirty-nine students from a hospital-school served the diners.

Lions raised 17,000 euros (US\$19,000). Funds went to a cancer group, for audio books and to entrepreneurs, who accepted the interest-free loans to establish their businesses.



French chefs volunteered their skills to help Lions help others.

## NORWAY

# Clubs Hits Jackpot with Lottery

Per Christian Lo and other members of his club approach people at crowded shopping malls and ask, "Have you registered your Grasrot?" Norsk Tipping, the popular national lottery, "tips" 5 percent of a wager to a player's designated favorite charity. Yet more than half of lottery players have not registered for the Grasrotandelen, or "grass-roots share."

The Lions have been able to persuade more than 3,000 lottery players to designate the Fredrikstad Lions Club as their charity of choice. Astoundingly, the club receives about US\$200,000 annually from Norsk Tipping, the government agency that runs the lottery. Only one other group receives more funds: the Vålerenga, an elite soccer team in Oslo.

Norsk Tipping oversees a wide range of scratch cards, interactive video games accessed by smartphone or in kiosks and sports such as horse racing.

"The Lions spend the money on good projects in their community, and they always tell the press. Then they get even more good will," says Vibeke Aasland, editor of the LION in Norway. "I think Per really wants to beat Vålerenga, too."



Per Christian Lo holds a lottery playing card and the brochure used to convince lottery players to donate funds to his club.





# A Love Story: Me and Brazil

BY CATHY STALLER

Painfully shy and terribly unhappy, I was a 17-year-old high school student in 1974. My sister had gone to Japan thanks to the Nappanee Lions in our small Indiana town. The Lions told me Brazil was the option this time. Brazil? I knew nothing about it. But then I remembered a glorious picture in a fifth-grade school book of the statue of Christ on the mountain, his arms outstretched over Rio de Janeiro. So, not exactly sure what I was getting into, I signed up to be a Lions' exchange student in that far-away, mysterious nation.

My friend was also slated to go. So she and I learned a few words of Portuguese from a Brazilian exchange student at our high school. Oddly, the two words that stuck with us were “banheiro” (bathroom) and “alface” (lettuce). Banheiro—we guessed that would come in handy. But alface? We used the word as a joke. Shall we go to lunch? Alface!

My family was not exactly rich. I delivered newspapers when I was 10 and then babysat and sold soft-serve ice cream and greasy burgers at the Dairy Queen. I needed my own money for “luxuries” such as lunch at school. We couldn't afford to buy many new clothes for my trip. So what if my exchange family looked down at my few possessions and decided I was beneath their dignity? I was worried sick. The night before my departure, I begged God to let me stay home and cried myself to sleep.

I discovered later I was not the only one anxious about my trip. Months before my arrival, when her husband told her they would host an American exchange student, my host mother burst into tears. They lived in a small apartment with six children in a small town. What would they do with a rich American girl demanding the finest of everything? What would they feed her? Don't Americans eat sandwiches all the time?

Like me, my host family prepared for the visit. The boys moved into the bigger bedroom so I could share a bedroom with the daughter closest to my age. My host mother, who knew some English, feverishly studied new words.

After our plane landed in Brazil, our bus drove to a huge soccer stadium in Belo Horizonte. Welcoming us noisily, cars honked and headlights flashed. Mobs of people then rushed to our bus. We heard shouting voices, each one loudly trying to find the right student. One man frantically yelled, “Catch! Catchy!” What in the world was he saying? Then I saw that he was holding a sign with the name “Cathy.” He was my new Brazilian father.

I reluctantly followed him to the car, where he enthusiastically introduced me to his wife. We didn't really understand each other but tried to make a connection. On the drive to their home, we stopped in front of a church in a small town. My mother went in to pray. They didn't know how much that comforted my heart.

Finally we pulled off the main highway into the small town of Manhauçu, located by a river and built on hills. My father tooted the horn. In an instant, a small boy turned from his futebol (soccer) game in a lot nearby and raced to us. And so I met my 7-year-old brother. Inside the home the rest of the family greeted me.

So much was new to me especially the food. But I learned to enjoy the meals. My host family was surprised that I ate their food without complaint. I explained how my family at home ate a varied, farm-based diet, too. Eventually they gave me the soda drink Guarana. It was delicious. I love Guarana Antarctica to this day.

Those six weeks passed quickly. I learned more Portuguese, slowly, and they learned more English. At dinner,





One six-week trip to Brazil and,  
oh, the difference in my life.

my father asked me questions in Portuguese, trying to help me learn. The younger children started doing it for fun, too. We made jokes about our language barrier. “No, thank you. It is too much,” I said when they offered me more food. Too much? *Tomate*? Was I asking for tomatoes? Whenever the oldest daughter didn’t understand me, she would nod her head gravely and shrilly say in Portuguese, “Yes, tomorrow at two o’clock!”

My stay there was a simple visit, just spending time with them. A few nights I went to a small club with the older ones, but I was not comfortable there. I’m not a dancer, and I could not speak easily with Brazilians amid the din. I happily spent the evenings at home with the younger children.

Often one of my family members would pick up the guitar and begin playing. They sang the popular songs of the time. We also sang tunes we all knew such as “It’s a Small World.” The family introduced me to the expressive, emotional music of Roberto Carlos. His music really struck a chord with me, and the girls took me to the music store, where I bought several of his albums.

By the time I was to leave I had learned to love this family. They accepted me with open arms and found a place for me in their lives. Sadly, at home in Indiana, I had a strained relationship with my mother. My value seemed to be tied to what I accomplished. My host family accepted me for who I was. It was life-changing for me.

I was not the same person after I returned home. I was more comfortable facing new situations and approached life with more confidence.

My time as an exchange student not only bolstered my shaky self-image but also colored the rest of my life. Brazil and I were apart but not separated.

My host family and I exchanged letter after letter. I sent my little brother colorful leaves from our changing autumn trees. I sent my family photos and told them more about American life. In turn, they sent me cassette tapes of themselves talking and singing to me as well as tapes of Carlos’ music. From their letters and from my listening to the music, my understanding of Portuguese increased. His music became a soundtrack for my life. Doing housework, relaxing in bed or particularly when feeling lonely or sad, his music gave me a sense of peace.

I met my Brazilian family in person again. Through the Lions exchange program, my brother came to my town for a six-week visit. Then, two years after my trip to Brazil, I returned there for the wedding of my sister. I actually flew to Brazil with Lions’ exchange students. I tried to ease their worries by explaining my experiences and taught them a few helpful words of Portuguese.

It proved to be a small world after all indeed. Again through the Lions club, a friend’s family took in a Brazilian girl named Marisa. We became good friends. Several years later, working at the post office in my small town, I met another Brazilian exchange student. Rejane and I became close. I went to her host family’s home, and we made *brigadeiros* together to share with her family. Years later, on another trip to Brazil, I felt at home as never before as I visited Marisa, Rejane and my Brazilian family.

I made sure Brazil was part of my children’s growing up. They listened to my music and heard me speaking Portuguese. Without consciously trying to, I taught them how to read body language, hand signals, voice inflections—all very important lessons in communication. I also taught a mini-class on Brazil at my children’s elementary school. I showed photos, played music, made the children *feijoada* and *brigadeiros* and shared *Guarana Antarctica* with them. To my delight, one of the students in that fifth-grade mini-class later went to Brazil to help rebuild a school in a Christian missions’ outreach program.

Now Brazil has become part of my grandchildren’s lives. Tired of showing “Winnie the Pooh” movies, I cuddle my grandchild to sleep with a video of Carlos I found on YouTube. Her older brother is entranced with the strange music. What is the man saying? Why can’t he understand it? What is “Portuguese”? What is Brazil? Now with both grandchildren I play language games using my Portuguese. Or I whistle words to them, which my grandson calls “whistle-talk.” It challenges them to figure out what I am trying to say.

I would love to show my family the places I visited in Brazil and to introduce them to the people that I love. But travel is expensive, and I will probably never return there. Fortunately, the Internet is affordable. I use Facebook to keep in touch with my Brazilian family and friends. I even follow Carlos on Facebook and relish learning the details of his annual cruise ship tour.

One six-week trip to Brazil and, oh, the difference in my life. I think of all the love that followed: my second family there and then my husband, children and grandchildren. Lions sent me abroad, and the acceptance and love I experienced from a caring Brazilian family set me on the path of fulfillment and happiness.

The LION salutes the International Youth  
Exchange program on its 25th anniversary  
(March 1986 LION).

# *BROKEN HEARTS AND HOOPS*

Lions in Idaho honor a fellow club member  
in a way he'd appreciate.

BY BRYAN SMITH

Carri Parrish-Curtis lost her brother, sister-in-law and two nephews, and Fred Parrish lost his cousin in the accident.





It rose like a bustling city, the backboards and hoops and risers providing the low-lying skyline. The snap and squeak of sneakers, the chirp of refs' whistles, the shouts and laughter stood in for downtown bustle. Players of all ages filling out more than 50 three-player teams were the inhabitants. Men and women, decked out in yellow vests and hats, functioned as the facilitators. Humming through all was life, joy and hope, but also a deep sense of sadness.

The three-on-three basketball tournament in Idaho was, like many such events, created to be a benefit as well as a campaign to raise awareness about a deadly issue—both of which suggested that beneath it all lay a great loss.

In this case, it was true to the point of soul-ache. Gone in a way so sudden, yet so preventable were a father, a mother, and two sons, a tragedy that would have been crushing no matter who the victims. But this was Bill Parrish, the 6-foot-4-inch, larger-than-life, red-headed Chubbuck Lion who everybody liked and everybody wanted to be liked by. It was his wife, Cathy, whom everyone called Ross, the sweet, smart, funny, stay-at-home mom. It was 14-year-old Keegan, the popular extrovert who like his father seemed to be good at everything, including basketball. And it was 12-year-old Liam, quieter, with the dry wit, and smarts and talent to do anything he wanted. They beat, in short, at the heart of the community, their family name known, admired, and respected by most every one in the quintessential, quaint, close-knit town of Pocatello, population 55,000. Passionate in their faith, generous in contributions of their time and money to the causes they cared

about, their membership in the Lions club such a part of the many Parrish family generations that it seemed part of their DNA, their sudden deaths in 2014 seemed nearly unbearable.

No one was naïve enough to believe that this two-day tournament could heal all the wounds. But as two of the event's main organizers—Bill's cousin, Fred Parrish; Bill's sister, Carri Curtis; and the two surviving children left to face life without the closest parts of them, Jensen and Ian Parrish—saw the smiles, heard the laughter, shared the stories and tears of support, it seemed life might just go on after all and that from the tragedy might even arise something...good.

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Something wasn't right. Anyone who knew anything about Bill and Ross Parrish knew two things: they never missed church on Sunday and they were among the first to arrive at a weekly tradition that had achieved almost legendary status in town: a Sunday night dinner at the home of the family matriarch, grandma Becky. So large had the event become that she'd had a 1,500-square-foot clubhouse built, complete with a large screen television for karaoke and movies, a lounging area where family could catch up, and a dozen large round tables built to accommodate the 30 to 40 people who showed up each week for taco night or pizza or any of a multitude of home-cooked fare.

"We've been doing it every week for as long as I can remember," says Carri Parrish-Curtis. "We do it so the family can stay close, find out what's going on in each others'



The Parrishes: (from left) Ian, Liam, Bill, Ross (Cathy), Keegan and Jensen. The accident killed Liam, Bill, Ross and Keegan.

lives.” Adds Jensen, “We’ll get together and just hang out, play games or sing karaoke sometimes. My extended family is really close.”

Bill’s absence, in particular, was impossible to ignore. “He was big man with a big shock of red hair,” says cousin Fred. “He could just light up a room with his personality. He had one of the most infectious laughs you’ve ever heard.” Bill was entirely at home among Lions. His father and uncles had been Lions, and Bill had tagged along with them selling brooms and lightbulbs. Outgoing even with strangers, his familiarity with Lions made it easy for him to put in his two cents at meetings. “He wasn’t shy about putting forward ideas and suggestions,” says Tamyé Durrant, past president and a family friend.

Members did not begrudge his input; he earned it. Bill and Ross and their four children counted as twelve—a dozen hands when helping to sort eyeglasses. Or a Parrish could be relied on to keep score at the club’s softball tournament. “Being a Lion was just part of his family’s life,” says Durrant admiringly.

People wanted to be like Bill, Fred Parrish says, and because of that, “he inspired people to do great things, just as he did great things himself—coaching Little League teams, his service in Lions, in his church and youth groups.” Cathy had a similar effect on people. “She was just a loving, giving person who made every one feel special.”

When neither they, nor two of their four children, Keegan or Liam, showed up for church that morning of Sunday, Feb. 22, 2014, the rest of the family was already concerned. When dinner time rolled around and there was still no word, worry grew. “Is everything OK,” flashed the text on Carri’s phone. “Where is everybody?” Maybe they went out of town, Carrie thought, trying not to panic. One daughter, Jensen, was out of town, in Portland, Oregon. In the 13th month of an 18-month stint doing missionary work for the Mormon church the family attended, the BYU-Idaho student was not planning to return home for another five or six months. Likewise, Ian, 20 at the time, was away, also working as a missionary for the church, in his case in the 18th month of a two-year call in South Dakota. But no. The rest of the family would never simply go on some kind of impromptu overnight outing without telling any one. And they would not simply ignore repeated calls to their cell phones.

The more Carrie’s husband, Brian, an emergency medical technician heard, the more he was convinced something was terribly

wrong. And so, at the end of the dinner he and Carrie went to the Parrish’s home. It seemed eerily still, as if the entire family was already asleep. When Carrie’s knocks went unanswered, and when “G,” the family dog, failed to bark, the sister opened the door with a spare key. “Take a deep breath,” the husband advised. Calling out their names, Carrie went room to room. Each lay in his or her bed, completely still. “Within 30 seconds, we knew,” Carri says. The family was dead. “It was not a gruesome sight,” she says. “They were at rest, at peace.” But Carrie’s husband knew enough to know that whatever killed the family—be it gas or carbon monoxide—still hung in the air. The couple hustled out and dialed 911.

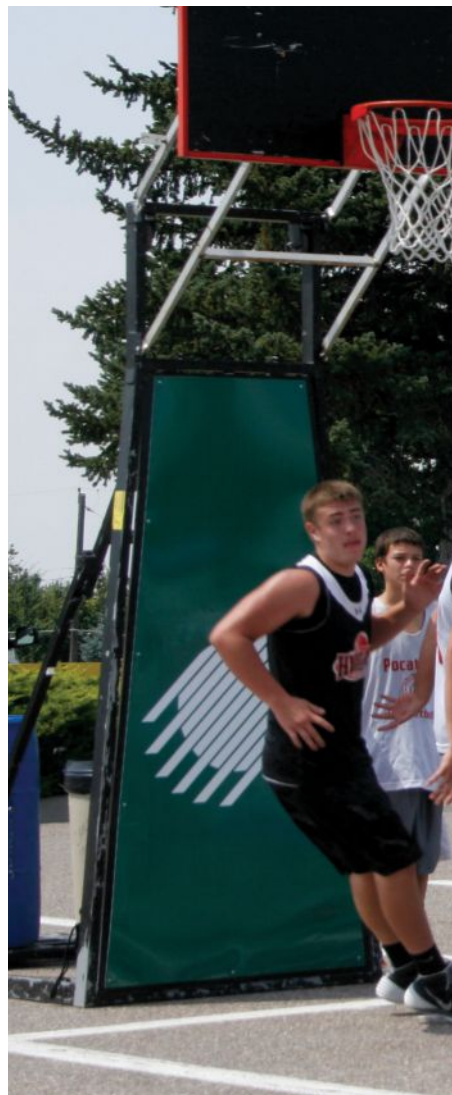
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The call, when it came, seemed unreal, Jensen recalls, the words clear enough, but the reality of them a nonsensical jumble. *There’s been an accident. The family is dead.* “I can’t even explain it,” she says. “I just didn’t know what to do.” The first thing was to connect with her surviving brother, Ian. Together, they made plans to meet in Utah two days later, then travel together back to Idaho.

The news, announced in newspaper headlines and carried on television news broadcasts throughout Idaho, landed on their community like an atom bomb. The Parrishes? It wasn’t possible. But indeed, as Brian Curtis had suspected, a carbon monoxide leak from a faulty water heater had silently, odorlessly filled the home with poisonous gas sometime between 11 p.m. and midnight on the



Lions ran the three-on-three tournament to raise awareness of the danger of carbon monoxide.





Saturday before the bodies were discovered. The family appeared to have been in the home for a while, Bannock County Coroner Kim Quick later explained. Tragically, though the family had smoke alarms throughout—Bill Parrish had even recorded his voice on those alarms because Jensen was hard of hearing—there were no carbon monoxide detectors.

“It hit me like a hammer blow to the chest,” says Durrant. “The Parrish family is huge—several Parrish patriarchs with large families and it extends out into a maze of aunts, uncles, and cousins. I think at least a third of our community are related to the Parrish family in some way.”

“Our families knew each other from Lions and also from church and living close to each other,” adds Durrant. “So it was like losing family members.”

TV news crews were waiting for the surviving siblings, who said they were drawing on their faith, and their extended family, for strength. “When we saw each other, we kind of had a bonding moment,” Jensen recalls. “He put his arm around me and we walked out of the airplane into the airport and our family was waiting. It was one of those

moments like, ‘this is awful, but we’re going to get through it together.’”

Support poured in—from the church, their Lions club, friends, and family. The siblings already had a place to stay—with an aunt while they helped with funeral arrangements and prepared for the service. “It was really hard at first,” says Jensen. “But there were so many times when something strengthened me inside and let me know it’s going to be fine, it’s going to be OK.”

One of the hardest parts was going back to the house, to begin gathering and cataloguing the family’s possessions. The siblings decided to sell off the belongings, which meant spending weeks and months in and out of the place where their family had died to prepare for an October auction. Sometimes, Jensen recalls, she would simply listen to her father’s voice on the fire alarm over and over, agonizing over the irony that another danger had taken him and her other loved ones.

As difficult as it was to be there, however, it also provided the two a chance to reflect on the wonderful moments spent with their loved ones. It was also when they



'There weren't just men playing, but wives, girlfriends, hundreds of people out there participating.'

started thinking about more than just the heartache they were feeling—but whether there was a way that to use the tragedy for a greater purpose.

For Ian, that meant returning to his missionary work, and drawing on his family's memory as an inspiration to give even more, work even harder. For Jensen, it meant starting a blog, which she called, "A New Normal." In posts that were sometimes searing, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes painfully honest, and always hopeful, she began sharing her journey through her grief, and how her faith was helping her survive and even grow.

"A little over a month has passed since everything has happened," she wrote in her first entry, on March 26. "I've been the angriest I've ever been. I've been the saddest I've ever been. I've been the numbest I've ever been. I've also been at some of my happiest points."

Meanwhile, a fellow Lion planted a seed of an idea with cousin Fred, and sister Carri. The late father and his sons had always loved basketball. Bill had actually played college ball at Ricks College (now Brigham Young University-Idaho.) He and Fred had kicked around the idea of a three-on-three tournament that could benefit those in need many times, but "then one of us would look at the other and say, 'That sounds like a lot of work,'" Fred says, chuckling, "and we decided by virtue of not deciding not to do it."

From the moment he heard the idea, the cousin says, he knew it was the perfect way to honor the family as well as support the cause that had become the mission of him, Carri, Jensen, Ian, and most every other member of the Parrish clan: to raise awareness about the importance of carbon monoxide detectors in the home. The idea, says Fred Parrish, "was to make sure that no family has to go what we've had to go through, that this kind of thing never happens again."

They put themselves on a punishing deadline—starting in June, they planned the event for early August. Chubbuck Lions and community members formed the planning committee and organized the tournament. Thanks to a quickly recruited lineup of local sponsors and a last-minute donation from First Alert, which contributed 100 carbon monoxide detectors to be handed out as prizes, they quickly put together the first annual Bill Parrish three-on-three basketball tournament. By now, Carri had established a group called "No CO." The simple message was: "All you have to do, the first step, is to buy that carbon monoxide detector," she says. The group now works with the local fire department on programs to educate the community.

They were ready, but had no idea what to expect. Would people really show up? What if it were a bust? They'd never done anything like this before. What if it was a flop? "None of us knew," Jensen says.

The magnitude of the response stunned them. Fifty teams, divided into "leagues" named after each of the lost family members, signed up and showed up in the parking lot on the Idaho State University Campus.

"It was amazing," Fred Parrish says. "There weren't just men playing, but wives, girlfriends, hundreds of people

out there participating." Music played over loudspeakers; friends and family cheered on the players. "It was a little like a carnival atmosphere."

Jensen was floored by the response. "So many people would come up to me and give me their condolences or tell me a story or an experience they had with one of my family members. It was so supportive, so strengthening for me."

Lions registered teams, managed a silent auction, handed out water, kept score and officiated. Near the courts the district's mobile screening unit, a colorful, state-of-the-art 38-foot trailer, offered health screenings. The sprawling basketball extravaganza mixed family and Lions, just as with Bill's family. Club President Wilson Parrish, another cousin of Bill's, ran the bracket. Jensen and Bill's mother and stepfather staffed a concessions booth. Parrishes of both genders and various ages ran up and down the court, fiercely competing as if it were just another game but knowing it wasn't.

Above all, the event stayed true to its mission. A contest awarded prizes to those who correctly answered questions about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. As tournament director, Fred Parrish spoke on behalf of the family, thanking everyone for the support and reminding them of the program's larger purpose: to spare others the heartbreak that made such a gathering necessary. By the end, more than \$10,000 was collected, money earmarked for an ongoing, aggressive awareness campaign.

"There were a lot of hugs and more than a few tears shed that day," Fred says. "It was really great, then sad, then great again."

"As I was walking through, watching the games, watching these people play basketball, these kids, 10 and 12, I thought ... this is one of the most satisfying days of my life."

And then, he says, reflecting on his late cousin's attachment to basketball and devotion to his family, "Someone told me—and it was a pretty good line—if Bill weren't in heaven right now he would be here and he would think he was in heaven."

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The parking lot where the tournament was held is just that again: a place for cars, just as to Jensen Parrish the house where most of her family perished is now just a house. "It's kind of bittersweet to know that it was a home," she says. "But my extended family has taken me in so well, and I have so many friends and so much family that I'm not always dwelling on it any more."

The biggest difference is that the Lions want the tournament to be an annual event, and so this summer the cavernous parking lot was transformed again into a little city of hoops, a small piece of heaven for some, and for every one, a monument to turning grief and tragedy into a place of help and healing.

Watch a video on the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning.



## 28th Annual Lions International Peace Poster Contest

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Encourage the youth in your community to express their feelings of peace, while gaining exposure for your club. Participate in this year's Lions International Peace Poster Contest.

Start now. Purchase a 2015-16 Peace Poster Contest Kit (PPK-1), which contains all the materials needed to sponsor one contest.

Kits are sold through the Club Supplies Sales Department, January 15 - October 1, 2015, at International Headquarters. A kit must be purchased for each contest sponsored. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery; outside the U.S. may take longer.



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**Join Us for  
Worldwide Week  
of Service in Sight  
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# TOO GOOD TO EVER END

Some Lions' fundraisers are going strong 60, 70 and even 80 years after begun. The formula for success is, well, success.

BY JAY COPP

## The Fairest of Them All

How old is the Aurora Farmers Fair? So old that organizers of the inaugural fair proclaimed that rigs or teams were not permitted on Main Street during the festivities, and the huge crowds streaming into town came by horse and buggy, in spring wagons, on horseback, and to the amazement of excited fairgoers, even in double cylinder automobiles. The first fair in this small river town of 5,000 in southeastern Indiana was held in 1908, and today nearly 50,000 fairgoers arrive on the first weekend in October to watch the loud, long parade, gawk at exhibits and classic

cars, sway to music, devour diet-be-damned elephant ears and, probably most anticipated of all, catch up with old friends.

"It's like a reunion," says Scott Petty, 2014-15 president of the Aurora Lions Club. Last year graduates of the high school from the 1950s, some now living in Arizona, Florida and other far-flung places, gathered for a hay ride as one of featured attractions of the two-hour parade.

Like many other adults at the fair, Petty attended as a boy. "I can remember running around without a care in the world. Now I see my 7-year-old having fun on the rides,"



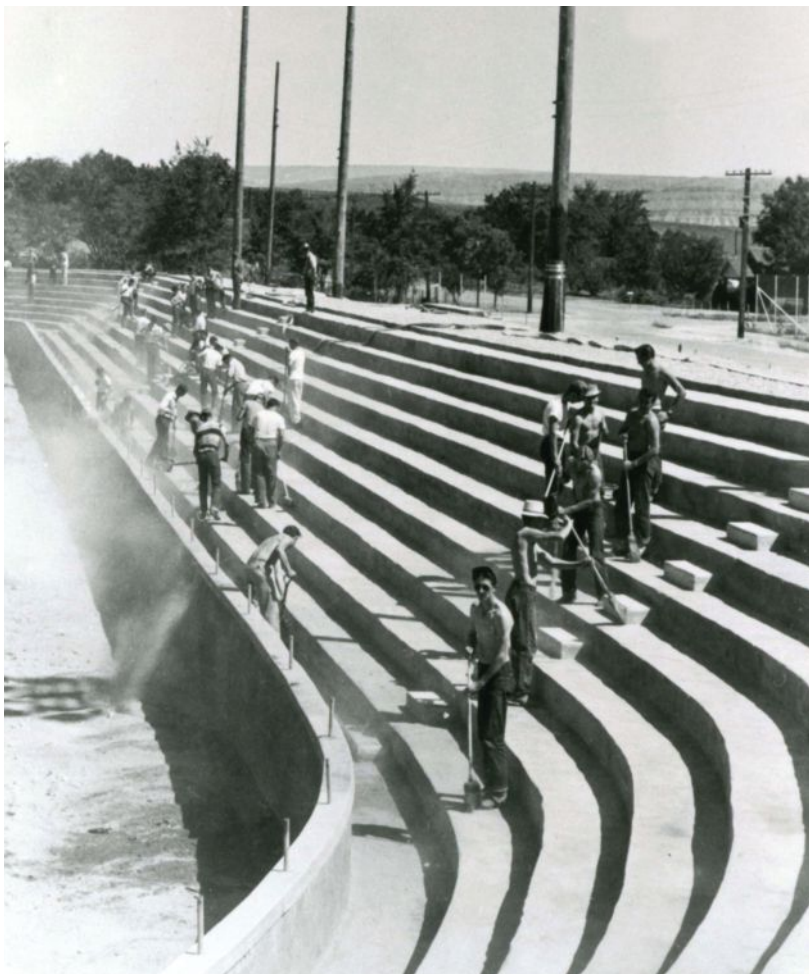
The River Queens of the Aurora Farmers Fair floated down a main street in 1962.



he says. Schools shut down for the opening day of the fair; teachers know that making children sit at a desk with the fair awaiting is a no-win proposition.

Outside the town farmers grow soybean, corn and tobacco. But the fair eschews livestock displays. The exhibits, displayed in the Lions' building, tend to be of more general interest. Displayed last year were entries from a photo contest and, made from Legos, a moving Ferris wheel and merry-go-round. Less provincial as well—and drawing fairgoers from far beyond town boundaries—is the musical entertainment. The fair books bands with solid reputations, and newspaper advertisements pull in many fairgoers from Cincinnati, 35 miles away.

Lions took over running the fair from the Aurora Business Men's Association in 1959. Chartered in 1947, the club has 63 members. Like the other Lions' projects profiled in these pages, the fun serves a purpose. In a recent 10-year stretch the club donated nearly \$600,000 for Scouts, scholarships, Leader Dogs, cancer reduction, diabetes awareness and many other concerns.



Lions helped build the historic Sun Bowl.

## Where the West is Still Wild

Cowboys no longer shoot-em-up on the silver screen, and the Ben Cartwrights, the Matt Dillons and their ilk no long swagger across the TV screen. But people still love cowboys, and the Dixie Roundup Rodeo in Utah is still packing them in and going strong after 80 years.

Run by the St. George Lions Club, the rodeo features real cowboys, who rope calves, ride bulls and nonchalantly dust off their chaps when unceremoniously tossed. "This is an extreme sport, and people love it. You've got a wild bull trying to beat the you-know-what out of a cowboy," says Joe Bowcutt, a 40-year Lion who serves on the city council. "There's a lot of glamor to it. It's an individual sport—one person and an animal."

The Lions' rodeo is a sanctioned rodeo event in which cowboys earn prize money in advance of



Cowboys are ready for the Dixie Roundup Rodeo in the late 1940s.









The float titled "Saturday Night 1866" took first prize at the 1966 Pinedorado.

Photo by the San Luis Obispo Tribune

the National Finals Rodeo. A rodeo producer hired by the club oversees the event, which includes a colorful parade and ends with bull riding. "Nobody misses that. Everyone stays for that," says Bowcutt.

Oklahoma and Texas may be more typically linked with cowboys, but Utah also was rife with cowpokes until at least 1935 when the rodeo began. "You probably had to be about half a cowboy just to survive daily life back then," according to a history of the rodeo. Lions held the rodeo in a smaller arena until 1947 when the club built its current facility, the historic Sun Bowl. Forty-two members each contributed \$100 from their own pockets. Lions and the residents they persuaded to help did the arduous manual labor while construction companies donated their services. Hundreds of high school and college students finished the job in leveling off the arena.

The rodeo excites spectators but, as a consequence of its longevity, also pulls at heartstrings. "It involves your whole family. My daughter will call me and say, 'When's the rodeo? I want to bring my daughter,'" says Bowcutt. "I was on a church mission with my wife to the Philippines for 18 months. I'm not making this up: the only thing I was homesick about was the rodeo."

## Recovering the Past Year after Year

It's not the hilarious Follies variety show, the lively parade with colorful marching bands or the 1940s-era, kitschy kiddy cars with hovering parents and grandparents smiling even wider than the children. It's not even the magnificent setting just off the ocean in a California coastal town cocooned by swaths of rare Monterey pines.

What brings fairgoers to the three-day Pinedorado in Cambria, what has brought them here since 1949, is something less tangible. It has to do with memory and expectation and, finally, gratification. Longtime events build on themselves. They become better over time because in a world where aging and decay is inevitable there remain signature days that stay frozen in time. Being

there is stepping into and recovering the past while still being completely steeped in a golden present.

"The appeal [of the Pinedorado] is tradition. It's what you do on the Labor Day weekend," says Lion Norm Palmer, who has coordinated a half-dozen Pinedorados and volunteered at 26. "The town is full of tourists on Saturday for the parade. Sunday is like a big family reunion." You may leave Cambria, but the Pinedorado calls you back. "People say all the time, 'I was here as a kid. Now I bring my grandkids,'" says Andy Zinn, 2014-15 president.

The name "Pinedorado" bespeaks the event's allure. The first part of the name refers to the Monterey tree, native to just three places, and the second part alludes to the mythical El Dorado, a magical place full of opportunity and fulfillment.

The thousands of hours required to stage the Pinedorado is beyond the resources of the 90-member Cambria Lions Club, which enlists volunteers from a variety of groups in town. After the festival ends and receipts are counted, the club donates funds to each group.

The teamwork helps make the Pinedorado the community-building event it is. "We could go solicit funds and not spend three long days of intense labor. It takes thousands of man hours, and the hard work doesn't equate [to funds raised]," says Palmer. "But it's a community thing. All the service clubs are involved in it."

## Having Fun by Poking Fun

Parody plays well in White Bear Lake. This March the title character in "PETERS PANTS" didn't lose his shadow—he kept losing his pants. That's no small matter when a malevolent Captain Hook is chasing you. A few years back White Bear Lake Lions did a send-up of "Grease." Their Danny and Sandy in "School Daze" were hopelessly devoted to slapstick romance.

The Minnesota club has put on a popular annual show since 1946, six years after it was chartered. A Lion writes the show. Lions and family and friends star in it. Some are more talented than others. That's part of the charm. "It's a crapshoot," says Mike Machus, who has written a dozen shows and been part of 39. "We don't have any Broadway people. The audience knows people are up there giving it their best shot." Adds Mike Roelofs, another longtime writer and performer, "We're mostly amateurs. That's where the passion comes in. People are trying to make it work. The audience can relate to that."

The Lions skirt the fine line between jesting and offending. "It's a G-rated show with an occasional PG. There might be a line or two that goes over the heads of kids," says Machus. Adds Roelofs, "It's a tricky thing. We go right up to the line and maybe cross it but don't totally go over it."

A half-hour drive north of Minneapolis, White Bear Lake, population 24,000, is no metropolis. That's all the more reason why nearby Hugo is a frequent target in shows. "They're a small farming community, so we have some fun with that," says Machus.

But the Lions know making fun of themselves draws the most laughs. "In my first show we wore pink tutus and did a ballet to 'Truly Scrumptious.' That sold it for me. My mom was on the floor crying and laughing," recalls Roelofs.

The four performances, held at a school theater (the largest venue in town), raise as much as \$20,000. The funds enable the club's 76 members to leave their paw prints all over town: Lions Park, the Lionmobile (which transports seniors and those with disabilities) and a library study room named after Lions. Yet it's not as if residents don't already know about the club. "The show is our signature event. People know who the Lions are," says Machus.

The shows benefit from the talents of a professional choreographer, expert musicians and a gaggle of friends and relatives. This year's show included "my wife, my oldest daughter, two sisters and my dog," says Machus. Kopper, a Brittany Spaniel, played Nana, the dog-nursemaid of the Darling children.

The exact particulars of long-ago shows may fade from recollection, but good memories of the camaraderie in staging a show remain. "The audience has a blast for one night. We laugh a lot for the eight or nine weeks before a show," says Roelofs.







## Longtime Projects Abound

Lawrenceburg Lions in Tennessee have sponsored a youth baseball team (photo) for **52 years**. The first team sponsored by the club included future U.S. Senator, 2008 presidential candidate and "Law & Order" TV star Fred Thompson (back row, far right). Lawrenceburg was the home club of 1966-67 International President Edward Lindsey.

Schumacher Lions in Ontario, Canada, have run their Sportsman Show for **68 years**. Vendors sell everything from fine bed sheets to boats, and the popular birds of prey exhibit of the Canadian Raptor Conservancy showcases the bald eagle, falcon and great horned owl.

Willits Lions in California have held an egg hunt for **87 years**. One year a heavy rain forced Lions to hold a "drive-up egg delivery"—parents drove under an auditorium arch to get the eggs. "You guys are our heroes," a parent called out.

Floyd Lions in New Mexico have treated residents to a night of country music at the Floyd Lions Club Jamboree for **65 years**.

Pancakes don't get old. Duluth Lions in Minnesota have served flapjacks for 58 years, the Norfolk Lions in Nebraska for 55 years, the Pacific Lions in Missouri for **63 years** and the Cape Girardeau Lions in Missouri for an astounding 77 years.

Partly to celebrate the victories of World War II, Lake Zurich Lions in Illinois helped establish Alpine Fest in **1942**. Lion Footloose Frank (his real name), who has coordinated the event for more than two decades, is a most appropriate volunteer: his father, William, lost his sight at an explosion in a war plant in 1944. Lions helped him set up a business in woodturning, and he became so skilled that a movie was made about him.

For **54 years** Bergenfield Lions in New Jersey have rubbed shoulders and broken bread with Rotarians, Optimists and members of other service groups at their Brotherhood Dinner.

Cold Spring Lions in New York have awarded scholarships at the commencement of Haldane High School for **55 years**.

The Costa Mesa Newport Harbor Lions in California are known as the "Fish Fry Club," a title earned from **68 years** of holding the fundraiser.

Santa Claus has come to town thanks to the Grand Falls Lions in Newfoundland, Canada, for **57 years**.

Stow-Munroe Lions in Ohio have given more than 20,000 awards to grade school students for **57 years**. "My fellow Lions voted me the permanent chairman of the program because they found out I was one of the first to receive it in 1958," says Robert Platt.

Mount Prospect Lions in Illinois recently ran their **77th Annual Village Festival**.

Mason + Dixon Lions in Pennsylvania have been preparing boys for responsible lives by supporting Boys Scout Troop 400 in Delta for 80 years. Eagle Lions in Colorado have sponsored a troop for **70 years**.

Spartanburg Lions have supported students at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind for **82 years**. A few years ago students received flutes, drums and other musical instruments, and an annual tradition is a gala Christmas party.

St. Paul Downtown Lions in Minnesota have honored the top male and female high school student-athletes for **71 years**.

"Play ball" has been heard on the diamond for **55 years** thanks to the Exeter Lions Club All-Star Game in California.

Snow and cold don't faze Chazy Lions in New York. For more than **50 years** they've sponsored a Winter Weekend for children that includes outdoor contests such as snow sculptures and indoor competitions such as dodgeball.

This fall marks the **63rd year** Wilton Lions in New Hampshire will hold their Penny Sale at which people purchase tickets for donated goods and winners are drawn for the items.





Since being chartered in **1948**, the Kirkland Lions Club in Illinois has held a Fourth of July celebration. The events this year basically began at sunrise and continued beyond sunset: a pancake breakfast, a parade, a pork chop barbecue and fireworks.

For **73 years** the Goodfellows program of the Richmond Lions in Michigan has provided food baskets at Christmas for families in need. Members secure ads for a Lions' newspaper and sell the paper to raise funds.

Lions have big hearts, and Norton Lions in Virginia exemplify that with their Big Heart Project, a **64-year** Christmas donation of clothing, food and toys to needy families.

Pacifica Lions in California have sponsored a Junior Olympics for **50 years**.

Lake Oswego Lions in Oregon have hosted a July 4th Pancake Breakfast for **66 years**.

The Keller Lions Club Fair in Texas is a **67-year** tradition. Don Blevins, a 50-year member and son of a founding member, can attest that is all is fair in love: on his first date with his future wife, Kaye, they rode together on the fair's Ferris wheel. Ah, yes, the circle of life.

*Don't see your club's longtime project here? Let Lions know about it by posting on the Facebook page of LION Magazine at [facebook.com/lcilionmagazine](https://facebook.com/lcilionmagazine).*



## Club Part of the History It Celebrates

The Oakmont Country Club has hosted eight U.S. Opens, more than any other golf course. People in Oakmont, a suburb of 6,400 on the Allegheny River near Pittsburgh, are proud of their small town's place in the sports world. But they're also proud of their own history as a tight-knit community, and last year they celebrated their town's 125th anniversary. Entirely fitting, the Oakmont Lions literally took center stage during the festivities, performing "Celebrate Oakmont 125: A Musical History of Our Town."

The Lions and their shows are an integral part of the town's history. Chartered in 1940, the club has put on a variety show every year since 1943. "We've done a patriotic show, a Christmas show, a Gershwin show, a Sinatra show. You name it, we've done it," says Lion Gary Rogers, the producer of the 2014 show. "It's amazing the amount of talent we have in such a small town."

That's been a reason for the show's enduring success: though a core group of Lions take on major roles year after year, the club counts on the contributions of community members. Dance troupes add sizzle (and swell the audience with family and friends); high school students act and serve on the stage crew. "They make us look good. They do a great job with the sound and lighting," says Rogers, a salesman for General Mills.

### CANDIDATES FOR QUEEN OF OAKMONT LIONS CLUB SHOW



The Oakmont Lions' show included a beauty queen contest in 1967. "It was as big a deal as the homecoming queen," says Gary Rogers.



The Oakmont Lions rehearse in 1997 for their show "100 Years of Broadway."



The 40-member club deftly divides up tasks such as ushering and printing according to interest and skills. Rogers began as an usher and became a “Lions player” before taking on the job of producer. Was his rise a Hollywood-type story? “I was hoping to stay as an usher in the background,” he says with a laugh.

The history show featured segments focused on decades. The ‘40s featured songs from Big Bands and the

’50s was rock ‘n’ roll. In between the songs two Lions in rocking chairs reminisced about local happenings from that particular era whether it was a high school football championship, a new school, a golf tournament or even a Lion opening a well-known business.

A cherished tradition, the show ended with the cast loudly singing “Lions Roar.” Says Rogers, “The crowd loves it. They always sing along.”



The turkey raffle is a beloved tradition in Parma.

## Taking a Chance Long Ago Pays Off

You don’t find bright lights and big crowds in Parma, Idaho. “We don’t have any stop lights or parking meters. We don’t even have a McDonalds,” says Glenda Leigh, 2014-15 president of the Parma Lions Club. Despite the paucity of people in Parma, population 2,000, the club has been able to sustain the same fundraiser for 64 years. Since 1951, the club has raffled off turkeys.

In November 100 tickets are drawn for 12-pound turkeys ordered by Lions from the M and W, the town’s sole grocery store. Lions typically gross \$5,000 from the sale of the \$1 tickets.

“There is a lot of support. People know the funds go for community projects. I’ve never had anyone tell me to take a hike,” says Leigh, a retired English teacher.

Part of the appeal is that the odds of winning are decent. Leigh herself has won twice, and her son won last year

after she sold him tickets. Some winners, especially Lions, donate the turkeys to the town’s food pantry.

The club is robust with 78 members, some of them farmers. Giving away turkeys is a nice complement to the local crop—Idaho potatoes.

The turkey raffle began after a club member taught horticulture at the University of Idaho in Moscow. He returned to Parma and told members of the huge success of the Turkey Carnival and Fair of the Moscow Lions.

That’s often how Parma Lions still operate—observe and act. Driving in her car, Leigh recently saw a large group of children in the park, trying to eat sack lunches provided by a summer lunch program, but huddling under a tree because of a sudden downpour. The Lions’ next project is to provide a covered pavilion for the park.



The Utah Shakespeare festival staged "Hamlet" in 1962.





## The Play's The Thing in Utah

To be or not to be. Well, the remarkable Utah Shakespeare Festival almost wasn't. It's not a Lions' event, but without Cedar City Lions the festival's 54 seasons, its much-acclaimed tragedies and comedies, its authentic theater—so close to the design of Shakespeare's Globe Theater that the BBC filmed part of its Shakespeare series there—its blasting open minds and hearts with the wisdom, genius and empathy of the Bard, none of this would have transpired, would have been such stuff as dreams are made on.

Festival founder Fred Adams had moved to Cedar City from New York in 1959 to start a theater department at a small junior college. The iron ore industry had collapsed there. Tourism was the town's lifeline; the state's gorgeous parks were nearby. Then the federal government announced that the new interstate would be located 20 miles from town. No one would ever bother to drive to Cedar City.

But Adams had an idea: a Shakespeare festival. He knew that a Shakespeare festival in the small town of Ashland in Oregon prospered. Adams described to StoryCorps what happened next.

"I went to the Elks Club. I went to the Kiwanis. I went to the Rotarians. I went to the Chamber of Commerce. I must say, the Chamber of Commerce, when I gave the idea of a Shakespeare Festival, the idea went over like a pregnant pole vaulter. It was dead silence in the room. When I went to the city fathers to ask them if there would be any chance of some subsidy, I was literally laughed out of chamber. They thought that was the dumbest thing.

"If I'd come up with a festival that had some merit to it, but Shakespeare, absolutely ridiculous. One of my students said, 'My brother is the president of the Lions club.' We went to the Lions club that morning. Six in the morning for breakfast. Why on earth anyone meets at 6 in the morning, I don't understand. After I had done my spiel, one of the Lions raised his hand and he said, 'Fred, how much of the \$1,000 that you require do you think that you're going to raise in tickets?'

"I answered him very openly, 'I figured that we could raise all of it.' We had no problem with that, but we had to have up-front money in order to buy lumber and fabric, et cetera. He made a motion to the Lions club that they underwrite the Utah Shakespeare festival for any amount up to \$1,000 that we did not earn in ticket sales. It was unanimous. That gave us our nest egg. We brought in over \$3,000 that summer. Didn't have to pay a thing to the Lions. They never had to pay a dime out."

The Lions, not normally associated with high culture, brought Shakespeare to Utah and to millions. Ole Will warned Horatio—advised us—not to be surprised at the unexpected: "there are more things in heaven and earth than of dreamt of in your philosophy."

# *‘I’M NOT BLIND’*

My life seemed hopeless. But a gift from Lions made all the difference.

BY NANCY SHUGART



Photo by John Carroll/The Daily Toreador

Shugart tells her story at a TEDx conference at Texas Tech University in Lubbock.



## *‘We’re sorry. There’s nothing we can do for Nancy.’*

The summer before third grade, I began losing my eyesight. When school started, I knew right away that something was very different... and very wrong. I could not see what my teacher was writing on the chalkboard, and I was beginning to hold my books closer to my face when reading. My teacher quickly picked up on my difficulty and called my parents. “Nancy is having trouble seeing the chalkboard,” she informed them. “No problem,” was basically their response. “We’ll get her some glasses.”

This was 1965 in a small town just outside of Houston, Texas. Our family optometrist examined my eyes and, to everyone’s surprise, found nothing wrong with them. He tried a host of lenses expecting to find one that would bring the eye chart into focus for me. But nothing helped. I could see the big E but nothing else. The doctor reported to my mother that he had found nothing wrong with my eyes. He told her that sometimes children, in order to get attention, pretend to be unable to see.

What could have been a simple eye exam had turned into an emotional nightmare for me. My parents also were upset and confused. My teacher was telling them I couldn’t see and the doctor was saying I could. They decided to take the doctor’s advice and just be patient with me. In time, everyone believed, I would decide to start seeing again.

On one hand, I was relieved to hear that I would not have to wear glasses. Kids who wore glasses got called “four-eyes,” and I hated the thought of being teased like that. On the other hand, however, this news only confused me even more. *If nothing is wrong with my eyes, I wondered, then why can my classmates see the chalkboard and I can’t? Why am I different?*

Day by day, I became increasingly frustrated. I just couldn’t understand what was happening, and no one seemed to want to talk about it. Convinced that my inability to see was all in my mind, everyone seemed to believe that if the problem was ignored, it would simply go away and I would start seeing again.

My 8-year-old mind desperately tried to make sense of what was happening. My whole world was changing. I couldn’t understand why I was always getting hurt. Why

was I always tripping and falling over things that others were able to see?

During that year, there were many times I tried to explain to my classmates that I just couldn’t see some things. But the question they always asked then was, “If you can’t see, then why don’t you wear glasses?”

And then there was the emotional pain. Why was I starting to lose my friends? One day I learned that a couple of my friends were quite upset with me. They thought I was becoming a snob because they had waved at me from

down the street and couldn’t understand why I had not waved back.

Mrs. Henderson, my third-grade teacher, called on me in class to read just as often as she called on the other kids. And when I said I could not see to read what she had written on the chalkboard, she would tell me to get out of my seat and walk up to the board so I could see it. Mrs. Henderson demanded as much from me as she did from the other kids. Today I am grateful to her for that, even though at the time I thought she was just a mean old witch.

During that year, I discovered a skill to compensate for my loss of eyesight: memorization. If I thought there was a chance that Mrs. Henderson might call on me in class to read my book report, I would memorize it the night before. I would then stand

in class and hold my paper at a normal distance from my face while reciting it to the class. I would look at my paper as though I was reading it when, in fact, I was really saying the whole thing from memory.

Despite the false beliefs I was creating in other people about myself, I remained focused on one goal. My goal was to eliminate as much of my pain as I possibly could, the emotional pain from all the teasing and the physical pain from all of my accidents.

Gradually, I figured out other little ways to help me achieve this goal. I learned that I could recognize my classmates by their voices since their faces were too blurry and no longer reliable for identification purposes. Of course, I took a lot of teasing when I would mistake a boy with a high-pitched voice for a girl.



Shugart poses for her third-grade picture—when she began losing her sight.

In spite of all the teasing I took from some kids, there were others who were very kind to me. Some kids seemed to recognize that I really couldn't see clearly long before most adults did. This may have been because they were around me all day and they knew that no kid would ever "pretend" to not see a kickball coming straight at her face or purposely walk through a pile of fire ants just to get attention.

When we broke for summer vacation, my parents decided it was time for another eye exam. This time they took me to an ophthalmologist. Unlike the last exam, my eyes were dilated in this one and examined very carefully. The ophthalmologist saw immediately what I had been struggling with for nearly a year. My parents were told that I would never see clearly again. The diagnosis was macular degeneration and retinitis pigmentosa, two degenerative diseases that had affected the retina and optic nerves in both of my eyes. My visual acuity was 20/200—legally blind. But no one ever told me that.

My parents took me to every specialist they could find. Some of the most prominent ophthalmologists in the country were located in Houston at that time, and I saw every one of them. I lost count of the number of doctors and interns who stared into my eyes with their strange instruments as though they were witnessing a rare phenomenon. I do know this: If I had a nickel for every time my eyes were dilated and examined, I could pay off our national debt.

We kept praying that someone would offer us hope that I would soon regain my eyesight. But no one did. Instead, like a broken record, the response we continued to get was, "We're sorry. There's nothing we can do for Nancy."

I was concerned about what would happen if my teachers realized just how little I could actually see. I was afraid that if my loss of sight were too noticeable, my teacher might have me placed in a special education class. Special education classes, back in the 1960s and in my hometown, were not what they are today. Special education classes then were used mainly as holding tanks for kids who were in any way considered slow or "handicapped," as people with disabilities were called in those days. I was not slow intellectually, and I sure didn't think I was handicapped.

My mother told my teachers about my visual impairment. I was never told I was blind. I knew I couldn't see as well as other people, but I never thought I was blind. Blindness, I thought, meant you couldn't see anything at all. I could see things; they were just very blurry.

My teachers were always supportive and caring. I honestly have to credit much of my academic success to my elementary school teachers. Though they may not have fully realized the extent of my sight loss, they were aware of it. Yet they wisely continued to demand as much from me as from my classmates.

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My love for school was still very much alive as I prepared to enter high school in the fall of 1971. By that time, I had been given a magnifying glass which helped make reading slightly easier. Long reading assignments, however, were still quite exhausting and painstakingly slow.

Soon after school got underway, I heard that the swim team was looking for new members. Swimming was my

second love in life, right behind chocolate. The team accepted anyone who could swim, and I swam like a fish.

I soon became the team's long distance swimmer. There is one swim meet that I will never forget, for it taught me a valuable lesson. I was signed up for only one event in this particular meet—the 300-meter freestyle. Swimming twelve lengths of the pool could be quite tiring, but this was the event I had always done my best in.

I walked up to my starting block and looked around. I saw one girl on each side of me but I couldn't see beyond that. I asked a teammate how many I would be swimming against.

"Three," she said.

Okay, I thought. *I only have to beat three girls to get my first place. You can do this, Nancy*, I told myself.

We stepped up on our starting blocks. The gun went off and we hit the water. *Pace yourself*, I reminded myself. *Twelve lengths is a long way to go.*

"Five," I heard my teammate yell at me as I made my turn. Seven more to go. No problem. I'm feeling strong. But wait! Both of the girls in the lanes next to me were passing me going in the opposite direction. I wondered, were they behind me or ahead of me?

"ELEVEN." The number I had longed to hear was now being shouted at me by a very enthusiastic teammate. I called upon every ounce of strength I had left and, with all the speed and power I could muster up, I made the final few strokes to the finish.

OH, NO! My worst nightmare had come true. Not only had the other three girls finished, they were out of the pool and drying off. I was the only one still in the pool. But then three of my teammates rushed over to me. Why in the world were they so happy? Didn't they know I got last place?

"Nancy," they shouted. "You got first place!"

"You're kidding," I said. "All three of them quit?"

"Yes!"

I have learned that that's the way it is in life; there are a lot more quitters than doers in this world. The people who are willing to be in it for the long haul and are willing to endure whatever it takes to achieve their goals, ultimately become the most successful people.

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Many of my high school teachers were unsure as to the degree or type of assistance they should provide. I was probably the only student with a visual impairment they had ever had in their classes. In the early 1970s, most students in Texas who were legally blind were not attending public schools. Most were sent to Austin to the Texas School for the Blind.

Now, I have to tell you that I despise that word "handicapped," but that was the term used back then. Over the



years, the term has been changed to “disabled,” but I prefer “physically challenged.” After all, that’s what it is; it’s a physical challenge that calls upon the person to find an alternative way of doing something.

One class in which I was occasionally called upon was Mr. M.’s math class. One day in class, Mr. M. called on me to solve a problem he had written on the overhead projector. I asked him to read it to me so I could work it at my desk. “You can see it,” he snapped. “You just don’t want to see it. You’re lazy.”

I sat stunned. Mr. M. had, on occasion, been rude to other students who didn’t seem to want to learn, but never had he spoken to me like this. I could feel all eyes in the class staring at me, wondering how I was going to respond. After what seemed like an eternity of uneasy silence, I finally spoke. “There’s a letter in the office...” I tried to explain. It was a letter from my ophthalmologist that my mother had asked school officials to put in my file to help my teachers better understand the situation. But before I could finish my sentence, he interrupted.

“I don’t have to read any letter. I’ve seen you walk around this school. You can see whatever you want to see. You’re just lazy.”

There was that word again. It was that “lazy” part that stung the most. He had no idea how hard I worked to try to keep up with everyone else. No one did.

That day was a turning point for me. All of those painful memories from childhood came rushing back, reminding me of how no one had believed me back then either when I said I couldn’t see.

*After all these years, I cried inside, the nightmare is still not over.* I made a decision that day. I decided that I would never again allow myself to be hurt the way I was hurt in Mr. M.’s class that day. I decided that I would never talk about my eyesight with anyone ever again.

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I talked my parents into letting me get a part-time job at a cafe that was a couple of blocks from our home. They agreed to let me work only on Friday and Saturday nights. The cafe where I worked was very small. It only had four booths and a counter. I worked with a cook named Rose, and we made a pretty good team once we got to know each other.

After a while, I became quite good at my job. I quickly memorized the items on the menu and how much each item cost, so I wouldn’t have to strain my eyes to read the menu. I memorized the keys on the cash register since I couldn’t see the numbers written on them.

Some of the customers, especially the regular ones, picked up on my visual impairment rather quickly, while others never noticed. I wanted my visual impairment to be as inconspicuous as possible, and so I worked hard to make it just that. I occasionally filled coffee cups up till they were overflowing, and I sometimes left customers with wet clothes when I knocked their drinks over. Didn’t they know they weren’t supposed to move that glass of water once I put it on the table? I could cover up my visual impairment as long as I could control where everything was placed, but that was not always possible.

Since we were the only two working that shift, Rose



and I got to know each other pretty well. I told her all about my loss of eyesight and why I couldn’t see. I also told her I was considering quitting school. Rose had told me once that she had left school when she was fifteen, so I knew she would understand. I told her that I was now ready to start working full-time at the café.

Rose was in her late 50s and had been working as a waitress most of her life. She let me know that she did not enjoy working like a dog all of her life. She said, “Oh, you want to be like me when you grow up? Is that the kind of life you want?”

That one particular conversation with Rose played over and over in my head many times. Though I still had more questions than answers about what I wanted to do with my life, the fact that I was at least starting to question my choices and their consequences was definitely a good sign.

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My vision of becoming a teacher began when I was in Mrs. Blackburn’s kindergarten class. I remember coming home from kindergarten every day and lining my stuffed animals up in front of my little chalkboard and teaching them everything that I had learned from Mrs. Blackburn that day. I had the smartest Teddy Bear in the neighborhood. As I passed from grade level to grade level, the vision went with me.

I knew I would have to go to college to become a teacher, but I really had no desire to continue my education after high school. I did not have many fond memories from high school, and I could not imagine college being any better.

My parents had always wanted me to go to college, but since no one in our family had ever been, I had no one to advise me about how to get started. My high school teachers and counselors never discussed college with me and, considering how low my grades were there, I can’t say that I blame them.

One day a friend of the family brought over a course catalogue from the community college. Out of curiosity, I began thumbing through it. My interest was sparked when I saw they offered a degree in music. Two weeks after graduating from high school, I was back in school again. I enrolled in the first summer session at the community college as a music major.

It did not take long to realize that my musical background was not nearly as extensive as my classmates’. I had taken piano lessons during my elementary and junior high school years but had not continued it in high school. Many of my college classmates had not only taken private lessons throughout high school but had also been actively involved in either band or choir. I had a lot of catching up to do.

I worked hard that year. With my little magnifying glass, I plowed through the reading assignments and memorized all of my piano and vocal music. As always, the pace was slow, but I now saw purpose and value in what I was doing and I was very pleased with my results. It was refreshing to see As and Bs on my grade reports again.

As my first year at this community college drew to a

*As always, the pace was slow, but I now saw purpose and value in what I was doing and I was very pleased with my results.*

close, I asked my music instructors about the music programs at several universities in Texas. When I asked them which university they considered to have the best music program, they unanimously agreed; it was North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas) in Denton.

My teachers, to my surprise, weren't impressed at all with my decision. "You'll be out of your league up there, Nancy," was their response.

But off I went to Denton. And you know what? They were right! It was tough. In fact, I believe to this day that going through that music school is the hardest thing I have ever done. It's also one of the accomplishments that I am the most proud of.

My first day on that campus is a day I will never forget. Upon arriving, my parents and I carried all of my things up four flights of stairs to my room in the Bruce Hall dormitory. This was the life, I thought. Bruce Hall was where most of the music majors stayed and now I was a part of it. *What am I doing here?* was the first question that invaded my mind as I watched my parents pull out of the parking lot and begin their 300-mile journey back home. *Why am I crying?* was my second question.

But it didn't take long before I fell in love with the place—with the campus, but most of all with the people. Everyone was so friendly and so helpful. The professors were very approachable, and they were not shocked in the



least by my visual impairment. They had seen it all. Unlike the public schools in my hometown, I was not the first visually impaired student to come through this university. In fact, there were many students on that campus who were overcoming greater physical challenges than mine, and watching them go after their dreams strengthened my belief that I, too, should go after mine.

As my first year at NTSU progressed, proud feelings of accomplishment were mixed with those same old feelings of frustration. I was still using my small magnifying glass when reading and the going was very slow. Regardless of how strong my determination was, I could not keep up. I ended up dropping a couple of classes that first year because the work load was just too much for me to handle.

I had, without a doubt, chosen a very challenging major. In addition to my lengthy reading assignments every day, I also had to memorize pages upon pages of music for my piano and voice lessons.

When that first year ended, I went home for the summer. I tried to relax, but I spent most of my time worrying

about what I should do.

I sat in my bedroom crying my eyes out. My mother came into my room that night and, seeing my anguish, she began to cry too. She wanted so much to help but didn't know how. She and my father had taken me to every specialist in Houston many times over the years, but the answer was always the same: "We're sorry. There's nothing we can do for Nancy."

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In my second year of classes at NTSU, I took a semester of Spanish. The instructor of my Spanish class was a young graduate assistant from Peru. One day this instructor asked me to stay after class to talk with her. She had noticed how hard I was struggling to see the book and said she felt certain that the financial aid office would pay to hire a reader for me.

I went to the financial aid office that afternoon. Immediately the lady answered, "Oh, you don't need us. You need the Commission for the Blind."

The Commission for the Blind? I didn't say it, but I was thinking, *I'm not blind. I just can't see clearly.* I felt awkward walking into the Commission for the Blind. I had with me the letter from my ophthalmologist. My hope was that it would strengthen my plea for help. After waiting a few minutes in the outer office, Martha, the counselor, invited me into her office.

"I'm not blind," I told her. I wanted to make that clear to her. "So I don't think you'll be able to help me, but maybe you know someone who can."

I then pulled the letter out of my purse. "This will explain the medical reason why I can't see clearly," I said as I handed it to Martha. She read the letter and then slowly returned her attention to me. She seemed a bit confused as she said, "This letter says your visual acuity is 20/200."

She paused. "Do you also know that 20/200 is legally blind?" Legally blind? I'm sure the look on my face told her this was the first time I had ever heard that phrase before.

Martha couldn't believe that I had been legally blind since age eight, and no one had ever told me. She was extremely curious to know how I had managed all those years without any help.

"It hasn't been easy," I began. Though I had just met Martha, I felt that I was finally talking to someone who had the capacity to understand what I had been through. Martha wasn't blind herself, but she had been a counselor for the blind for many years. I also noticed right away that she did not have a left hand. For some reason, this made me feel more comfortable about opening up to her. She knew personally what it was like to overcome a physical challenge.

We talked for over two hours. We talked about the many ways I had learned to compensate for and even disguise my visual impairment.

Talking openly about these things for the first time was



like taking a breath of fresh air. I had spent a lifetime trying to hide my visual impairment.

Something else momentous happened. Martha asked if I was familiar with the fourth floor of the library. Was I ever? I had only basically lived there studying for the past year and a half. She asked if I knew where the media center was on that floor. Of course I did. Though I had never needed to go in there, I had passed the room every day on my way to my study carrel.

Martha then told me about a machine they had in this media center. “It’s called a CCTV, which stands for closed circuit television [today known as a video magnifier]. It’s a magnification machine that enlarges print and displays it upon a screen.”

I didn’t walk to the library, I practically ran. I had to see this mysterious machine that Martha said might make it possible for me to see to read again. I walked into the media room and a lady at the desk led me to the back of



the room where the CCTV was located. It had a screen similar to a TV which was raised about a foot off the table. There was a movable table beneath the screen.

The lady asked me if I had a book I would like to read. My backpack was full of books. I pulled out my music history book, opened it and placed it on the movable table. The lady said proudly, “The Lions Club donated this to our university library. It’s quite amazing.” She then turned the machine on.

Within a few seconds, I was in tears. But this time they were tears of joy. I couldn’t believe my eyes. For the first time since I was 8 years old, I could actually see to read. The print that appeared on the screen was large and clear, and I didn’t have to strain my eyes to see it. It was the most beautiful sight I had ever seen.

This had to be the most fabulous machine man had ever invented. The gift of reading had been given back to me. And to think I nearly gave up; I almost quit school because I couldn’t see to read. If I had quit, I might never have discovered this miracle machine.

The people in the media center had to pry me away from this new miracle machine at closing time that evening. I did not want to turn it off. This machine had just opened up a whole new world for me. It was a world with endless possibilities—a world whose door had been closed to me for most of my life but now was open. And to think God chose a graduate assistant, all the way from Peru, to lead me to it. Miracles really do come from the most unexpected places and in the most unexpected ways.

*Shugart became a teacher, devoting 21 years to elementary school children. She recounts her life in “Challenged to Win,” from which this story is excerpted. She is president of the Austin South Austin Lions Club in Texas.*

Watch Shugart’s inspirational talk, which cites the role of Lions in her success, at a TEDx conference.

*I couldn’t believe my eyes. For the first time since I was 8 years old, I could actually see to read. The print that appeared on the screen was large and clear. ... It was the most beautiful sight I had ever seen.*

# LIONS AND THE UNITED NATIONS: OUR PARTNERSHIP SERVES THE WORLD

BY PAMELA MOHR

"The United Nations isn't just about politics and peace-keeping," points out Al Brandel, 2008-2009 international president, now the association's representative to the United Nations and the chairperson of Lions Day with the United Nations. "The U.N. is about helping people and humanitarianism—the same thing we do every day as Lions." Seeing more than 500 Lions from 37 countries participating in the annual prestigious daylong March event, the 37th and his first as chairperson, was a vivid illustration to him exactly why the bond between the United Nations and Lions has been unbreakable for 70 years.

"I saw for myself how well everyone mixed with each other. Seeing Lions meeting new people and talking so easily, I realized why this partnership with the United Nations works so well," Brandel says. "It was like a mini-U.N. that day. Lions are all so different and from so many different parts of the world, but we still work together for the same thing. We share the same values. We work for the health, safety and well-being of people around the world."

From a partnership that began in 1945 in San Francisco when Melvin Jones and other Lion leaders helped design the non-governmental organization (NGO) charter for the United Nations, the two organizations remain steadfast allies, particularly when it comes to challenges facing children.

"We must assume that every world citizen desires world peace and will do something about it," said D. A. Skeen, international president that year. Peace still eludes the world, but Lions are continuing their efforts to protect the planet's people in need. That bond forged decades ago was strengthened even further in 2008 when the association signed the United Nations Global Compact to help fulfill the U.N. Millennium Goals.

The Millennium Goals are: eradicating extreme hunger and poverty; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other terrible diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability and promoting global partnerships for health.

Lions, in fact, have worked closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) for 30 years to improve the health and lives of millions. Since 1990 when SightFirst was established as an official Lions program, more than US\$275 million has been awarded to 1,115 extensive projects in 102 countries. These grants have been for disease control, eye health and saving sight, as well as for training resources.

In Sri Lanka, Dr. Sarath Samarage, a Panadura Lion since 1983 and a WHO national consultant, says WHO is helping to fund the Lions' Promoting Healthy Lifestyles campaign. Clubs are distributing educational materials in three languages to reduce diabetes and other ailments that can be eliminated or lessened by healthier living. The project also includes workshops and screenings, and encourages a more active lifestyle for children and adults for good health. "We support WHO and WHO supports us. Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases is a top priority for Lions and WHO. Lions in Sri Lanka work very closely with U.N. agencies," he says.

Lions are officially partnered with the Measles & Rubella Initiative, a joint effort of WHO, the United Nations Foundation, UNICEF, the American Red Cross and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Working with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and GAVI Alliance, Lions are helping vaccinate children worldwide to save lives. Reducing child mortality, the fourth critical component of the U.N.'s Millennium Goals, is the aim of this comprehensive campaign. It's also a cornerstone of the Lions' Centennial Challenge. Lions worldwide are raising \$30 million to vaccinate 200 million children by 2017. Already, immunizations have saved the lives of more than 14 million children from dying of measles and its complications since 2000.

In 1996, LCI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with UNICEF that focuses on projects aiding the world's children in need from providing Vitamin A doses to promoting global education. 2014-15 President Joe Preston once said, "This is where Lions shine. In different ways and in many different nations, Lions are making progress on the eight Millennium Development Goals."

Norwegian Lions united with Lions in Lebanon to help refugees in Syria. Lions have built schools in remote villages in Afghanistan where children, girls especially, had no opportunity to learn because it was forbidden by the Taliban. Leos and Lions in Hawaii delivered loads of socks and schools supplies to Afghan girls in an effort to keep them warm while they try to learn in unheated schools in the heart of winter. Japanese Lions have completed more than 36 education-related projects in Cambodia. Entire schools were built.

Lions give an annual donation to UNICEF's School-in-a-Box program. In 2015, LCIF presented a check for \$35,000 to Liza Barrie, UNICEF's chief of Civil Society Partnerships. "Lions are helping children learn, no matter



where they are. Every child has a right to education,” Barrie says. She describes the school-in-a-box program as a “simple idea born of necessity.” Each emergency box of school supplies can be used for one teacher and up to 40 students when a crisis prevents them from attending school.

“Lions have helped School-in-a-Box kits be shipped to virtually every part of the globe. These metal cartons help the youngest survivors of conflict and disaster. They represent one step toward reclaiming their childhood,” Barrie points out. The boxes, each valued at a little more than \$200, do much more than simply helping displaced children continue their education. “Being in a school setting helps children recover from the emotional and psychologi-

to work with the European Union to fund Lions Quest in other countries,” says Brandel. “UNODC has already identified five other countries where the program could be expanded. As a former police detective, I worked with kids who had problems with drugs. Now instead of reading them their rights, I’m able to say, ‘We’re here and we’re able to help you.’ I want to reach more kids all over the world to help them make better life decisions.

“I’m sure we’ll be continuing to expand our partnership with the U.N. to work globally and locally with one another because we have so many common interests. It’s all about partnerships. Both LCI and the United Nations share the goal of improving conditions for those in need.



Lions in Tanzania have helped 20 million children in their country receive vaccinations against measles and rubella in partnership with WHO. The immunization project is helping to fulfill the United Nation’s Millennium Goal to reduce child mortality.

cal trauma of war and natural disaster. This Lions-UNICEF partnership has benefited hundreds of thousands of children in 20 years,” Barrie says.

More than 17.5 million children have been helped by Lions, who last year invested 6.3 million service hours to promote reading skills in the United States and other countries.

Lions Quest is now part of the U.N.’s Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) drug prevention and education program. A recent \$100,000 LCIF grant was awarded to begin the Skills for Life curriculum in Serbia. Thus far, LCIF is the first private, NGO to participate in UNODC’s drug prevention program, which is expected to be primarily funded by the member nations of the U.N.

Three Lions Quest workshops have been conducted so far and two more are scheduled to train 60 educators. They, in turn, will share the program with more than 800 students in nine schools in the Belgrade area. “We’re hoping

We face the same challenges. We both want to promote international understanding and provide humanitarian service. Our interaction with the U.N. means that we collaborate and save lives with our different initiatives. It’s exponential. It just keeps growing. By working with the U.N., we have something to build on with our Lions projects. Together, we make a great team.”

Watch a video about how Lions worldwide are supporting the U.N.’s Millennium Goals.

Lions support the newly-created United Nations in the hopes of finding lasting world peace (January 1946 LION).

# Lions in Nigeria Aid Cancer Patients

BY ERIC MARGULES

One morning, as administrator Stella Agbogun made her rounds in the Radiotherapy Department at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) in Nigeria, she happened upon a young man comforting his weeping mother in the hallway.

They had traveled to Lagos from Cross River, a Nigerian state more than 400 miles away, so the woman could receive cancer treatment at LUTH. But without any money or relatives in Lagos, the pair had nowhere to stay. They were desperate and completely alone.

Agbogun, a Lion, knew something had to be done to help the family and those like them—who travel from far and wide for access to LUTH’s Radiotherapy Department but lack the resources to secure housing for themselves during treatment.

“They had nowhere to sleep,” says Agbogun. “They had no relations in Lagos, and they did not have enough money for their accommodation. I was moved by pity. After that incident, I made the decision to be a positive change, to create a better living environment for cancer patients.”

Agbogun, District 404 B governor then, saw an opportunity to serve her community and improve the lives of vulnerable individuals. She collaborated with LUTH and Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) to develop plans for Mercy Home, a housing facility for cancer patients at the hospital.

Agbogun worked both with the LUTH management team to finalize details and secure the space for Mercy Home and with Lion leaders to complete the project. With plans for 20 beds, Mercy Home would offer temporary accommodation for radiotherapy patients and their relatives who cannot afford accommodations in Lagos.

With the help of a US\$75,000 Standard grant from LCIF, arrangements for the construction of Mercy Home were put in place. On a rainy day in July, behind the Radiotherapy Department at LUTH, Lions and local dignitaries gathered to break ground on the special facility that was years in the making.

At the groundbreaking ceremony, Professor Akin Osibogun, the chief medical Director of LUTH, elatedly described how honored the hospital was to commission Mercy Home. The facility was a dream realized.



Poverty in Lagos and elsewhere in Nigeria make it difficult for people to access healthcare.

“LUTH’s management team sealed the entire deal by giving us this space, where Mercy Home stands,” Agbogun said at the ceremony. “They gave us easy access to the institution and were ready to render assistance and encouragement.”

Mercy Home now stands as a symbol of hope to people in some of the darkest times of their lives, as well as a reminder that wherever a need arises in the community, Lions will find a way to meet the challenge.

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







## Fostering Literacy Among Children in Egypt

Ancient Egyptians knew that writing and literacy were essential to society. Cultures that came much later pay tribute to their progress in written language: the word “paper” derives from the Egyptian word “papyrus.” But reading skills in the average Egyptian home today are substandard. Nearly nine in 10 Egyptian parents read only schoolbooks with their children, according to the Information and Decision Support Center in Egypt. Parents lack confidence in their own reading skills or simply do not appreciate the importance of critical reading to the development of language skills.

The Lions of Egypt, in partnership with the Aga Khan Development Network and the Om Habibeh Foundation (OHF), are working to foster literacy in children in Aswan. Combining OHF’s academic expertise with the financial support of a US\$35,000 Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) Standard grant, local Lions launched a “Reading for Children” project. The goal is to increase children’s access to books, improve parents’ capacity to support their children’s learning, strengthen interactions between children and parents and reinforce primary literacy skills.

Once local facilitators were trained, the process of equipping libraries within those community-based organizations began. To increase children’s access to books, OHF purchased a variety of books and interactive games. These organizations now host an extensive collection of books and early childhood development materials. OHF also provided child-accessible bookshelves and an assortment of arts and crafts supplies.

Facilitators also conducted home visits that provided mothers with a safe place to engage their children and take an active role in their children’s education. Facilitators explained the importance of reading to children and gave creative suggestions on using daily activities to enrich children’s language development.

OHF also hosted several reading camps during school breaks. Nearly 280 children participated, taking part in storytelling and educational activities. At the end of each camp, the children and facilitators marched through the streets, holding signs and distributing flyers to promote the importance of literacy. These marches contributed to a sense of community and increased awareness of the project.

In one year, the Reading for Children project positively impacted more than 900 mothers and more than 2,500 children throughout Aswan. The participating community-based organizations became safe, attractive spaces for mothers to interact with their children. The reading and play sessions not only increased language development for the participating children but also expanded mothers’ ability to participate in that development. The local Lions and their partners are making great progress fostering literacy in Egypt.



Mercy Home is a residence for low-income cancer patients in Lagos.



## Like the LION

Add the LION's new Facebook page (search for [lclionmagazine](#)) to your list of likes and stay connected with the magazine. Share story ideas and comments for our editors by sending a Facebook message. Comment on question posts for Lions, and your words and profile photo might end up on this page. Tell us about your club's longterm project (see page 35).

## Find it at [lionsclubs.org](#)

If your club is looking for ways to get involved in November's Lions Diabetes Awareness Month—and World Diabetes Day on November 14—check out the resources available on LCI's website. Join the Lions' efforts to help the millions of people living with diabetes with guidance on organizing a Strides event, holding a screening, applying for a grant and more.



## Social Media Quick Tip

Does your club's Twitter account need some attention? Add photos to your Tweets and gain up to 27 percent more Retweets. Tweets containing quotes, video links and hashtags can also boost Retweets into the double digits. (Source: [twitter.com](#))



## A World of Lions on Flickr

Lions' service stories are often best told through photos, and flickr.com has more than 16,000! Follow LCI and find daily inspiration in snapshots from around the globe. Add your club's photos to the stream by filling out the Submit a Photo form on the LCI website.



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## Membership Can Rise This Fall

For Lions, autumn is the season to “Just Ask.” October’s Membership Growth Month is a special time to share your excitement about serving with prospective new Lions. Get ready to rally with inspiration from Lions and resources from LCI.

### If You Build it, Lions Will Come

Five years ago the Seal Beach Lions Club was an active group with a large membership of 100. Aiming to do even better, they set their sights on becoming one of the top three clubs in California and developed a five-year strategic plan. Longtime Lion Scott Newton shares highlights of the club’s growth to 288 members.

- “Our plan was designed to wow the community with service. Increased membership would be a byproduct of the plan. We called it ‘if you build it, they will come’—and they did.”
- “After doing an internal needs assessment and taking a hard look at what outdated traditions needed to change, we dramatically increased our community presence with hands-on service projects. We included Leos in nearly everything we did. We increased publicity and updated the Lions brand.”
- “We saw results much earlier than expected. People heard about us, saw us serving or came to one of our happy hours or bimonthly orientations.”
- “We became the number one club in California in three years. Now, our retention program is really a philosophy of Lionism—creating an environment with great meetings, a strong social element and many meaningful opportunities to serve.”

### Tea for Two, or Three— New Members

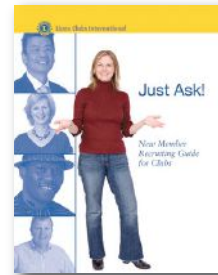
The best Lions’ events often wear multiple hats, serving as fundraisers, awareness-builders and recruitment opportunities. The Venice Lions discovered how a targeted and personalized fundraising event could do just that. Fresh off the heels of a successful string of fashion shows, the Florida club wanted to keep their growing number of women supporters engaged. Ann Favreau proposed a high tea event; the first was so successful they have since held two more.

“The main purpose was to have a fundraiser in a lovely atmosphere in which we could share the Lions’ message of service and highlight our projects. We told our guests the story of Helen Keller and how their support would allow us to serve,” says Favreau. The teas also turned out to be a perfect venue for recruiting, with three new members joining so far. The intimate setting enabled members to convey who the Lions are, while mingling over tea sandwiches and pastries. Wearing fancy hats—with a prize for the best one—didn’t hurt either.



Lions have always found creative ways to build membership.

- A Texas club makes its mark on the community and increases its membership by 100 in 18 months (December 1983/January 1984 LION).



### Just a Click Away: LCI Resources

The “Just Ask! New Member Recruiting Guide” contains a wealth of ideas and tools to expand your club. Find a four-step process to recruit, create a growth plan, implement the plan and welcome new members. Get more out of the guide with the “Inviting New Members and Keeping Members Satisfied” tutorial presentation. Find them both at [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org).

### Get Extra Credit

Remember to report membership increases



occurring in October through MyLCI to be eligible to receive Membership Growth Awards.

## Club News

The Fifth Annual **Wisconsin Lions** Camp Fun Run, Walk and Ride raised nearly \$8,000 to benefit the camp.

When a member of the **Southbridge Lions Club** was diagnosed with esophageal cancer two years ago, members of the **Massachusetts** club rallied around him. Lion Gary Fontaine urged state legislators to recognize this growing disease, and the club was presented with a citation and proclamation signed by the governor for its efforts. The Southbridge Lions Club Bowtie Tuesday for Esophageal Cancer Awareness was held in May, with nearly 100 percent of the membership and their guests wearing bowties.

The **South Carroll Lioness-Lions Club** in **Maryland** collected items to benefit the Humane Society on Make a Difference Day. They collected cash, gift cards and pet food and supplies outside a veterinary clinic.

The **Coventry Lions Club** in **Pennsylvania** donated \$2,500 to a food pantry.

The **Wheaton Lions Club** in **Illinois** sponsored a 5K Reindeer Run and Walk through downtown streets with the Wheaton Park District to raise money to help build a Ronald McDonald House in the community.

The **Ames Breakfast Lions Club** in **Iowa** sponsor a "Pizz-a-thon" every week during the summer during which teams of children can trace the ingredients of their free pizza—from slice back to soil—in cooperation with a learning center. Lions help participants plant seeds in a planter box and record growth data weekly before taking the group to a farm to see growing and harvesting operations in action. The children then make their own pizzas using the ingredients they grew.

**Hampton Bays Lions** in **New York** raised more than \$50,000 from a walk/run, which supported a guide dog foundation, provided scholarships and helped stock a food pantry.



Usually about 100 antique cars line the streets from May to October on the third Wednesday of the month when **Whiting Lions** in **Indiana** sponsor their **Cruise Nights**. To celebrate the end of school in June, Lions sponsor the "Kindy 500," during which kindergarteners decorate their own box cars and take them on a "cruise down the street," says Lion Olga Papp. "The children are all so proud of their creations." The children are then treated to free ice cream cones.

The **Chambersburg Noontime Lions Club** in **Pennsylvania** collected for a food pantry during a two-month campaign.

**Avalon Lions** in **New Jersey** raised \$15,000 by sponsoring a summer concert attended by more than 700 music lovers. The money was donated to an organization that helps homeless families.

In **North Carolina**, **Franklin Lions** raised \$1,700 by selling brooms at a county fair.

The **Suncook Valley Area Lions Club** in **New Hampshire** sponsored a successful membership campaign by advertising a public invitation for people to visit a club meeting on the

eve of Veterans Day. Lions offered to pay the dues of veterans for half a year as an added incentive and in appreciation of their military service. Eleven new members were inducted after attending the event.

Members of the **Green Lane-Marlboro Lions Club** in **Pennsylvania** volunteered to pick up litter and trash alongside a busy road.

**Sacramento Senator Lions** in **California** sponsor an ongoing project collecting and donating school supplies.

**Victoria Lions** in **Texas** decorated a photo booth at a festival with a rustic backdrop and an array of western-style props. For a \$5 donation, patrons dressed up in old-time gear and had Lions take their photos. More than 350 were sold that day.

Lions in **District 11 B2** in **Michigan** operate a new Project KidSight vision screening trailer donated by South Haven Black River Lions Patrick McFarland and his wife, Arline. It was given in memory of late Kalamazoo Downtown Lion Bill Kowalski, who helped expand the KidSight screening program to Michigan. Screenings are done at outdoor health fairs, festivals and events during temperate months. The trailer is pulled by a truck, and its interior features a jungle theme. It's designed for the amusement of children, with pictures of small animals on the walls.

Children from a primary school participated in a reading project sponsored by the **Bridgetown Lions Club** in **Barbados, West Indies**, at the governor general's home. After they read short stories and poems to show their literacy skills to His Excellency Sir Elliot Belgrave, the governor's staff gave the 20 children a tour of Government House.



The **Seattle First Hill Lions Club** in **Washington** presented \$1,500 scholarships to four graduating high school seniors. Lions funded three scholarships and the fourth was donated to the club by a local foundation.

**Forty Fort Lions** in **Pennsylvania** sponsor a 5-mile race, which annually attracts more than 500 runners and nets the club approximately \$6,000 to support community service activities including Little League and other youth groups. The race is held in memory of Lion Bernie Hargadon, an avid runner.



Members of the **Bellevue Lions Club** in **Michigan** joined with Friends of the Park volunteers to repaint and rehab park playground equipment. Lions lent their labor sanding, repainting and fixing children's equipment. All funds for the project were provided by the village.

In **Michigan**, the **Olivet Lions Club** collected \$700 and, literally, a ton of nonperishable food items for a food pantry.

In **Pennsylvania**, members of the **Tunkhannock Lions Club** collected donations to help provide local vision care for people in need during White Cane Days.

**Portage Lions** in **Wisconsin** sponsored a "Stuff the Bus" campaign to provide school supplies for schoolchildren.

Lions clubs from throughout the United States have donated more than \$3 million in 30 years to **Lions Project for Canine Companions for Independence (LPCCI)**. A symbolic check presentation was held at LPCCI headquarters in Santa Rosa, California, to illustrate Lions' dedication to helping provide more than 4,500 assistance dogs to those in need.

Members of the **Cecilton Lions Club** in **Maryland** screened 1,221 children in schools last year and referred 127 for further care.

The **Amherst Lions** and **Lionesses** in **Nova Scotia, Canada**, sponsor an anti-drug, anti-bullying program for fifth-graders after being asked by a police officer to help involve youth in healthy and productive activities. They pay to bus students from their schools to see a presentation co-sponsored by several organizations including youth football, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, local police and fire departments, a martial arts program and health professionals. Lions give departing students promotional T-shirts and contact information for program presenters. Last year, 145 students from four schools participated.

**Miami Springs Lions** in **Florida** clean, sort and determine prescriptions on eyeglasses collected from clubs throughout District 35 N. Last year, Lions shipped more than 16,000 eyeglasses, 84 pounds of spare parts and more than 2,950 lenses to a recycling center.

The **Homosassa Lions Club** in **Florida** sponsors a yard sale to support shelters for the homeless.

The **Forada Lions Club** in **Minnesota** gave \$2,500 to Leader Dogs of Michigan for building projects.



**Digital LION**  
Read more Club News at  
[lionmagazine.org](http://lionmagazine.org).



Macon Cherry Blossom Lions **John Cecil Daniels** (pictured above) and his wife **Elsie**, also a member of the Georgia club, spent several days on a ship exploring Antarctica, also called the White Continent, since it is 98 percent covered in ice, even in summer months. It wasn't just a learning experience for the Daniels. They used every opportunity to stay warm and also to publicize Lions Clubs International to all they met—even to curious penguins they encountered on the planet's northernmost continent.

**Dr. Lowell Gess**, 93, an ophthalmologist and longtime member of the Alexandria Evening Lions Club in Minnesota, recently returned home after a two-month stay in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He volunteered at an eye hospital when the resident eye doctor was evacuated because of the Ebola virus threat. Gess and his late wife served as medical missionaries in that country for 20 years, and he estimates that he's crossed the Atlantic Ocean 186 times going back and forth to Africa. Because he tended to the eye care needs of Ebola survivors, Gess spent three weeks after his return in a self-imposed quarantine. He downplays his humanitarian actions. "I thought, well, at age 93, I wasn't at any risk, so I went over and filled in," he tells the Alexandria Echo Press.

Fifth-graders ride atop the lead float in the **Woburn Host Lions** annual Halloween parade in **Massachusetts**. Last year, 70,000 people lined the 2.5-mile parade route to watch 20 marching bands and 80 floats. Host Lions have been organizing and running the parade for 60 years, collecting donations for the Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund from parade watchers totaling \$525,000 thus far. In 2014, Lions and Leos carrying donation buckets collected \$19,000 for the fund.



A **Colombo Lion** in **Sri Lanka**, traveled more than 9,000 miles to help **Monroe Lions** in **Ohio** flip pancakes. Manel Darbare was visiting her adult son in Cincinnati and wanted to attend some Lions activities in the area. District 13 G Governor Roger Dixon facilitated a visit with Monroe Lions, where Darbare helped cook and serve pancakes to hungry customers. She told Lions that she was happy to be of service to an entirely new community. "It's as if I never left my home," she says.

Members of the **Fort Vancouver Lions Club** in **Washington** volunteered at an American Diabetes Association Expo. They helped with registration, staffed a bookstore and greeted attendees who visited the Expo to learn more about diabetes and its management.



John Chantler of the **Avon Lions Club** in **Ohio** holds up a 4-inch bluegill to measure during a children's fishing tournament that Lions sponsor annually in a community park they helped build. Lions hosted 188 children who gathered at a park pond for a few hours of fishing and breakfast provided at no charge by Lions, who've been sponsoring the tournament since 1993.

Members of the **Arlington Lions Club** in **Virginia** sold fruit as a fundraiser and donated 12 cases of fruit to personnel at Arlington Fire Department stations.

The **Chesapeake Southside Lions Club** in **Virginia** regularly helps fund a bowling league for the blind, collect eyeglasses for recycling, sponsor children at a summer camp for diabetic children, screen sight and clean roadsides of litter.

The **Roaring Run Lions Club** in **Maryland** collected coats and toiletries for people in need.

**Foothill Lions** in **California** raised more than \$800 during their White Cane Days collection. All money is designated to help support community vision needs.

**Westminster Lions** in **Maryland** gave bags of apples, oranges and candy canes they had filled to children attending a Christmas parade in town. More than 200 bags were distributed.

**Pinchot Park Lions** in **Pennsylvania** created and delivered large baskets of assorted fruit for 30 families in need during the holidays.

The **Goulds Lions Club** in **Newfoundland, Canada**, sponsored a guide dog walk in memory of Lion Doug Harvey, a 36-year club member. The walk raised more than \$2,500 to sponsor a guide dog named "Dougie" in Harvey's honor. Lions have additionally pledged to raise \$12,000 for the Lions Foundation of Canada in three years to sponsor an autism assistance dog.

For 27 years in a row, **El Cajon Lions and Leos** in **California** delivered large baskets of food to 110 families in need in their community. Included in each was a turkey or ham for a holiday meal, along with other staples. Lions and Leos delivered baskets to the homes of 110 families.

**Terryville Lions** in **Connecticut**, have been conducting pediatric vision screenings since 2012, but last year at the request of a school nurse began screening children with autism in a special school district program. Lions screened eight children, four of whom were referred to specialists for further eye care.



**Knowlton Lions** in **Quebec, Canada**, have sponsored an annual garage sale fundraiser since 2004 that attracts hundreds of shoppers as well as trucks full of donated goods. "It's spring cleaning time. People think of us," explains Lion Errol Frechette. Lions raised \$7,500 last year for the area's volunteer first responder police and fire units.



Lions in **District 22 A** in **Maryland** gave \$90,000 to the Maryland School for the Blind to build a pavilion. Lions raised \$60,000 and received an LCIF grant for \$30,000 to build the 30-foot by 60-foot structure in the center of the school's campus, where it's now serving as a popular gathering place for students.

The **Rumford Lions Club** in **Rhode Island** refurbished three outdoor eyeglass collection boxes. The boxes are former U.S. postal mailboxes that the club obtained 10 years ago and were reinstalled in their original locations after being sanded and repainted with new Lions logos. The boxes have proved to be popular community drop-off points, annually bringing in between 3,000 to 4,000 glasses.

The **Emmett Lions Club** in **Michigan** sponsored a raffle to raise money to donate a paddle boat to the Lions Bear Lake Camp for campers with special needs. The boat is handicapped-accessible for all children and young adults.

The **Kipling and District Lions Club** in **Saskatchewan, Canada**, received the Premier's Service Club Award from Nadine Wilson, provincial secretary. Lions were recognized for their 50 years of service in the community. The award, established in 2013, is given to groups dedicated to improving the quality of life for residents of Saskatchewan.

The **Midland Downtown Lions Club** in **Texas** raised \$30,000 from its 59th annual pancake breakfast. More than 4,000 people attended the last breakfast.

The **Capitol Hill Lions Club** of **Washington, D.C.**, participated in a community "Adopt a Family" program by providing holiday gifts and provisions for a single mother and her six children. The children, between the ages of 1 and 6, each received several age-appropriate presents as well as a Christmas tree from Lions.

**Northridge Lions** in Ohio netted \$900 from a holiday poinsettia sale.

**West Chester Lions** in **Pennsylvania** donated 10 bags of food to a food pantry and \$750 to Beacon Lodge for the Blind.

In **Minnesota**, members of the **Eden Prairie Lions** and **Lioness Clubs** collected 1,874 pounds of food and nearly \$700 for a community organization.

**Dallas Lions** in **Pennsylvania** gave \$500 to a library to purchase large-print books and audio tapes for the sight impaired.

**Winona Noon Lions** in **Minnesota** hosted a free Christmas day dinner at a local church for people who either had no place to go for a holiday meal or were in need. More than 150 people attended.

Members of the **Dyer Lions Club** in **Indiana** gave tote bags filled with supplies such as handmade blankets and baby supplies to new mothers at a home for expectant teenage mothers. The totes also contained toiletries and gifts for the new moms.

**Rockport Lions** in **Texas** last year bought 465 toys for children in 202 families in need during their 40th Toys for Kids holiday program.

The **Boise Bench Lions Club** in **Idaho** donated more than \$19,000 to the Idaho Eastern Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation. The funds were raised through a golf tournament.

The **Mar-Tex Evening Lions Club** of **Marshall, Texas**, joined with an elementary school and a grocery store to donate 160 boxes of groceries to families in need. Another 15 boxes were donated to a food pantry.

The 141-member **Daytona State College Omega Leo Club** in **Florida** joined with area Lions clubs and organizations for the disabled to promote Abilities Awareness Day. The event included white cane walks, blind basketball and a baseball game between the college's women's team and a team from a school for the blind. More than 1,000 students attended the various events and several of them from one class created a detailed plan for fundraising ideas to help the Florida Lions Conklin Center for those with multiple disabilities. The center is located next to the college campus.

# LION

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11 issues published yearly by

Lions Clubs International

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Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842

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http://www.lionsclubs.org

(ISSN 0024-4163) (R-124397233)

(PRINTED IN U.S.A.)

Official publication of Lions Clubs International.

Published by authority of the Board of Directors

in 20 languages—English, Spanish, Japanese,

French, Swedish, Italian, German, Finnish,

Korean, Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, Chinese,

Norwegian, Icelandic, Turkish, Greek, Hindi,

Indonesian and Thai.

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## Anniversaries

### SEPTEMBER 2015

**95 Years:** Canton, Ohio; Cincinnati Host, Ohio; Kimball, Neb.; Lima Host, Ohio; Louisville Downtown, Ky.; Pittsfield, Ill.

**90 Years:** Albany & Troy, N.Y.; Arlington Heights, Ill.; Corning, N.Y.; Garrett, Ind.; Mankato, Minn.; Palatine, Ill.

**85 Years:** Hope, Ind.; Lewisburg, Ohio; Lexington, Mo.; Okawville, Ill.; Woodsboro, Texas

**80 Years:** Abbeville, S.C.; Bamberg, S.C.; Carrollton, Ill.; Medina, N.Y.; Olympia Host, Wash.; Pine Bluff Downtown, Ark.; Twin Cities, N.Y.

**75 Years:** Bay City, Texas; Brookfield, Mo.; Carthage, N.Y.; Coleman, Mich.; Coleman, AB, CAN; Covington-Kenton, Ky.; Elmhurst, Ill.; Fayette, Ohio; Kershaw, S.C.; Lebanon, Va.; Magog, QC, CAN; Mansfield, Pa.; Palmyra, Ill.; Raymond, AB, CAN; Renfrew, ON, CAN; Waverly, Ill.; Willmar Noon, Minn.

**50 Years:** Clarksdale, Mo.; Fort Gaines, Ga.; Freeburg, Mo.; Redcliff, AB, CAN; St Joseph East Side, Mo.

**25 Years:** Florence, Colo.

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

See the Higher Key Award recipients.

## Information

### In Memoriam

Past International Director Don Reece of Eunice, Texas, has died. He served on the international board of directors from 2004 to 2006. A member of the Eunice Lions Club since 1992 and a Progressive Melvin Jones Fellow, he volunteered for Lions Kidsight USA and served as president of the New Mexico Lions Eye Bank and Southern New Mexico Lions Diabetes Association, and as mayor of Eunice.

### For the Record

As of June 30, Lions Clubs International had 1,377,913 members in 46,510 clubs and 755 districts in 210 countries and geographic areas.



## A Chance to Keep Up in School

Logan Boone of Batavia, Ohio, tragically lost his sight from a degenerative eye disease when he was 6. At age 10, the plucky child started using a BrailleNote—a portable, 32-key device that can store textbooks and homework in Braille. But his school had borrowed the machine from a neighboring school district, which needed it back.

So Cindy Jacobs, director of Student Services at Batavia Local Schools (BLS), where Logan is a student, contacted the Downtown Cincinnati Lions Club. Lions clubs district-wide teamed up to raise more than \$5,000. Six weeks later, Logan had a BrailleNote of his own.

“No one refused the call to help,” says John Tolos, the 13 H past district governor who coordinated the effort. “I was so proud of this district.”

Logan received the BrailleNote in 2013 at a special event attended by 40 Lions from 15 clubs. As a cameraman from a local TV station recorded him, Logan created a note on the device: “Dear Lions clubs, thank you for giving me the BrailleNote. It sure will help me with my schoolwork.”

Now in sixth grade, Logan is thriving with the device. BrailleNote converts his Braille into English. “He can print out his homework and give it to his teacher, just like his peers,” says Debbie Snoke, a vision assistant with Clermont County Educational Service Center.

The BrailleNote helps Logan keep up with his fellow students. “I’m amazed at his always positive attitude,” says Diana Newcomb, a vision aide. “We have a blast each day learning together.”



Logan is learning thanks to a BrailleNote.

Lions, has your club heard from a recipient of your service or charity? Tell us about the feedback you’ve received from those whose lives you’ve changed for the better. Email a brief description to [lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org](mailto:lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org). Please include “Thank You” in the subject line.

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## Pole Cats

The greased pole climb is part of the Labor Day Festival of the Illinois Valley Lions Club in Oregon. The Lions' three-day event has been the biggest festival in the area since 1962. Other attractions have included a watermelon seed spitting contest, a talent show, a Tuff Truck race, a model airplane show and the popular Lion Burger.



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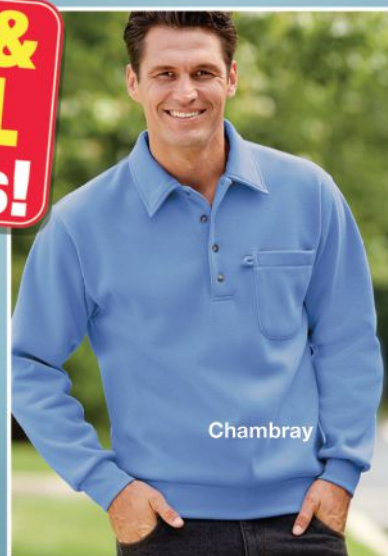
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