

# DISTRICT



Changing the World

## Spirit

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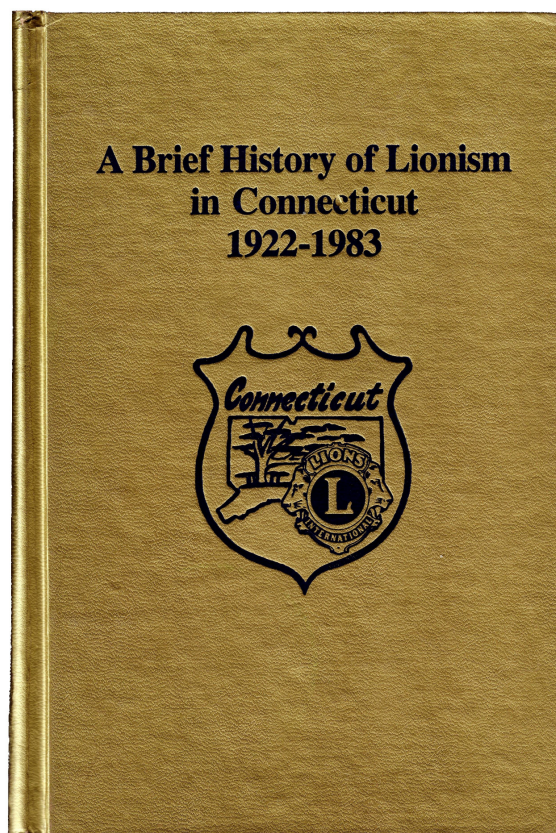
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## It Is In Our History



### **A Brief History of Lionism in Connecticut 1922 - 1983**

Authors, Curtis E. Jennings, Kenneth V. Olson  
Editor, Francis Segesman  
Project Manager, Otto Strobino  
Dedicated to every Connecticut Lion  
In Memory of Melvin Jones

### **A Brief History of Lionism in Connecticut - 2007 Edition**

Author Manager: Frank P. Mauro, PCC  
Co-Author: Richard Foote, PDG  
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Publishing: Dan Uitti, PDG  
Dedicated to PID Otto Strobino

## GLOBAL MEMBERSHIP INITIATIVE 1.5 MILLION

JIM TROMPETER GLOBAL  
MEMBERSHIP TEAM LEADER

The 1.5 million Global Membership Initiative is a program designed with input from Lion's Leaders worldwide. The purpose of this program is to strengthen membership within our clubs to a total membership worldwide of 1.5 million members. Lions Clubs throughout the world provide a valuable service in many ways to their local community, and to the State /Territory and Country in which they reside. The need for our services and financial support continues to increase and a strong membership base is essential to fulfill these needs. I have asked each Zone Chair and Club President to evaluate the status of their Club Membership and work together to identify areas where we need to focus. A club can have a membership roster of 35 members but in many instances, there may only be 20 active members due to health issues, time availability or just plain lack of interest. Clubs in these types of situations can rapidly descend to a level where it will be difficult for them to serve their community at their current level. The purpose of the 1.5 million initiative is to be proactive in dealing with declining membership. I recently emailed all Club Presidents information on how to start the steps to evaluate and design a program to strengthen their membership. On a positive note, Membership in District 23B is at + 18 members through November. I will be sending more information in January on how to build your clubs membership. I am asking that each of work together within your club as a team to evaluate where you stand in membership and set a goal and program to take you where you need to be. The District Team and I are here to support you. We look forward to working with you. My hope is that you have a Wonderful Christmas with Family and Friends and a Healthy New Year.

## Glastonbury Centennial Lions Club presents "A Wee Bit of Murder"

GLASTONBURY CENTENNIAL LIONS CLUB PRESENT

A Wee Bit of Murder

March 16 6:30 PM

MURDER MYSTERY DINNER

TICKETS: \$100 INCLUDES: INTERACTIVE SHOW 3-COURSE MEAL SILENT AUCTION

MANCHESTER COUNTRY CLUB 305 S. MAIN ST MANCHESTER RESERVE YOUR SEAT BY 3/8

Tickets available from any Glastonbury Lion or by calling 860.430.1852

SHOW! FOOD! PRIZES! FUN!

**Glastonbury Centennial Lions Club** presents "A Wee Bit of Murder" Murder Mystery Dinner. The big event will be held at the Manchester Country Club on Saturday, March 16, 2024 with doors opening at 6:30pm. Tickets are \$100 and include a 3 course served meal, cash bar, an interactive show and silent auction. To purchase your tickets, contact any Glastonbury Lion or call Lion George Norman at 860-430-1852. We anticipate this will sell out quickly, so reserve your seats now!





### I am waiting to go blind.

I was born with a rare degenerative retina disease called Retinitis Pigmentosa. In the early 1970s, my retina doctors at the Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary in Boston informed both me and my older brother with the same disease that we would be 100% blind by our teen years. Not a fun diagnosis.

Life went on, but it went on with this overriding uneasiness that at any moment I could wake up and life as I knew it would be over. I'd be blind. There were sports, girlfriends, vacations, proms, and more, but still, the uneasiness. I was waiting to go blind.

I was a happy child. My teen years turned into my 20's, and life went on. These years brought college, a marriage, a move to Florida for a few years, beginning law school, and being in a rock band. I was still waiting to go blind, but life went on.

In my 30's, I was blessed with my two daughters. I graduated from law school, passed the bar, traveled, and enjoyed a blossoming career. I was still waiting to go blind.

My 40's brought a very difficult divorce, a successful rock band, trips to Kenya, and the realization of my biggest fear: that when I go blind, I will never see my daughters' faces again. I was terrified. Yet, I was still waiting to go blind.

I am in my early 50's now, and I am

still waiting to go blind. My vision has decreased, and I gave up driving years ago. I am grateful, though. I have a full time job, I am very active in the blindness and low vision space, I still play music, and I am happily remarried. However, I am still waiting to go blind.

Vision loss has been a blessing in my life. Although I have been waiting to go blind for 50 years, vision loss and the threat of complete blindness have served to motivate me. As a result, I do not sweat the small stuff, and I know that almost everything day to day is small stuff.

Since my earliest years, I have known what it is like to have a disease you cannot control. The upside of this fact is that I clearly understand those things that I can control and those things that I cannot control. The early realization that I control almost nothing is the blessing of vision loss. I do not fear blindness anymore. Life has taught me that being blind is not what holds us back. Blindness is not the problem. It is the all too frequent negative internal dialog we have with ourselves combined with the lack of education from the sighted world about blindness. I remain passionate about the social and emotional needs of the blind and educating the sighted world.

I am still waiting to go blind, but I am not waiting around for it to happen.

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### About Kevin McNally

As a legally blind father, musician, traveler, motivational speaker, lawyer, communicator, and more, Kevin remains contagiously upbeat and happy. Kevin is passionate about vision loss, educating others on the realities of vision loss, and how to lead an inspiring and successful life irrespective of visual challenges. Kevin is thrilled to bring his passion for life to you.

Kevin McNally lives in Marlborough Connecticut with his wife and their pet chickens.

Contact Kevin at [kevin@kevinmcnally.us](mailto:kevin@kevinmcnally.us) to discuss navigating, educating, and succeeding with vision loss. Kevin's website is [www.kevinmcnally.us](http://www.kevinmcnally.us).

Find Kevin on TikTok as the "Blind Guy Out Walking."



In August **New Britain Lions** (left to right) June O'Leary, Francine Austin, Doug Bray and Maria Bernacki helped out and financially supported New Britain's singular Walk & Roll event which supports hundreds with disabilities.



New Britain Lions Francine Austin (Club President) and PDG Steve Polezonis ready to head off in the International Convention parade in Boston.

### New Britain High School Madrigal



New Britain High School Madrigal Singers performing at the Lions annual Christmas celebration.





New Britain Lions Past President Lew Platt with happy parent after shopping at JC Penney for free winter clothing as a part of the club's Warm the Children program. 900+ children will be served in 2023.

### Activities of the New Britain Lions Club

#### WARM THE CHILDREN

The New Britain Lions Club will provide warm winter clothing to 900+ needy children with the support of hundreds of volunteer shoppers, a grant from the City of New Britain, thousands of dollars donated from the community and the help of our school social workers who identify those in need. We spend \$70 per child at JC Penney (which gives us additional discounts and support). We'll raise and spend approximately \$50,000. Started by UNICO New Britain 20 years ago, we inherited the program ten years ago when UNICO died. We are also supported by our local New Britain Herald newspaper. This is led by Lion Stephanie Frank and Club President Francine Austin.

#### ANNUAL LIONS TRIVIA NIGHT

Trivia Night has become an annual fun night out for Lions, family, friends and business associates. A professional Trivia firm leads 60-70 trivial "pursuiters" at New Britain's historic 19th century Trinity on Main (formerly Trinity Baptist Church). It's free to members with \$10/person for the many guests. There are prizes, a cash bar, plus coffee and desserts provided by members. Lion Maria Bernacki leads this event.

#### ANNUAL POINSETTIA FUND RAISER

For more than 20 years **New Britain Lions** have sold hundreds of gorgeous poinsettia plants (small, medium, large, red or white). As a fund raiser it's not so big but for our local friends, businesses and churches it has become a "must do" annual event. It also helps us stay connected with the community in a unique way. Lion Nick Augustino of our famous East Side Restaurant heads up this effort.

#### TWO SPECIAL MEETINGS IN DECEMBER

On December 12th beginning at 12:15 pm at the YMCA the club will host New Britain High School's famous Madrigal Singers. This is an annual event. All are invited, lunch is free to members and \$10 for guests. (RSVP required.) Former Madrigal Lion Maria Bernacki will host us.

On December 19th, beginning at 5:30 pm at the YMCA the club will have its Annual Yankee Swap Dinner (free to members/\$22 for non-members). The "swapping" is fun and competitive. Attendees need to bring a wrapped gift valued at \$20.

**Marlborough Lions** held their 6th Annual Marlborough Masquerade 5K on Sunday October 29th. While weather was not on our side a lovely race day nor for day-of registration participants, with only 31 actual runners, those that ran had fun. Our top male and female winners were local neighboring towns, whole our lone costumed runner came all the way from NH.



The **Marlborough Lions** recently inducted 2 new members into the club, Lion Dr. Jennifer Greloch, who brings her experience as a low vision doctor into the club, as well as Lion David Porter, Marlborough's new town manager. New members were inducted by DG Peter Nevers alongside their sponsors President Megan Lloyd and Secretary Ken Hjulstrom, the same day that officers were finally able to be installed. That same day, the meeting location was changed to accommodate an older member who is unable to attend meetings, and so we met at his assisted living facility, which has been very open and accommodating to Lions having our meetings there for our oldest and one of our longest standing members Lion Arnie Buckley.



The **Marlborough Lions** completed our yearly screening at our elementary school, screening nearly 300 students resulting in approximately 15-20 referrals.





Marlborough Lions were able to donate at the annual night of giving at the American School for the Deaf dinner put on by the culinary students in honor of the Lions.



At the same time, the Marlborough Lions awarded earlier this year, President Megan Lloyd was able to present Lion John Glynn with his well earned Ambassador of Sight award for his dedication to the club, to embodying the Lions motto of Where there's a need, there's a Lion, and to dedicating the time to making sure kids are screened for eye diseases.



Pictures are President Megan Lloyd and Vice President Kevin McNally.

**The Torrington Lions Club** had an extremely successful year in fund raising, therefore, we were able to increase our donations to the local food banks. Usually, we donated \$500.00 to each of the food banks, because of our successful years we were able to increase our donations for this year to \$2000.00. All the food banks were extremely appreciative of the generous amount and the funds were much needed this year.



George Craig (soup kitchen board member), Phil Dzurnak (Lions Secretary), Christy Tellier (soup kitchen President), Mike Yuchunas (Lions President).



Mike Yuchunas (Lions President), Karen Thomas (Executive Director), Phil Dzurnak (Lions Secretary)



Phil Dzurnak (Lions Secretary), Lt. Apolinar Marte (Salvation Army Commander/Lion Member), Mike Yuchunas (Lions President), Lion Denise Nowak, Maritsa Marte (Salvation Army).



Mike Yuchunas (Lions President), Deirdre DiCara (Executive Director), Phil Dzurnak (Lions Secretary), Diane McMahon (vounteer)



The Woodbury Lions Club arranged for a visit by Santa Claus. Just visit with Santa at the North Green Bandstand from 1 till 3! He arrived by fire truck!



**New Milford Lions Club** hosted a great Christmas party for 98 seniors. Thanks to the New Milford Leo Club and the Scouts from Troop 58 for all the help! And Santa and the Grinch even showed up! There was singing and dancing and lots of great food and gifts. Thank you to all who donated and helped make this happen.





The Watertown Lions Club received the official visitation of District Governor Peter Nevers on November 28. President Jim Floyd presents a Watertown Lions Pin, as other members present pins of other years. The Watertown Lions Club has a pin almost every that represents the current President. DG Nevers gave us a very good speech about our work.



President Jim Floyd donates for the Watertown Lions Club to the Giving Tree program, purchased gifts for children in need to make their holiday a little brighter! President Jim is with Gayle of Gayle's Depot Farm Shoppe and Lion Ron Blanchard.

In addition to Watertown Lions Club members, unloading the trailer from Nova Scotia gained the assistance from the Fire Department and employees of Click Bond.

## 2023 Christmas Tree Sale - Watertown Lions Club

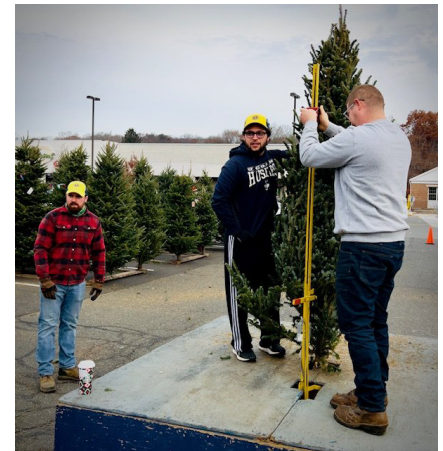
Unload the Christmas Trees



Prepare the Christmas Trees for Sale



Prepare the trees for display: Remove the twine. Measure and tag with Type (Fraser or Balsam), Height and Price.



Drill hole into the bottom of each tree to fit the perfect Tree stand. Then set up for display, as seen in the background.

The Watertown Lions Christmas Tree Sale continues. Due to rain, it has been extended to the second weekend of December. (Saturday, December 9, 2023 and Sunday, December 10, 2023)

## Amazon Project Greetings

Dashing through the yard  
In Steve's white horse-powered sleigh  
O'er the roads we go  
Delivering stuff all the way  
Making spirits bright  
What fun it is to ride and sing as  
We will distribute all our Amazon goods tonight.

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way. Oh, what fun it is to ride and sing in Steve's white horse-powered sleigh tonight.

The Amazon Project is a program that allows our clubs to redistribute returned Amazon merchandise to local non-profits. Clubs



can pick up one pallet of 16 boxes, bring them back to their club, sort the items, and donate to the appropriate organization. I emailed all the clubs a form for signing up and explained how it works. Our first couple of runs had seven clubs participate. We had boxes filled with food, stationery, soda, books, and more. Overall, our district received 300 boxes valued at around \$250 per box or \$ 75,000 of items donated back to the community. Thanks to all the clubs that participated.

If you have any questions or want to participate, don't hesitate to get in touch with me at [msjudysemporium@yahoo.com](mailto:msjudysemporium@yahoo.com)

### District Community Grants

Last year, we offered the clubs in our district an opportunity to apply for a District Community Grant. What is a DCG Grant? To help answer that question, I attached a brief description, some frequently asked questions, and a short video below.

Last year, five clubs received grants to help support some great projects in our district. This year, our district has received \$5000 in funds to distribute to clubs with projects meeting the community's needs. To apply for a DCG Grant with our district, please send a brief description of the project and the amount you are asking for to GST Chair Judy Doyle at [msjudysemporium@yahoo.com](mailto:msjudysemporium@yahoo.com) by Dec 31st. All requests will then be submitted to our committee for review. Depending on how many requests are received will depend on how funds will be distributed.

We have already started to receive requests, so make sure you get your request in before the deadline on December 31st, 2023.

### Greetings from Zone 6 Lions Clubs Akella Sarma - Zone 6 Chair

Zone 6 is doing well and has been active and vibrant. We have large and small clubs but all of us are enthusiastic in helping our communities in our own way. As our motto says " your club. your way."

Recently I visited the East Hartford Lions Club's Cans and Bottles collection event. They are a very active and great group of Lions. Under the direction of Lion Steve Crecco they had phenomenal events. If any other club would like to start a similar event, I am confident that Lion Steve will be more than happy to help.

Manchester Lions club took part in the Amazon 360 mission and had a very rewarding experience according to Lion Mary Gorman. Clubs interested in this event should contact. Judy Doyle at 503-320 -7274. I am sure that

Lions Mary will be happy to share her experience.

Under the direction of President Nora Clark Hartford Evening Lions club had a successful fall festival supper. There was a great community presence and the event was well organized. My congratulations to all the volunteers at that event.

Glastonbury Centennial Lions Club recently had a self defense class. It was well organized under the direction of Lion Cindy Gartland. I think all the clubs should think about organizing this class in their town to help all citizens, especially the young and vulnerable, to defend themselves with simple techniques. Please reach out to lion Cindy.

All our clubs are taking part in eye screening, eyeglass collection, hunger relief, preservation of hearing and helping the Red cross in collecting

donated blood. I am planning to attend the remaining clubs in Zone 6 as soon as possible.

All of us are donating to the local, regional, national and international causes as we see fit. Hope all of you took part in giving Tuesday fundraising.

Even Though we feel that all charity is local we should think globally. We should all work together for greater good. So my sincere request to you all to talk to one another, help and educate each other, communicate with your Presidents, Zone chairs and district leaders. More we know, the better we will be.

Wishing you all a very happy holiday season and a successful New Lion Year.