

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

Big Projects of Connecticut Lions



Chapter 3

Chapter 3

SOME BIG PROJECTS OF CONNECTICUT LIONS

Some projects of Connecticut Lions deserve special attention because they involve more than one club or district, or because of sheer magnitude, continuity, man hours, money contributed, or other unusual factors. It should be noted, however, that all projects in this chapter together do not equal the sum total of the other things Lions do: scholarships, eyeglass prescriptions, food banks, picnics and outings for the handicapped, donations to the needy in their communities, and a great variety of other charitable activities. Most of the Lions' money and time go to these.

Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation

Of the projects recorded in this chapter the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation is the greatest in terms of money and perhaps in the number of people who benefit at least indirectly from the work of this Foundation. Almost everyone in America will at some time in their lives profit from the research conducted by the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science in the Yale University School of Medicine. This department receives the major share of the Foundation's grants.

The records of Lions International do not indicate which state was the first to have an eye research project or a foundation, but, as of 1983, there are fifty Lions sight foundations recognized by the International Board. Of these, six include "Research" in their titles. The Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation, Inc., was licensed to use the name Lions and the Association emblem in June of 1956, the earliest record for a sight foundation with "Research" in its title.

On November 16, 1953, the State Council of the Lions appointed a committee to investigate the possibilities of a state-wide program in which all the clubs in the state could participate. Lion Harold A. Ashley was designated Chairman. Ashley had been a member of the Waterbury club since 1940. He is one of the grand patriarchs of Connecticut Lionism. He was District Governor, served on the Board of Directors of Lions International, and was the first President of the Eye Research Foundation. He served in the last office for 15 years, longer than any other President. Without Lion Ashley it is doubtful that the Foundation would be the successful institution it is.

When his committee was formed in 1953, it began investigating many projects. It learned that of the millions spent annually for medical care and other services for the blind, less than one percent was for research. An eye research program was approved by the State Council on March 16, 1954, and Chairman Ashley was authorized to contact Yale University. Yale had no organized program on research into diseases of the eyes.

Massachusetts already had an eye program, and Lion John Johnson, then an International Director as well as being an ophthalmologist working in the project, was helpful in providing information. After many meetings at Yale, Dean Vernon W. Lippard of the Yale School of Medicine indicated Yale's desire to establish the program if the Lions could provide the funds.

At the State Convention in June, 1954, the committee recommended adoption of the Eye Research project as a state-wide Lions activity, and the recommendation was approved contingent upon the acceptance and the pledged support of 75 percent

of the clubs. Chairman Ashley traveled throughout the state urging clubs to join the effort, and at the 1956 Convention he was able to report success. He recommended that a nonprofit corporation be chartered by the State of Connecticut. The Convention voted in favor and the charter was issued by the state, dated July 20, 1956. The first slate of officers was as follows:

President.....Harold Ashley, Waterbury
 Vice-President.....Richard F. Case, Willimantic
 Secretary.....A. LeRoy Anderson, Bristol
 Treasurer.....Spencer B. Hirst, Meriden

The Board of Directors was as follows: Walter Kenney, New Haven; Thomas Leonard, New Britain; H. Wallace Crook, Danielson; Dominic Minicucci, Naugatuck; Robert Irving, Plainville; and Ernest Hopkins, Niantic.

The Presidents following Ashley were as follows: Past District Governor Richard F. Case, 1971-1975, who had served as Vice President of the Foundation for 15 years; Past District Governor Anthony Caparrelli, 1975-1977; Past International Director and Past District Governor Joseph Ganim, 1977-1979, who started the Lions Candy Day Sale as an annual fundraiser for the Foundation; Past District Governor William F. O'Neil, 1979-1981; and Past District Governor Thomas A. Hubbs, 1981-1983.

Once the Eye Research program was adopted the Lions moved quickly to implement it. Governor of the State of Connecticut, Abraham Ribicoff, issued a proclamation designating October, 1956, as Connecticut Lions Eye Research month. On October 1, 1956, the first annual kickoff dinner was held at the Quinnipiac Club in New Haven attended by representatives from most clubs which had pledged support. Lions International President Dudley L. Simms of Charleston, West Virginia, was present along with the main speaker, Dr. Vernon Lippard, Dean of the Yale School of Medicine. From that day, the amazing story of the Lions Eye Research Foundation can be told in several parts, all of which make the whole of it.

Pledges of Over \$1.5 Million Honored by Foundation in 26-year History

Total grants awarded through 1982 include:

Yale School of Medicine, Department of Ophthalmology.....	\$1,125,657
Connecticut Braille Association.....	57,250
Lions Gallery of the Senses, Wadsworth Atheneum.....	50,000
Connecticut Society to Prevent Blindness, Inc.....	24,250
University of Connecticut Health Center	
Department of Ophthalmology.....	188,500
Mansfield Training School.....	10,500
William Backus Hospital in Norwich.....	10,000
Connecticut Visual Health Center.....	8,700
Museum of Art, Science, and Industry.....	5,060
Middlesex Hospital.....	1,800
Music Foundation for the Visually Handicapped.....	4,000
God's Gift House, Norwich.....	6,800
Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.....	13,000
TOTAL	\$1,505,517

Money

The first year's goal was \$15,000. The total actually raised was \$22,157.87, and in the spring of 1957 the first grant was made to Yale in the amount of \$19,999. Of the 118 clubs, 98 contributed. The growth of the Foundation over the years is clearly indicated in the more than one and a half million dollars raised by 1981, over one million going to Yale. In 1981 alone, the Foundation raised over \$200,000. One source of Lions contributions is the annual Candy Day instituted by Foundation President Joseph Ganim in 1977. Candy and gum were free, but donations were solicited. In 1983, the name of this fund drive was changed to Lions Day because of the health implications of sugar. Sugar free candy and gum were substituted. Money eventually began to come in from other sources, although Lions Clubs' contributions are still the main support. Two other sources of income are interest from investments and bequests.

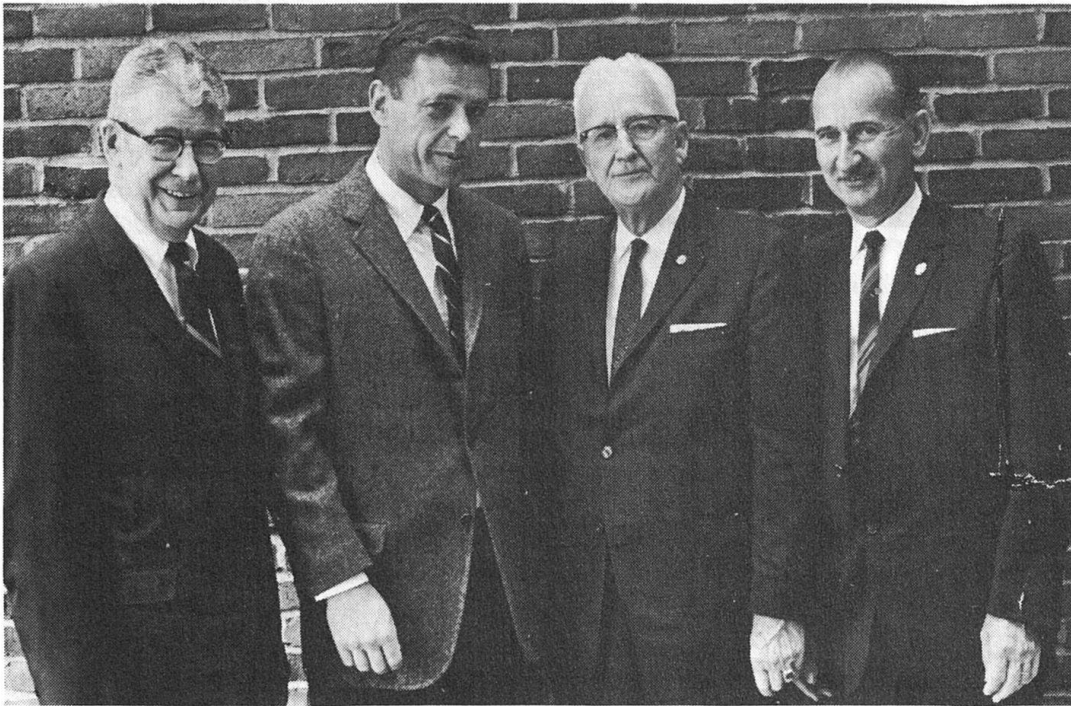
Summary of Total Contributions and Candy Day

District	Previous Totals	1981-82	Accumulated Totals
A	\$ 594,121.90	\$59,127.00	\$ 653,248.90
B	268,090.26	22,151.00	290,341.26
C	295,209.61	30,437.50	325,647.11
Misc.	41,026.29	2,176.00	43,202.29
Totals	\$1,198,448.06	\$113,991.50	\$1,312,439.56
		Candy Day net receipts 1977-82:	97,693.84
		Grand Total	\$1,410,133.40

Personnel and Facilities

These were the next considerations. Certainly implicit, but never clear in financial records, is the story of what money can achieve. With the first Lions donation of \$19,000, the Yale School of Medicine began looking for an ophthalmologist to head the new Research Center but was unable to find one until October 15, 1958, when Dr. Bernard Zuckerman of New Haven accepted the position on a part-time basis. It was not until July 1, 1961, that Dr. Martin Sears from Johns Hopkins University was appointed full-time Director of the Research Center.

Dr. Sears began his work in a small laboratory with one technician and limited equipment in an area of about 100 square feet. A Lions Glaucoma Referral Center was established in 1966, despite the cramped space. In 25 years under the expert guidance of Dr. Sears, and with his enthusiasm coupled with that of the Lions, the Yale Research Center expanded to 10,000 square feet of floor space with 24 laboratories scattered over several floors. A Lions Clinic and a Lions Glaucoma Referral Center were established in these new quarters in 1979. Both the Clinic and the Referral Center were added to provide medical services to patients. Many patients are referred to both of these service areas by Lions throughout the state. As of 1982, there were 40 full-time doctors and researchers. Dr. Sears is now Chief of the separate Department of Ophthalmology and directs one of the best known and most respected research centers in the country. Harold A. Ashley, the founding father of the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation was honored in 1972 with a bronze plaque in the glaucoma referral center.



Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation - Yale, 10-23-68

L to R: Charles Costello, President Yale New Haven Hospital; Marvin L. Sears, M.D. Associate Professor Ophthalmology Yale; Harold Ashley, President CLERF 1956-1971; Richard Case, Vice President CLERF, President 1971-1975

To manage its own considerable effort, many committees of dedicated Lions give generously of their time in planning and executing the various responsibilities of the Foundation. The committees were not all created at one time but evolved to meet specific needs, and so they reflect the growth of the organizational effort. As of 1982 they are: Executive Committee, Constitution and By-Laws Committee,



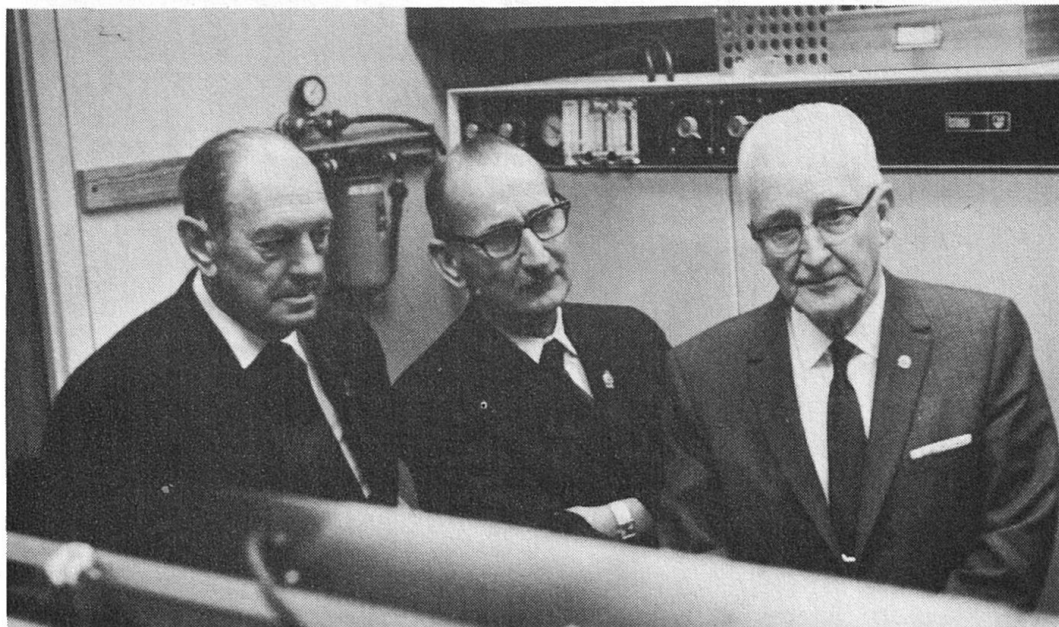
Kicking off the 25th anniversary year, 1981, of the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation was the annual meeting held in October in New Haven. Head table notables (several hard at work here) were (l-r): PDG Rocco Cingari, First Vice President; PDG Fred Curtin, Second Vice President; PDG William O'Neil Jr., Past President; Dr. James O'Rourke, Professor and chief of the Ophthalmology Division, University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington; Dr. Marvin Sears, Department Head, Ophthalmology and Visual Science, School of Medicine, Yale University; PDG Thomas Hubbs, President of the Eye Research Foundation.

Finance Committee, Long-Range Planning Committee, Public Relations and Information Committee, Grants Committee, State Candy Day Committee, Special Study Committee, Memorial and Honoring Committee, and Eye Registry Committee.



From left to right: William F. O'Neil, Jr., President Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation, Inc.; Alan Daninhirsch, District Head Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation, Inc.; Dr. Robert W. Berliner, Dean Yale School of Medicine; Dr. Marvin L. Sears, Chairman Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sci. Yale School of Medicine.

Three committees were created by Foundation President Anthony Caparrelli during his tenure (1975-1977). One was to review the Foundation's public relations image throughout the state and initiate publicity programs. A second was to investigate wills, bequests, trusts and corporate grants. The third, a special study committee, was to check into government grants.



Viewing new equipment at the Foundation Center at Yale Medical Center left to right: Wally Crook of Danielson; Richard F. Case, Willimantic, Vice President of the Foundation; Harold Ashley, Waterbury, President of the Foundation.

It is not in the purview of this history to tell the story of the work done at Yale. It must suffice to record that it is not limited to research. It includes educating doctors from all over the world to work in the specialty of eye diseases and injuries and treating patients, primarily from Connecticut, but also from the entire country and from other countries. Since 1961, the School of Medicine has graduated 32 doctors who have chosen the field of ophthalmology, while an additional 56 doctors from all over the world have been trained in this field at the Research Center. As a direct consequence, the number of ophthalmologists in the state more than doubled (increasing from 80 to 180), since 1961. In clinical practice, 16,000 visits were made by eye patients to the Research Center in 1982 alone, not only from the state but from all over the world.

A few research activities should be noted. In 1978, after four years of work, the drug timolol was introduced by the Eye Research Center to alleviate glaucoma. In 1983, Dr. Marvin Sears and Dr. Joseph Caprioli, instructors in the Department of Ophthalmology, announced the findings of their research with a plant extract from a member of the coleus family of common house plants. Initial work with the extract showed significantly lowered pressure in the eyes and thus the promise of a new weapon against glaucoma. The department is also in the forefront of laser research for treatment of certain eye diseases. While the cure and prevention of blindness is still a dream to be realized, the work of the Research Center has already delayed the coming of total darkness for thousands.

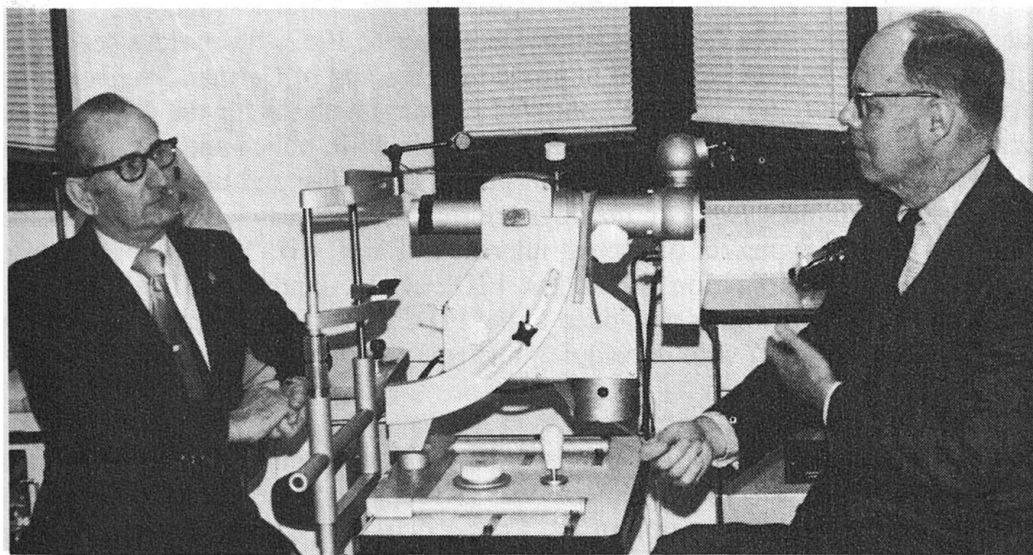
Presently, 1983, the Lions-Yale team is embarking on the most ambitious project in its Connecticut experience. Dr. Sears has notified the Foundation that the Boardman Building in the Medical Complex at Yale will be available to the Department of Ophthalmology provided that the Lions of Connecticut can come up with \$500,000 in two years to adapt it to the needs of that department. Dr. Sears wants the building in order to be able to consolidate his scattered activities, expand



The Boardman Building.

research, install new and more sophisticated equipment, increase the capacity for educating doctors and researchers, and to treat patients. When acquired, the Lions Eye Research Foundation will have accommodations therein. Rocco Cingari, First Vice President of the Foundation, immediately embarked on organizing the effort to raise the money through club and individual Lions' efforts and from corporations, foundations, memorials, and government grants. He was ably assisted by President Thomas Hubbs.

As indicated earlier in the financial tables, the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation supports several agencies concerned with problems of sight. The cumulative total of these grants reached \$300,000 in 1982. Grants to the University of Connecticut Health Center Department of Ophthalmology are also for research. This is not considered duplication of effort. It is the nature of science that many researchers around the world work on different problems, and often on the same problem from different approaches or assumptions. Equally important, no scientific answer is considered valid until it is verified by other scientists. While the University of Connecticut School of Health is publicly supported, there are often critical needs which are not met with appropriated funds.



Richard Case, President of the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation and Dr. J. O'Rourke, Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Connecticut Health Center discuss an item of research equipment funded by Connecticut Lions.

The Connecticut Braille Association was founded in 1959 with the primary purpose of supplying textbooks in braille to students. With this assistance, students could go to regular schools rather than go away from home to residential schools for the blind. The Association also reproduces books in large type for the visually impaired. Much of their work is done by volunteers.

The Connecticut Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., began its first vision screenings for children in 1953. The Society also tests adults over 35 for glaucoma. Tests are conducted at various locations throughout the state. To extend their services to more children they train volunteers, and, through the work of some 6,000 clubwomen, parents, teachers, and nurses, over 400,000 children have been tested. Lions clubs throughout the state also sponsor and assist in screenings. The Association provides information on vision problems through flyers, pamphlets, films, and media coverage. In 1967, the Society was instrumental in having a law passed which requires children to use protective eyewear in shops and laboratories. Grants from the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation constitute part of the Society's funding.

The Connecticut Visual Health Center, founded in 1971, is operated on a non-profit basis. It provides glaucoma screening and serves as a diagnostic, research, and teaching facility having a trained staff and doctors. With a mobile van it can serve people in remote areas. It conducts several screenings each year, and more than half of these are supported by the Lions Eye Research Foundation.

The William Backus Hospital and the Middlesex Hospital received grants from the Foundation to help with the purchase of sophisticated equipment.

The Museum of Art, Science and Industry in Bridgeport established a tactile gallery in 1979 with \$2,700 from the Lions Eye Research Foundation. The gallery has received additional Foundation support since that time.

The Music Foundation for the Visually Handicapped at the University of Bridgeport was established in August, 1977, by a group of people in Fairfield County. Its main purpose is to provide musical instruction and instruments to the legally blind. Those they serve come from 11 towns in Fairfield and New Haven Counties and range in age from 7 to 70. Grants from the Lions Foundation have made up about ten percent of their budget.

The FIDELCO Foundation started its work in 1960 and was incorporated as a nonprofit corporation in Connecticut on December 6, 1962. It provides seeing eye dogs for the blind. It endeavors to improve the breeding of German Shepherd dogs for this special purpose, develop improved training methods for the dogs to make them more effective in more ways with the blind and in police and security work, and to instruct the blind and the general public in the use and usefulness of these highly trained animals. Some of the dogs are shipped overseas for the blind in other countries. This is a project of special interest to Charles H. Kaman, President of Kaman Aircraft Corporation and of the FIDELCO Foundation. The Lions Eye Research Foundation grants are added to the FIDELCO general fund for operating expenses in connection with developing and training dogs.

Eye Disease Registry

The Connecticut Eye Disease Registry in the Department of Ophthalmology at the Yale University School of Medicine was established by the Lions Eye Research Foundation with the cooperation of the Connecticut Eye Bank. The Registry was established in 1974 after more than two years of planning by Registry Committee Chairman H. Wallace Crook and President Richard Case of the Foundation. They had distributed over 13,000 pledge forms and in the first year received 400 pledges. It was believed that the Registry was the first of its kind, as no other was known to exist. One may donate his or her eyes after death to the Registry. Diseased eyes are used for research, and healthy eyes are used for replacements. The Lions Eye Research Foundation assists in informing the public and providing forms for eye donations. It also assists in obtaining eye donations for the Connecticut Eye Bank and Visual Research Foundation, Inc., of the New Britain General Hospital, New Britain, Connecticut.

All of these things the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation achieves with no paid staff. In view of all the Foundation's accomplishments, its present goals, and its anticipated future service to the relief of, and contributions toward what may be an eventual solution to these problems of vision impairment, the Lions of Connecticut can honestly claim they have accepted, without reservation, Helen Keller's challenge to them to become "Knights of the Blind."

The Lions Gallery for the Sightless

The Lions Gallery for the Sightless, Inc., was called the Tactile Gallery of the

**Form for Persons Over 18 Wishing To Donate Their Eyes After Death To:
THE CONNECTICUT EYE BANK & VISUAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC.
of the New Britain General Hospital and/or To Register Their Eyes With:
THE CONNECTICUT EYE DISEASE REGISTRY
at the Yale University School of Medicine, Department of Ophthalmology**

I, _____ of age, hereby donate my eyes at the time of death to: THE CONNECTICUT EYE BANK, for processing.
(Please Print)

I have — 1. Healthy eyes ☐ 3. Specific eye disease _____
2. Healthy eyes, wear glasses ☐ 4. Systemic Disease affecting eyes _____
I, hereby authorize my physician, hospital, clinic, or other medically related facility, insurance company or other organization or person, to furnish THE CONNECTICUT EYE BANK and/or CONNECTICUT EYE DISEASE REGISTRY, any and all information with reference to my health.

My Eye Doctor's Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

My Next of Kin's Name _____ Relationship _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

WITNESS _____
WITNESS _____ Signature of donor _____

Please return this Pledge to THE CONNECTICUT EYE BANK OFFICE, 100 Grand Street, New Britain, Ct. 06052, for processing.
TELEPHONE 224-5550 — [24 hours]

Donor's address

Street _____

City _____

Zip # _____

CONNECTICUT EYE BANK
Sponsored by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows
CONNECTICUT EYE DISEASE REGISTRY
Sponsored by the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation

These programs are endorsed by the Eye Section, Conn. State Medical Society

Pledge secured by _____



Senses in its early days. In 1974, the directors voted to change the name to correspond to its incorporated title. Recently, it is commonly called the Lions Gallery of the Senses. The last title, though not its incorporated one, more accurately describes it. The Gallery entertains and educates through all the senses except taste, and it serves all visitors, not only the blind. Its primary mission and service, however, is to the sightless.

The Gallery had its beginning in 1968 as an idea of Hester (Mrs. D. Sergeant) Pepper, former Chairman of the Ladies Visiting Committee of the Connecticut Institute for the Blind. She became interested in the Mary Duke Biddle Tactile Gallery in the North Carolina Museum of Art which was established in 1966 as the first of its kind in the world. Mrs. Pepper suggested the idea of a Hartford Tactile Gallery to James Elliot, Director of the Wadsworth Atheneum. The need for sustaining financial support was brought to the attention of the Hartford Lions Club because of their primary interest in helping the blind. Herbert Liebert, President of the club, introduced the project, and the club granted \$1,500 for a feasibility study. In October, 1968, Mary Pope Cheney was engaged by the Wadsworth Atheneum to conduct the study. She completed the study in January, 1969, and the project was approved by the Atheneum Board of Trustees in April, 1969. Space was allocated in the museum and a request for funds was submitted to the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation. At their meeting on May 3, the Foundation, which represents all three Lions districts in the state, referred the request to its projects committee. The Gallery Committee then went before the Cabinet of District 23B to see if the district Lions could undertake the project. The Cabinet authorized the Committee (District Eye Research Chairman George Mellen) to approach clubs in that district for pledges of support.

On January 26, 1970, the following motion was presented to and approved by the Cabinet of District 23B: "That District 23B approve the Gallery for the Sightless at the Wadsworth Atheneum as a Lions project open to all Lions Clubs of the State of Connecticut, with the understanding that the go-ahead for the setup of the Gallery will not be given until we are assured that all of the necessary funds are available. Also, it is further recommended that it be presented to the Eye Research Foundation Projects Committee for its consideration."

Temporary officers were appointed by Robert Southworth, Governor of District 23B, at a meeting at the Berlin Fair Grounds in April. A committee chaired by Nunzio Rosso of the Berlin Lions Club drafted a Constitution and By-Laws. Lion Bert Turner, a lawyer from the Simsbury Club, began work to obtain tax-exempt status from the federal government. Formal notice of approval was received from the Internal Revenue Service May 20, 1983.

On November 30, 1970, a very important meeting was held. Representing the Lions were George Mellen, the first President of the Lions Gallery of the Sightless, Herbert Liebert, Vice President, Thomas Hubbs, Secretary, Milan M. Knight, Treasurer, Nunzio Rosso, and Robert Southworth. Mary Cheney, Mrs. Woodbridge Constant, and Mrs. Hester Pepper represented the Ladies Visiting Committee. Representing the Atheneum were James Elliot, Director; Roger Selby, Director of Education; and Miss Melissa Lodge, Education Secretary. At this meeting it was decided that the new facility would be called The Tactile Gallery of the Wadsworth Atheneum. Plans were drafted for the gallery, and the opening was set for the second half of 1971. Many other details were decided, including recruiting of a curator. Regular meetings of the Gallery Board of Directors were started in the fall of 1970. Most of them were held at the Belvedere Restaurant in Plainville.

The Gallery was officially accepted as a District 23B project in 1971. The first



George Mellen addressing the first meeting of the group to establish the Gallery.

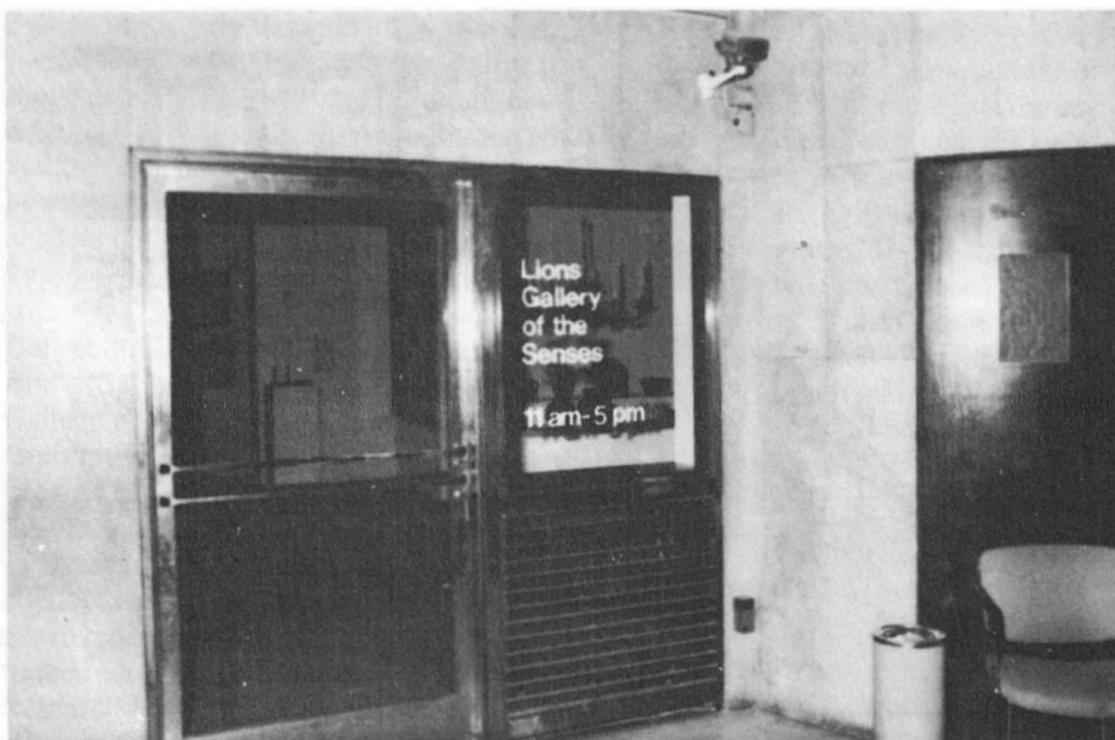
annual meeting was held on October 26, 1971 at the Wadsworth Atheneum. It elected as its first regular slate of officers those mentioned who had been serving in a temporary capacity, and added Mary Lynn Ray as Curator. The original Constitution and By-Laws were approved at this meeting.

The grand opening of the Gallery for Lions and invited guests was held on May 6, 1972, and it opened for the public on May 10. The first exhibit, titled "Dialogue for the Senses," was designed by Professor Gyorgy Kepes of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. From its opening to the end of 1982, a total of 39 exhibitions was presented. They were specially designed, some by leading artists, to challenge all the senses except taste in perception of the world, not only as individuals experience it, but as they share with one another their reactions. The programs teach by arranging sensory reactions to specific events in history, for example, "A Sense of the Victorian Age," or by grouping objects for effect, as "chairs" where a dozen types are selected from history, such as a Chippendale and Scott Carpenter's Astronaut seat.

Mary Cheney wrote that "traditionally, visitors expected that exhibitions for the blind should consist only of realistic objects selected by sighted staff to be touched but not looked at." From the first exhibition of the Gallery in 1972, "Dialogue for the Senses and Forms for Dance," the visitor was challenged to make a very personal response.

"I am proud that the Gallery continues this unique program," Mary said, "a first in museum annals, and that its philosophy has spread to other museums abroad. A new Gallery at the Kunst Museum in Hanover, Germany, is based directly on the Lions Gallery...."

One of the early concerns was whether there would be enough participation by visitors to make the effort to establish the Gallery worthwhile. There are some 21,000 blind persons in New England, and Hartford was centrally located for serving a major part of that population. In addition, the Atheneum has a quarter million visitors, many of whom would be interested in the Gallery because it would offer



Entrance to the Gallery.



An interesting exhibit of paper cord holds the attention of George Precourt (I), District Membership and Retention Chairman, and Gertrude DeLeo, Immediate Past President of the Manchester Lioness Club and her seeing eye dog, Poppy, prior to the annual meeting of the Lions Gallery of the Senses. The exhibit, in different weaves and thicknesses of paper, was hung so that visitors could brush against the work, pull or wind the cords around their hands.

Ruggiero photo

much to the sighted as well as the blind. The Lions clubs agreed at the outset to fund the effort for three years and then evaluate progress. That became moot because the Gallery was a success from the start and by 1981-1982 attendance had reached 33,000 per year. This was an increase of 3,000 over the previous year. Money also became available from other sources, including grants from the Lions Eye Research Foundation in the amount of \$5,000 per year. All Lions clubs in Connecticut support the Eye Research Foundation, but the major sources of money for the Gallery are still the Lions clubs from District 23B, Hartford, and Litchfield counties.



Gallery President Thomas Hubbs (c) presents a treasurer's plaque to Lion William Pehl (r) and a secretary's plaque to Lion Richard Stahl, for three years of devoted service to the Gallery. The presentations were made at the Gallery annual meeting at Wadsworth Atheneum.

Ruggiero photo

The Gallery continued to grow in attendance and in national reputation to where it is now recognized as one of the leading museum facilities for the handicapped in the United States. It is indeed a gem in the Connecticut Lions' crown of achievements, a first of its kind in the world to offer multiperception learning through art.

Employment of the Blind

The concept of a program to encourage Lions and the public to develop jobs for the blind was initiated in 1971 by Past District Governor Ralph Fiore of District 23B. At that time a cabinet committee, "Employment for the Blind," was organized with Lion Charles Hilbourn of West Hartford as Chairman. Lion Ray Wild of West Hartford, Lion Paul Faas, then of Simsbury, and Past District Governor George A. Precourt of East Hartford were also members of the original committee.

During the first year, a plan was developed to encourage employers to consider employment for the blind on a non-discriminatory basis. A speaking tour began with George Precourt and Paul Faas (a blind Lion) advocating consideration for hiring the blind. During the second half of the year, 19 educational programs were given and resulted in full-time positions for several blind persons who had previously been unable to find competitive employment.

In 1972, Past District Governor Milan Knight of Winsted appointed Lion George Precourt as his chairman. Pursuance of the same principles as in the previous year resulted in competitive employment for 11 more blind persons.

In 1973, Lion George Precourt was reappointed by Past District Governor William S. Jerin of Southington, and the same program was continued with an additional nine people being placed in employment. During that year a blind person from Willington received full teacher certification as a result of the work of this committee. It was the first time ever that a blind person had been fully certified in Connecticut, and, until the Lions moved in on the problem, the certification had been delayed for the five previous years. In May of 1973, Past District Governor

George Precourt received a commendation from then Governor Thomas Meskill as well as a special award from President Richard Nixon at a White House breakfast, both as a result of his personal efforts in employing the blind.

In 1974, Past District Governor Thomas Hubbs of Bloomfield reappointed Past District Governor George Precourt as chairman, and during that year 19 blind people became employed. The program was submitted to convention, and it was proposed that a permanent committee of District 23B be set up to run it. By unanimous consent, the district approved the necessary By-Laws change.

Many states and sub districts became interested, and Lion George Precourt traveled to all the New England states as well as New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Florida, and Wisconsin to speak on the District 23B program. During that year four sub districts developed a committee each and used the 23B program as a model.

In Connecticut District 23A, Past District Governor Rocco Cingari of Darien established a committee on Employment of the Blind in 1974. It was chaired by Bill Petrey and co-chaired by Past District Governor Bill Buckingham. They worked with state officials and the private sector and made a documentary film with sports announcer Mel Allen as narrator. Helping were employees and an executive of General Telephone and Electric Corporation. The documentary cost was \$6,000 but, because of donations of time and expertise, the actual cost to the Lions was \$600. There were also radio announcements, and the immediate result of the media effort was 22 placements. This is a very satisfying achievement when one considers that a placement is not counted until the employee has been on the job for 60 days. By 1980, District 23A was able to report 57 placements. The committee was discontinued in 1982 when it had the report that there were more jobs than applicants. During the time Districts 23A and 23B worked together, they produced more than 150 jobs for blind persons.

From 1975 through 1979, Lion George Mellen of Glastonbury chaired the District 23B committee and the program changed from giving public talks to assisting multiple handicapped blind persons to get work at home and in the sheltered workshop and to become self-employed. The state had previously established a workshop for the blind in Newington, Connecticut, and the Lions contributed to its operating fund. The blind make handcrafted articles for sale. In 1976, District 23B, for the first time, included in its program the sale of articles made by the blind. Thirty-five clubs participated with sales of \$10,860 which made it possible to add another 13 persons to the workshop. In 1980, District 23B reported record sales and the hiring of 18 more persons and, in 1981, 49 of 50 clubs and all of the Lioness clubs participated in the sales. As of 1983, 42 persons were employed in sheltered workshops and about 170 in home industries. Although District 23B has handled the workshop and home employment project essentially by itself, the other districts have supported the effort. Several of their clubs and Lioness clubs have sold articles for the blind and helped in educating the public. As of 1983, District 23B sales have grossed over \$100,000.

In 1979, the Connecticut Legislature passed a law designating a "Lions Workshop Fund" as a means of segregating that part of the workshop finances derived from sales and from private donations. The sense of the law is to express legislative intent that the state's appropriations for the multiple handicapped will not be decreased because of money they receive from private sources.

During the years 1979-83, four clubs earned special recognition for their support of the program for the blind. Those clubs were Elmwood, East Hartford, Hartford, and New Britain. In 1983, a Lions liaison was established to coordinate efforts between Lions clubs and the state. The purpose is to keep the state informed

on where and for what purpose funding is needed and the status of employment of the blind. Clubs will be informed about programs, funds available, work being done, and help needed, and they will be encouraged to expand their own efforts.

As a result of the Lions work and leadership, other organizations are now involved with support. The Franco-American war veterans announced that in 1984 they will begin an annual benefit dance with all proceeds going to the Workshop fund. It is expected to generate \$10,000 in the first year.

The Lions can be proud of their "Employment of the Blind" effort for the following achievements:

1. Two hundred thirty persons currently listed as multiple handicapped are employed at various levels as a result of sales for the blind sponsored by Lions.
2. A grant by the federal government was received as a direct result of Lions support.
3. President James Fowler (Lions International) declared Employment for the Blind his number one project worldwide.
4. Over \$20,000 of net income from the workshop is expected in 1984.
5. The program continues to expand, with Connecticut Lions setting an example for Lions everywhere.
6. The multiple handicapped not only experience pride and satisfaction in gainful employment, but have themselves become involved in planning and operating their work projects and programs.

Hearing Conservation and Hearing Research

Hearing Conservation became a Lions International project in 1971. International's concern was grounded in the tragedies of 16 million hearing-impaired in the United States alone. District 23B's concern was the 180,000 hearing-impaired in Connecticut.



Demonstrating new hearing equipment at the American School for the Deaf.

In 1973, District Governor Milan Knight of District 23B appointed a committee to determine what should be done to implement a hearing project in his district. Don Watrous of West Hartford was designated chairman with Joe Hirsch of New Britain and George Mellen of East Hartford as committee members.

The committee discussed problems of budget, public hearing tests, tests of school children and education of the public. They entered discussions with professional staffs at the American School for the Deaf and at the Hearing Improvement Center, both in West Hartford.

In 1978-1979, Angelo J. Salvatore, Governor of District 23B, worked with the Hearing Improvement Center (HIC) in West Hartford on development of a hearing aid bank at the HIC. Used hearing aids were to be collected by Lions, cleaned and repaired at the Center and given free to needy persons when tests indicated that the aids would be helpful.

In 1979-1980, Ed Smith, Governor of District 23B appointed Edward Sparapani as his hearing chairman. Ed worked closely with American School for the Deaf (ASD) in developing hearing tests. The district, that year, provided hearing tests for the students of ASD and transmitters for the instructors. The district also kept very active in the hearing aid collection and their utilization.



Edward Sparapani

In 1980-81, Cliff Randall, Governor of District 23B, also appointed Ed Sparapani as his hearing chairman. In 1980, the Lions placed 24 aids in the bank and made 14 referrals. The total cost for each person served was about \$100.00, paid for by the Lions. As of 1980, a total of \$3,400 had been contributed by 25 clubs in District 23B. In that year the Lions also contributed a hearing-aid system to ASD for use in upper classes. The system included a transmitter for a teacher and eight student receivers with a charger for the receivers. Ed that year also developed the "Need to Communicate" slide show which has proven to be very popular.

In 1981-1982, Otto Strobino, Governor of District 23B, continued all the work on hearing conservation and provided the first computers for ASD, purchased by the Lions. He helped HIC establish an inventory and added more clubs to the list of supporters and of those making referrals. Governor Otto initiated the temporal bone

bank project in District 23B under the guidance and supervision of again Chairman Ed Sparapani of Rocky Hill. Lion Ed became the indefatigable crusader for hearing conservation. He developed a slide and lecture presentation and visited Lions clubs and civic groups educating people on the problems of deafness and hearing impairments and soliciting their support. The immediate result was money for an audiometer for ASD.



Allen Needham, Director of HIC, explains a computerized hearing test and audiometer. Standing left, George Spooner of the New Britain Lions and Ed Sparapani.

District Governor Otto and Chairman Ed invited representatives from the National Eastern Temporal Bone Bank in Boston to a conference in New Britain as a preliminary to the involvement of Connecticut Lions in supporting the bank's research and educational efforts. Districts 23A and 23C also were invited to send representatives. Robert Thornley attended for District 23C but 23A was not represented. Thornley had been appointed hearing conservation chairman for 23C in 1979 by District Governor Ernest Kopeć and remained on as chairman 1981-1982 on the appointment of District Governor James Mackey. The conference was the beginning of another state-wide project for the Lions. District 23A began financial support soon after the project got under way.

Records of Lions International indicate only four organizations for hearing conservation recognized by the Board of International Directors, as of 1983. The first so recognized was the Lions of Virginia Hearing Foundation and Temporal Bone Bank. It was incorporated in June, 1979. With respect to both ear research and hearing, and temporal bone bank foundations, International Executive Secretary, Ray Schaetzel says: "I am obliged to advise that the Association did not have (or pay much attention to) any legal or records procedure respecting the formation or existence of such organizations and the right to use the name Lions and the Association emblem for too many years. There may well be foundations or other such organizations operated by Lions which have not been officially authorized to use

the name and emblem." At any rate, the Connecticut Lions have not created such an organization or foundation for hearing, or for ear research and treatment. Instead, they are working directly through existing institutions.

Temporal bone banks were established through the efforts of the Deafness Research Foundation, not connected with the Lions. There are four National Temporal Bone Banks (NTBs), the Eastern, Midwestern, Southern and Western. All Northeastern states work through the NTB-Eastern, located in the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, 243 Charles Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02114, which in turn has connections with the Harvard Medical School. There are some fifty hospitals and laboratories in the United States doing research on deafness and hearing impairment, and all medical schools, even if not engaged in research, are conducting classes in diseases of the ear and hearing impairment. Finally, some 140 institutions are members of the temporal bone bank system. All of these make steady demands on the available supply of temporal bones which is never adequate, especially when donors must be identified in advance and should have recorded ear examinations which are helpful to users of the bequests. The ear's temporal bones are used only for research and education. No transplant procedures have been developed, even for the smaller, inner parts of the ear. However, wire implants have been made with mixed results.

In District 23C Lion Robert Thornley also has been a tireless crusader, working on all the problems of the deaf and the hearing impaired, and the funds raised are steadily increasing. In 1980, the district contributed \$750 to the Research Center at St. Raphael's Hospital, New Haven, for their work on deafness. In 1982, donations to the ASD totalled \$1,000 and increased to \$1,500 in 1983. Clubs in District 23C contributed \$500 in each of the two years to the Southeast Connecticut Hearing and Speech Center in Norwich, Connecticut for persons who could not afford testing and hearing aids. Also in 1983, \$500 was given to the Seaside Center in Waterford for an audiometer to test the hearing of retarded children. An additional \$300 was given to the Windham Memorial Hospital in Willimantic to help cover the cost of an ear-drill machine.



Robert Thornley

District 23C, under Thornley's leadership, began a vigorous campaign on behalf of the temporal bone bank. Radio and newspaper announcements informed the public about the program and personal solicitations among the Lions and the public brought good results. The main person behind this drive was Caroline Diehm, a member of the Waterford Regional Lioness Club. She alone contributed over 100 donor applications, representing over 50 percent of the 1983 total received by the bone bank in Boston. District 23B contributed 25 donors.

District 23A has been a strong financial supporter of hearing conservation and hearing research. In April, 1980, Lions of 23A contributed \$18,000 for a brain-stem-evoked-response machine for the Yale Medical School. At the time it was the only machine of its kind in the state. Appointments for tests were booked six months ahead, and this machine was expected to reduce the waiting list by fifty percent.

Thomas Valerio, District Governor of 23A, 1981-1982, appointed Robert Buchanan as Chairman of Speech and Hearing. A new project to be undertaken was soliciting temporal bones for the bone bank in Boston.

Considering the very short time that Lions have been actively involved with hearing impairment and deafness, they have already made a difference. With the dedicated leadership of District Governors, and especially of crusaders like Sparapani and Thornley, there is little doubt that the Lions motto, "We Serve," will open the world of sound to many people.

Camp Cedarcrest

Camp Cedarcrest is a joint project of many service clubs. Presently there are Lions, Kiwanians, Civitans, and Rotarians of the original group, plus Probus, Quotas and Soroptomists. One original member, the Exchange Club, no longer participates.

The camp was a dream of Fred Dawless, a Rotarian, in 1924. In that year an Inter-Club Boys Work Committee was formed, and in 1925, Henry Booth, a Lion, located 15 acres of land on Wepawaug River in Orange suitable for a camp. Lion Frank Lawrence was a leader in arranging the site purchase and in early development of the camp. It required work, and in 1927 the first dam was built for reclamation and to make a swimming area. In 1928, the camp began operations under a community service agency which later became the Department of Recreation in the Parks Department of New Haven.

In 1931, an Inter-Service Club Committee was incorporated, and title to the camp was transferred to that corporation. In 1923, a flagpole at the camp was erected and dedicated to the memory of Lion Frank Lawrence.

Meanwhile development continued. In 1935, six cabins were built, one by Lions. In 1936, nine summer cabins were added. In 1938, some 28 acres were given to the camp by a Kiwanian. In 1934, a caretaker's cottage was built and a caretaker was employed. The city pays the salary of a ranger who serves full time, all year.

The city also provides sand and gravel as needed for the ball field and swimming area.

In 1963, Sherwood Eberth donated 3½ acres of land, and in 1969 an arts and crafts building was constructed.

In 1976, the camp was used by over 2,700 day campers. It is used mostly by children from the inner city. Other groups often use the facilities for a minimum charge of \$35.00 per day.

Capital and operating funds, above those raised from fees charged to adult

groups and the service support rendered by the City of New Haven, are provided by a coalition of service clubs. Clubs in surrounding communities, including Lions, are part of the support group. Fundraisers are held for this specific camp. Club members and businessmen often make donations, and the New Haven Foundation for Public Giving has contributed funds for particular projects.

The New Haven Lions have contributed about \$30,000 over the years to Camp Cedarcrest along with uncounted hours of labor in building, repairing, painting, and generous donations of paint, lumber, nails, and other supplies.

Camp Hemlocks

The beginning of Camp Hemlocks is best told in the following letter, edited for clarity:

August 25, 1924

Mr. Arthur E. Stone, President
Lions Club
Bridgeport, Conn.

Dear President Stone:

It is with a great deal of satisfaction that I am able to submit to you a complete report of the Lions Club Building Committee on the new Hemlocks V.N.A. Home at Nichols. Personnel of the Lion's Committee is as follows:

Herbert J. Hanson, Chairman
Arthur E. Stone, President of Bridgeport Lions Club
William W. Bent, Past President
O.C.S. Zioli, Architect
Frederick H. Beckwith, Architect
William S. Hewlett, General Contractor
Peter M. Davey, Donator of land
Howard Stone
David H. MacKenzie
W.R. Muirhead

September 25, 1923, the committee met in joint session with a cooperating committee of the Visiting Nurses Association. The members of this committee are as follows:

Mrs. Elmer H. Havens, President V.N.A.
Mrs. H. Bertram Lambert, Chairman of Hemlocks Committee
Miss Louise C. Spence, Superintendent V.N.A.

With the location of the new home already definitely decided upon, this being a splendid gift of Peter M. Davey, a member of the Lions Club, of 10 acres of land with a fifty-foot right-of-way situated on a beautiful hilltop in Nichols.

The next matter of importance was the planning of the building. This became the principal topic of discussion at this meeting and resulted in the listing of the following requirements of space.

- (1) Sleeping room for the cook and her assistant with bath and toilet facilities
- (2) Sleeping room for the matron and her assistant
- (3) Sleeping room for the public health nurse and her assistant with bath and toilet facilities

- (4) Dormitory space for twenty boys and twenty girls with bath and toilet facilities (shower facilities for forty children)
- (5) Set tubs for soaking clothes
- (6) Storeroom space
- (7) Kitchen
- (8) Dining room
- (9) Play hall (living room)
- (10) Linen closet for bed linen and children's uniforms
- (11) Closet space in the cook's, matron's and nurse's rooms
- (12) Closet space for dishes and other kitchen closets

Committee members, O.C.S. Ziroli and Frederick H. Beckwith, were appointed as a subcommittee to draw up plans on the basis of the above required space for presentation at the next meeting.

From the date of the first meeting and throughout the winter, eight meetings were held, some jointly with the Visiting Nurse Association. Discussion centered on four different sets of plans submitted to the committee. Consideration of the plans was based on three principal points:

First, that of providing the requirements of space and equipment requested by the Visiting Nurse Association.

Second, that the building should be of substantial and permanent construction and of a layout that would permit future expansion.

Third, that the cost of the construction be within the sum set as the goal of the Lions fund, which at that time was \$10,000.

At the joint committee meeting of March 11, 1924, Plan No. 4 was accepted and at the meeting of March 21, 1924, the Hewlett Construction Company, represented in our club by Lion William S. Hewlett, presented a most favorable contract for our consideration. A copy of same is attached hereto.

After some discussion with regard to Plan No. 4 and its specifications and the contract at hand, the committee unanimously voted to award the general contract to the Hewlett Construction Company of Bridgeport, at a cost not to exceed \$11,000. This action of the committee was unanimously ratified by the club members at the regular meeting of March 26, 1924. As this meeting the club unanimously voted an additional pledge of \$25.00 per member in order that the sum of \$11,000 might be realized.

Following the awarding of the general contract, the Hewlett Company immediately began the construction of the home and in due time awarded the following subcontracts, all work being done at cost.

Electrical work, Flynn & Powers.

Painting & Decorating, David H. MacKenzie.

Plumbing, Bridgeport State Trade School.

The committee and the contractors found everyone approached with regard to the erection of the home ready to cooperate in offering services and materials either at cost or given free. Prominent among this group were the following.

Materials supplied at cost

F.H. Hannon Supply Company—siding, flooring, Celotex, etc.

Silliman & Godrey—tile drains, flue lining lath

A.W. Burritt Company—interior trim and asbestos shingles

Edgar Beers—sash and doors
American Hardware Stores—hardware
J.D. Johnson Company—plumbing fixtures
Karm Terminal Company—cement
Lineburgh Carahor & Co.—builders risk insurance

DONATED

Peter M. Davey—10 acres of land
William V. Dee—ventilators
D.M. Read Co.—window shades
Hunter & Havens—trucking and reinforcing
A.W Burritt Co.—flag pole
George McCarthy, Jr.—sand
Karm Terminal—cinders
Howlands Dry Goods Co.—flag (6 x 9)
Bridgeport Construction Co.—material for road
Southern New England Telephone Co.—telephone poles
Winter & North—compensation and liability insurance
O.C.S. Zirolì—plans and specifications
Frederick Beckwith—blueprints
Locomobile Company—transportation
M. Steinerts—piano
Conlin Company—exterior paint
Vultex Company—interior paint
Krause Electric Co.—radio
State Trade School—road signs and bronze tablet
Walter Ball and Fred Harrington—labor on plastering
George B. Whitehead—flowers and plants

In addition to the erection of the building a road was constructed, a distance of approximately 1500 feet from the main highway directly to the entrance of the building, the expense being born by the Lions Club and the Visiting Nurses Association. This road was made possible largely through the efforts and supervision of Lion William Hewlett. An artesian well supplying adequate water to the home was installed by the Visiting Nurses Association.

Dedication of the building in the form of appropriate exercises was held, on the afternoon of Thursday, June 26th, 1924, under the direction of a Lions Club Dedication Committee and in the presence of a large number of friends of the Lions Club and the Visiting Nurses Association.

Following is the Lions Club Dedication Committee.

Howard Stone, Chairman
William W. Bent
Charles W. Bitzor
Peter M. Davey
Dr. B.M. Parmelee
Herbert J. Hanson

The home began actual operation with the receiving of its first children July 1, 1924.

At a meeting of the Building Committee held on August 12, 1924, the work of the Hewlett Company was accepted and their bill unanimously approved. The committee voted to direct the treasurer of the club to pay the Hewlett Construction

Company the sum of \$11,000, which included construction of the home and partial expense of the road. The committee also voted their thanks to the Hewlett Construction Company for the splendid interest and cooperation shown by members of the firm throughout the period of construction. The committee feels itself indeed fortunate in having had such a reliable construction firm to work with on this project.

I personally wish to express full thanks and appreciation to the members of the building committee, who faithfully attended to the many details which are bound to arise in the work of a committee of this nature.

The work of the committee is finished, its members one and all are happy to have participated in the erection of this building. We turn over to you, as president of the club, the keys of the building, fully believing that Bridgeport Lions will always have great interest in the welfare and wonderful work of the Visiting Nurses Association.

Very respectfully yours,

Chairman of the Building Committee.

NOTE: Camp Hemlocks was created under the leadership of Judge William W. Bent, President of the Lions Club of Bridgeport, July 1, 1923, to June 30, 1924. Arthur E. Stone succeeded Judge Bent, July 1, 1924. Consequently, this letter is addressed to Art Stone.

The Bridgeport (Host) Club maintained an unbroken record of fond support of Camp Hemlocks with funds for camperships, and they volunteered equipment and repairs as needed. Other clubs in the area, principally the Trumbull Lions, added their support. Another 19 acres of land were acquired to expand the capacity of the camp.

In 1947, the V.N.A. decided to conclude its fresh air program in favor of well-child clinics and home-bound-care services, and they sold the Hemlocks property to the Connecticut Easter Seal Society, which opened it as a summer camp exclusively for the handicapped in 1950.

In 1970, the Connecticut Easter Seal Society received a directive from the State of Connecticut's Fire Marshal that the property should be brought up to state fire codes or steps would be taken to close the camp. The cost would have been prohibitive. Furthermore, new construction outside the perimeter of the camp blocked further expansion. The terrain was unsuitable for wheelchairs and for people using braces and crutches. The solution was to build a new camp on a larger site.

The Connecticut Easter Seal Society purchased a 155-acre tract in Hebron bordered by the Salmon River State Forest. The property included a 16-acre man-made lake ideal for fishing and boating. The planners and architects of the new Camp Hemlocks toured all the accredited camps for the handicapped throughout the country. The best features of those facilities were noted and included in the new camp, now known officially as the Connecticut Easter Seal Society's Hemlocks Outdoor Education Center.

One of the facilities was to be a Children's Arts and Crafts Building. The project was adopted by the Bridgeport (Host) Lions Club as a commemorative unit at a cost of \$21,000. Learning that the Bridgeport Club was not in a position to equip the building, Theodore Samaris of Meriden, then District Governor of District 23A, 1973-1974, pledged to raise money to buy kilns, tables, and other equipment during his year as Governor. This he did. In 1975, Governor William L. Roberts of

Meriden selected the Camp Canteen as a District 23A project, another commemorative unit at \$15,000, and this was also completed during his administration. In 1976, Governor Robert B. Pilot of Orange raised funds to add equipment to the infirmary. In 1977, Governor Emanuel A. Merullo of Danbury selected the project of a special lift bus for Camp Hemlocks. On hearing of this need, the Darien Club took over the entire project for District 23A. Thereupon, Governor Merullo undertook a major camp addition, a pavilion to protect against sun and inclement weather, to be funded by the rest of the clubs in District 23A.

Originally, the bids for the pavilion came in at \$87,000. The project was scaled down to \$65,000, of which the Lions would pay \$45,000 and the Easter Seal Society the balance. The pavilion was completed during the governorship of William J. Carroll of Bridgeport, 1978-1979.

Camperships were provided for impoverished, physically handicapped children during the governorships of Michael Granatuk of Waterbury, James Halligan Jr. of Seymour, and G. Thomas Valerio of Orange.

In 1982, Governor William D. Phillips of Meriden learned of the need for a parcourse at Hemlocks. A parcourse consists of a cluster of special equipment and ropes to develop the fitness of the handicapped in an exercise-trail setting. The cost was \$15,000, and District 23A came through again. Bridgeport and District 23A have made, and are continuing to make, a major contribution in serving others through the camp. At the same time, they are writing their own chapter in the social history of Connecticut.



Bridgeport Lions Fundraiser for Camp Hemlocks. Lions not identified.

Mansfield Training School

Mansfield Training School is a state facility for blind and the blind retarded. In the 1960s, the school responded to the need for special facilities to care for the blind retarded. In the planning and early development of these facilities Lion Rocco

Cingari organized the Lions' involvement, and coordinated planning and execution with Al Pike, Director of the school, and Joyce Smith, his executive assistant. Two meetings were held at the school with 39 out of 57 clubs in District 23A participating. The district set a goal of \$35,000 to complete two wings of the school for the blind retarded.

The completion of the first unit was assured when the Lions clubs and the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation made a contribution of \$4,000. Meanwhile, contributions kept ahead of the work schedule until the total, with pledges, amounted to \$46,225. The leader was the Darien Club which donated \$10,000 and pledged another \$10,000. The Darien Lions have continued to give a high priority to the needs of the school.

The first unit was completed in 1970, the second in 1974. These were dedicated as Lions Hall I and Lions Hall II. These provided semi-private rooms for two or three adults, a common dining room and a social area. The units were believed to be the first of their kind in the nation located in a residential facility for the retarded. The purpose of the design was to create a homelike atmosphere with emphasis on self-care, self-feeding, and mobility training.



Interior of a room for two, typical of the Lions Halls at Mansfield Training School.

In addition to their help with the main school facilities, the Lions contributed \$5,000 toward constructing a residential cabin at the Training School Day Camp in Conventry. Richard Case and others in the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation supported the entire effort with funds and encouragement.

Hurricane Diane

On August 18-19, 1955, Hurricane Diane struck Connecticut with high winds and destructive flooding. Property losses were estimated at \$93 million. Many were homeless and without resources. When the first news of the disaster was announced, Howard Wry of the New Britain Lions Club contacted Robert Irving of the Plainville club, who was also District Governor of District 23B, and suggested that there was an emergency role for Lions in relief of suffering.

The first effort was to deliver food to Naugatuck, but when the station wagons arrived with food they could not get into town. They turned the food over to the local Lions and returned to try another tack. Lion Wry discussed the problem with Lion Peter Kenney of the New Britain club, who was manager of Station WKNB-TV, and the idea of a telethon using celebrities was born. Mr. Julian Gross, owner of the station, pledged full support provided an organization and procedures were established to collect and disburse funds and provided that none of the money collected would be used for expenses, but all would go for relief. Mr. Gross, who was also a member of the Hartford Rotary Club, got Rotary involved, and another coalition of service clubs was organized called the United Service Clubs of Connecticut. It was organized for this single purpose and was to be terminated automatically when the job was done.

A State Central Committee was formed composed of the following: James E. Bent for Rotary Clubs; Robert J. Irving, Lions; Richard J. Dillon, Kiwanis; Jack Salmon, Exchange; Felis Scapellati, Civitan; Edwin H. May Jr., Jaycees; and Samuel Kellin, B'nai B'rith. Station WKNB put on the Telethon from 9:00 p.m., August 24, to 2:00 p.m., August 25. More than 13,000 pledges were received, totalling in excess of \$200,000. Almost 100 percent of the pledges were collected. To this \$58,088 was added by Governor Abraham Ribicoff from the Governor's Relief Fund.

The Central Committee established a fund, administered by the New Britain National Bank, to receive all money and to make disbursements as directed by the Central Committee. Machinery for processing applications was established at local levels. This consisted of joint committees of service clubs who interviewed applicants and forwarded applications to the Central Committee in cases where aid was justified. It was agreed in the beginning that federal, state, and local governments and the Red Cross would be the first sources of all aid. The Central Committee with more limited resources would be the agency of last resort when other resources were exhausted, or when aid was justified but because of regulations government agencies could not intervene. By January 23, 1956, the Central Committee had made grants to 260 individuals or small businesses in 37 communities in the amount of \$269,434.44. Winsted received the largest number of grants, 40 totalling \$42,842; Torrington was next with 48 grants at \$40,550; and Waterbury was third with 34 grants at \$38,706. The lowest was New Britain, one grant for \$170.

It may be remembered that in 1935 the New Haven Lions Club made a "substantial" donation for flood relief in the Connecticut River Valley, but that was not a state-wide Lions project.

Eyeglass Collecting

Eyeglass collecting began in 1932 during the great depression. Mrs. Arthur Terry, a volunteer Red Cross worker at a food depot in New York City, was taking applications for food packages. She noticed that many of the poor people could not see well enough to fill out the forms. Mrs. Terry began collecting old eyeglasses from her friends and she gave them to the poor who needed them.

She kept expanding the effort and getting more people and groups involved. Not only did they collect eyeglasses, but also old cuff links, discarded silver, and real and costume jewelry. She found a sympathetic refiner in Newark, New Jersey, who paid for the metal, and the funds were used for new prescription eyeglasses. An optician in New York City gave eye examinations and prescriptions at minimum cost to patients Mrs. Terry sent to him. This was the beginning of New Eyes for the

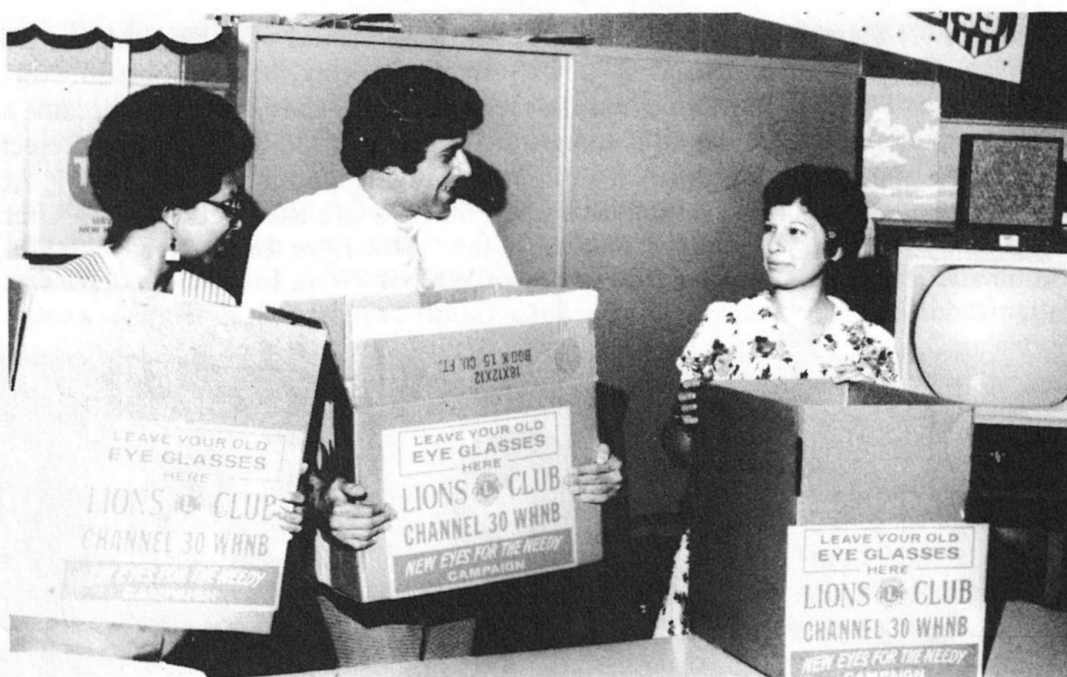
Needy, Inc., Short Hills, New Jersey. By enlisting the aid of celebrities like Ed Sullivan, Groucho Marx, Robert Q. Lewis, Arthur Godfrey, Bernard Baruch, Norman Vincent Peale, Herbert Hoover, and General Lucius Clay, her effort became a national one, and glasses began coming in from all over the country. The project came to the attention of Howard V. Wry of the New Britain Lions Club in 1961. At the time he was Director of Promotions and Public Relations at WKNB-TV. After preliminary meetings with representatives of the "New Eyes for the Needy" Foundation and Robert Bray, General Manager of WKNB-TV, a Lions Club drive was organized.



John Kromish of the East Haddam Lions Club, and William Hall of the Pratt and Whitney Aircraft Group (P & WA) optical services pack 3,300 pairs of eyeglasses collected from April 1975 to December, 1976. The P & WA group cooperates with the Lions.

In the beginning it was a New Britain Lions Club venture, but it expanded to other Lions clubs in the state. It still remains basically a District 23B project. WKNB-TV still, as of 1983, pays for shipping collections to Short Hills, New Jersey. All eyeglasses received by "New Eyes for the Needy" are sorted. Metal frames are still sold for scrap and receipts go for new prescription glasses in this country. Glasses in plastic frames which are simple nears and fars, are tested and graded and shipped overseas to fill specific orders from medical missionaries. New prescription glasses are handled through hospitals and welfare agencies which are given funds for this purpose by "New Eyes."

As of 1983, District 23B has collected over 300,000 pairs of glasses.



Packing eyeglasses at WKNB-TV.

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) and CARE

The Lions Clubs International Foundation was chartered in Illinois in June, 1968, as a not-for-profit organization. LCIF's association with CARE-Korean Aid was made by Edward Korbal, Chairman of the Lions Board of International Relations. A letter was sent to each Lions club in this country and CARE received substantial contributions.

At the fortieth Convention of Lions International in 1957, it was announced that LCIF had become the 25th member agency of CARE, and Lion Clarence Sturm became a member of CARE's Board of Directors. Emphasis was placed on cooperation between Lions clubs overseas and overseas missions of CARE. But given this close cooperation, it is the policy of Lions International that the Lions Clubs International Foundation is to be promoted as a separate entity, and all Lions donations, even when intended to support CARE projects, should be channeled through the LCIF or a LCIF-CARE chairman, but the distinction between them should be kept clear as well as the procedure for handling contributions.

Total contributions to LCIF for 1981-1982 was \$1,834,996, with \$737,511 or 40.2 percent coming from the United States. However, the United States total does include money from a few international districts which straddle the United States-Canada border, Districts 19, 49, 37, 5M, 5, and 41.

Connecticut Lions started slowly in contributions for this cause, as no doubt was the case with all clubs. Once the purpose of LCIF and the need for its services became well-known, the donations increased markedly. Since 1971, total contributions by Connecticut Lions were approximately \$100,000. In some instances money went directly to CARE, bypassing LCIF. In some cases, funds were earmarked for special projects in underdeveloped countries. Examples, as reported by District Governors, were the following: schools in Kenya, Guatemala, and Nicaragua; education and agricultural units in South America; a portable water-supply unit in South Africa; water pumps in Ecuador; three school nutrition centers in the Philippines; "Year of the Child" project in Honduras; and a leprosy project.

LCIF is completely justified in emphasizing that the most effective international relations are people-to-people concern, understanding and cooperation. It is one of the finest examples of the Lions motto "We Serve," and Connecticut Lions are proud of their part in this demonstration of caring and good will.

Diabetes, Glaucoma, and Drug Abuse

The Diabetes program was adopted by the International Board of Directors on June 27, 1982 at Atlanta, Georgia. The idea came out of the Board's Service Activities Committee as a recommended long-range project under the impetus of then First Vice-President, Everett J. Grindstaff. Diabetes testing, especially, has become a major concern of Lions because of the known effects of diabetes, visions impairment and even blindness. Testing for glaucoma is often conducted either in conjunction with diabetes testing or as a separate project. All service is free to the public.

Lions arrange for a site, schedule appointments, and arrange for doctors and nurses to do the actual testing. Doctors and nurses volunteer their services. Lions pay incidental costs and help with any details, such as advertising, parking, greeting the persons coming for tests, helping with equipment and materials, etc.

On other occasions, testing is done in hospitals during a special day set aside by the hospital during the year for a health fair. Many aspects of health, and disease and accident prevention, are characteristics of the fairs. Again, Lions help in any way they can.

Lions International's drug program was adopted at the Board meeting in Kyoto, Japan, October 5, 1981. Again, this was under the leadership of First Vice President Grindstaff. Lions' efforts to reduce drug abuse are educational, as the term "awareness" implies. What is actually done is determined by local situations. Most clubs arrange for talks in elementary schools by qualified persons, doctors and pharmacists if possible or by a policeman who has had special training in problems of drug abuse. Children of grades four and five are considered most likely to profit from this program. Once young people are in high school, too many have already started to use drugs. Breaking the habit and the group associations formed to promote and use drugs is extremely difficult.

The first step is usually educating parents about the dangers of drug abuse. The next step is helping them develop ways to work with young people. This is especially true if parents have reason to believe that drugs are available in the schools, or if their own children are behaving in a manner that suggests they are already becoming tragic victims. Another way is organizing students to counter the pressures of those who would induce their friends to try the experiment of getting high.

Beginning in 1984, Lions have been cooperating in the national effort known as "Chemical People." This organization, not associated with the Lions, attempts to create local affiliated groups of parents and interested citizens to work for control of drug distribution and use. Lions have long been concerned about this national disaster which destroys so many young lives. They are working along with parents and citizens to bring drug abuse under control.

Tree Planting

A major project of District 23B is tree planting. Interest in this project began during the administration of International President Kaoru Murakami of Japan. He had a special interest in the environment and especially in reforestation. This interest struck a responsive cord in Otto Strobino, District Governor of District 23B, 1981-1982.

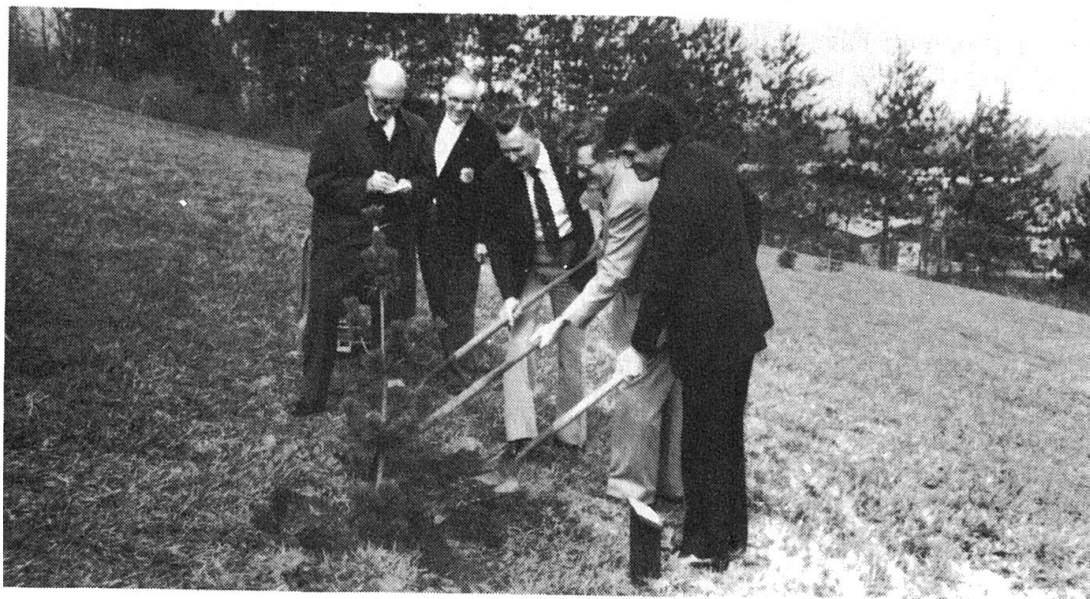
Otto appointed George Mellen as his chairman for this project and George contacted Edwin Kirsting in the School of Agriculture at the University of Connecticut. Dr. Kirsting was enthusiastic about tree planting on grounds available on the campus. The project was approved by University President, John A. DiBaggio. The outcome was the planting of 638 trees, one for each district of Lions clubs in the world. The area was designated the Connecticut Lions Memorial Forest.



Otto Strobino, District Governor of District 23B, to immediate right of sign, holding a small tree stake in his hand. Others present were members of his Cabinet.

In addition to the forest, a project of planting one tree each year was initiated to honor the incumbent International President. These plantings are in a separate area on the campus, called the pinetum. Insofar as possible—considering climates—each tree will be of a species indigenous to the homeland of the incumbent President of Lions International.

As a result of Governor Otto's and Chairman George's effort this project has become a yearly activity which lets us recognize our international president and at the same time cement relations to our great state university.



Tree planting at the Pinetum, University of Connecticut at Storrs.

Highway Safety Program

In the late 1950s the Connecticut Lions began discussions about traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities. They were seeking a role for Lions to help reduce the tragedies.

In 1959, International Counselor T. Joseph Puza of District 23C was appointed to head a highway safety committee for Multiple District 23. William Grosberg of 23A appointed Joseph H. Darling of Madison as highway safety chairman for the district. Puza laid the groundwork by opening communications with the Director of Highway Safety for the State of Connecticut.

At the Lions mid-winter conference in 1960 Lion Charles Gibbons gave the following report.

In September 1959 when I was appointed your State Director of Highway Safety, I sought the help and co-operation of the three District Governors in selecting committee members who had the interest and ability to contribute to this program. I am mighty proud to have serving on my team from:

District 23C:	International Counsellor	Wally Crook	Danielson
	International Counsellor	Bill McKenzie	Groton
	International Counsellor	Al Rivers	Danielson
District 23B:	International Counsellor	Bob Regan	New Britain
	International Counsellor	Marty Horowitz	New Britain
District 23A:	Past Deputy District Governor	Ed Gumprecht	Cheshire

At this time I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to these committee members for their accomplishments to date.

Our first meeting was held on October 20, 1959 at the Commodore McDonough Inn, Middletown with all committee members in attendance. At this meeting I stressed that the theme of all our meetings would be "what are we in favor of—not what are we opposed to." Many items were discussed, the most important of which were:

- 1. Promote legislation for learner's license.*
- 2. Promote highway safety through use of billboards, bumper strips, etc.*
- 3. Recommend that the State of Connecticut provide rodeo courses supervised by state inspectors.*
- 4. Promote an essay contest.*
- 5. The one suggestion that met with the wholehearted approval of all was the promotion of Lions Highway Safety Week throughout Connecticut. Tentative date, the last week in April, 1960. It was recommended that we arrange to obtain speakers from the Connecticut State Police, Motor Vehicle Department, local police, Highway Safety Commission, etc. Also films from insurance, oil and trucking companies, all for use at schools, Lions clubs and other organizational gathering during Highway Safety Week. It was suggested that we invite members of sports car and hot rod clubs to speak before groups.*

On the Sunday prior to Safety Week, we ask the cooperation of the clergy of all faiths to announce from the pulpit our program and solicit the support of their parishioners.

As a result of this most interesting meeting, Wally Crook was appointed to contact sports car and hot rod clubs throughout the state. Bill McKenzie to contact the Connecticut Police; Al Rivers to meet with the Motor Vehicle Department and State

Highway Commission; Bob Regan and Marty Horowitz were to contact various insurance companies; Ed Gumprecht—trucking companies and I to solicit oil companies. Through these contacts we hope to corral as much manpower and material as needed to make Safety Week a successful one.

Since this October 20 meeting, committee members have been invited to each of the three district cabinet meetings and there solicited the cooperation of all in this coming venture.

On January 11, 1960 our committee met for the second time at the Nathan Hale Hotel, Willimantic where we heard the results of the various committee members' endeavors. Les Williams of the Connecticut Police and Deputy Commissioner William Hilliard of the Motor Vehicle Department assured our Al Rivers that the facilities of their respective departments will be at our disposal. Upon demand, insurance, oil and trucking companies will be most willing to provide speakers, film and hand-outs during the last week in April.

It was suggested at this meeting that we contact the Submarine Base at New London and obtain from them speakers for our program.

So much for our Safety Week.

At Willimantic our committee recommended the following be presented to the proper authorities for their consideration:

1. That all new driver applicants, if successful in passing their driving test under supervision of Motor Vehicle inspectors, be issued a **Learner's Permit** good for a period of six (6) months. During this period the learner should become acquainted with driving requirements and acquire skill in the operation of a motor vehicle. Emphasis must be placed on skill and common sense operation to obtain and keep a **license**.

Present law requiring junior operators to obtain special training is good, but discriminatory. Such requirements should be for all applicants.

2. Changing conditions call for a review of the examination system. More emphasis should be placed on skill and physical qualification. Again we suggest that the state provide rodeo courses and collect a small fee from each applicant. Passage or completion of the course along with a physical and written test would qualify the applicant for a **probationary license good for one year**. Such license to be revoked automatically if applicant becomes involved in an accident due to carelessness or violation of motor vehicle laws during the probationary period.

3. It is most important that only those physically fit hold a Connecticut driver's license. It was suggested that operators be re-examined who have compiled a noticeable accident record.

I would like to close this report by saying "Strict Enforcement is an essential deterrent but it should be remembered that an officer cannot ride with every operator."

"TRAFFIC IS THE NUMBER ONE ACCIDENTAL KILLER . . . IT IS OUR GREATEST RISK BECAUSE WE FACE IT EVERY DAY."

State Council Chairman Joseph W. Ganim, District Governor, read the following letter received from the State of Connecticut Safety Commission —

"The Connecticut Safety Commission recently authorized the appointment of several important program advisory committees. The primary purpose of the advisory committees will be to further strengthen the working relationships between the commission and leading civic, business, professional and youth-serving organizations in the state.

The activation of these advisory committees will provide an excellent means of enlisting the talents and abilities of many people and organizations in the statewide safety program of the commission.

At this time, I would like to extend an invitation to you to serve as a member of the commission's Advisory Committee on Civic Action. The three objectives of this committee are;

- a. To coordinate the safety programs of leading civic, business and professional organizations with the program of the Connecticut Safety Commission.*
- b. To keep citizen groups well informed about official traffic safety programs, and to encourage civic action in support of official programs.*
- c. To enlist the active support of civic, business and professional organizations for legislation and other measures designed to strengthen the statewide safety program.*

An initial meeting is planned in early February, and it is anticipated that no more than two or three meetings would be held per year.

Please let me know via the enclosed card if you will be willing to serve on the Advisory Committee on Civic Action. Your continued active interest and support of Connecticut's safety program will be appreciated.

Very sincerely,

*/s/ Cyril F. Mower, Vice Chairman
Connecticut Safety Commission and
Chairman, Advisory Committee on
Civic Action*

Records are missing on what happened to the program. Some of the things recommended were carried out at first, but within a decade the program was dropped. It was a great publicity campaign for a good cause. However, driving habits were too deeply embedded in the American psyche and culture to be substantially modified by advertising. It was a problem too big for even the Lions to solve. Yet, even if they saved one or two lives or decreased injuries by a minute percentage it was worth the effort.

After reading about the major projects of Connecticut Lions told in this chapter, their volunteer work in service to their fellow human beings needs no emphasis. Still, there are untold, even forgotten, ways in which clubs have cooperated with each other to achieve greater goals. Also, some projects conducted by individual clubs are of such magnitude and continuity that they might well have been included in Chapter III. One excellent example is Camp Layton Rose, established and continued in operation by the Waterbury Lions Club. That story is told in Chapter IV.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LIONS CLUBS

Chapters four, five, and six deal respectively with the clubs of District 23A, 23B, and 23C. Data on the chartering of all clubs are found in Appendix H, along with their first presidents, secretaries, and treasurers. These are not repeated in the three chapters. Some additional information about individual clubs can be found elsewhere throughout the History.

The following abbreviations are used in these three chapters:

LCIF - Lions Clubs International Foundation, Inc.

CLERF - Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation, Inc.

LGS - Lions Gallery of the Sightless, Inc.

Where the word (Host) appears in a club's name it means that the club was the first of more than one club organized in the town. Usually the host club has organized the other club or clubs in the town.

The three chapters are organized to present four aspects of Lionism:

1. Contributions, given by a Lions club directly to worthy causes without personal involvement of the Lions.
2. Club service activities, which usually require money, but also involve Lions in direct personal relationships with the beneficiaries. Examples are: taking the handicapped on picnics, giving Christmas parties for convalescents, assisting at glaucoma screenings, etc.
3. Civic projects which benefit a club's city as a whole. They usually involve labor as well as money. However, Lions are not working on a person-to-person basis with the beneficiaries of this kind of service. Examples are: building park pavilions, swimming pools or baseball fields, city cleanup days, and other like projects for city improvement.
4. Fund-raising activities, to which all Lions in the club are committed.

It will be immediately obvious in reading the next three chapters that not all clubs have received the same amount of coverage. Some clubs are older and had more to tell. Others simply did not report all their activities. A special effort was made to obtain information on the amount of money contributed to worthy causes by all the clubs in order to determine the impact of charitable giving by all Lions over the years. Because of under-reporting or failure to report on money gifts, the estimate is not as reliable as it might have been.

It is estimated that Connecticut Lions Clubs have contributed a total of \$20,000,000 from 1922 to 1983. This estimate is based on averaging each Lion's productive effort at about \$100.00 per year, times the average State membership per year, times 61 years. It is probably a conservative figure. It does not include materials and labor donated by Lions to all sorts of recreational and civic properties.

The estimate for time and labor is 900,000 hours. This includes fundraising projects; outings, picnics, and parties for the handicapped and the needy; glaucoma screenings, eyeglass collections and food banks; labor donated to build, repair, maintain, and beautify camps and civic facilities and places; time given to discussing and planning; and transportation time from home to meetings and worksites. The hour estimate is also conservative. It does not include social activities, conventions, organization of new clubs, and other internal matters.

To get a clearer view of all this, see the following chapters for what the various Lions Clubs have reported.

