

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

**The CT Lion Fairs &
Communications**



Chapter 7 & 8

Chapter 7

THE CONNECTICUT LIONS FAIRS

The most ambitious fundraisers held by any of the Connecticut Lions clubs are the country fairs. Of the fifty-nine annual fairs in Connecticut, six are operated by Lions. Of the six, five are classified by the Association of Connecticut Fairs as major fairs; namely, the Berlin, Hebron, Lebanon, Portland, and Terryville fairs. The Wolcott Lions Fair is classified as a district fair. It took courage and determination on the part of the clubs to start these fairs, and a prodigious amount of planning and labor to keep them going year after year. The fact that the six clubs have been able to do so much for their communities, and for State and International Lionism, attests to the success of their efforts.

The Berlin Lions Fair

The story of the Berlin Lions Fair begins with a swimming pool. The club undertook that project as a civic-improvement activity in 1946. The Berlin Lions Memorial Pool was dedicated in 1947. It was necessary to install a diversionary pipeline, and in 1949 the club took out a \$5,000 loan to pay for it. An outcome of discussions about repaying the loan was the decision to resurrect the Berlin Fair.

The original Berlin Fair was run by the Berlin Agricultural Society from 1866 to 1919. When they dropped the fair, there was none in the town for 30 years. Then, in 1949, the Berlin Lions appointed a committee to proceed with deliberate haste to bring the new fair into being. Members of the committee were: Clyde Kincaid, chairman; John Graham, vice chairman; George Hamlin, legal matters; Harold Harrison, treasurer; M.V. McLaughlin, secretary; and members Albin Holmquist, Joseph Kamenski, Paul Giana, Willis Winchell, Philip Mildrum, and Clifford Hamilton. Milton Abrams was club president.

Two questions pressed for immediate answers: where to hold the fair, and of what would it consist? The search for a suitable location ended at an ideal spot, Joseph Kamenski's farm in East Berlin. Mr. Kamenski allowed them to use the farm without charge. But it was only the land. There were no facilities or equipment. The club rented tents and, thanks to wonderful friends at the Durham Fair, they were able to borrow rabbit and poultry cages, a stone boat for the horse draw, and other equipment.

Meanwhile, other Berlin Lions were busy finding answers as to what would go on at the fair. They interviewed everyone they could find who remembered what the old Berlin Fair was like. They wished to include the old with the new, all the things that made fairs unique events. One such was the hot-air-balloon ascension and parachute drop. Ed Allen of Batavia, New York, was still performing this act, and he was brought back for the first fair. There would be poultry, rabbits, animals, and farm produce. There would be exhibits, rides and contests. There would be entertainment and square dancing, rides and games for youngsters and food.

Finally, October 7, 1949, the first Berlin Lions Fair opened with a parade of antique cars. George Green, Grand Marshal, officiated at the ribbon cutting ceremony, assisted by First Selectman, John Graham, with other town officials and Lions present. What started out to be a small fair turned into a most gratifying and encouraging success. It ran for three days, through October 9, 1949. There were

18,304 paid admissions. Total attendance was approximately 25,000, counting workers at the fair, persons with complimentary passes, and children who were admitted free on one afternoon.

From the beginning, the Berlin Lions Fair was classified a major fair, and it continued to grow. Permanent facilities were needed. The cost and inconvenience of renting tents was a detriment to both operations and financial returns. Mr. Kamenski and his wife, Stephanie, again came to the rescue with an offer to sell 117 acres. The terms were \$60,000 payable at \$4,000 per year, with a final payment of \$12,000. The Kamenski's would hold the mortgage, interest free. The sale was completed in 1954. Included with the land was an eight-room colonial house, a barn, and sheds. The club rented the house and barn until 1969 when it was leased to the Berlin Historical Society.

Even before the purchase, the Berlin Lions Club established the Berlin Agricultural and Horticultural Society. This incorporated society was only the Berlin Lions wearing different hats. Separate incorporation is a common practice among nonprofit organizations, done for legal reasons. When the land purchase was negotiated, the purchaser was the new corporation.

Once the title to the land was transferred, the Lions, i.e., the society, began a building program that was to continue for several years as Lions had the time and as funds became available. Some work was contracted, but most of the construction was done by the Lions. The Lions, as of 1983, had seven exhibit buildings, three food buildings, a headquarters, two rest rooms, three ticket offices, and two pump houses, a total of 18 structures. In addition, Berlin churches and a few nonprofit organizations have been permitted to construct their own fair-related building in the area. Four churches, the American Legion, the Kensington Garden Club, and the Democratic and Republican parties all have their own buildings. The Mattabassett Rifle and Pistol Club began constructing its own facility in 1983. The colonial house, which came with the land and which had been leased to the Berlin Historical Society, was purchased by that organization, but without title to the land.

The Lions have developed a community environment centering on the fair. In return, they have been supported by all groups involved. One example is the work of the Berlin Graduate Nurses Association. They have operated the first-aid station since the first fair, and as early as 1965, they reported donating 1,250 hours of service at the station. Another example is the services performed by the well-known veterinarian, Dr. John McIntosh.

As facilities expanded, so did all activities of the fair: exhibits, contests, concessions and entertainment. Craftsmen began arriving from all the New England states. Some were coming from New York, New Jersey, and from Tennessee. A few animal exhibitors are turned away because of space limitations, especially those for poultry, rabbits, cattle, and sheep.

Attendance is always the key to the growth and success of the fair. In almost every year when the weather is good a new attendance record is set. There were 30,000 paid admissions in 1983. This does not include workers, children on free-admission afternoon, those with passes and other special groups such as the handicapped.

Ed Allen, the balloonist, was injured at another fair and had to retire. His act was replaced by a skydiving team. There have been animal acts with buffaloes, elephants, and Harriet Beatty's lions. Sal Soloman, a Hollywood stuntman, has performed a high-diving act at the fair.

Beginning in 1949, the Martin Ranch has put on a western horse show on Sunday, and this has become a regular feature. Also, the 4-H Boots and Spurs Club has



Berlin Lions Fair, 1949

sponsored a Saturday horse show, an open-entry event.

The Berlin Fair Marathon was a feature of the original fair which again became a scheduled event from 1961 to 1966. Dr. Ludmil Chotkowski was responsible for having the event reinstated. Unfortunately it had to be discontinued, not for lack of contestants or interest, but because of traffic on Buckley Road.

The above outline merely indicates the evolution of the Berlin Lions Fair. Management practices also changed to meet growing responsibilities. The General Chairman of the first fair was Clyde Kincaid. Clifford Hamilton chaired the second in 1950. For several years, 1951 through 1968, the Lions Club president was also the General Manager of the fair. It finally became too great a responsibility for one man to hold both offices. In setting up the officers for the Berlin Agricultural and Horticultural Association in 1969, it was decided that the Lions Club First Vice President would be the General Chairman of the fair, and the Lions President would be Honorary Chairman.

Planning is always more than a year ahead of the next fair. Determining the concessionaires, coordinating with the nonprofit organizations who share the facilities, inviting participation in the arts, needlework, agricultural, and other exhibits, arranging for entertainment and many other logistical problems must be resolved every year. Added to these tasks is the ordering of all supplies for the food booths. Request by food concessionaires are submitted to the Lions who do all purchasing for reasons of health and quality control. And just before opening day the work schedule for the Lions must have its final revision. It takes every man doing his share to make the event a success.

And successful the Berlin Fairs have been. The projects started out as a means to

pay back a loan for work on the Lions Memorial Pool. The loan was paid promptly, and over the years, it is estimated that the club has contributed \$250,000 to this one cause (the Lions Memorial Pool) alone. This even includes the cost of lifeguards. Every year the children of Berlin swim free of charge. Other generous contributions by the Berlin Lions Club are recorded in Chapter Five.

Many Berlin Lions have given beyond the call of simply fund raising to make the fair an outstanding major event. It is difficult to select individuals for special recognition. Yet, two names are often mentioned, Nunzio Rosso and Al Holmquist. Al Holmquist is referred to as one of the fathers of the fair. He owned an automobile agency in Berlin, and this served as a meeting place for the fair committee for several years. He also served on the original committee.

Nunzio Rosso, another "father of the fair", served as Fair Treasurer for 15 years. No further endorsement is needed for Nunzio, but the record would be incomplete without reference to some of the things he has done for his club and for Lionism in Connecticut. For more information about this great Lion, see the Berlin Lions Club entry in Chapter Five.

Hebron Lions Harvest Fair

One of the first activities of the Hebron Lions Club was to assist the Hebron Recreation Council in running a small local fair. After a year under this arrangement, and at the suggestion of the Recreation Council, the Lions assumed sponsorship of the fair in 1971.

After another year, a very successful one, the club voted to acquire property for a permanent fairgrounds. In 1972, the club bought 84 acres of land from William Monaco on Route 85 in Hebron. The price was \$40,000, to be paid over ten years. Collateral was the good name of the Lions. The mortgage was paid on time and in full. Later, in 1978, an additional 16 acres was purchased from Wilbur and Alan Hills for \$16,000. This is being paid by the rental of fairgrounds facilities, by sponsoring events such as a bluegrass festival and the Donna Fargo show, and by using part of the profits of the Hebron Fair.

While the Lions were working to pay off mortgages they also were constructing facilities. The following list shows the types of buildings and when they were constructed.

1972-Wood-frame electrical storage building

1973-Two wood-frame toilets

1976-50 by 100 feet pole-type building, wood truss construction with aluminum roof

1977-Wood-frame Lions' food booth

1979-Two wood-frame stages for performances

1980-Single row of concession booths; permanent ticket booth, security and business office

1981-Single row of concession booths; maintenance storage shed (date of construction uncertain)

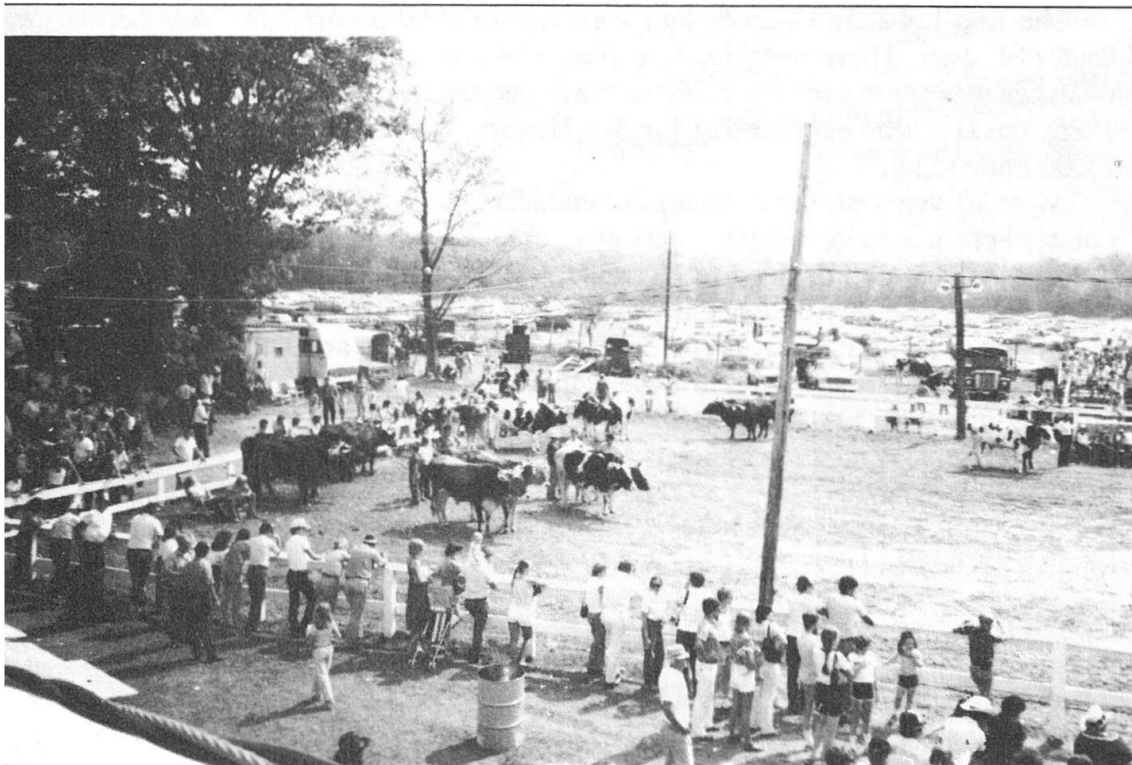
1982-Double row of concession booths

1983-Electrical building, concrete and wood-truss construction

The expansion of facilities attests to the success of the fair. When run by the Recreation Council it was a small, local event not listed by the Association of Connecticut Fairs. In the first two years of operation by the Lions 1971 and 1972, it was listed as a district fair. Thereafter, it was listed as a major fair. It continues to grow and is usually referred to as the "Big H." There were 40 concessions at the first Lions fair and 130 at the one in 1983. Club policy is to allocate concession spaces

first to local, nonprofit organizations, and to rent all other spaces.

Attendance is the true measure of success, and the phenomenal growth of the "Big H" is reflected in the few hundred people who came to the first fair and the estimated 130,000 who came to the one in 1983. The Hebron Lions hired the Mansfield Lions to handle the parking, and this arrangement is expected to continue.



Hebron Lions Harvest Fair—The Big "H", 1980

Exhibits, amusements, and entertainment have kept pace with other developments. Nashville entertainment has included Sheb Wooley, Freddie Hart, the Blue Ridge Boys and Mark IV Band, and Tommy Overstreet and the Nashville Express. The Hebron Lions Fair was the first to feature "King Arthur and the Lion" high-wire act and the first to feature a farm tractor pull. It was one of the first Connecticut fairs to run four days. However, the club makes every effort to ensure that the "Big H" retains the atmosphere of a true country fair oriented toward the family. The aim is to portray the present in an agricultural setting and not lose sight of our roots in the past.

As the Harvest Fair has grown, management has changed to meet the added responsibilities. A separate corporation, the Hebron Lions Agricultural Society, Inc., was chartered in 1979 to manage the fair and disburse monies in accordance with the laws and regulations governing nonprofit organizations. This gives the legal framework. However, nothing would happen without the many committees which control, direct, execute, and integrate the hundreds of details that a major fair demands, and these committees all depend on the unselfish dedication of the Hebron Lions and their wives.

Lebanon Lions Fair

The Lebanon Lions Club was chartered and incorporated in 1952. From the outset they thought in terms of major projects for the benefit of the community.

In 1955, the club purchased 38 acres of wooded land for \$2,000. They cleared about eight acres, built a three-acre pond, and opened a recreation area for the town's use.

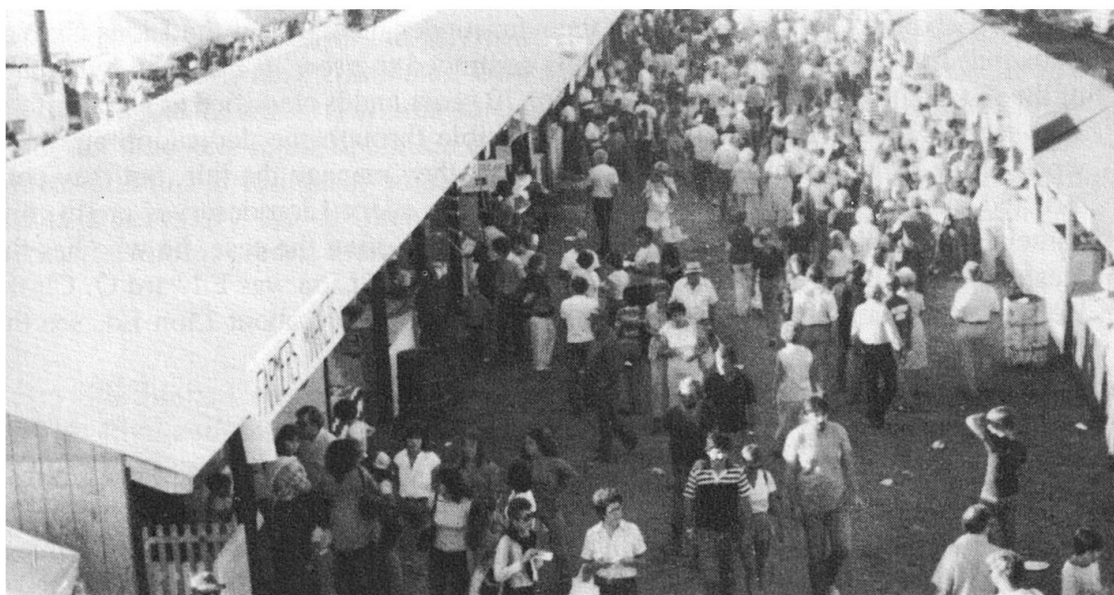
The club needed substantial revenues to carry out their work, but Lebanon is basically a farming community and bedroom town of about 4,700 people. It does not have a strong base to support charitable activities. The Lions needed outside revenues, and this led to the decision to start a fair.

The first Lebanon Country Fair was held in 1959 on the large common in the center of town. There were rides, games, exhibits, and about 30 concessions. Attendance was approximately 2,500. It was a success, as has been every fair since. In 1983, the last year of reporting for this History, there were 118 concessions with 25,000 attending.

After 10 years on the common, attendance and activities had increased to the point where it was no longer practical to erect and dismantle temporary facilities each year. The club decided to clear the rest of their land and build a permanent fairgrounds. The club obtained a twenty-year loan in the amount of \$32,000 from their bank in Willimantic and proceeded to clear the land and build a cyclone fence around four and a half acres for the fair itself. The Lions constructed their first building in 1968, 105 feet long by 40 feet wide, to be used as an exhibition hall. Also, in this year they constructed a power building.

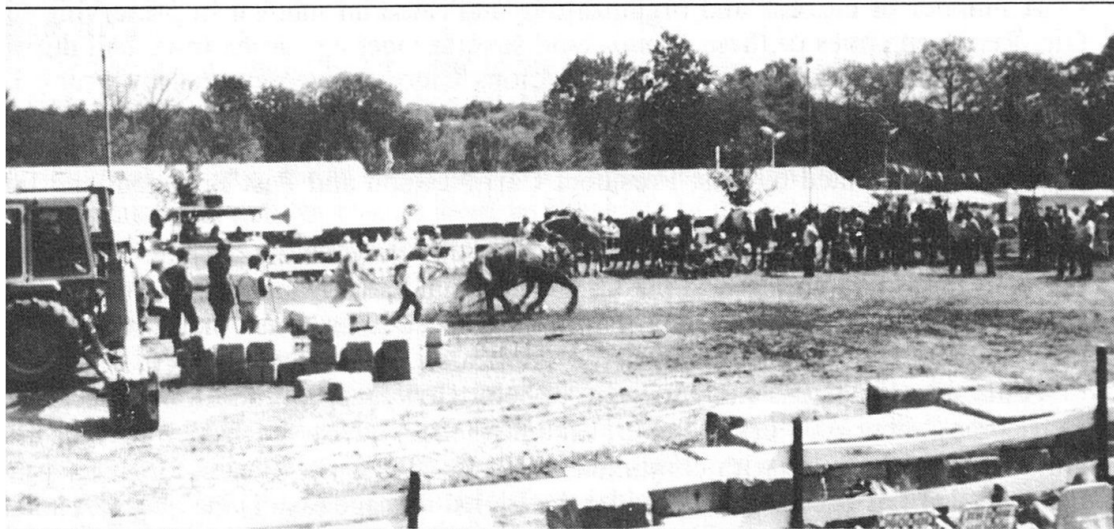
The club continued to rent tents for five years, and then constructed a pole-type building 150 feet long by 40 feet wide for dairy cattle, and a toilet facility 20 feet long by 14 feet wide. Their last building, also a pole-type building, was constructed in 1980. It is 90 feet long by 40 feet wide, and it is used for sheep and poultry exhibits. Both pole-type buildings are often rented for social functions when not being used for the fair.

In 1975, the club purchased additional land adjoining the fairgrounds in the front. This consisted of four building lots, or about seven acres, at a cost of \$8,000. They sold one lot for \$3,000 and financed the balance with a three-year loan to be paid from receipts from the fair. The land is to be used to park cars on the grass.



Hebron Lions Fair—The Big "H"

R. Campbell



Lebanon Contry Fair, August 7, 1982

Ken Olson

The Lebanon Lions still conduct their fair under the name of the Lions Club of Lebanon, Inc., even though the fair has continued to grow. It has been a member of the Association of Connecticut Fairs for 20 years and is classified as a major fair. The success of the fair has been made possible through the dedication and hard work of the members of the club. Not only do they manage the fair, but they constructed most of the buildings themselves. While every Lion deserves credit, one name stands out both in ideas and leadership. As is often the case, he who has the idea ends up in charge of the project. This outstanding Lion was Edward O. Clark. He served as Fair Superintendent for 25 years. For more about Lion Ed, see the Lebanon Club's entry in Chapter VI.

Portland Lions Fair

The Portland Fair began in the early 1920s as a project of the Portland Grange. In 1949, the Portland Exchange Club joined the Grange in operating the fair. The Grange discontinued its association with the fair in the late 1950s and the Exchange Club operated it alone. After the 1980 fair, the Exchange Club announced that it would no longer continue the event.

A number of citizens and organizations indicated an interest in preserving the fair. Representatives of these groups held several meetings at the town hall during the winter of 1980-1981. The Portland Lions Club was represented by Frank L. DiStefano, District Governor of District 23C, Club President Joseph Barry, Club Vice President Carl Wallace, and club member Oddilion LaRoche. The Exchange Club was represented by Past President Carl Newson and Past President and fair chairman, Don Goodrich.

None of the organizations would commit itself to such a big project. Finally the Portland Lions Club offered to put up the financial backing and provide the leadership to continue the fair. The Lions Club proceeded to establish the Portland Fair, Inc., and received the charter of that organization, dated September 1, 1981.

A number of citizens came forward to help. However, for the Lions it became a total commitment of every member, including their wives. Each member put in a minimum of 60 hours, with committee chairmen working twice as long. That the Portland Fair has been a success under the Lions' management is the only testament needed to prove their dedication.

When the Grange started the fair it was held in the Gildersleve section of Portland on Route 17A in the vicinity of Summer Street on property owned by the Rev. Masters' Auto Club. From there it moved to the Jarvis property on Route 66 and finally to the Portland fairgrounds on Route 17A.

The land where the fair is presently held is owned by the Portland Exchange Club and a number of private individuals. Rent for the ground and for parking exceeds \$5,000, which includes use of the property for about two weeks. There are three pole tents on the grounds, and the Lions Club rents five circus tents. The Lions are presently exploring the possibility of acquiring land for an expansion of the fair.

The fair has continued to grow under the Lions' management. Paid attendance at their first fair was over 9,000. It is registered as a major fair. In 1983, paid attendance exceeded 21,000. There were approximately 30 concessions at the first fair and 75 at the last one. Entertainment has featured karate exhibitions, skydivers, break dancers, high-wire acts, quality professional bands, country and western music and helicopter rides. The fair offers the usual country fair events of poultry and livestock exhibitions, horse draws, vegetable and fruit exhibits, baked goods, art, crafts, needlework, etc.

Those who have been in the forefront of fair planning and operations are Past District Governor Frank DiStefano, Ody and Jeanne LaRoche, Peter Scianna, and Bill and Jackie Reardon. Perhaps an unusual practice is that some of the Lions' wives not only help in the operation of the fair, but also serve on the planning committees and are in charge of some specific programs. The small size of the club makes it necessary that all members participate fully in the planning and in the work. Therefore, credits really should include the entire club roster.

Terryville Lions Country Fair

The Plymouth-Terryville area had four different fairs over eighteen years, 1902-1920. The first was Wilton's fair, operated by a private group. It was held on Carter Road during its short life of two years. The Plymouth Grange operated a fair on North Street on the grounds later occupied by the Plymouth Center School. It closed in 1914. A year later, the Terryville Agricultural Society started a fair on North Riverside Avenue. It closed in 1920. There was a rival to this fair, the Plymouth Fair. It was held on the same street, but at a different location and different days.

For a long time there was no fair in the area, until the Terryville Lions decided to hold their first one, September 17-18, 1949. The Lion most responsible for organizing the effort was J. Francis Ryan. He had been a member of the Terryville Agricultural Society. Later he served five years as President of the Association of Connecticut Fairs and for twelve years as President of the Litchfield County Council of Fairs. Francis also was one of the organizers and a charter member of the Terryville Lions Club.

The Terryville Lions started their Fair on farmland owned by the Stashenko family. At first they rented land just for the duration of each fair, and rented tents to house exhibits and other needed facilities. In 1975, the Lions bought the 28 acres they had been renting from the Stashenko family. They paid \$94,000 for the land, financed by a mortgage on which they were still paying as of 1983. Shortly thereafter they bought two and a half acres from Ida Sorenson for \$15,000 cash. They bought another plot of approximately one acre from three women who were joint owners. For this they paid \$14,000, again in cash. Both plots were contiguous to each other and to the fairgrounds. The extra land was needed for expansion and for parking.

In 1975, the Lions incorporated themselves as the Terryville Country Fair. They began construction of permanent buildings immediately after they bought the land. One large, pole-type building was constructed in 1975 for exhibitions and another for animals was built in 1980. Four other large, pole-type structures were erected as time and funds were available. Virtually all the work was done by Lions. As of 1983, they had a total of 13 buildings. One of the last buildings was dedicated to J. Francis Ryan. Because of the growth of the fair, they still in 1983 rent two or three large tents each year.

At the first fair there were approximately 12 concessions, and in 1983 there were over 400. Paid attendance was approximately 1500, at the first fair, and about 33,000 in 1983.

The Terryville Country Fair offers all the attractions of a major fair: livestock exhibits, poultry, rabbits, vegetables, fruits, baked and canned goods, flowers and floral displays, arts, crafts, needlework, food booths, games and entertainment, etc.

One of the highlights of the Terryville Fair is the annual fireworks display. Another event for the past five years, 1979-1983, is the performance of the Bristol Old Tyme Fiddlers' Club. Over fifty of the Fiddlers' Club members (total over 90) participate in the rendering of old-time music and current tunes.



Lion William Allread and U.S. Senator Lowell Weicker at the Terryville Fair



Governor's Footguard at the Terryville Fair

In addition to honoring J. Francis Ryan, the club gives special recognition to Frank Dzielinski who started as secretary of the first fair and has continued in that demanding job ever since. If it can be said that one man holds this huge project together it has to be Lion Frank.

Wolcott Lions Fair

In 1979, the President of the Wolcott Lions Club appointed a five-man committee to study ways to raise funds. Their suggestions included a beerfest, a carnival, an international foodfest, and a fair. The last suggestion was adopted.

Wolcott had a fair from 1882-1940. It was conducted annually by the Wolcott Agricultural Society except for the years 1906, 1934, 1935, 1937, and 1938. The Lions Committee contacted the late John Washburne of the Wolcott Historical Society for information about the original fair. What they learned encouraged them to go ahead in spite of the fact that the earlier one had folded. The original fairgrounds could still be used, though it was now the site of Frisbie School and the property of the town. Only one building remained from the original fair, and it was not available because it was used by the town.



Wolcott Lions Fair, Sept. 14, 1983

Ken Olson

The local government donated the use of the land, and the first Wolcott Lions Fair was opened in 1979 with a food tent, a carnival, and miscellaneous game booths. The first event was a moderate success and each fair thereafter was bigger than the preceding one. In 1983, thirteen tents were needed to accommodate the activities. These included oxen and horse draws, 35 food concessions, arts and crafts exhibits, approximately fifty commercial firms' exhibits, an agricultural exhibit with one of the largest poultry shows in the state, a midway, continuous live entertainment, a three-day family auction, and a spectacular fireworks display.

Every year the fair opens with the Wolcott Lions hosting area handicapped children and adults with three hours of free rides and food. There are baking contests and money prizes for art, needlework, and crafts; vegetables and fruit; animals, and other categories. The Wolcott Lions found it interesting to compare prize money with the amounts offered at the original fair. The oxen draw at the first fair carried a first prize of \$5.00, and a second prize of \$3.00. In 1983, the first prize (over 3,200 pounds category) was \$70.00, down through the sixth prize of \$20.00. On the other hand, in 1983, the first, second and third prizes in each of the categories of needlework (quilting, embroidery, rugs, cross-stitch and counter-stitch, etc.) was respectively \$3.00, \$2.00 and \$1.00. Thus, "woman's work" still did not rate very high on the honor roll.

The Wolcott Lions have not established a separate association to manage the fair, but conduct it under their own name. In spite of limitations due to a lack of permanent facilities, their Wolcott Country Fair is classified as a district fair after being in existence only five years.

While all Connecticut fairs are operated to make a profit, they also keep alive a great American harvest tradition, combined with a festive atmosphere where people can relax, meet old friends and forget the daily stresses of life. The fairs are also educational experiences for those who live and work in a world of technology, separated from the growing and living things of gardens and farms. A visit to a fair is especially valuable for children, even if they get a stomach ache from overindulgence. The sights, sounds, and smells can not be duplicated anywhere else. Thus, the six Lions clubs, along with other operators of these events, deserve credit for keeping alive a segment of America's cultural history.

Chapter 8

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications is the medium that holds any large organization together and keeps all the parts working toward established objectives. Few, if any, organizations communicate internally better than the Lions, and that is one reason for their success.

Verbal Communications

Verbal communication is the primary and most effective means of transmitting information. Club meetings vary...monthly, biweekly, or weekly. At the meetings correspondence is read, committee reports are received and discussed, and decisions are made. In addition, the club's board of directors meets monthly to discuss projects and programs and to prepare recommendations to be made to the club members at regular meetings. The board also recommends new members.

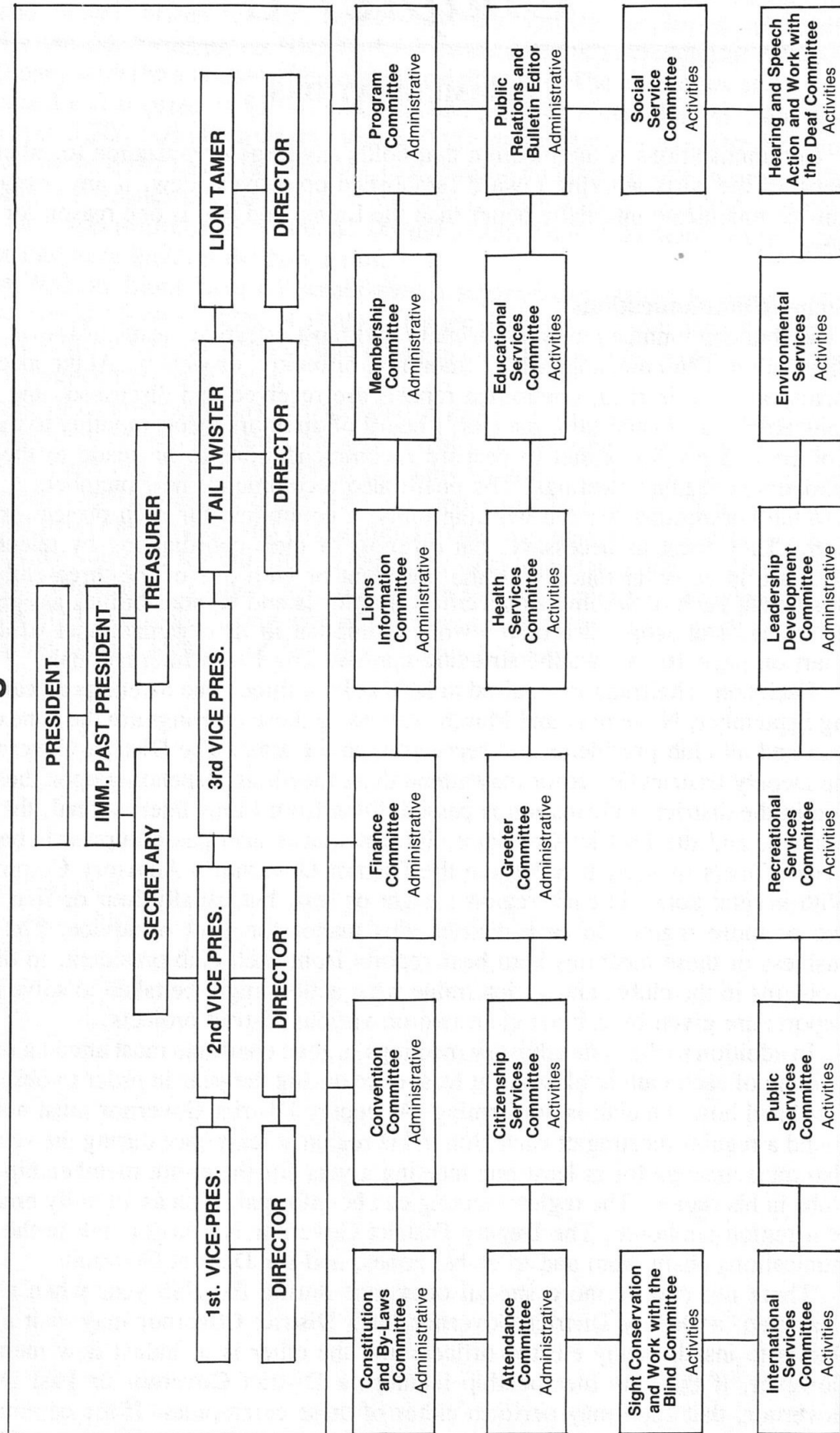
Club committees are the working units, a committee for each project or program. They meet as necessary, but do most of their coordinating by telephone. They are in constant touch with the president or with one of the three club vice presidents, each of whom has specific committees and responsibilities assigned to his office. The scope of a club's work is implicit in its organizational structure. Chart on page 162 shows the structure approved by Lions International.

Each zone chairman is required to hold at least three zone meetings a year, during September, November and March. Attending these meetings are the zone chairman and all club presidents and secretaries in the zone. The District Governor or the Deputy District Governor may attend these meetings, depending upon the tradition in the district. Information is passed down from Lions International, the State Council, and the District Governor. Information is also passed upwards because these officers in session constitute the District Governor's Advisory Committee. With several zones in each region...eight or less, but usually four or five...and two or more regions in each district, this makes for a lot of advice. The main business of these meetings is to hear reports from each club president, to discuss problems in the clubs, and to determine what action might be taken to solve them. Reports are given by cabinet chairmen on various district projects.

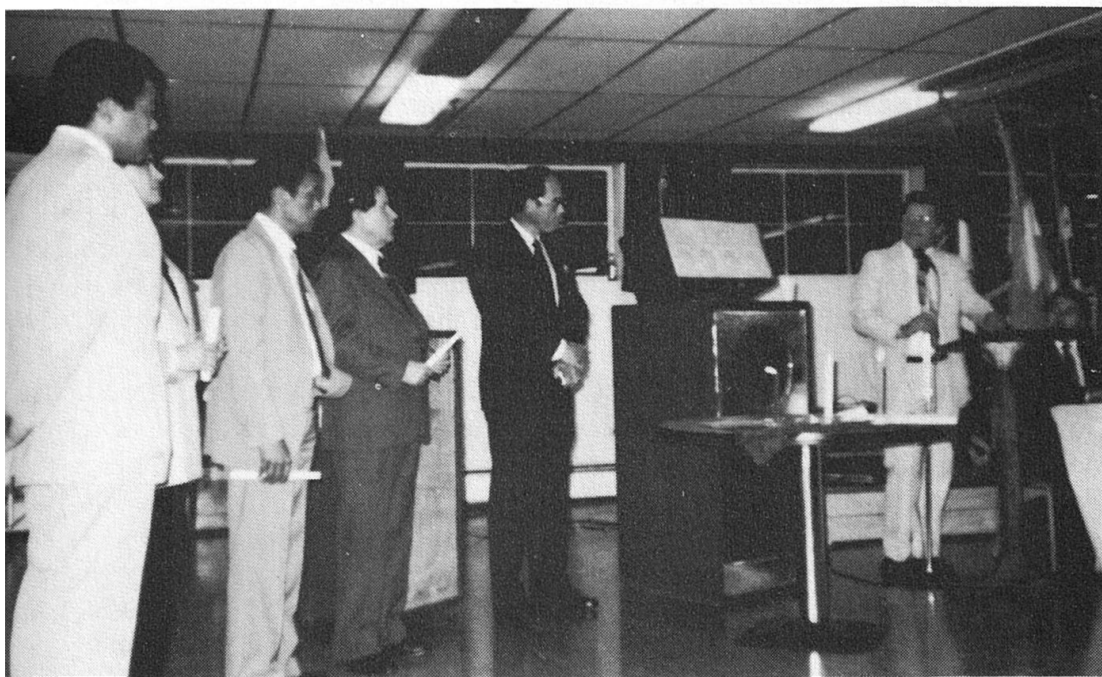
In addition to the zone advisory meetings, a zone chairman must attend a regular meeting of each club in his zone at least once during the year in order to observe at first hand how the club is performing. A Deputy District Governor must not only attend a regular meeting of each club in his region at least once during the year, but also must arrange for at least one meeting a year for the entire membership of all clubs in his region. The region meeting can be informal, such as a family breakfast or a region jamboree. The Deputy District Governor is a major link in the communications chain from and to clubs, zones, and the District Governor.

There are two or more special occasions during the club year when a Zone Chairman, a Deputy District Governor, or a District Governor may visit a club. One is to install newly elected officers and the other is to induct new members. However, if the club membership includes a District Governor or Past District Governor, that Lion may perform either of these ceremonies. If the ceremony is performed by a visiting Lion official, it may or may not be counted as one of his required official visits to the club, depending upon circumstances of the occasion.

Lions Clubs International Club Standard Organization Plan



The installation of newly elected officers occurs during the month of June, as the Lions' year runs from July 1 through June 30 of the following year. Installation is a formal ritual (See Appendix R). Every Lion is encouraged to "move up through the chairs," holding successive offices until he finally serves as president.



Installation ceremony of Hartford Evening club.

Induction of new members also is a formal ceremony (See Appendix Q). It is designed to impress upon new members the seriousness of the Lions' pledge to serve others with his substance and his labor. If a club is fortunate enough to recruit several new members, it could have more than one induction ceremony per year.



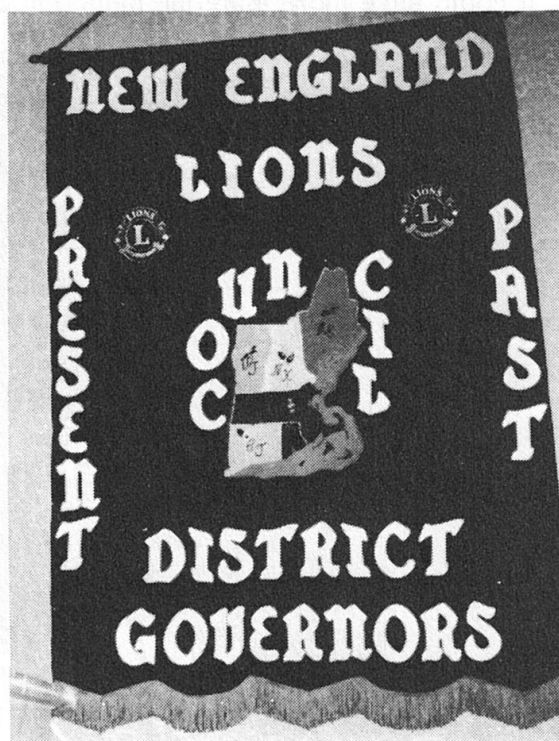
DDG Ken Olson inducts new members as DG George Lomnitzer looks on. New Britain Lions Club.

The busiest communicator of all is the District Governor. Anyone aspiring to that office must expect to spend about 200 nights or days away from home during his year in office, and drive 10,000 to 20,000 miles or more. Candidates for that office are invited to attend the State Council meeting in January. They are also encouraged to attend the Lions New England Council meeting in January to meet with other candidates for District Governor in the New England area. Newly elected District Governors are expected to attend the Lions International Seminar discussed below. The District Governor must visit a regular meeting of each club in his district at least once during his one-year tenure. He must arrive early to meet with club officers prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Each District Governor has his own cabinet (Chart No. 1 Chapter II), consisting of the cabinet secretary-treasurer, deputy district governors, zone chairmen, and cabinet chairmen. These last are nonvoting members. The cabinet meets quarterly. The main topics for discussion are the vitality of the clubs and the progress of work by the district committees.

The State Council (Chart No. 2, Chapter II) is composed of the three District Governors of Multiple District 23. It has a nonvoting chairman who is an immediate past district governor and a nonvoting secretary-treasurer who is a past district governor. The council must meet five times yearly, including: one time within thirty days after the State Convention, one time during October, January and March, and a final time on the first day of the next State Convention. The council chairman may call special meetings for urgent business. The main functions of the council are planning and conducting the State Convention and the Mid-Winter Conferences, establishing policy for the Multiple District in conformity with the rules of Lions Clubs International, and conducting the Lions Leaders Seminar.

The Leaders Seminar committee consists of two past district governors from each district and a chairman who is also a past district governor. The seminar is usually held in June for newly-elected club presidents, secretaries, and treasurers. Its purpose is to develop strong and successful clubs through highly trained leaders.



Merrimack, New Hampshire Banner.

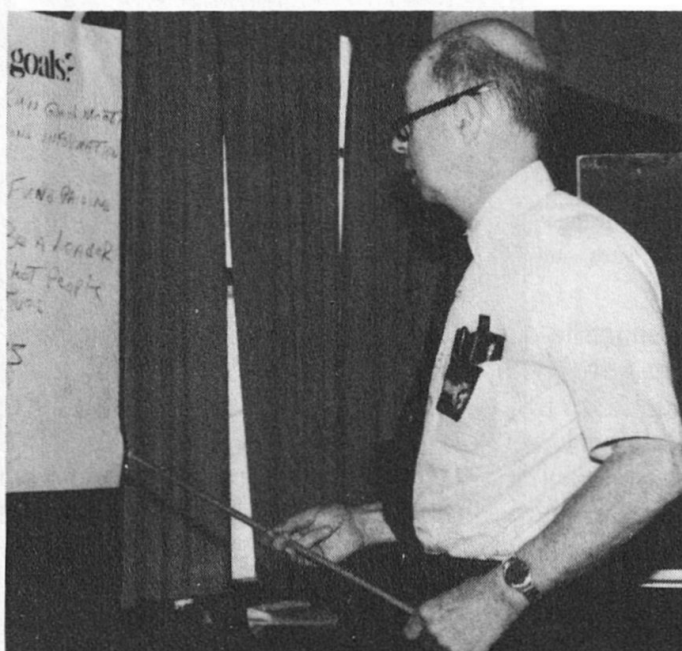
The most recent of the Connecticut Lions seminars is one for all new Lions. It was initiated by Past District Governor Howard Wry of 23B in 1982. The first of these was held in Windsor, Connecticut, and the second in Unionville, Connecticut, in 1983. As of 1983, it is still an experimental program, not officially adopted by the State Council. Its purpose is to motivate new members and inform them about the organization and functions of Lionism above the club level. The seminar leaders encourage new members to avail themselves of the opportunities for advancement to higher positions of leadership in their clubs, zones and districts.



Merrimac, New Hampshire site of New England Council Seminars.



Past International Director and Chairman Joe Raub opens the Lions Leadership Development Training Session



P.I.D. Joe outlining his objectives to the class.

The New England Council is a representative group from all districts in the six New England states. It conducts the New England Council Cabinet Leaders Seminar. This seminar was initiated by Past District Governor of 23C Joe Raub, who conducted the first one in 1973. It usually meets in Merrimack, New Hampshire, in September. Those Lions who will serve in a District Governor's key cabinet positions are urged to attend.



New members orientation, 1982.



PDG Bill Jerin addressing the new member seminar at Camp Happy Hill, Connecticut in 1982.

A pre-election seminar is held for candidates for District Governor. These are conducted by the Connecticut Association of Past District Governors when requested to do so by the State Council. The purpose is to inform the candidates on details of the office in order to get new administrations off to a smooth start. The Association of Past District Governors is mainly a social group, but makes itself available for special projects of the council.

Lions Clubs International conducts a seminar for newly-elected District Governors during the three days immediately preceding the official opening of the International Convention. All newly-elected governors are expected to attend no matter where in the world the convention meets.

The annual International Convention also serves the purpose of fostering opportunities for verbal communications among delegates from the 157 countries or geographical locations where Lions clubs exist. Most countries are represented at the International Convention. Yet these are not the only opportunities Lions make for themselves to talk across national boundaries. Lions from all countries of the free world travel abroad for business and pleasure. They often make a point of visiting a Lions club abroad and exchanging club banners as tokens of friendship.



Lion John Perri on left and President W. Bud Redman present club banner to Dietrick Kohne, a visitor from West Germany. Mr. Kohne was passing through Guilford during our 1983 Peach Shortcake Festival.

Most clubs around the world make a point of displaying their collection of banners at club meetings. In Connecticut, with only one-third of the clubs answering the question about individual visits by their Lions to clubs in other countries, the following countries were listed: Antigua, Austria, Bermuda, Canada, England, France, Germany, Grand Cayman Islands, Greece, India, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, Portugal, Scotland, Spain, St. Martens Island, South Africa and Venezuela. Visitors to Connecticut clubs came from Australia, England, France, and Japan. Lions are encouraged to wear their distinctive Lions lapel pin wherever they go. When they travel abroad this leads to some interesting casual meetings. Even when two Lions do not understand each other's language, they smile and shake hands because they understand the language of Lionism.

Written Communications

Written communications are as thorough and comprehensive as oral dialogue. Again, the greater part of written material is for internal use. The grass roots item is the club newsletter or bulletin. All clubs are urged to issue one at regular intervals, and about 95 percent of the clubs do. Normally they are issued monthly, except during July and August when most meetings are dormant. Some of the clubs have either a weekly or biweekly newsletter. The newsletter reviews what has happened since the last issue and what is planned for the current month. It alerts members to important coming events. Special attention is given to fundraisers and service projects, urging all good Lions to come to the aid of their clubs. Social news and Lions awards are also important items in the newsletter.

The oldest club newsletter in Connecticut is the "Jungle News" of the New Haven Club. It was first issued in 1922, soon after the club was founded and when Herbert F. Beebe was secretary. Each week one of the Lions would contribute enough of his business letterhead paper and envelopes to mail to all members. After several years the club adopted its own letterhead, but the title "Jungle News" was retained. Lester Hintz, club historian, estimated that about 3,000 issues have been mailed since 1922.

The club secretaries take minutes of meetings, and, while these are not usually distributed, they are a valuable reference frequently referred to in conducting club business.

A basic report required of all clubs is the monthly Membership and Activities (M&A) report. It is a one-page standardized form of Lions Clubs International. It condenses a lot of information by using code symbols and abbreviations. Copies go to Lions Clubs International, district governors, deputy district governors, and zone chairmen.

Every club finds it necessary to write many letters during the year. Some are official to the District Governor. Many are about projects and programs, some being announcements to other clubs. There are always letters of appreciation to individuals and firms that have supported the club.

Zone Chairmen are not required to circulate a zone newsletter, and usually do not. There has been at least one exception; Keith Wuerthner, chairman of Zone 5, District 23B, 1983-84, did issue four newsletters, "The Rap Sheet," during his tenure. It was an exception well received.

Each subdistrict of Multiple District 23 issues its own bulletin which is mailed to all members. These run from four to eight pages, depending upon news items submitted by the clubs and district officers, and communications received from the State Council, the Lions charitable foundations, and Lions Clubs International. Bulletins serve the basic need of keeping members informed, especially committee chairmen who need to know what is happening in their areas of responsibility. They carry messages from the Governors and other newsworthy items, as well as reports on special projects, including the work of Lions overseas, youth exchanges, and Lioness and Leo club activities. Bulletins of all three districts average four issues per year. They are self-supporting from advertisements from clubs and businesses.

The most important document prepared by the District Governor is the district directory. It lists all officers down to and including club secretaries and treasurers. It gives their home addresses and home and business telephone numbers. It lists the same information for all district committee chairmen and past district governors. It contains other Lions information as well, altogether some 350 entries. The directory also lists all Lioness clubs, their presidents, secretaries, and treasurers, with addresses and telephone numbers. The directory must be prepared within a few weeks

LIONS COMMUNICATIONS



The Knight - Lion

NEWS ABOUT THE NEW BRITAIN EVENING LIONS CLUB
POST OFFICE BOX 550 NEW BRITAIN, CONN 06050



LIONS CLUB OF HARTFORD Inc
PARMA RESTAURANT, HARTFORD, CONN.



Bethlehem LIONS CLUB

Connecticut LIONS FOUNDATION
Eye Research

THE LIONS VISION



HARTFORD EVENING LIONS CLUB
P.O. Box AO Hartford, Connecticut 06106

BRISTOL LIONS CLUB
NUTMEG SIMBA
Post Office Box 1221 • Bristol, Connecticut 06010



LIONS CLUB OF AVON
We Serve

Avon Connecticut 06001



THE EAST WINDSOR LIONS CLUB, Inc.
P.O. Box 288
Windsor, Connecticut 06095



Litchfield LIONS CLUB
Litchfield, Connecticut 06759

SEYMOUR LIONS CLUB
LION



TALES

NEWINGTON PRIDE

LIONS CLUB OF NEW BRITAIN, INC.
Den News
Meetings Each Tuesday, 12:15 P.M. at Y.M.C.A. Except July and August.

THE RAP SHEET
V. Keith Muertner
Zone 5 Chairman
District 23B Connecticut

The TAIL TWISTER
News and activities of
THE WEST HARTFORD LIONS CLUB
P.O. Box 10123 - West Hartford, CT 06110

THE BETHEL LIONS CLUB
BETHEL, CONN. 06001

The Tale Twister
ALL THE NEWS THAT'S PRINT TO FIT
For and about East Hartford Lions



LIONS CLUB OF TORRINGTON, INC.
P.O. BOX 88
TORRINGTON, CONNECTICUT

The News Bulletin
ROCKY HILL LIONS CLUB
Rocky Hill-Pivot Point of Connection

THE CUB REPORTER

WINDSOR LOCKS LIONS CLUB

WINDSOR LOCKS, CT. 06096



Lion's Purr
EAST GRANBY LIONS CLUB

MANCHESTER LIONS CLUB
P.O. Box 614
Manchester, CT 06040



The District Spirit
23B CONNECTICUT
BY LION W. KEITH MUERTNER
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT



Moose Lions Club
MONROE, CONNECTICUT
Entering Our Twenty-Fifth Year of Service
MARCH 1952 - 1977



DISTRICT PRIDE
District 23A

Bulletins and Newsletters

after the new governor is elected. This means that he must have been working on his appointments while he was still a candidate for the governorship, even when he was unsure of his election to office. Much of the actual work on the directory may be done by the district secretary, depending upon the wishes of the candidate. Without the directory much of the Lions business would grind to a halt.

The District Governor must also report the names and addresses of all newly elected and/or appointed district officers and committee chairmen to the International office no later than August 15 following his election at the State Convention which always occurs in late April or early May. This report is filed on the association's standard Forms M-28 and M-28A.

The District Governor must submit a monthly report to the International office on or before the 20th of the following month, covering all his visitations. He must report all conventions, conferences, cabinet meetings, and any other district-wide meetings.

The names and addresses of all newly elected club presidents and secretaries must be reported by May 31 on International's Form PU-101.

The District Governor must, within 30 days following the close of the International Convention, file with the International office a certification as to those club presidents in his jurisdiction who have qualified for the 100 Percent Club President's Award. The certification is executed on a Lions International standard form.

The outgoing District Governor must, within 30 days following the close of the International Convention, file an Extension Survey Report for his district outlining performances and functions which might be improved, including the formation of new clubs. A copy of this report is given to his successor, and a copy is sent to the multiple-district secretary or extension representative.

The outgoing District Governor must turn over to his successor the names and addresses of all newly elected club officers as well as all district records. A receipt must be obtained and mailed to the International office within 40 days after the close of the International Convention. Even then he is not finished. He is expected to make himself available for many assignments, especially those involving responsibilities of the State Council.

The State Council is responsible for all written reports of its own seven committees, and the annual reports of the Mid-Winter Conferences and State Conventions. The conference reports run to 20 pages and convention reports upwards of 40 or more. The State Council Secretary must send a copy of each report to Lions Clubs International, District Governors, governors elect, past district governors, and club secretaries.

The State Council, districts, and clubs have their own constitutions and by-laws. In addition, the State Council has a Policy-Protocol Manual binding on all subordinate units (see Appendix N). None of the items mentioned immediately above may have provisions in contradiction to the Constitution and By-laws of Lions Clubs International or to any officially sanctioned policy of Lions International.

Outside the normal chain of command are the Lions Eye Research Foundation, Inc., and the Lions Gallery of the Sightless, Inc. These charitable organizations issue their own reports, copies of which are provided to the State Council, the District Governors, and selected outside organizations and agencies.

Communications with the public include newspaper releases and radio and television announcements. Many clubs also distribute flyers and put up posters advertising special projects and fundraisers. Street signs at town lines advertise service clubs. The average number of newspaper releases per year is four per club.

These usually relate to donations and are accompanied by a photo of two or three Lions Club members and the recipient. Some local newspapers are cooperative with the Lions, and some are not. Large metropolitan dailies carry few news releases for local charitable organizations, with the exception of such groups as United Way and the Red Cross. The average number of radio announcements by local stations is one per club per year. Television coverage is rare indeed. When it is provided, it is usually for large public gatherings such as Lions fairs. Of the fairs in Connecticut, six are operated by Lions: Berlin, Hebron, Lebanon, Portland, Terryville, and Wolcott. These fairs are covered in Chapter VII.

The International Organizations

Perhaps the most enjoyable and interesting communications, at any rate for those who participate, occur among individuals in the international groups sponsored by Lions Clubs International. They are a part of every state's history of Lionism because all states are involved.

The Youth Exchange Program

The earliest international group activity was the Youth Exchange Program. A Youth Exchange Program was proposed for adoption by the Association at the Board of Directors meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, held in May, 1961, during the term of International President Finis E. Davis. The resolution to create the program was formally adopted at the International Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in June, 1961. One month later, the International office in Chicago, Illinois arranged a first pilot exchange in response to a request from a Lion in Bari, Italy, desiring to send his 16-year-old son, Lorenzo Calabrese, to the United States. That summer, Lorenzo was hosted by the Midwest Lions Club of Detroit, Michigan, and he stayed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Sam Verdi. In its early stages, the program was developed under the guidance of the Youth Exchange Program committee, chaired by International Director Charles W. Mowery. Committee members were Past International President Julien C. Hyer, Vice Chairman; International Director Pierre A. Germain; and Past International Director Herbert L. Birum Jr., Clarence A. Johnson, Coordinator of the Youth Exchange and Activities Program, helped get the fledgling program off the ground through his administrative efforts.

Interest in the new program grew rapidly. By April, 1962, some 457 Lions clubs and 89 district officers had requested information on the program. In its first year of official operation, during the term of International President Per Stahl, 131 youths took part in visits organized by 94 host clubs and at least 34 sponsoring clubs.

In its early days the Youth Exchange was for individuals 16-to-25 years old, but in 1967 the limits were changed to 15-to-21 years. Visits were arranged by the International office until 1964 when the responsibility was given to the clubs.

Youth Exchanges Through the Years*

1961-62	131
1962-63	236
1963-64	252
1964-65	384
1965-66	429
1966-67	678

1967-68	710
1968-69	1,319
1969-70	2,056
1970-71	1,570
1971-72	1,946
1972-73	2,162
1973-74	2,895
1974-75	3,291
1975-76	3,870
1976-77	2,678
1977-78	2,118
1978-79	2,140
1979-80	3,087
1980-81	3,548
1981-82	2,905
Total 38,405	

*Additional Lions Youth Exchanges may have been completed during these years. However, only those which have been reported to the International Office are listed.

The meaning and effects of the Youth Exchange Program are best expressed in a letter by a teenager sponsored by the Mansfield Lions:

In July of 1982, a 14-year-old girl named Tracy Murray came down from Port Perry, Ontario, and stayed with my family for two weeks. We showed her many southern New England sites . . . Sturbridge Village, Mystic Aquarium, the ocean, and many restaurants. Having so much fun down here, I didn't think we could possibly have any more fun in Port Perry, but I was wrong. Her family, which consisted of two older sisters and one older brother, made me feel so relaxed in a place so far from home. We went to Canada's Wonderland (a huge amusement park), Niagara Falls, museums, and Toronto store sales, and we spent four days with her father at their cottage. I had my fifteenth birthday . . . cake, ice cream, cards and gifts.

Leaving Port Perry was very hard to do, and not a month goes by when they don't call me. We write often. I cannot thank each and every one of you enough. It was by far the greatest trip of my life.

On July 21, I will be flying back up to Port Perry. Tracy will then fly back with me for a visit. I would like to wish everyone who has the fortunate opportunity to be a part of the Lions Club Exchange Program as much happiness as I have experienced.

*Sincerely,
Rachel Palmer*

Connecticut participates in the Youth Exchange Program, but there is no record as to when the first exchange took place or the club involved. It is not possible to determine the total exchanges and persons because clubs do not always report these events. Connecticut clubs occasionally host young people without sending Connecticut youth abroad.

Countries which have exchanged young people with Connecticut are: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Peru, South Africa, and Switzerland.

The total number of exchange youth to and from Connecticut reported for the

years 1971 through 1982 is 134. The largest number of exchanges was with Canada. In the early 1970s, several involved Western European countries, but in recent years Japan has been the most active. Seven came from that country in 1980.



Governor William O'Neill welcomes Japanese visitors. Other adults, left to right: District Governor, Otto Strobino; Past District Governor, Cliff Randall and far right, George Lomnitzer.

Considering that Connecticut is only one state involved in Lions International's Youth Exchange Program, one can appreciate the significance it has overall for international understanding. Young people have the opportunity to become acquainted with each other. They visit schools, churches, museums, resort areas, stores and places of historical interest. Some go to Fenway Park and Yankee Stadium.

Twinning

Lions do not agree on the origins of twinning. The first reference in Lions Clubs International is a letter in 1948 which refers to a twinning between a club in Sweden and one in Switzerland. Neither club was named. The purpose was to gain a better understanding between their communities and countries.

Shortly after 1948, Lions clubs in France established contacts with those of Germany, Italy, and Austria to rebuild good relationships after the Second World War. Twinning was not recognized as a program of the Association until 1971, at which time an award (a patch) was provided for all clubs that reported participation. Today, Leo and Lioness clubs are also actively participating, and twinings number in the thousands.

Many Connecticut Lions clubs are twinning with clubs around the world, and a few with other clubs in the United States. Regular correspondence is usually carried on, with exchanges of information and ideas on the work on Lionism. This often leads to visits by members of one club to the other. The positive value of this kind of international communications and face-to-face relationship cannot be overstated. Lions do it better than anyone else.



Typical display of service club signs; Middletown, Ct. Note Lions Club.

USA-CANADA Lions Forum

The USA-Canada Lions Forum was initiated by Joseph McLoughlin when he was Connecticut's own Lions International President in 1977. It is open to all interested members of clubs in the United States of America and in other countries which affiliate under the Forum Constitution. As of 1983, this included the United States, Canada, Bermuda and the Bahamas.

The main purpose of the forum is to promote fellowship and mutual understanding amongst all of the Lions who are members of clubs in the areas named above. Forums have been held in Chicago, Illinois in 1979, St. Louis, Missouri in 1980, Denver, Colorado in 1981, Louisville, Kentucky in 1982, and Chicago, Illinois in 1983. Some 3,000 Lions attend these forums.

Forums are independent of the Lions Clubs International Headquarters Administration, but must conform in all respects to International's rules and policies. The forum is entirely self-supporting from registration fees. Responsibility for the forum rests on current members of the International Board of Directors elected from the area authorized to participate in the forum. A general chairman of the forum is appointed by the ranking Lions International officer who is from the area participating. He in turn appoints a general chairman who appoints a forum committee. The forum committee coordinates the activities of the local host chairman and the local host committee and directs the forum within the guidelines of the board policy of Lions International.

The forum provides an opportunity for informal conversations among participants, and formal presentation of proposals for discussion. After the close of the forum a report is issued, copies of which are forwarded to Lions International Directors.

Connecticut has been represented at all forums, but no attendance reports are filed with the State Council. The council has no standing committee for the USA-Canada Lions Forum.

It would be difficult to find fault with the methods Lions have developed for internal, local, national and international communications. However, methods require application, and there are a few weak links at the club level: some clubs have no newsletters; some clubs are unable to obtain coverage in some local media; and some have the ill-fortune of not having a good public relations man. Everyone is not cut out for the job. It takes an acute sensitivity as to what is newsworthy and a flair for presentation that attracts reader interest. Attracting attention to what Lions do is the first step in gaining wide public support. Even admitting to an occasional failure, the total performance in communicating is nothing short of amazing, especially for an all-volunteer organization. Communications is the Lions roar!