

**THE SHEBOYGAN EVENING LIONS**  
**HISTORY**



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**1922 - 2017**

**95<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

The year is 1922. The headlines read:

- The United States Supreme Court unanimously upholds the women's suffrage amendment
- Jimmy Murphy wins the Indy 500 with an average speed of 94.5 miles per hour
- King Tut's tomb was discovered
- Einstein wins the Nobel Prize
- Reader's Digest begins publication
- The Lincoln Memorial is dedicated
- Lillian Gatlin becomes the first woman to fly across the United States, a flight that took a little over 27 hours
- Vitamin D is discovered as a cure for rickets
- Insulin becomes a treatment for diabetes
- The Sheboygan Evening Lions become the fourth Lions Club to be chartered in Wisconsin

Businessman Melvin Jones began the Lions Clubs International in Chicago in 1917. Over the years it has become the largest service organization in the world with over 1.4 million members and 46,500 clubs. Melvin Jones wanted Lions to be an organization with a definite purpose, and when Helen Keller asked that Lions become “Knights of the Blind,” that became the Lions’ major purpose.

Previous to 1922, when a person was diagnosed with diabetes it was a death sentence. The life expectancy was one to two years after diagnosis. The introduction of insulin in 1922 saved the patients’ lives but other problems still exist. One of the consequences of diabetes is the threat of blindness. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of blindness; therefore, it was natural that the Lions became involved.

The American Diabetes Association estimates that 23.6 million Americans have diabetes. The Centers for Disease Control predict that if current trends continue, one in three Americans will develop diabetes at some point in their lifetime.

The Sheboygan Evening Lions have long supported diabetes research financially and through education. To educate the community about the prevention and control of diabetes, the Lions of the Evening and Noon Clubs provide pamphlets to people as they enter and exit stores in Sheboygan.

In addition to supporting research and education concerning diabetes, the Sheboygan Evening Lions as well as Lions throughout Wisconsin provide a camping experience for youngsters with diabetes. The Lions Camp is located at Rosholt, Wisconsin in the center of the state. It consists of 400 acres of forest with hiking trails and surrounds a 45 acre private lake. The camp buildings consist of modern cabins, lodge, dining hall, memorial building, recreation shelter, nature center, trading post, a crafts lodge and an eyeglass recycling center. The summer staff of 45 consists of counselors, program specialist, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, nursing assistants, kitchen, and maintenance personnel.

The Lions Camp began in 1956 and is now capable of providing a camping experience at no cost to the camper for approximately 1,500 campers per year. Some of the campers are blind or visually impaired. Others are deaf or hard-of-hearing, while others may have mild cognitive disabilities. These campers, along with the children who are diabetic, participate in activities such as canoeing, paddle boats, pontoon boat rides, archery, fishing, swimming, hayrides, various sports and games, hiking, environmental education, cookouts and handicrafts.

The used eyeglass recycling center located at the Lions Camp processes approximately one million used eyeglasses a year. They are sterilized, sorted by prescription, male or female, adult or child, and then packaged for transport to where they are needed. Last year they were sent to 29 different countries. Lion volunteers and optometrists will pack fifteen to twenty thousand pair of eyeglasses into school buses, ambulances and other donated vehicles for transport to places such as Mexico where people line up for many hours to be outfitted with glasses that are correct for them.

Closer to home, the Lions in Wisconsin and volunteer optometrists screen Special Olympians before their competition in Stevens Point and Oshkosh. Typically around 350 athletes are screened and more than 60% are given glasses.

In Sheboygan, members of the Evening and Noon Lions, as well as other Lions Clubs in the zone, are now able to screen thousands of children for vision problems. The revolutionary device is called a spot camera. The screenings only take a few seconds; thus, an entire school could be screened in a day. The camera can detect such things as cross eye, lazy eye, near and farsightedness, astigmatism, and an axis indication. A copy of the screening is given to the parents. If the child screens out-of-range, the parents are advised to follow up with a vision professional. The referral rate is approximately 6 to 10%. It is important to locate these children so that their vision problem can be addressed before it becomes permanent.

Sheboygan Evening Lion members transport visually impaired adults from Sheboygan to a monthly meeting with other visually impaired adults in the Manitowoc area. In addition, transportation is provided for some of these individuals to the Lions Camp at Rosholt. But the highlight of the transportation project is the transporting of cornea tissue to and from the Lions Eye Bank in Madison, Wisconsin.

A relay network has been established and manned by many hundreds of Lions transporters so that cornea tissue can get from the collection point to the recipient of the transplant in a matter of hours. Recipients of the cornea transplant used to wait months for tissue to become available. Because of the success of the Lions Eye Bank program there is no more waiting for available cornea tissue in Wisconsin. Wisconsin Lions Eye Bank is able to deliver cornea tissue out of state. In 2010, 1352 corneas were provided for transplant. Corneal transplant surgery is the most frequently performed human transplant procedure in the United States. Tissue donors can be age 2 to 75. The wearing of glasses or contact lenses does not matter. There is no cost to the donor's family. People with HIV, active Hepatitis B or C, encephalitis, meningitis, active tuberculosis, leukemia and a few others may not be eye tissue donors for transplant. On the other hand, people with cancers or malignancies or diabetes are often suitable as donors for transplant use.

The Sheboygan Evening Lions also contribute to Lions International programs, the latest of which is the control of measles in Africa with the vaccinations of children ages 9 months to 47 months. Measles is the leading cause of vaccine-preventable death in children. Measles can also

cause blindness. Since 2001 more than 700 million children have been vaccinated through this Lions program. Another successful Lions International program is the elimination of river blindness in Central America. Lions have established eye clinics where trained ophthalmologists and nurses dispense vitamin A tablets all to prevent blindness throughout the world.

One of the more wonderful ways for assisting the blind or visually impaired is the Lions Leader Dog program. The Leader Dog School is located in Rochester, Michigan and is supported by Lions Clubs in the Midwest, including the Sheboygan Evening Lions. Between 300 and 400 dogs are trained each year at a cost of about \$37,000 per dog. The school was established in 1939 and has distributed over 15,000 Leader Dogs to individuals at no cost to the recipient. The visually impaired student has to be at least 16 years old and must be physically and mentally capable of caring for and using the dog for its intended purpose. The student will complete a 26 day training program which includes city, county and nighttime travel. They will also be trained in proper care for the dog. During the 26 day training sessions the students are housed in modern dormitories on the Leader Dog campus. With the development of new technologies, the school now provides GPS equipment on the dog's harness, and this has turned out to be a fantastic aid for the visually impaired individual receiving the Leader Dog.

Other new technologies for the blind will include scanners that read printed material and then orally repeat what it just read. Braille printers are still being used and they probably will still be needed in the future. Magnifying readers and computer-enlarged readouts also aid the visually impaired.

Sheboygan Evening Lions organized on January 30th, 1922. Their charter date became February 1, 1922 with Otto Kaufman as the club's first President.

The charter members ninety-five years ago probably had no idea that their new Lions Club would have such an impact on the community, state, nation and world. Who were the charter members? Do you recognize any of these names?

H. E. Brasure	George J. Klein
Gustave W. Buchen	A. E. Knauf
Alvin A. Cobb	Dr. Edmund Knauf
A. F. Debelack	Fred Koehn, Jr.

John Dennis	Edwin Koellmer
H. R. Ebenreiter	H. C. Lindeke, Jr.
D. Carroll Ellmore	E. A. Lutze
Carl H. Esch	Ewald A. Pawsat
H. G. Etteldorf	Chas. A. Pepper
Chas. W. Finnegan	Roland Pfister
A. P. Gottsacker	A. W. Ramm
Gustave A. Hahn	Frank J. Rohde
George Heller, Jr.	H. E. Steffen
Elmer M. Hervey	John F. Stuckert
Harry Howard	Harry Verhulst
Herbert H. Jung	W. F. Weeks
Jacob W. Jung	Ernst Wolf
Otto Kaufman	Egbert Zimmerman
Richard J. Kemp	

On June 1st, 1922, Lions District Governor Dr. John Scott came from Springfield, Illinois to present the charter. The celebration was held at the Sheboygan Country Club. Among the guests were Jerry Donahue, President of the Rotary Club; Dr. Arthur Fiedler, President of the Kiwanis Club, and seven members of the Manitowoc Lions Club, which was the third Lions Club to be chartered in Wisconsin.

In his keynote address, District Governor Dr. Scott pointed out that Lions Clubs are showing remarkable growth in that there were now 400 Lions Clubs (approximately 1% of the clubs today). Dr. Scott also said that Lionism will “break down the barriers of selfishness,” for the Lions code is based on voluntary unselfish service. He finished with, “The great things of the past were done by extraordinary men working alone. The great things of the future will be done by just ordinary men working together.”

The first meetings of the Sheboygan Evening Lions were held at the Grand Hotel, later the Elks Club, followed by the Security Bank building. Other meeting places have been Riverdale Country Club, Durwood's Flamingo, Al and Al's, and currently at Lakeshore Lanes.

In the 1920s the Sheboygan Evening Lions sponsored a miniature airplane building contest. They also sponsored local radio broadcasts of concerts. Assistance was given for a crippled children's clinic and establishing a class for handicapped children. A movie projector was donated to the tuberculosis sanitarium.

The 1930s saw projects such as assisting in raising \$250,000 for a new hospital, participating in a harbor improvement project, helping the American Legion with an employment drive, distributing Christmas baskets for poor families and holding a Christmas home decorating contest. The Evening Lions campaigned for and obtained a city ordinance dealing with protection of the blind using white canes. They also gave white canes to the blind. They were a part in the organizing of a Civic Music Association, securing a new post office, sponsoring a Boy Scout Troop and bringing a new railroad to Sheboygan. Playground equipment was purchased for "Kiddies Camp," a community Halloween celebration was staged and a picnic was held for all city fireman. They combined efforts with the Rotary, Kiwanis and Optimist clubs to establish a Boy Scout camp at Cedar Lake called Ro-Ki-Li-O.

The 1940s saw a continuation of many of the Evening Lions projects. However, because of World War II the club added many patriotic endeavors to their list of projects, such as sponsoring a war bond sale program over radio station WHBL and supporting a WAAC recruiting drive. They raised money for the Red Cross and met with other clubs to help with the Community Fund drive. High School debate and forensics teams were invited to give patriotic programs.

When the war ended, the Evening Lions expanded their projects in the community. They collected funds and co-sponsored the formation of the Sheboygan YMCA. They assisted in building a youth hostel, assisted the Community Chest, sponsored plays given by the Drama Guild, co-sponsored the building of the local Girl Scout camp, collected clothing for people at the Park Lawn Home, presented a Polio-Pak heater to the city, and donated treats, gifts and slippers to the children of Friendship House.

It was during this period that the Sheboygan Evening Lions were host to past Lions International president Frank Birch and international director Clarence Sturm, who was

eventually to become Lions International President. To date, these two men are the only Lions to become International Presidents from Wisconsin. It was also during this period that the Evening Lions celebrated their 25th anniversary.

The next 25 years marked the beginning of domination by the Sheboygan Evening Lions in a contest called the Y-Olympics. Competition was between local service clubs and was held at the YMCA. Some of the events were free throws, water volleyball, inner tube races, putting, and sheephead for the older participants, storytelling, group singing and bean bag toss. Afterwards, the competing organizations would have a ham dinner, and the first place trophy, "Iron Mike," was presented. Iron Mike was a homemade robot looking trophy and was won by the Evening Lions so often that it was given a Lion's vest to wear.

This time was also the beginning of a major money maker for the Evening Lions: Concerts given by the United States Marine Band. Many thousands of dollars were raised through this project. This enabled donations such as \$1,100 for the purchase of a wide picture screen for the TB sanitarium. \$1,500 went for a swimming pool for the Girl Scouts. \$1,000 was used to refurbish a room for children at the Association's Opportunity Center. More than \$1,000 went to family services for the purchase of eyeglasses for children. \$100 was spent to help establish a rifle range. \$250 was donated to the Retarded Children's Fund. Over these years a great deal of money was spent or donated to smaller projects such as hundreds of bags of candy at Christmas for handicapped children, the Quarterback Club, an American flag for the Boy Scouts, white canes for the blind, Kiddies Camp, tape recorders for the library to assist the blind, radio purchase for a special education class, transportation funds were provided for the Midwest Association for the Blind, sponsorship for participants in the soap box derby and contributions to foreign students through the American Field Service program. There were other new projects such as ringing bells for the Salvation Army, a father-son night, collection of used eyeglasses, working at Brat Days, selling light bulbs, and being able to send children to the Lions Camp at Rosholt, Wisconsin.

The remaining forty years saw the sponsorship for several years of the Buccaneers drill team, scholarships for dozens of students at North and South High, hosting of a holiday basketball tournament featuring Lakeland College and purchasing trees to replace many elms that died from Dutch elm disease. Also, the Evening Lions chartered Boy Scout Troop 882 and Cub Scout Pack 82, both established for handicapped Scouts. Schools received donations of safety



glasses and booklets on eye protection. Nursing homes received tele-captioning devices for deaf and hard-of-hearing residents. Contributions were made for the Sheboygan Band Shell, St. Nicholas Hospital drug information center, Heritage School and television sets for Rocky Knoll Sanitarium. The Sheboygan Area Eye Bank was established and in addition, the club participated in glaucoma screenings for Sheboygan residents. To fund these efforts the club sold light bulbs, roses, large coloring books, roasted corn, worked at company picnics and held many brat fries.

Rose Day is still our major fundraising endeavor. However, we have become involved in many different projects in the past few years. For example, the Evening Lions purchased the material, built, and installed a wheelchair ramp for an elderly person allowing her to enter and exit her home unassisted. The hearing loop that was installed at Spaceport Sheboygan was paid for by Lions Clubs in our zone and spearheaded by the Evening Lions. Also, we are funding the toddlers' area at the Above and Beyond Children's Museum. Bookworm Gardens received backpacks with supplies, a picnic table, and money for upkeep of the Helen Keller perennial gardens from us. The Evening Lions become involved in many more children's projects, such as the Right to Read program, the Reading Action Program, Feed Our Hungry Children food distribution, Stuff the Bus, Safe Harbor, Coats for Kids, Lions Quest program, hearing loss prevention, and vision screening. Finally, the Evening Lions have become involved in SEAS (Sailing Education Association of Sheboygan). We assisted the Sheboygan Noon Lions in hosting the World Blind Sailing Championship that was held in Sheboygan in September 2014. The championship was so successful that the Sheboygan Lions will be hosting the event again in September 2016. In addition, we have donated money toward a sailing simulator. Suffice it to say that the Sheboygan Evening Lions have had a significant impact on Sheboygan and the world.

Part of the impact the club has had was in the growth of Lionism. They sponsored the following clubs: Sheboygan Falls Lions, Sheboygan Noon Lions, Random Lake Lions, the original Plymouth Lions, Mosel Lions, Sheboygan Hispanic Lions, Sheboygan Lionettes, Sheboygan Lioness, North High Leos, Farnsworth Leos and South High Leos. Through this expansion locally and worldwide, so much more was able to be done including aid for victims of tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and flooding. Recall the flooding in Sheboygan in 1998. The Evening Lions raised more than \$20,000 to assist local victims. It is little wonder that Lions Clubs International has been selected in the last few years as the number one NGO

(non-governmental organization) in the world. In addition, the organization was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of the 1.4 million members, their outlook for the future and the leadership of the officers at the international, state and local levels. Local members who have held state office in Lions are Al Thuemler, State Secretary; Sid Kaye, District Governor; Herb Schneider, District Governor, Wisconsin Lions Foundation Director and President; Steen Heimke, Wisconsin Lions Foundation Director; and Louis Cecil, State Leo Club Chairman. Local members who served on a District 27-B1 level were: Bob Schutt, Louis Cecil, Cabinet Secretary/Treasurer; Ed Falck, Bill Kopetsky, Louis Cecil, Bernie Beimel, Andy Giesen, Ellen Cheney, Zone or Region Chairman. An enormous debt of gratitude goes out to all of the other Sheboygan Evening Lions Club officers who have served these past 95 years.

How does a person become a part of this fantastic organization? Actually, it is by invitation. By Invitation we see something in you that makes us suspect that you are the type of person that is willing to make this a better world.

The challenges of the 21st century will require the new ideas and enthusiasm of younger Lions. It is their opportunity to build on the great accomplishments of the Lions that have gone before. For instance, there are now more than 15 million people in the United States with visual impairments. In the world there are about 314 million people with visual impairments. 80% of blindness is preventable, but now some blindness is curable. What new strategies will be necessary to deal with new discoveries and technologies?

The new technologies are amazing. There are computers equipped with speech software so that the visually impaired can do word processing, search the internet and use spreadsheet programs. There are monitors that can magnify words up to 65 times their size. The Library of Congress provides a talking book program consisting of approximately 65,000 recorded books. The program also offers DVD movies that have a built-in track with audio explanations of what is occurring in the movie. Local libraries offer books printed in large type and books recorded on CDs or cassettes. There is a free service that allows listening to hundreds of newspaper articles through synthesized speech over the telephone.

There is even a device called Talking RX that is a chip that can be attached to prescription bottles to audibly tell you the medication and dosage. Perhaps one of the

medications will be the drug being developed at the University of Utah School of Medicine which could be the cure for macular degeneration or diabetic retinopathy. Gene therapy and stem cell research are also providing procedures for curing blindness.

Still other research involves the creation of a bionic eye. The bionic eye implant would restore sight to people with age related blindness. The implant uses miniaturized electronics and a chip placed behind the retina. An ultra-thin wire strengthens the damaged optic nerve by transmitting light and images directly to the visual cortex.

Of course there are other problems. For example, it is a common complaint of the visually impaired that newer cars are so quiet that it is difficult now for a blind person to detect traffic flow. How do we deal with that problem? The Lions must continue to evolve so as to be able to meet the needs of people in the 21st century. That is why we need you to become a lion.

We will invite you to be a guest at two of our meetings where we become acquainted with you and you with us. We want you to become familiar with what we do. We also want you to witness the fun we have together, and the special programs that make meetings interesting and enjoyable. If you choose to become part of the Sheboygan Evening Lions you fill out an application which is turned over to the membership committee and then the board of directors for approval. It is a good system and has worked well for the past 95 years. There is one problem however. Some people would be wonderful Lions but have not been invited for some unknown reason. If you are that person and would like an invitation to look us over, contact an Evening Lion member or Membership Committee Co-Chair Louis Cecil at (920) 458-71.

