

1954 - 1984

HISTORY OF THE TOLLESBORO LIONS

30th ANNIVERSARY

Look back with me if you will - over 30 years when the Lions Club of Tollesboro was chartered. At that time an interested Vanceburg Lions Club came into this community along with a representative from Lions International, Ken Caperton, Chicago, Ill., to try and see if enough enthusiasm was prevalent in Tollesboro, to see if enough service minded men would join the ranks of other Lions members throughout the world in performing good deeds of service and organize into a Lions Club. Well, on April 30, 1954 we were chartered by District Governor Bertram Riggs of Ashland, Ky., along with the assistance of Zone Chairman Jack Kibbey and the Vanceburg Club members and wives attending 100%. Serving as Toastmaster was Dr. Herb Bertram, Jr. It was a very serious, educational and meaningful presentation of the charter and at one point we almost lost our wives due to the suggestion of one of our outspoken members who insisted the ladies go do the dishes right before the main speaker. The charter was accepted by our first President, Charles Hughes and the following charter members: Charles Hughes, Chelsea Merritt, Owen Cooper, Howard Frye, Erman Boyd, Scott Corns, Newell Rudder, W. B. Grant, Henry Calvert, Martin Voiers, Eugene Fox, Samuel Wright, Charles Bane, Julian Gillespie, Harry L. Applegate, H. Brayfield, LaVae Secrest, Tommy Barbour, Boyd Harrison and O. S. Highfield.

Under the expertise of Pres. Charles Hughes the membership was anxious to get into the spirit of Lionism and to be of service to their community - and I might say at this point we were so charged and challenged that no matter what assignment to a committee or office we held - it was our duty to fulfill our obligations - no excuses - no faulting - and this spirit and determination has prevailed throughout our 30 years.

Some of our projects and activities I will try to give you from memory and what information I have tried to dig out of our filing cabinet which at one point was "cleaned out" by some industrious member who felt it too full and threw some papers away.

Makes
In 1954 we started off our first project by furnishing street lights to the town. To help defray the cost, we raffled off a calf at the Lewis County Fair - at that point and time three of our good dedicated Lions took the calf around on display - led the calf - or on second thought the calf could have led the Lions. These Lions were Henry Calvert, Boyd Harrison and Newt Voiers. We also had a light bulb sale.

In 1955, our President, Chelsea Merritt decided to put us into big show business and had a Miss Gay along with her lovely beauties come to town to train us for our National Debut. We constructed wooden post barriers around the High School grounds.

1956- We decided we had learned enough about show business and we wanted to get in on the big payoff - so we put on our own show - The Minstrel - what fun we had. The fellowship was great!! During that year we also started having Old Country Ham Dinners which was an annual event for several years.

We also helped in promoting a new telephone service to this area.

1957 - Wrestling Matches at this time was really booming and making huge amounts of money. We tried our hand - results - we went \$40.00 in the hole. This was the year we finally hit on a project - we started our annual Lions Fair which we have had every year since. We cleared \$2,000.00 on our first fair which lasted ONE DAY. We purchased a portable pump and donated it to the Fire Dept. at a cost of \$641.20.

1958 - We bought a trap shoot outfit and decided to go into the business of trapshooting. We did alright except it about broke 3 or 4 Lions members as we felt we had to shoot in the matches to bait the other guests in order to make some money. This was the year for another Minstrel. We also started the eye testing program in the three schools in this end of Lewis County. We started the Pledging of Eyes for Eye Research. The Club sponsored W. B. Grant for District Governor with LaVae Secrest serving as District Sec.-Treas. During that year we also played host to the District for a Dinner Meeting.

1959 - This year we tried our hand at Midget Basketball Tournament and the Year of the White Elephant Sale - the Club took 3rd place in the State for having the most Outstanding Club.

1960 - Now we really went out on a limb. We bought 8 acres of ground to develop a community park. We gave \$5,000.00 for the property, we went in debt for \$4,000.00 of it. We started a scholarship fund and held a What-Not Sale.

1961 - We had the Governor of Kentucky, Hon. Bert Combs to come for an Old Ham Dinner - Sold tickets at \$10.00 per plate. We made \$1,250.00 and presented it to the Fire Dept. to buy new equipment. Still had our fair going too.

1962 - Had an all night tractor pull and was a huge success and a real experience. This was the year we started building at the Lions park. The Shelter House was built at a cost of \$850.00.

1963 - Sponsored a Farm Machinery Sale. Samuel Wright was appointed Zone Chairman on the Dist. Cabinet. We continued with our Fair.

1964 - By this time we decided we were tired of eating everywhere in town when we had meetings so we built our present clubhouse at a cost of \$10,500.00 and we borrowed \$9,000.00 on that project, so you see we don't care to borrow money.

1965 - New Project - Pancake Breakfast and the beginning of the Outstanding Citizenship Award Program which has been going ever since that time. Lion Grant elected to Eye Foundation at Louisville as a Trustee for a 2 yr. term.

1966 - We built a Ball Park - Tried to promote water and gas for the community - Lion Ray Trumbo appointed Zone Chairman by the Dist. Gov.

1967 - Lighted the Ball Park - Had a Jr. High Basketball Tournament. Lion Ray Trumbo served as Dep. Dist. Gov. on the District Cabinet.

1968 - This is the year we got too big for our "britches". We had outgrown our present property so the biggest venture yet - we decided to buy the adjoining property, the Bob Applegate estate of 25 acres, a house and barn that was going to be auctioned off. We had several meetings, cautioned everyone not to let out a peep - the club finally decided on two men to be their bidding and use their judgement in how far to go in what to pay for the property, one liberal and one conservative, Grant and Gillespie, not necessarily in that order. The price was \$25,500.00. What did we do? We borrowed more money, I don't remember the amount but probably \$25,000.00.

1969 - Now since buying the new property we had a tobacco base. We raised our tobacco, had the annual fair and since we needed to pay off part of our debt, we made a sale of the house and a strip of land to Steve Harris for \$10,000.00. This joined Steve and evened his fence line. Now we had to build a fence between the property we sold and the Lions.

1970 - We decided to build a new Horse Show Ring, designed by Lion Steve Harris an engineer by trade. Yes, we even equipped it with a modern lighting system and it has the name of being the best ring for miles around. We couldn't sit on the ground, so we built seats. The Lion who is conservative furnished his cross cut 2 man saw and about cut ~~over~~ Lions hand off in making the seats.

1971 - We had another Minstrel - Oh, excuse me, I meant to say Variety Show. Times had changed - we hadn't noticed because we had been so busy with Lionism, but intogration had set in. So we had a minstrel, but called it a Variety Show. Lion Steve Harris was appointed Zone Chairman. To beautify the Park Entrance, we built a planter and erected a sign.

1972 - Tobacco Crop - FAIR - promoted the swings and slide project and Maysville City School donated swings and slides thru the efforts of a good Lion from this club. Of course, we couldn't decide where to put them. We selected committees two different times finally decided on a spot and erected them on a different spot. Oh, Yes, we had quite a debate, long and loud at times about the swings but years have healed the wounds.

1973 - Lion Steve Harris appointed Zone Chairman for second time. Built a grandstand in the center of the Horse Ring and it is still standing, Wasn't it beautiful???

1974 - Sponsored a softball tournament - Built more bleachers for spectators to observe the horse shows and other events.

1975 - We sponsored a Circus - the only trouble was the day of the event the circus didn't show up. We still had our Fair that summer.

1976 - Had our Annual Fair and raised the tobacco. Built a new tennis court. Good to see people young and old waiting in line for their turn to use the courts.

1977 - Same old stuff - Had the fair, raised the tobacco. We added fencing to the tennis court.

1978 - Donated acres to the newly incorporated City of Tolleboro so they could develop more recreational area.

1979 - Celebrated our 25th Anniversary as a Lions Club, with a good turnout of Lions, wives and visitors. The highlight of this year was paying out of DEBT. Now we could start the next 25 with a clean slate.

1980 - We still have the Fair which has grown to a week of activity. The tobacco crop got to be too much so we let someone else raise it now, too many irons in the fire for us to do much farming.

1981 - Just more of the same - The Fair - Giving scholarships to deserving graduates and helping in community affairs as they come up.

1982 - New lights were installed at the Ball Park and rewiring was done, Tractor Pull lights and a fence was bought all for a cost of \$11,810.50.

An item of interest, remember the night the transformer caught fire and we had our own fireworks at the FAIR???

1983 - a trailer was bought for storage - Deepfreeze purchased - We gave \$60.00 to Trooper Island - \$380.00 to Sight Conservation - \$100.00 to the Fire Dept.

1984 - We continue with the eye testing and have purchased glasses for a number of children over the past 5 years totaling more than \$800.00. A donation to K.L.I.F. for \$100.00 and a total of \$625.00 in scholarships to graduates. I feel we can truly say this club is to be commended for all it has accomplished over the past 30 years. We have had good cooperation and lots of hard work.

Throughout all these years we have examined students eyes in schools in the western end of Lewis County and purchased numerous glasses. We have had our Annual Fair now for 26 years - 27th coming up. We also have had the Outstanding Citizenship Award program each year since the beginning. Donated to such causes as The Tolleboro Volunteer Fire Dept., Camp KYSOC (Crippled & Blind Children's Camp), Trooper Island, The Kv. Eye Foundation to help build our present building in Louisville for Eye Research and Eye Bank, operation on a youth's eyes, to needy families, burned out families, Christmas treats every year to the schools needy children, repaired toys, Cancer Fund, 4-H, FFA, FHA and to the scholarship fund since 1965.

We've had many members go through our doors of Lionism and did not stay, but as ironic as it may seem, we started with 20 members and after 30 years we still have 21 Good Solid Lions. Those who have served as President through the years in order are:

1954 - Charles Hughes	1957 - Owen Cooper
1955 - Chelsea Merritt	1958 - Julian Gillespie
1956 - W. B. Grant	1959 - Jess Truesdell

Elmo

Tanny

1960 - Samuel Wright
1961 - James Clark
1962 - LaVae Secrest
1963 - Ray Trumbo
1964 - Eugene Fox
1965 - Tommy Harbour
1966 - Charles Hughes
1967 - Steve Harris
1968 - James Boyd
1969 - LaVae Secrest
1970 - Larry Tucker
1971 - Samuel Wright

1972 - Howard Frye
1973 - Don McCann
1974 - Paul Dugan
1975 - Hershel Polley
1976 - Harold Applegate
1977 - Larry Tucker
1978 - Larry Applegate
1979 - Charles Hughes
1980 - W. B. Grant
1981 - Don Johnson
1982 - Kirby Wright
1983 - Charles Hughes
1984 - Hershel Polley

Stop!

Well, folks, I've bored you long enough - our wish is to see all of you again the next time we have a celebration.