

Lions Club celebrating 100 years as membership slides

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IVN Contributing Writer

The Lions Club, an international organization that is celebrating their 100th year of operation, serves communities primarily by raising funds for those who cannot afford glasses, hearing aids, or medically necessary eye surgeries. The Illinois Valley is host to two clubs—the Illinois Valley Lions which is men only and the Cave Junction Lions that is multi-gender. However, both of these organizations are struggling to maintain a stable member count.

Steve Lyons, one of the longest lasting members of the Illinois Valley Lions, said that the distractions of modern life play a big part in their struggle to gain new members. “Back in the older days, there were over 100 members; they had to limit the membership of the club. It was popular; we didn’t have VCRs and video games. It was more of a community social thing.” He continued on by explaining that the “older days” of the Illinois Valley Lions went all the way back to 1948, the year Cave Junction became a city and the year the local club was founded.”

When Lyons joined 25 years ago he estimated that they had around 45 members. Today there are around 30. They have hovered around the first number until the last five years when membership started to slide. Lyons

reported that they are slowly losing members due to the “old timers” passing away and people having kids. Between working and caring for their children many members no longer have time left for the club.

Lyons, referring to their annual Tuff Truck and Labor Day Festival said, “We gave away the breakfast to the Mason’s because we didn’t have enough people to handle it anymore,” and continued about their short handedness with, “And now the American Legion Auxiliary comes in and does bingo after the Mason’s get done with breakfast in the pavilion building.” Furthermore, he added that it takes a lot of members to put on the “biggest show in town.”

It can be assumed if membership slides far enough that this event’s future may be in jeopardy. Lyons added that this year the ticket count for their Labor Day motorcycle raffle was increased by 100 because they paid a lot more than the usual for a custom, rather than stock, Harley Davidson Motorcycle.

Lyons, who is distancing himself from the club due to other engagements, said in closing that, “We’ve asked the younger guys to step up. About six of us have been president every year. Now we’re letting some of the younger guys come up and take more of a leadership role. We’ve got to prepare the next generation for being the leader.”

Harry Johnson, the current president of the Cave Junction Lion’s Club, shared a

somewhat similar view as to why the club is having difficulty stabilizing their member count. “There’s no definitive answer. My guess is that the younger crowd, younger meaning 21-45, just aren’t going out and joining service clubs like the Elks and the Masons and the Lions and all the different ones out there. The economy nowadays—they’re just so busy. Most families, the husband and wife sometimes work two jobs. When you get done with those two jobs you just don’t have time to be going to a meeting. I understand completely but it is hurting membership in a lot of these clubs.”

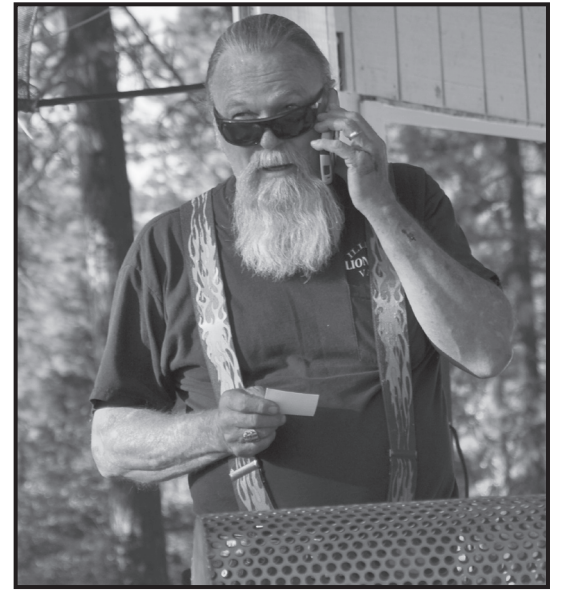
“The Valley’s growing,” Johnson said about what could be done about declining membership, “You see a lot of new businesses coming into the Valley and what we need to do is to get out and talk to the ownership of these businesses and convince them that they should come out and be part of the Valley.” He further explained that business owners could get new customers through direct or indirect partnerships with people in the area formed in the Lions Club.

The Cave Junction Lions are, like their Illinois Valley brethren, host to many fundraisers but the biggest ones on their roster are the “Classic Custom Car Show” in June and the “Turkey Bingo” event in November.

Unfortunately, Johnson and his wife will be stepping down from their posts as president and treasurer soon and will leave the organization at only five members strong.

This is down from 17 which was the peak membership count while Johnson has been in the club.

If you are interested in joining the Illinois Valley Lions Club you can call Steve Lyons at 541-287-0290 or if you wish to join the Cave Junction Lions email cjlions@frontier.com for more information. Joining the club generally costs \$69 annually.



Steve Lyons calls the 2015 Harley raffle winner on Labor Day.

Winding Trails: by Al Hobart

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Illinois Valley News

Jack Frost— Cross Country Ski Races

There’s one thing about that old joker, Jack Frost – you can almost always depend on him pulling the same hoary old joke about this time every year; first he makes the apparently weary gesture of gathering up his wintry trappings and demurely retiring to the North, from whence he came.

Suddenly summer seems to be upon us. The days are sunny and unseasonably warm. Everybody rejoices at the early retreat of Old Man Winter – everyone, that is, except those who are enjoying winter sports. Early flowers are blooming all over the place. The

earth becomes so dry that worried householders are beginning to water their treasured outdoor plants. Then all at once great cloud masses begin to roll across the sky, and finally the welcome rain starts to fall. The off-season mini-drought is ended.

And right then, if you are listening carefully, you’ll hear that eerie rippling sound that resembles muffled laughter coming from the tumbling clouds. The temperature falls. The raindrops puff up like popcorn and float down to blanket the ground and everything on it with a thick layer of new snow. That sneaky old prankster has come back, shrieking with frosty laughter.

Yesterday, after a rather prolonged and flowery period of pseudo-summer, the rain began, starting out as scattered showers. Then it finally settled down to business, and during the night came

the startling transformation. The rain that had been hammering on my metal roof seemed suddenly to cease. I reached over to the back of any tank and pulled the spare blanket over me. Then I heard the familiar plunk, thud, as the rapidly accumulating snow tumbled from the edge of the roof. With part of my heart breaking for those who were cheering the arrival of summer, and part rejoicing at the new turn of events, I snuggled contentedly down under the covers, closed my eyes, buckled on my new racers and went skiing happily off into Dreamland.

Now, as I sit toasting by my fireside, it is snowing heavily outside, has been snowing without let-up all morning. I just looked out the front window at the bird-feeder “gauge” and noted that there is 6 or 7 inches of new snow piled on it. A pair of mountain quail are out there

scratching and digging to get at the buried wheat. They’ll soon be up on the porch, where the little juncos, or snowbirds, are chittering and stuffing their tiny crops with chickfeed.

If this new snowfall should be followed by some cold weather I’ll have some good skiing close to home – a pleasure that has been denied me so far this winter. But I can’t complain – I’ve had lots of good skiing in the Cascades with my friends, and several real lively sessions at Lake of the Woods, where our Oregon Nordic Ski Club has been holding racing events this winter.

Last Sunday we held our last official cross-country ski races for the season, and it was one of our best and biggest such events. Contestants and visitors came from as far away as Washington, Utah, and Colorado, and a small group even came

down from Canada to take part in this particular event, making it an international affair.

Those Norwegians from Canada and Seattle (all originally from Norway) were of course among the top trophy winners. In order to beat one of those fellows you need to have stepped right out of your cradle onto a pair of skis. Just to watch them perform is a real pleasure.

The lone representative from Packers Gulch at the meet strutted proudly off with his second pretty, shiny 2nd place trophy of the season tucked under his arm.

From now on our skiing will be ski-touring, ski-picnicking, and just playing around up where the snow is ready and waiting for us – right up to the time when the old gentleman heads north for real, and cuts the snow from under us til winter comes again.

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