

EASTON LIONS CLUB



Easton Lions Club, P.O. Box 1032, Easton, MA 02334-1032

Editor: Nancy Sullivan, nsullivan01@verizon.net

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION



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Message

And So...We
Began to Serve,
1931-1945

President's Message

It seems only yesterday that we were talking about how marvelous it is that our Club would be celebrating 85 years of service to our wonderful Town. There are many memories to share, and we hope this special edition sparks



those memories. Indeed, there are many good memories of our collegiality, collaborations, and working together for the common good. Those traditions created and sustained over these many years carry the qualities

and character of our club today, and give it its recognized outstanding brand in our town and district. This special edition will begin several that bring back the memories of those traditions. Enjoy!

I want to thank Ed Hands and Marion Wingfield for their excellent work to create the article on the history of our Club. They spent many hours searching through a number of musty files and better preserved Town archives to bring this article to publication. We hope you enjoy this journey down memory lane and reflect on all the types of service our Club has provided to our community over these many years. This article is the first of several we hope to bring to you in celebration of our 85 years of service.

The Easton Lions Club – The Early Years 1931--1945

In 1917, America was just beginning its involvement in World War I, but a 38 year old Chicago businessman named Melvin Jones was thinking about more than the war when he challenged his local business group to “reach beyond business issues and address the betterment of their communities and the world.” Jones and his group decided to contact similar clubs around the country and hold a convention on June 7, 1917. At that convention, the group adopted the name of one of the invited groups the “Association of Lions Clubs.” A few months later, a constitution and by-laws were adopted and the Lions Club was born. Within three years the Club had become international, and in 1925 Helen Keller urged the organization to become her Knights of the Blind, the cause the Lions are most known for today. Despite the focus on sight, Lions Clubs are free to adopt any non-political local cause or charity that helps to meet the needs of their community.



*Where there's a
need, there's a
Lion.*

In 1931 Easton was certainly a community in need because America was deep into the Great Depression. Bill Fenwick, stationmaster at the North Easton Depot, wanted to do something to help his town. He and his friends decided to call in the Gillette Brothers, paid fundraisers who worked for the Lions Club, for a meeting at the Minnetonka Restaurant on September 16th, 1931. The Minnetonka was centrally located at the junction of Belmont and Washington Streets, and it was hoped that the meeting would attract men from all over town.

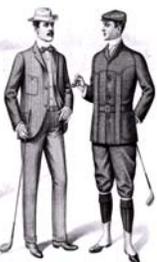
At the time, there were only six Lions Clubs in southeastern Massachusetts. The Gillette Brothers probably summed up the mission of the Lions with the club's motto, "We Serve." From the start, the Lions have been a service organization, not a fraternal, religious or political group. The Club prefers no religion, yet it encourages every member to play a role in their respective church. The Club doesn't prefer one political group, but it encourages members to pursue their duties as citizens. Of course, the Gillette Brothers mentioned Helen Keller and becoming Knights of the Blind. Whatever the brothers said, 21 men signed up as Charter Members. Sponsored by the Attleboro Lions, the Easton Lions Club received its Charter on October 1, 1931 at the Minnetonka. The Charter ceremonies opened with the singing of "America," a song that still opens every Lions meeting.

The club members decided to focus on three things:

- Bettering education
- Improving public health, and
- Fighting poverty.

This decision should come as no surprise since four of the original members were either doctors or dentists, three more were educators, including the Superintendent of Schools and the Principal of Oliver Ames High School; two other members owned restaurants, and two were grocery owners; so, they were well aware of the food problems of Easton residents.

The founders of our Club were all products of the Victorian era. The oldest member was Edgar E. Kelley, born in 1860. His hardware store at 14 Center Street now houses the law offices of Past President, Kevin McIntyre. The youngest member was Cornelius Harvey whose market was on the corner of Mechanic and Main Streets.



One of the first projects undertaken by the Club was to equip a dental clinic at Oliver Ames High School. The Club underwrote Charter Member Dr. Harold Smith's work at the clinic for a nominal sum of six dollars per morning. A second dental chair was added within five years. Another early project was the addition of eye testing machines for the



schools, and funding glasses for needy children. Today, our eye mobile visits our Town at least twice each year. the Club

collects hundreds of used, old eye glasses for recycling to other countries, and assures that anyone who is needy has prescription glasses.

During the Great Depression, Easton had a population of a little over 5,000 people. At Thanksgiving and Christmastime, the Club donated over 80 holiday baskets to needy families.

Since its inception, 100% of the money raised by the Club has gone to fund service projects.

In the early days, card parties and lecture programs, most held at Frothingham Memorial Hall, and overseen by Charter member Jack Mason, were the big fundraisers.

Meetings were held in a variety of restaurants and halls, but the early Lions seemed to prefer catered meals – original charge \$1.00; then, as now, supplemented

by members' dues and "penalties" charged by the "Tail Twister." The women's clubs and church groups that provided the meals benefited their own treasuries...another way the Lions helped fight the Depression.

Membership grew throughout the 1930's. In 1935, Herbert O'Neil became the first non-charter member to become "King Lion," followed the next year by another new member, Elmer C. Harrold. In 1932, Abraham Brooks joined the Lions and, after decades of community service, became the first Easton Lion to be a member for 50 years. Herbert O'Neil later became the first Easton Lion to serve as a District Governor.

By the start of World War II, the Lions had 52 members. Half a dozen members were young enough to join the armed forces, including David and Oliver Ames, and Clyde Craig. Club members avidly followed these soldiers and sailors as they served around the world. The war also provided a strong call to service for the Lions on the home front.

Regular meetings began to feature programs on topics of national interest, like "Synthetic Rubber," and "Things You Should Know About the Rationing System." Charter member, Dr. Jacob Brenner, presented an important early lecture on "neurosis and other mental disturbances as it affects those in our Armed Forces who have been through front line action and have returned to the U.S. for treatment." That is what we would today call PTSD, and it was a cutting edge topic in 1944.

Rationing led to problems and creative solutions for the Club. Early in 1943, it was announced that gas rationing rules might define driving to Lions



meetings as illegal "pleasure driving," leaving the club members to get to meetings on foot. However, within two weeks, the local ration board declared the Lions Club vital to the war effort and placed it in a special category with the Grange, allowing members to drive to meetings although car-pooling was recommended.

The war and the Ration Board challenged the Lions traditional food distribution as well. The Lions discovered that war work had so improved the economic landscape that only 20 Christmas baskets were needed in Easton. However, every recipient of a basket would have to give up ration points for any rationed food in the basket.

429588 EF

WAR RATION BOOK No. 3

Identification of person to whom issued: **PRINT IN FULL**

Kath B. Benson

Street number or rural route: **1112 So. Lowell St.**

City or post office: **Easton, California**

AGE	SEX	WEIGHT	HEIGHT	OCCUPATION
24	F	145 lbs.	5 ft. 8 in.	Lab. Tech. Employee

Signature: **Kath B. Benson**

WARNING
This book is the property of the United States Government. It is loaned to you for your use only, and is not to be used for any other purpose, or to use it, or permit anyone else to use it, except to obtain rationed goods in accordance with regulations of the Office of Price Administration, and you are to find a War Ration Book near where it is in the War Rationing Board which issued it. Persons who violate rationing regulations are subject to \$10,000 fine or imprisonment, or both.

LOCAL BOARD ACTION

Issued by: _____ (Local board member) (Date) _____

Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

(Signature of issuing office)

Club members solved this problem by visiting every food store in Easton and getting the store owners to agree to honoring a Lions Club gift certificate so that the twenty families could chose to buy whatever food product they needed whether it was rationed or not.



The Lions amply repaid the Ration Board's designation.

In 1942, club members raised \$1,000.00 and sent 300 boxes to Easton soldiers overseas. Today, our Lions Club and District send hundreds of "Shoebboxes for Soldiers" to our men serving all over the world, and especially in the Middle East.

When the local Red Cross was charged with raising \$7,000.00 in a war bond drive, five of the seven subcommittee chairs were Lions and the drive was oversubscribed by \$1,000.00.

One of the unique features of Easton



during the war was an aviation observation post located in the attic of the old High School on Lincoln Street, one

of the highest spots in town. Students, under the supervision of some adults, spotted training flights and phoned in reports. The Lions voted to improve the observation post, although the first effort by Harry DeWitt caused a blackout when he cut into the wiring!! Below the High School, on the Rockery Green, the Lions erected and maintained the town Honor Roll listing all of Easton's service men and women.

In a time of food rationing, the Lions combined their long term support of the town's youth programs with a practical effort to boost home food production. In 1943, the Lions distributed 3,300 tomato plants to 70 boys and girls in the 4H Club. Seventeen members of the Lions donated additional funds so that 16 4H-ers could raise chickens. In October, the kids reported that the tomato plants produced 240 bushels of tomatoes that was turned into 2,214 jars of preserved tomatoes. The 17 members who had paid for the chickens got a free chicken pot pie dinner and a free chicken. Since meat was rationed, the hen's eggs were worth their weight in gold.

When the war ended, the Easton Lions could take pride in raising thousands of dollars for war bonds, supporting servicemen overseas and honoring them at home, and involving youth of the town in the war effort. The post-war era would bring new challenges, but the Easton Lions in their first decades lived up to their motto **“We Serve.”**

Congratulatory Notes

To the Easton Lions:
Congratulations on the 85th Anniversary of your club's founding.

The Easton Lions Club is truly an extraordinary group providing extraordinary community service, as I can testify, having been a Lion in 5 different clubs in 5 different states and have found no club comparable to your Easton Lions Club!

I am proud to have been a small part of your club's history and wish continued enthusiasm and vibrancy for another 85 years!

Carl Johannesen,
Past President
Easton Lions Club
2000-2001

(Carl now resides in Arizona)

To my fellow Easton Lions:

Our Club's on-going success, across these 85 years, is a tribute to all members, past and present, who contributed so very much to making our club able to continuously grow and change as the needs of our community have changed, and the means of delivering services to our community have changed. This has kept our club a vital, vigorous, and strong. Our club has met the challenges of change over these 85 years which, I am proud to say, resulted in our club being awarded the only award of its kind by Lions Club International: “The Most Outstanding Club in the World.”

It's a standard we live up to every day. I am very proud of our club, and to have been your President. I wish our club every continued success as “We Serve.”

Nancy Sullivan
Past President
Easton Lions Club
2007-2008, 2015-2016

EASTON LIONS OFFICERS 2016-17

President	Matthew Cioffi <i>president@eastonlions.org</i>
Immediate Past Prez & Newsletter Editor	Nancy Sullivan
Secretary	Matt Soeldner <i>secretary@eastonlions.org</i>
1st Vice President	Patty Sommers
2nd Vice President	Fran Clifford
3rd Vice President	TBD
Treasurer	Ken Love <i>treasurer@eastonlions.org</i>
Assistant Treasurer	TBD
Dues Treasurer	Mark Ingalls
Membership	Rob Goodrich <i>membership@eastonlions.org</i>
Lion Tamer	John Mallers
Tail Twister	Joyce Tardito
1 Year Directors	Veronica Lamb Richard Freitas Jorge Cortizo Mike Melly
2 Year Directors	Dottie Fulginiti Scott Kudcey Steve Hoffman Jill Hatfield

The Easton Lions Club Newsletter is published monthly and is written by members for our club members. We invite members to submit articles and news items of interest to Nancy Sullivan, nsullivan01@verizon.net. The club reserves the right to edit submitted material and determine articles for final publication.

CLUB WEBSITES & EMAIL:

www.EastonLions.org
info@eastonlions.org

Facebook Pages (www.fb.com):

[EastonLions](#)

[EastonThriftStore](#)

[YardleyWoodRink](#)

Share the links with Friends and Family! If you'd like to help out with our web pages, please contact Matthew Cioffi at president@eastonlions.org.

GOLF TOURNAMENT A GREAT SUCCESS !!!!

Our club's 18th Annual Charity Golf Tournament was a great success. Congratulations to all on the Golf Tournament Committee, and to its superb Chair, Scot Kudcey (4 more years!!!).

Through the club's efforts, the Golf Tournament raised over \$9,000.00 at the Easton Country Club to benefit the community of Easton.

We need to take time to celebrate the wonderful Lions in our club, and the extraordinary people in our community, who are perfect examples of real contributions to our community. The work to make it happen, and the money raised at this year's golf tournament, and each year's golf tournament, is our way of saying "Thank You!" as our club returns 100% of the proceeds back to serve our community's needs.

Thank You! to the community for such great support, and **Thank You!** to the Lions who worked to serve our community through another "hole in one", outstanding tournament.

CLUB CALENDAR

- September 26:** 18th Annual Golf Tournament at ECC - 10 am
- September 28:** 85th Ann. Dinner and General Club Meeting - 6:30 to 8:30
- October 1:** Cape Cod Canal – In the Blink of an Eye Walk - District 33S
- October 4:** Senior Cook-out at the COA with Eye Mobile

This issue sponsored by:

**The family of Bill Malone
To Honor his Memory**

Thank you!

Queen of Hearts

By Stan Borgeson

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