

Growth of Lionism

Jan 13, 1879 : Melvin Jones is born to Capt. Calvin Jones and Lydia Jones at Fort Thomas, Arizona, USA.

1909 : Melvin Jones marries Rose Amanda, a pretty Chicago girl, who later becomes the U S National Women's Golf Champion. In the meantime he completes his college courses in Business Management and Law and joins the insurance agency of Johnson & Higgins. Later, he starts his own insurance firm.

March 13, 1913 : Melvin Jones is inducted as a member of a group of Chicago business and professional men, the Business Circle, whose sole intention at this time is to help its members through mutual assistance. Melvin Jones rejuvenates the dying club with his dynamism and soon the membership rises to 200. He is made Secretary.

1916 : Secretary Jones with permission from the Board of Directors of Business Circle and moved by the conviction that the members of his club could utilize part of their talents and abilities for the benefit of the community, corresponds with the office bearers of similar organizations in the different parts of the United States, to form a national association with the intention of community and humanitarian services.

May 1917 : Melvin Jones, encouraged by the response to his appeal to start a service club, sends out a "call to meeting".

June 7, 1917 : Twenty two delegates representing clubs in different parts of the United States meet at the Hotel La Salle in Chicago and decide, after lengthy deliberations, to form an ASSOCIATION OF LIONS CLUBS. No concrete explanation can be given for meaning the new body LIONS, although one of the clubs represented at Chicago had this name. At the end of this historical meeting, Lionism is born. Melvin Jones is named Acting Secretary.

Oct. 8-10, 1917 : The first Convention of the Association is held at the Adolphus Hotel at Dallas, Texas, and is attended by 36 delegates and 9 alternates representing 22 of the 27 member clubs from the States of Arkansas, California, Colorado, Illinois, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas (of the 27 original clubs given the official status "Founder Clubs" - 23 are still in existence today). At this convention, a set of Constitution and Bye-Laws is adopted, the Code of Ethics and Objects are drafted and the official colour (purple and gold) approved. Dr. William P Woods of Evansville, Indiana, the first President of the Association and 9 Directors ask Melvin Jones to continue as Acting Secretary (Later Jones is named Secretary/Treasurer).

Aug 19-21, 1918 : The second Convention in St. Louis Missouri, adopts the Objects and Code of Ethics drafted the previous year at Dallas.

Nov 1918 : Secretary-Treasurer Melvin Jones publishes the first issue of The Lions Club Magazine (later renamed The LION) to commemorate the first anniversary of the founding of the Association and reports that, despite the war and influenza epidemic, the number of clubs have nearly doubled to 48 and that the association has a net balance of funds at the end of the first year of existence.

July 9, 1919 : At luncheon on the first day of the third Convention in Chicago, Halsted Ritter a young attorney from Denver, Colorado speaks on the Opportunities of Lionism. The name "Lions" he says 'spells not only the kind of beasts, typifying all the qualities we love to extol; it stands not

alone for fraternity, good fellowship, strength of character and purpose, but above all, the combination of letters L-I-O-N-S heralds to the country the true meaning and basis of citizenship, Liberty, Intelligence. Our Nation's Safety.' This ends, once for all, the controversy over the name to be chosen for the Association and his interpretation of the letter L-I-O-N-S is chosen for the Association and his interpretation of the letter L-I-O-N-S is later adopted by the Board of Directors as the Association's Official Slogan.

March 20, 1920 : Lionism becomes International with the organization of the first Lions Club in 1920 in Canada (Windsor, Ontario).

May 1920 : Oklahoma, USA holds the first District Convention within the International Association of Lions Clubs.

Dec. 31, 1921 : The International Board of Directors approves and adopts the Lions emblem as designed by Maurice Blink of Santa Barbara, California.

June 23, 1924 : International Parade becomes a feature of conventions.

June 29, 1925 : At the Opening Session of the 8th International Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, USA, Helen Keller urges Lions to become "Knights of the Blind". The delegates accept the challenge, thereby beginning an era of selfless service on behalf of the blind by Lions Clubs. Later, the Association becomes one of the leading organizations of the world in the battle against blindness. SIGHT CONSERVATION AND WORK FOR THE BLIND is given top priority.

1926 : Lionism comes to Asia with the inauguration of the Lions Club of Tientsin, China.

July 21, 1926 : The first ever Necrology Ceremony (memorial service for deceased Lions) is held during the first Plenary Session of the 10th Annual Convention in San Francisco, California.

March 15, 1927 : Mexico hops aboard the Lions bandwagon as a club is organized in Neuvo Laredo.

June 21, 1929 : On the 4th day of the 13th Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, USA delegates vote to amend the International Constitution to incorporate the Object "to create and foster a spirit of generous consideration (later changed to understanding) among the people of the World".

1930 : Thirteen years after its founding, Lions International achieves a strength of 2,200 clubs and 80,000 members. The International Headquarters, till now functioning in the cramped insurance office of founder Melvin Jones and looked after jointly by him and his wife, is moved to a rented office in Mc-Cormick Building in downtown Chicago and employs 33 full time staff.

July 14-17, 1931: Toronto, Canada is the venue of the first International Convention held outside the United States.

1932: International Board of Directors designates January 13 as Founders Day to be observed by all clubs.

1934 : The Great Depression of America affects the Association and reports a deficit in its financial position. Despite the struggle, the 2,600 clubs in the Association continue to carry out community service activities and report 19,300 completed projects. International Board approves the Key Award Programme, the most cherished of all Lions award schemes.

1935: Lions International turns the corner financially, bounces back with renewed vigor and vitality and records a new gain of 7500 members and net surplus in funds. Central America enters the Lions fold with the inauguration of the Lions Club of Colon in Panama.

1936: Lionism travels to South America as a Lions Club comes into existence in Barranquilla, Colombo.

1937 : International Board establishes Melvin Jones Week to be observed in January. Later the whole month is designated Founders and Rededication Month.

1939: Lions membership crosses the 1,00,000 mark and goes over 1,17,000. Founder Melvin Jones is decorated by the Cuban Government with its highest civilian award. The National Merit Honour of Carlos Manuel do Cespedes.

July 23-25, 1940: Lions International Convention goes outside North American Continent for the first time in 1940 as Havana, Cuba hosts the 24th Convention. Second World War erupts.

1942: Lions International celebrates its Silver Jubilee, but there is no pomp or show since humanity is being torn apart by the most destructive war of all times. As many as 24,000 Lions are in uniform, fighting in different parts of the globe.

1943: Lions are urged to establish post war stabilization committees. Lions International joins the global effort to aid war devastated countries and people. One of the most significant of these efforts is the collection, by Lions and their families, of thousands of truckloads of clothes and emergency drugs.

1944: Founder Melvin Jones still occupying the position of Secretary General, requests the International Board of Directors to send an eventual replacement.

1945 : Early in the year, Melvin Jones attends the Washington Conference for the preliminary planning of the United Nations. In April he and other officers of the Association participate in the deliberations which finally gave birth to the UN and Lions International is included among the 42 world bodies that are given consultative status. As desired by the founder R Roy Keaton is appointed Assistant Secretary - General of the Association. CARE comes into being and Lions International becomes a regular donor and supporter (through Lions Clubs) of its projects worldwide. Secretary General Melvin Jones is awarded the Order of Merit and Honour of the Cuban Red Cross. No Convention is held this year owing to the war. International leaders assemble at the Headquarters for a solemn ceremony.

1946 : The war is over, 11, 263 of the Lions who served in the forces return to their clubs. Lions International now has on its rolls 2,79,116 members in 5,500 Lions Clubs belonging to 18 countries.

1947 : Lionism is on the threshold of its fourth decade of tremendous growth and goes to Oceanic with the inauguration of the Lions Club of Lismore in New South Wales, Australia. Lions International is given permanent consultative status as a non-governmental organization of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), one of the five major organs of the UN.

1948 : Europe welcomes Lionism as the Lions Club of Stockholm in Sweden is organized.

1949 : With the formation of the Lions Club of Manila (Host) the Philippines becomes the second Asian nation to find a place on the Lions map. The Lions Club of London (Host) is the first club in Great Britain.

1950 : The International Board calls for entries from all over the world, for selecting a motto for the Association. More than 6,000 entries are received. As the Association's membership crosses the 400,000 mark the Board confers upon Melvin Jones the title "SECRETARY GENERAL FOR LIFE". The Board also restructures the Administrative Setup at the Headquarters and appoints an Administrative Council made up of a Chairman and Director General, a Treasurer and a Secretary, together with the Secretary General Melvin Jones.

March 5, 1952 : Lionism reaches the land of the rising sun as the Lions Club of Tokyo, Japan, is founded in 1952.

1953 : The Continent of Africa gets first hand experience of Lionism when the Lions Club of Casablanca in Morocco is inaugurated.

July 11, 1953 : A long cherished dream of the Founder and of all those who worked for Lionism is fulfilled as the Closing Session of the 36th International Convention in Chicago witnesses the dedication of the Association's newly acquired, magnificent, own building on Michigan Avenue, Chicago to serve as the living symbol for the next 18 years, of the world's most important and largest Service Club Organization. (The International Headquarters become fully functional in the new site by 1955).

July 19, 1954 : At the close of the 37th International Convention in New York city, delegates vote to adopt WE SERVE sent in by a Lion from Canada as the Official Motto of the Association. Tragedy comes to the founder Melvin Jones when his wife Rose Amanda passes away, plunging him into sorrow and loneliness.

Feb.3, 1956 : Lionism comes to the shores of India as Lions Club of Bombay with Noshir N Pundole as Charter President. The formation of the first Lions Club in India was the result of the untiring efforts of Noshir Pundole, Late Noshir N J Khan, Late Commdr, Keiki B Godrej and Shafiq A. Monsaour assisted by Robert Williams of the Lions Club of Saxton, Pennsylvania, USA which sponsored the Lions Club of Bombay and Delhi. The club in Delhi was inaugurated on February 11, (Lionism spreads fast in the country and as many as 10 clubs are organized within the first year).

June 21, 1956 : Lilliam M Radigan the charming cultured and friendly neighbour of Melvin Jones, who helped and pacified him during the said lonely days following the loss of his wife, becomes Mrs Melvin Jones at a simple, but solemn ceremony.

July 1, 1956 : Lions Clubs in India are formed into District 304 and Noshir Pundole nominated District Governor for 1956-57. He serves as District Governor for two more terms 1957-58 and 1958-59.

1957 : Lions International completes 40 years of eventful and useful existence. The Board, on the advice of an efficient management consultancy firm, reorganizes the Headquarters operations along modern corporate lines and create the positions of Executive Administrator, Secretary, Treasurer, Legal Counsel, Division Managers and Department Managers. Lions Club of Glenside, Pennsylvania, USA establishes the first Leo Club (though not yet officially recognized).

1958 : International Board of Directors confers the title FOUNDER AND SECRETARY GENERAL on Melvin Jones.

1959 : Lions International scores a century in the number of countries and geographic areas as Thailand joins the ranks of Lionism with the organization of the Lions Club of Bangkok. In October, the membership of the Association crosses 6,00,000.

April 1960 : The Lions Club of Hialeah (Palm Springs) in Florida, USA is the Association's 1599th Club.

Jan 13, 1961 : The Chicago (Central) Lions Club, which was the Business Circle prior to 1917, honours its greatest member, LION MELVIN JONES, on his 82nd birthday, presenting him with a scroll and the establishment of a perpetual scholarship fund in his honour.

June 1, 1961 : Founder Melvin Jones passes away. Hundreds of thousands Lions and their families, civic leaders, governmental dignitaries, pay their respects to the great visionary as he lies in state and during the funeral on June 5, the International Board designates January 13 his birthday, as Day of Memory and January as Melvin Jones Memorial Month.

June 1961 : International Board approves Youth Exchange as an activity of the Association.

June 20-23, 1962 : The Eastern Hemisphere has its first Lions International Convention as Nice, France plays host to the 45th Annual Meet. At the end of this Convention, a new District 304-C is formed in Central India. (This District is later subdivided and added on to the other four).

June 19-22, 1963 : Pin trading becomes an interesting pastime during the 46th Convention in Miami, Florida, USA.

Sept 1963 : Fiji Islands becomes the 125th Lions nation with the organization of the Suva Lions Club.

Jan 1964 : Robert McEilhery of the Lions Club of Albuquerque (Heights), New Mexico, USA is the 700,000th Lion.

April 1964 : Alarmed at the increasing number of drop in members worldwide, International Board adds Retention as an integral part of Membership Development.

July 1964 : On July 11, at the close of the 47th International Convention India gets its first International Director in the form of Noshir N Pundole who is elected for the 1964-66 term to represent the Africa and South Asia area. Director Pundole moots the idea of an Area Forum.

1966 : Lions International achieves the 20,000 mark in clubs and crosses the 8,00,000 mark in membership. The first Africa and South West Asia Forum is held in Nairobi, Kenya.

1967 : The Association celebrates its Golden Jubilee after 50 years of creditable existence. Lions International can boast of over 2,100 Lions Clubs and 8,50,000 members in 135 countries and geographic locations. As part of the 50th Anniversary celebrations, a World Peace Essay Contest is held with the theme SEARCH FOR PEACE. The first prize is won by A Russel Wodell, an 18 year old school boy from Cranbrook, British Columbia.

Oct. 8, 1967 : To commemorate its 50th Anniversary, Lions International institutes the HUMANITARIAN AWARD. The highest recognition for outstanding service to humanity, is presented to Dr Walter Munz who has been continuing the good work of Albert Schweitzer.

July 3, 1968 : The Leo Club programme is officially approved by the International Board. LIONS INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION (LIF) is formed to serve as Lionism's vehicle of global assistance.

July 2-5, 1969 : Tokyo, Japan is the venue of the first International Convention in Asia. This is the Association's 52nd Convention.

July 1969 : History is made as Lion Neil A Armstrong lands on the moon on July 21 and becomes the first man to put his feet on the celestial body.

July 4, 1970 : At the close of the 53rd Convention in Atlantic City of New Jersey, USA newly elected International President Dr Robert D McCullough announces the establishment of a WORLD LIONS SERVICE DAY on October 8, the anniversary day of the Association when "each Lion in the world is urged, as a humanitarian to share himself person to person, heart to heart, in some manner for the personal service of the less fortunate people."

Jan 1971 : Hunting Lions in the Air, a contest for Lions and who are amateur radio hams, comes into its own as the same is sponsored and promoted by the Lions Club of Rio De Janeiro in Brazil. (Later the date of the contest is fixed to January 13th to coincide with the birthday of Founder).

March 1971 : Lions Club of Fred, France is the Association's 25,000th Club.

July 1971 : International President Robert J Uplinger announces for the first time the 100% Club President's Award Programme. Lions International Headquarters moves into the newly constructed building on York and Cermak Roads in Oak Brook, a suburb of Chicago, Illinois. The property on North Michigan Avenue, Chicago is sold at a considerable profit.

Oct. 1971 : International Board recasts the Association's activities and approves the Major Service Activities.

March 1972 : International Board recasts the Association's activities and approves the following Major Service activities. 1) Sight Conservation and Work for the Blind 2) Hearing Conservation and Work for Deaf 3) Citizenship Services 4) Educational Services 5) Environmental Services 6) Health Services 7) International Services 8) Public Services 9) Recreational services 10) Social Services.

July 1, 1972 : During the Third Plenary Session of the 55th Convention at Mexico City, newly elected President, George Fredricks, declares 1972-73 the year of the Millionth Member and announces several awards in connection with the Programme. International Board changes International Relations Month to October, during which the founding anniversaries of the Association and United Nations occur.

Jan. 20, 1973 : The 26,000th Club of the Association, the Lions Club of Union City, Michigan USA is inaugurated.

Feb. 1973 : Lionism achieves the ONE MILLION mark in membership. Barney Gill of Virginia Beach (Oceana) Lions Club in Virginia, USA is the 10,00,000th member.

June 30, 1973 : During the third Plenary Session of the 56th Convention in Miami, Florida, USA the 1,00,000th Member, his Sponsor and his club officers are honoured by the outgoing International President.

Jan 1974 : Lionism is now active in 150 countries and geographic areas as the Lions Club of Tortola in British Virgin Islands is organized.

Jan 1975 : LCIF WEEK is observed for the first time. This becomes an annual feature. The Lions Club of Domodma - Tanzania is the Association's 28,000th Club.

June 28, 1975 : During his inaugural address at the close of the 58th International Convention in Dallas, President Harry J Asian announces the decision to start the Lioness Club Programme to coincide with the International Women's Year and the commencement of the International Women's Decade.

Dec 23 1975 : The Lions Club of Birmingham (Exhibition) in West Midlands England is the Association's 29,000th club

March 1, 1976 : The Lioness Clubs of Agra and Vishakapatnam are India's first Lioness Clubs.

June 1976 : International Board decides to change the titles of two major activities from Sight Conservation and Work for the Blind and Hearing Conservation and Work with the Deaf respectively. The Association embarks on its Diamond Jubilee Year, its 60th year of existence.

Sept 1976 : Lionism crosses yet another milestone with the inauguration of the Lions Club of Callaway in Minnesota, USA, the Association's 30,000th club.

Jan 20, 1977 : Lions of the world rejoice as 100% Past District Governor Jimmy Carter of the Lions Club of Plains, Georgia is elected 39th President of the United States of America.

April 1977 : The International Board takes a momentous decision as it approves the change of the association's name from LIONS INTERNATIONAL to LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL. The Board also changes the title of the major activity. Hearing Conservation and Work with the Deaf to Hearing and Speech Action and Work with the Deaf. Lionism now has 1.2 million members worldwide.

June 1977 : The Association celebrates its Diamond Jubilee

June 21-24, 1978 : During the First Plenary Session of the 61st Convention in Tokyo, Japan, 1977-78 International President Joseph M McLaughlin announces that the Government of India has permitted transfer of part of liquid funds blocked in the country to the Headquarters in Oak Brook at the rate of US\$ 2.50 per member per year. He also recalls that for the first time in the history of Lions International Foundation, the annual contributions have exceeded US\$ 1,00,000. At the close of the Third Plenary Session on June 23rd Wilbur L Wilson who served the Association for 36 years (29 of which were with Founder Melvin Jones, retires as Executive Administrator and is succeeded by Roy Schaetzel who has been with the Association since 1964 and is a member of the Lions Club of Chicago (Central) - the club to which the founder belonged.

Feb 1980 : The Lioness Programme with 63,000 members and 2,500 clubs becomes the number one Ladies Service Club Organization in the world.

March 24, 1980 : United Nations honours the Association by observing Lions Clubs International Day at its Headquarters in New York. Lions Clubs International is the first organization of its kind to be honoured thus. (This becomes an annual feature and the day is renamed Lions Day at the UN).

June 20, 1981 : The Third Plenary Session of the 64th International Convention at Phoenix, Arizona USA sees the first ever Lion from Asia assuming the President-ship of the Association in the person of Kaoru "Key" Murakami of Kyoto, Japan. President Murakami advocates planting of trees as symbol of peace. The success of this programme brings the Association the first ever and most coveted Environmental Leadership Award.

June 1982 : At the close of the 65th Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, USA newly elected Lions Clubs International President Everett J "Ebb" Grindstaff asks Lions Clubs to take up Drug Awareness and S\Diabetes Awareness as special emphasis programmes. (subsequently the International Board adopts these two as major Activities of the Association). President Grindstaff also initiates other new programmes- the Keep em Programme aimed at retaining Lions Clubs, members and lions JOURNEY FOR SIGHT, to be undertaken to create awareness among the public about the activities of Lions Clubs on behalf of the sight impaired and also augment funds for the same.

Jan 24, 1983 : The first WORLD PEACE DAY is observed by Lions Clubs all over. This becomes an annual feature.

March 1983 : An important milestone is achieved in Indian Lionism as the number of Lions in the country exceeds the 1,00,000 mark.

March 1986 : "Lions Day at the United Nations" becomes "Lions Days with the United Nations".

July 9, 1986 : The International Association of Lions Clubs honours Mother Teresa of Calcutta with the Humanitarian Award during the First Plenary Session of the 69th International Convention at New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. The award is accompanied by an amount of US \$ 25,000 from the Association's Vehicle of Global Assistance, Lions Clubs International Foundation.

July 1987 : History is made during the Third Plenary Session of the 70th Annual International Convention in Taipei, Republic of China. Delegates approve by overwhelming vote, to amend the Constitution of the Association by the removal of the word "male" from the requirements for becoming a Lions Club member, thereby making Lions Clubs International, the first among the organizations of its global stature, to throw open membership in its ranks to ladies also.

Dec 14 1988 : Lionism enters a Communist Nation. International President Austin P Jennings inaugurates the Lions Club of Budapest in Hungary, sponsored by the Lions Club of Helsinki, Hamaneimi, Finland.

June 24, 1989 : Past International Director Rohit C Mehta of Ahmedabad is elected Third Vice-President of Lions Clubs International at the 72nd Annual Convention in Miami, USA. He is the first Indian to be elected as an International Vice President. Dr. M C Modi of India honoured with humanitarian award.

June 7, 1990 : Consequent to the demise of the International first Vice President Mathew Seishi Ogawa on 12th September 1989, William L "Bill" Biggs was elected directly to the post of International President at an Extra-Ordinary election held in Oak Brook.

To further the Lions Clubs International Objects and Lions Code of Ethics, SIGHT FIRST, Lions Clubs International's new global sight initiative is launched at the 73rd International Convention. Over US\$ 100 Million will be spent through Sight First to eliminate blindness around the globe. Lioness Club Programme changes from sponsored activity to an officially recognized programme.

June 18, 1991 : The International Convention of Brisbane, Australia adopts a resolution that would make the office of Lt. Governor mandatory not later than July 1, 1994.

Jan 1993 : The International Association of Lions Clubs has 1,402,747 members in 41,349 clubs in 695 districts in 178 countries and geographical areas.

July 9, 1993 : The International Convention at Minneapolis, USA adopted the following resolutions :

To qualify for the office of District Governor the candidate should have served as Lt. Governor/Vice District Governor w.e.f. July 1, 1996.

1995 : Recipient of 1995 Humanitarian Award is Mrs Sonia Gandhi.

1997 : Kingdom of CAMBODIA and the Republic of BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA are the newly added countries to Lionism. Lions Clubs are now active in 183 Nations and Geographic Areas.

July 1997 : The Affiliate Member Category was introduced at the Philadelphia Convention.

Jan 19, 1998 : The Lions Clubs International And Junior Chamber International entered into a cooperative agreement to enhance service to local communities throughout the world.

April 18, 1998 : World Wide Induction Day was held successfully throughout the world. This was to become an annual feature.

October 8, 1998 : World Sight Day was launched to demonstrate how Lions worldwide are answering human needs of the most crucial nature.

Jan 1, 1999 : A special charter fee waiver programme for Lionesses and Spouses of Lions was launched.

2000 -01 Stress on Quality was given by the International President

2001-02 : International President Frank J Moore stressed on Retention and initiated the Retention Clinic

2002 -03: The concept of Impact Team was formulated to lay stress on Membership Growth.

2003-04: After a number of years the association had growth in membership. Stress was laid on inducting more and more women members into the organisation

2004-05 : The Art of Recognition - was initiated by Clement Kusiak, the International President. All awards and recognitions available through the organisation was compiled together in a separate publication.

2005-06 : The year of Passion to excel saw the initiation of the membership team entitled Mission 30. This team focussed on Plus one - i.e. One Member growth in each club and one club growth in each District. Campaign Sight First II was launched at the Hong Kong Convention.

2006-07 : The DG(E) group leaders were given the title of DG Members and were asked to work together the year with their District Governors towards Membership Growth.

2007-08 : The year of Challenge to Change marked the 90th year of LCI. It also was the 50th year of Leos and 30 years of women in lionism.

2008-2009 – The Financial Times rated LCIF as the World's best NGO. The position of 2nd VDG was introduced. The Global Membership Team was launched.

2009-2010- The association spread to the 206th country with the addition of Bhutan. The DG team concept was introduced. Africa was given a separate constitutional Area status. To make the GMT more effective it was expanded to include the MERL teams and the DG teams.

2010-2011- The Global Leadership team – a parallel structure to the GMT was introduced.

2011-2012- The IP lay stress on tree plantation and a record number of trees were planted around the globe. A new concept- “President meets Presidents” was initiated. A women’s task force was also constituted.