



L I O N S

Lions Clubs
International

T a s m a n i a



Newsletter Editor John Salmon Ph: 62653840 Email: editor@lionstasmania.org

From the District Governor's Pen...

Fellow Lions

What a great Convention! I must congratulate the Spring Bay Lions Club for delivering what I asked them for. A fun convention with a major focus on youth.

Also congratulations to Convention Chairman Mick Desmond on being awarded the Glamorgan Spring Bay Citizen of the Year. Well done Mick.

The food at the convention was fantastic and the Saturday fish bake was delicious. Most of the business sessions ran to schedule with only a couple being a minute or two over.

The LEO of the Year finalists have shown what our young LEOs are capable of with LEOs Jessica and Nic doing all Lions proud. **Congratulations to LEO Nic Van Essen from Penguin on winning the final.** However I don't think that LEO Jessica from Glenorchy was all that far behind him and hopefully she will compete again next year and go that one step further.

I was very proud to hear the two young LYNX ladies talk on their life experiences and how Lions had assisted them in changing their ways and turning their lives around for the better. They have both been a part of my life over the past few years and to see them on stage delivering their speech was the culmination of many stories, tears and hugs shared. Thanks to those clubs and individuals who have asked me if they can get involved. I will be in touch next year with information regarding the workshops and will be happy to welcome you on board.

If anyone else would like to assist me with LYNX and didn't get the opportunity to see me at the convention please send me an email and I will add you to the list.

Congratulations to DGE David Daniels, 1st DGE George Bugeja and 2nd DGE Michael MacLaren on their election wins. It is good to know that we have some excellent Lions to lead us forward over the next three years.

Also, well done to the Latrobe Lions Club on taking out the coveted District 201T1 Top Club Award for 2010/ 2011. This is a very hard working and dedicated club both within their community, our state and also assisting those around the world who are less fortunate than us.



I would like to thank those clubs that have taken up the challenge set by International President Wing Kun Tam to plant one (1) million trees

throughout the world this Lions year. To date Lions all over the globe have taken up the challenge with over five (5) million trees being planted so far.

Congratulations to the Clarence, Hobart Town, King Island, Kingborough, Kings Meadows, Rosebery, Sandy Bay, Sorell, Spring Bay, St. Helens and West Tamar Lions Clubs who have planted eight hundred and eighty-five (885) trees among them so far this year. I will hopefully see another one hundred and

fifteen (115) planted before the end of June to get to my pledge of 1,000 trees planted by the T1 clubs.

Lion Julie and I have visited thirty-six (36) clubs in the first six (6) months of this year and will visit the remaining thirteen (13) during February and March next year.

I thank those Lions and their partners who have made us both feel welcome during our travels and trust that you give all current and prospective members the same hospitality that you have afforded us.

LIONS and YOUTH
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE
TOGETHER



Regards, DG Toby

MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Our District Count

30 Oct 2011

Clubs: 49

Membership: 1260

Status:

"Established district"

30 Nov 2011

Clubs: 49

Membership: 1252

Status:

"Established district"

2
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4
5
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New Lions

CLUB JOINED

New Lion

SPONSOR



DODGES FERRY/STHN BEACHES

LIONS CLUB

Marie A Mason

SUSY GREGORY-COOK

Spike Mason

SUSY GREGORY-COOK

KING ISLAND LIONS CLUB

Glenda R Holloway

DEBRA DENBY

Freja M Peterson

HANS PETERSON

PORT SORELL LIONS CLUB

Martin Miller

NOT STATED

WESTBURY LIONS CLUB

Elizabeth M Gill

LYN DENT

W
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L
C
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M
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!

Lions Provide Relief for Earthquake Victims in Turkey

A recent earthquake in Turkey killed hundreds, injured more than 1,300 and caused extensive property damage.

Lions are bringing aid and comfort to the people affected by this disaster. LCIF approved an emergency grant to fund Lions' relief efforts. Our members are using these funds to provide relief supplies, including food and water.



From LCI "Newswire"

From the Cabinet Secretary

Orientation sessions for newer Lions

Early in the new year, orientation sessions will be offered for newer Lions members - those who have joined since 1 July 2010. Each of these Lions will receive an invitation by mail soon. Other Lions members are also most welcome at these sessions, however priority will be given to the newer members.

There will be three sessions offered, one in each of the regions (see details below).

The orientation session will provide an opportunity for newer Lions to meet Lions from other clubs in the area, and to learn something of the Lions organisation, our history, how things work, who is who in the zoo and what we can and should do as Lions members. *The sessions will be informal, friendly and informative.*

Things you should bring with you:

- Your Lions name badge
- Lots of enthusiasm
- A positive attitude



There is no charge to attend these sessions.

When & When

All sessions start at 10 am and conclude around 1230. A light lunch will be provided. Dress - casual.

South – 21 Jan 2012 at Howrah Recreation Centre (previously known as the Sunshine Home), 11 Howrah Road, Howrah.

RSVP by 14 Jan to Region Chairman Sue Johns phone: 6244-2593
email: region3@lionstasmania.org

North – 4 Feb 2012 at Kings Meadows Lions clubrooms, Merino St, Kings Meadows.

RSVP by 28 Jan to RC Derek Fellows
phone: 6327-2876
email: region2@lionstasmania.org

Northwest – 1 Feb 2012 at Lions Centre, 19 Ironcliffe Rd, Penguin.

RSVP by 25 Jan to RC Anne Fagg
phone: 6443-4287
email: region1@lionstasmania.org

Reminder re Club Elections & PU101 returns

Now Convention is over, your club should be planning your nomination and election meetings for early in the New Year.

I suggest all clubs should have election results for President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Chairman finalised by early March as I am assuming that PU101 returns will need to be completed by mid March.

I will write to all clubs once PU101 date is finalised.

PU101 can be lodged using the WMMR; this is the preferred method.

Maurice Jones
Cabinet Secretary



Fundraising Dinner

THE NEXT SOUTHERN LIONS CLUBS ANNUAL DINNER HOSTED BY THE LIONS CLUB OF SORELL.

WILL BE HELD IN SORELL ON:

WEDNESDAY

1st FEBRUARY 2012

6.30pm for 7pm

For further details & to RSVP 29th January 2012

Please contact: Geoff Clow
Zone Chairman
03 6245 9176
0408 281 176 or

geoff49@bigpond.net.au

THIS FUNDRAISER IS BECOMING MORE POPULAR EACH YEAR SO BOOK EARLY!

Australian Lions Foundation

Helping Lions, Help Their Communities



Photo left shows myself, President Leo Foley and Jack Lowe on presentation of a 50 year Medal to Lion Jack Lowe at the Sandy Bay Club.

Jack was a Charter Member of the LC of Launceston Windmill Hill and transferred to the City of Hobart (Host) in the sixties and is now a member of Sandy Bay Club.

In 1968, Jack was instrumental with the late Thad Sasser as the "Guiding Lions" in the formation of

the LC of Kingborough. He is the second longest serving Tasmanian Lion and still a member of a Club in this State.

OTHER NEWS:

Western Australian Bush Fires:

Virtually within hours of learning of the disastrous bush fires in the Margaret River area of Western Australia (W2) the Trustees approved an Emergency/Disaster Grant of \$20,000 to assist victims of this tragic event.

The Funds have been sent to the District Governor for disbursement and financial accountability.

Grants Approved at our last Meeting:

Two Clubs in our District were successful with their application for assistance with Projects.

The Lions Club of Penguin received a Grant of \$5,000 to assist with the upgrade of the Community Skate Park and,

The Lions Club of King Island received a Grant of \$3250 to assist with the construction of a shelter and barbeque for the Senior Citizens Complex.

In the new year all Clubs will be receiving information on the Foundation's Award Program which is the main source of fundraisings. This enables the Foundation to assist in times of Emergency/Disasters and provide assistance to other Clubs with their Community Projects.

Trustees meet four times a year to assess grants and the next meetings of Trustees will be held

4th & 5th February 2012 and 2nd May 2012

Please note that any pending Grant Applications by Clubs must be signed by the District Governor/Vice District Governor or Cabinet Secretary

prior to sending direct to me or to the Grants Chairman PCC Ian Kelly, PO Box 5522, FALCON, WA 6210. Applications need to be received at least seven (7) days prior to the above dates.

Should any Club require assistance with a Grant Application or Awards please contact me either by email apretyman@bigpond.com or phone 62252011.



DONATIONS TO THE FOUNDATION'S GENERAL OR EMERGENCY FUND ARE ALSO GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Alan Pretyman - Secretary and Trustee for Tasmania

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ROCKIN THE VEST

Lions International has produced a rap video "Rockin The Vest" that has taken off globally. This was shown at Convention on Sunday 13 November. A light-hearted send-up of Lions by Lions, this shows what is behind the Yellow Vest popular with Lions and encourages others to join the "Yellow Vest Posse".

There are a lot of words in the Rap that are a bit tricky to get - here are the lyrics for those interested:

Yo....Dial up that pacemaker G, I got something to say --
the yellow vest posse - H. E. L to tha P.
Comin 'atchu now (the yellow vest posse)

Well you might see me cruising in my old folks ride
Blinkers been on since I got inside
You thinkin' I'm a fogey, shuffleboardin' old timer
But I'm a Lions clubs member, and a really good rhymor

You know I dress to impress, fly as I can be
Wear my yellow vest whenever doin' good deeds
I might kick it in the park, bent ova' plantin' trees
Or go collectin' eyeglasses to help the kiddies see

Lions clubs! Lions clubs! No time for rest!
Lions clubs! Lions clubs! We be rockin' the vest!
Lions clubs! Lions clubs! Straight up and doin' more!

Lions clubs! Lions clubs! Lemme hear you roar! (Lions clubs yeah...come on)

Ballin' in my driveway, I might look pretty lame
But I'm a mac-daddy neighbor, volunteering is my game

I can mend a broken sump pump, know how to dig a stump up
Pruning shears in my hand, I make yo' rhoden-dron jump up

See I got skills to amaze you
Fall down I'm gonna raise you
You got a dry turkey sandwich?
I mayonnaise you (Oh yeah...I'm making your sandwiches)

Lions clubs! Lions clubs! No time for rest!
Lions clubs! Lions clubs! Stone cold rockin' the vest!

Lions clubs! Lions clubs! Philanthropic to the core!

Lions clubs! Lions clubs! Back up we're



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Irish Medical Dictionary

HANGNAIL

Coat Hook

IMPOTENT

Distinguished,
Well-Known

LABOUR PAIN

Getting Hurt At Work

MEDICAL STAFF

Doctors Cane

MORBID

A Higher Offer

NITRATES

Cheaper Than Day Rates

NODE

Was Aware Of

OUTPATIENT

A Person Who Has Fainted

PAP SMEAR

A Fatherhood Test

PELVIS

A Cousin To Elvis

RECOVERY ROOM

Place To Do Upholstery

RECTUM

Bloody Near Killed Them

SECRETION

Hiding Something

SEIZURE

Roman Emperor

TABLET

A Small Table

TERMINAL ILLNESS

Getting Sick At The Airport

TUMOUR

More Than One

URINE

Opposite Of You're Out

VARICOSE

Nearby

VEIN

Conceited

CHRISTMAS 2011 -- BIRTH OF A NEW TRADITION

As the holidays approach, the giant Asian factories are kicking into high gear to provide Australians with monstrous piles of cheaply produced goods – merchandise that has been produced at the expense of Australian labour.

This year will be different. This year Australians will give the gift of genuine concern for other Australians. There is no longer an excuse that, at gift giving time, nothing can be found that is produced by Australian hands. Yes there is!

It's time to think outside the box, people. Who says a gift needs to fit in a shirt box, wrapped in Chinese produced wrapping paper?

Everyone -- yes EVERYONE gets their hair cut. How about gift certificates from your local hair salon or barber? Gym membership? It's appropriate for all ages who are thinking about health improvement.

Who wouldn't appreciate getting their car detailed? Small local-owned detail shops & car washes would love to sell you a gift certificate or a book of gift certificates. For the gardeners on your list, consider some lovely healthy pot plants or plants for the garden; or even a gift certificate from the local lawn-mowing man.

Are you one of those extravagant givers who think nothing of plunking down the Panasonic of a Chinese made flat-screen? Perhaps that grateful gift receiver would like his driveway sealed, or lawn mowed for the summer, or games at the local golf course.

There are a bazillion owner-run restaurants -- all offering gift certificates. If your intended isn't the fancy eatery sort, what about a half-dozen breakfasts at the local café? Remember, folks this isn't about big National chains -- this is about supporting your home town with their financial lives on the line to keep their doors open.

How many people couldn't use an oil change for their car, truck or motorcycle, done at a shop run by the Australian working guy?

What about a gift certificate from a local home handyman for some chores to be done around the home?

Thinking about a heartfelt gift for mum? Mum would LOVE the services of a local cleaning lady for a day.

Someone's computer could use a tune-up, & I KNOW I can find some young guy who is struggling to get his repair business up & running.

OK, you were looking for something more personal. Local crafts people spin their own wool & knit them into scarves. They make jewellery, & pottery & beautiful wooden boxes.

Plan your holiday outings at local, owner-operated restaurants and leave your server a nice tip. How about going out to see a play or ballet at your hometown theatre.

Musicians need love too, so find a venue showcasing local bands.

Honestly, people, do you REALLY need to buy another 10,000 Chinese lights for the house?

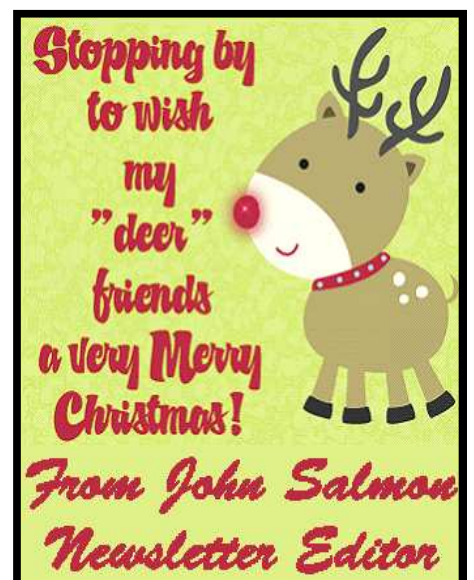
When you buy a \$5.00 string of light, about 50 cents stays in the community. If you have those kinds of bucks to burn, leave the postman, garbo or babysitter a nice BIG tip.

You see, Christmas is no longer about draining Australian pockets so that China can build another glittering city. Christmas is now about caring about Australia, encouraging our small businesses to keep plugging away to follow their dreams. When we care about other Australians, we care about our communities, & the benefits come back to us in ways we couldn't imagine.

Let THIS be the new Australian Christmas tradition. This is a revolution of caring about each other, and even if you are not religious isn't caring what Christmas is about?

From "Line on Lions"
(The Newsletter of The Lions Club
of Penguin Inc.)

Page 12 - December 2011



Get involved -
that's what Lionism
is all about

Youth Projects

PEACE POSTERS

Many thanks to the clubs who participated in the Lions Peace Poster Competition.

Congratulations to those students whose works were on display at the Triabunna Convention.

For the second year in a row the Rocky Cape Lions Club and Boat Harbour Primary School sponsored the winning entrant for Tasmania, **Ginger Rankin**.

YOUTH of the YEAR

Clubs who are participating in this Programme in 2011/2012 your Club Registration Form and cheque for \$130.00 should be received by me before the 31st December 2011.

In the past students have pulled out at the last minute leaving clubs without an entrant, if this happens the T1 Treasurer Lion Erik Madsen will reimburse your club.

February through to April will be a busy time for Youth of the Year.

Please note and adhere to the following dates:

- CLUB FINAL: by 15th March
- REGION FINAL: by 1st April
- STATE FINAL: 15th April
- NATIONAL FINAL: 4th May

Feel free to contact me if you have any queries.

DC Wendy Brady
6425 3056 or
wendon.12@bigpond.com



All too often we get caught up in the moment and make bad decisions. It's a reminder that we need to make smart decisions every day and make sure they are in line with our future goals.

Cabinet Treasurers Musings. . .

Regarding Mobile Phones, did you know?

- 1) If your phone battery is running low, you can dial *3370# to activate the spare emergency capacity of the battery.
- 2) To check your phone serial number, dial *#06#, record this number, and if your phone is stolen, phone the service provider to block this number, the phone is then useless to the thief, **even with a new sim card**.

Regarding ATM cards, did you know?

If you get ambushed and forced to withdraw funds from an ATM, **simply enter your ATM Pin Code in reverse**. The ATM will recognise your pin and dispense the funds, but the system will also alert and dispatch the nearest police car to the ATM position.

This information was recently broadcast by Crime Stoppers

Erik Madsen/Cabinet Treasurer



Worthy Club of the Year receives local recognition

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Four members of our club (Latrobe) ventured to the District Convention in Triabunna - an enjoyable time we had, topped off by the honour of receiving the club of the year award. With our club having celebrated it's 40th Charter Anniversary this year, this was the icing on the cake.

Following on from the Convention, Lion Mark happened to mention our award to Mayor Gaffney, who then contacted the Advocate. After a lengthy interview including PDG Alan Walker and a couple of hours going through hundreds of photos we thought we might get a half page in the paper but no.... three pages with only a couple of errors. We were overwhelmed.

A couple of months ago our club agreed to fund the initial costs of a **Hart Walker** for a little 2½ year old local child. We decided we would seek assistance from other groups in the community, however, the Ambers father is a member of the local Fire Brigade and they decided they wanted to raise the remaining \$5000.00 themselves.

A few weeks later they held a garage sale at the Fire Station; an article in the Advocate mentioned the sale and members of the fire brigade were willing to pick up any items people couldn't deliver themselves. Donations came in droves from fridges and washing machines to an organ and numerous TV sets, dining settings, a cupboard, toys, china - you name it and it was there. The generosity of the local community and the surrounding Fire Brigades was amazing and at the time of writing they have raised almost \$10,000.00 - and maybe the best part of all - funds left over are to go to another child on the northwest coast, who needs a walker.

They could have used funds for something else but, they have chosen to support another family, who they may never meet, and make their lives a little easier. *And that moved me to tears.*

Following on, the members of the Brigade invited me to their fortnightly meeting because they wanted to hear more about the *Hart walker* and the *Australian Lions Children's Mobility Foundation*. It's great when our own want to hear about the Foundation, but even more when other organisations are interested . . .

With a busy period to look forward to over the next few weeks with the Christmas Parade and another Speedway Meeting (yes, there's one on the 1st January!!), **I reckon our members will be looking forward to a couple of weeks break before we start off again!**



Kae Campbell

Secretary - Latrobe Lions Club & DC ALCMF

.....cont'd from page 3

gonna roar!

If rappin' is what it takes to get our message out
Then I'll put my gums in motion, let my words be flowin'
You got a flag football team? [blows whistle] I start coachin'
(Yeah. Flag football)

See I'm more than a guy out sellin' raffle tickets

I feed the hungry, help the helpless, tell the selfish where to stick it
That's why I'm thumpin my Lions club chest
Now it's your turn to put on the yellow vest
(Yeah. What up Lion.)

Maurice Jones

IT/Communications chairman





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Tasmanian Lions Foundation

Next meeting of Foundation to be held on

12th February 2012

Any Club with Grant Applications are to be in hands of the Secretary by:

5th February 2012

at 11 Camina Court Riverside Tas 7250.

A donation from your Club to the Foundation will help us to ensure that it can support your fellow Lions in bringing larger community activities to a successful conclusion.

We look forward and invite you to both utilize and support the Foundation in the coming year.

Finally, may I take this opportunity in wishing you one and all a Happy Festive Season and hope 2012 is a good one for you.

REMEMBER,

It is your foundation and we are here to assist you. - so please use it.

Until next month

Peter Burke Secretary



DISTRICT STAMP COLLECTING

Firstly, let me take this opportunity in wishing you all a Happy Festive Season and that you all have an enjoyable and safe time.

Your support is most appreciated and look forward to your continued efforts. With the Festive Season fast approaching we have the opportunity in finding a greater number of stamps come into circulation, we have the opportunity to ask friends and businesses to collect them.

There is little work as you wonderful Lions who currently collect them would know..So Lions we invite you take up this offer of help and forward them direct to me at:

11 Camina Crt Riverside 7250 and we will do the rest.

You can also give them to your Zone/Regional Chair who will give them to Lion Phil Robinson at Cabinet, who will get them to me.

Regards Peter Burke
Riverside Lions Club



PLACES I HAVE BEEN

I have been in many places, but I've never been in *Cahoots*. Apparently, you can't go alone. You have to be in *Cahoots* with someone.

I've also never been in *Cognito*. I hear no one recognizes you there.

I have, however, been in *Sane*. They don't have an airport; you have to be driven there. I have made several trips there, thanks to my friends, family and work.

I would like to go to *Conclusions*, but you have to jump, and I'm not too much on physical activity anymore.

I have been in *Deep DoDo* many times, and the older I get, the easier it is to get there.

I have also been in *Doubt*. That is a sad place to go, and I try not to visit there too often.

I've been in *Flexible*, but only when it was very important to stand firm.

Sometimes I'm in *Capable*, and I go there more often as I'm getting older.

One of my favorite places to be is in *Suspense!* It really gets the adrenalin flowing and pumps up the old heart! At my age I need all the stimuli I can get!

And, sometimes I think I am in *Vincible*, but life shows me I am not!

Lion Maurice Jones



Register to Attend International Convention in Busan 2012

Make plans to join Lions from around the world at our 95th International Convention in Busan, Korea, June 22-26, 2012.

While in Busan, be sure to experience Korean cuisine at a barbeque restaurant, get your toes in the sand at Haeundae Beach and take a short ride to visit Beomeosa Temple on the slopes of Mt. Geumjeongsan. Learn more about pre/post convention tour options - and be sure to register to attend by December 31 to lock in the lowest registration fee and reserve your hotel at our specially discounted Lions rates.

From the International President

First of all, in this season of belief, let me offer best wishes to all my fellow Lions, their loved ones, friends and families. We have come a long way in five months. My belief in the power of what every Lion can do to change the world is as strong as ever.

The early success of our campaign to plant 1 million trees makes me both proud and so humble. Whether it's planting trees in lands scarred by the tsunami in Japan or tornadoes in the United States, or planting trees to restore our planet's critical forests in Africa or South Asia, we have succeeded in unifying Lions all over the world. These acts of service are fun and rewarding to do. They bring clubs together and bring smiles to ourselves and to people in the communities we serve. Through mid-November, together we planted more than 5.7 MILLION trees in more than 60 countries. Isn't that amazing?

Some Lions ask me if I will set another target. I politely say "no" because I believe the target lies in each of our hearts. It is the Lions who determine how far we go and how many trees we plant. Every tree counts, even if you can plant only one. Every member matters, too.

Planting trees is certainly good for the environment. But to me, it's also a strong symbol of our association's commitment to the future and a reason to invite friends, families and others to join us in making it happen.

You see, if we as Lions can identify the right tree saplings, plan them in the right place, and take care of them - then certainly we can also invite a new member, give them a meaningful role in our club, and nurture them like we would a member of the family.

This is why I am also proud and humbled by Lions' response to this year's **"My Club, My Family"** initiative. We have strong membership growth this year, exceeding a 16,000 net gain through mid-November. But inviting new members is easy; treating them as if they were family and involving them in meaningful service will ensure they stay.

So my fellow Lions, with all we have done in five months, I am now happy to say that "I Believe" has clearly

transformed into "We Believe." It's because of you and your belief in what we can do. Your belief, and more importantly, your actions, have given me the greatest gift of all as your international president.

Consider this special issue a holiday gift to all Lions. The story's message is that Lions are indeed a precious gift to our communities. May the warm glow of family be part of your regular household and your Lions club as you believe in our great service mission.

Sincerely

Wing-Kun Tam
International President



Did You Ever Wonder....

Why doesn't glue stick to the inside of the bottle?

Why is a boxing ring square?

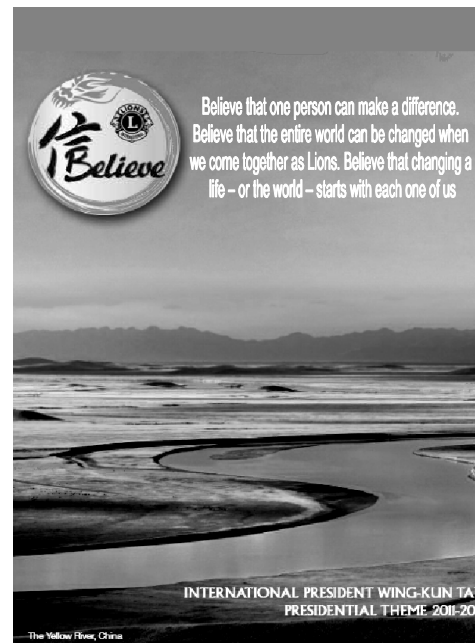
Why is it called lipstick if you can still move your lips?

Why is it considered necessary to nail down the lid of a coffin?



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MEMBERSHIP is EVERY member's BUSINESS!

Product Sales

Thanks to everyone for their efforts over the past year, and especially this year's Christmas period. The Christmas Pudding sales have been extremely pleasing, as have the 1Kg Cakes. 1Kg Cakes are out of stock and so are the Plum Puddings. We have sold 58,000 Puddings nationally, which is a vast improvement on last year's sales. Next year we hope for even bigger things.

Fudge and Mint sales have also improved somewhat. With better promotion perhaps these sales will increase next year. All Clubs need to study their approach and performance so that they can improve sales next year in all areas, and especially improve communication, as budgets always increase, never decrease.

All this work and planning is for nought unless accounts are paid by 31/01/2012. It is so important to pay accounts by this date as this affects rebates to M/D and District. If you have a query on your account please don't wait until the end of January to question it; do it early January at the latest. Late payments damage our reputation as the world's largest service club.

PLEASE REMEMBER

CAKE AND PUDDING ACCOUNTS ARE DUE AT THE LATEST BY

31/01/2012

Yours in Lions Viv Cardwell DC (Product Sales 2011)
Ph 6286 1311 or 0428 136 223



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It is preferred that articles be typed and submitted for publication by e-mail or CD/DVD. Please forward (where possible) photos and newspaper cuttings with your article.

Deadline for next issue is: *JANUARY 10th*

Copy for the newsletter is required on or before the tenth (10th) of the month of publication.

CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD



- 1. One** of the most enduring symbols of the Christmas Season originated in Italy. St Francis of Assisi commissioned a man to create a manger scene and a tradition was born. In Rome, canons are fires on Christmas Eve to mark the beginning of the holiday season and a 24 hour fast comes to an end on Christmas Day with an elaborate feast. Although small gifts are exchanged on this day, the main gift-giving day is on January 6, the last day of the Epiphany.
- 2. The** little town where Jesus is said to have been born is the site of the Church of the Nativity, which is ablaze with flags and decorations every Christmas. On Christmas Eve natives and visitors alike crowd the church's doorways and stand on the roof to watch for the dramatic annual procession. Galloping horsemen and police mounted on Arabian horses lead the parade. They are followed by solitary horseman carrying a cross and sitting astride a coal-black steed. Then come the churchmen and government officials. The procession solemnly enters the doors and places an ancient effigy of the Holy Child in the church. Deep winding stairs lead to a grotto where visitors find a silver star marking the site of the birth of Jesus. Christian homes in Bethlehem are marked by a cross painted over the door and each home displays a homemade manger scene. A star is set up on a pole in the village square.
- 3. Romanian** children take to the streets over the Christmas season travelling from house to house singing carols and reciting poetry. The leader of any particular group carries a large wooden star covered in shiny paper and decorated with bells and coloured ribbon. A picture of the holy family is pasted in the centre of the star and the entire creation is held aloft with the help of a broomstick or stout pole.
- 4. As** one of the more ancient civilizations on earth, Egyptian festivities around our celebrations of Christmas involve more ancient customs. Celebrations of the birth of Christ began about 300 years after his death in other parts of the world. In Egypt however, December 21 marks a celebration of the death and resurrection of Osiris, the god of the underworld and judge of the dead. And December 26 sees the beginning of a 12 day festival celebrating the twelve months of the year.
- 5. Christmas** trees aren't commonly used in Greece but in almost every home the main symbol of the season is a shallow bowl containing a little water. Suspended above the water is a cross that is wrapped in basil leaves. The mother of the home keeps goblins at bay by dipping the cross in the bowl and sprinkling water into each room of the house. This ritual continues through the twelve day of Christmas ending on January 6.
- 6. The** Scots celebrate Christmas in a rather sombre fashion and reserve their merriment for New Year's Eve. It's rather bad luck to allow the fire to go out on Christmas Eve because the chimney cools down enough to allow mischievous elves into the house via the hearth. On Christmas day the fire is transferred out-doors as people gather 'round a bonfire to dance to the sound of bagpipes before settling down to a hearty dinner.
- 7. Christmas** in Armenia is enjoyed a tad earlier than most of the rest of the world. Six days earlier in fact because they believe that Christ's birthday should be celebrated on the day of his baptism. No worries for Armenians about shedding unwanted pounds after the festive season - they prepare for their Christmas celebrations with a fast. They eat no animal food for a week and no food at all on the last day before Christmas.
- 8. The** kids of the rest of the world universally consider Polish children downright lucky. They receive presents once on St Nicholas Day and again on Christmas day when they enjoy a feast consisting of twelve courses, one for each of the Apostles. The table is always set with an extra place in case a stranger or the Holy Spirit should appear. The Star of Bethlehem is the most popular image of the Polish Christmas and the Star man and his helpers, the Star boys, deliver the presents on Christmas Day.
- 9. On** Christmas Eve, Iraqi Christian families gather together and one of the children read about the birth of Jesus while other family members hold lighted candles. Afterward the reading, a bonfire of thorn bushes is lit and everyone sings. If the thorns burn to ashes, good luck will be granted for the coming year. When the fire dies, each person jumps over the ashes three times and makes a wish. On Christmas Day another bonfire is lit in the churchyard. The bishop, carrying a figure of the Baby Jesus leads the service. Afterwards he blesses one person with a touch. That person touches the person next to him or her and the touch is passed around until all present have felt the "touch of peace."
- 10. At** 4pm on Christmas Eve in Norway all work comes to a halt as people take to their bathrooms to wash and put on new clothes to greet the holiday season. An ancient Norse figure called Julesvinn delivers presents to the children and on Christmas day families congregate to eat the Christmas pig. After Christmas day, the children play a form of trick or treat - where they dress up and go door to door asking for goodies.



The Last Word...

"Life just is. You have to flow with it. Give yourself to the moment. Let it happen." -- Jerry Brown