



# District 23A Newsletter

Official publication of DG Lion Joan Bennett

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## 88th Annual Multiple District 23 Connecticut Lions State Convention

This year's event will be held at the **VILLA ROMA RESORT** in Callicoon, New York from Friday, May 15th through Sunday, the 17th. For those who may not know, the Villa Roma has been completely renovated after a devastating fire and flood. More than \$27 million has gone into a completely redesigned and redefined facility, one that now boasts a 150 seat café, a majestic 600 seat ballroom, an elegant cocktail lounge, a grand lobby, an ice cream parlor, a spa, a boutique, a fitness center, an indoor sports complex (tennis, racquetball, and walleyball courts; golf driving range, and bowling alleys, plus an arcade), outdoor sports venues (tennis, go-carts, paintball, basketball, bocce, et. al., and a golf course), plus four outdoor pools, a new Jacuzzi hot tub, and an indoor heated pool.

More information including a registration form is available on the CT Lions website as well as the "District Pride."

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## GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

### TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS HOPEFULLY YOU DIDN'T MISS

First, **Kudos to PCC Joe Poirier Mid-Winter Chairman and all of his Committee members** for a fantastic Mid-Winter Conference. Starting with the Friday night festivities including the Music, cook-off, costumes and of course the food and beverages provided by the VDG-elects. The Mardi Gras theme was a great idea as everyone really seemed to enjoy themselves. On Saturday morning the seminars were exciting and very informative (I was particularly happy for the LEHP seminar that offered training and help on eye screenings); the exhibits in the main hallway were outstanding and the flyers they offered informative. The Leo's own "mini" conference/seminar was a hit and attended by over 160 Leos from throughout the multiple district. I thought this was one of the best conferences for the Leos, and I especially liked the idea of the "Scavenger Hunt" ice-breaker. Leo clubs in 23A that attended: Beacon Falls, Branford, Madison, New Haven, New Fairfield, Newtown, Trumbull and Wolcott.

The Saturday afternoon luncheon's guest speaker was Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who gave a moving speech on service and graciously answered questions afterwards. Added to that were the 3 Peace Poster winners, including the MD winner from Madison, whose creative artwork never ceases to amaze me.

Later in the afternoon, the nominating speeches for 1st and 2nd Vice District Governor candidates (Walt Sherman and Lyn Myers) were given and for those who missed them, they are available in the February issue of the online District Pride at [www.ctlions.org](http://www.ctlions.org). Later, the business meeting was held where the multiple district and individual districts financial reports were given along with the District Governors' mid-year "state of the union" messages and other business.

PID Harold Ott was our keynote speaker at the Saturday night banquet and spoke to us of Lions pride and service in the community. PID Ott and his wife Barbara were a warm and delightful couple and truly added much to our conference. Awards were also given out to outstanding Lions in all of the districts, and all of them were truly deserving of the recognitions they received. In 23A, International President's Certificates of Appreciation were given to Lions Colette Anderson and Frank Phillips, and an International Leadership Medal was given to Lion Ed Haberli.

Second, thanks to **PDG Mary Krogh** and her team for the New England Lions Council Melvin Jones presentations and dinner held at the Groton Inn in late February, where Immediate Past International President Mahendra Amarasuriya awarded Melvin Jones Fellows pins and plaques to more than 60 recipients. On Sunday, due to pending inclement weather, brief NELC reports, including those by the District Governors, were presented.



## Extension Workshop

PID Bill Moody, from Canada, held an Extension workshop on March 8th, and we learned not only how to charter a new club but also ways to increase club membership. MERL team members attending were VDG Mark Lyon, PDG Marinus deJongh, IPDG Rose Marie Spatafore, Lions Don Cleary, Ed Haberli, Tom Sullivan, Tom Veneruso, Rick Zappone and CT Linda Maggs. Also present were members from the Hamden Club (Richard and Ann Inzero), Yalesville/Wallingford (Joyce Wruck), and Waterbury (Gretchen Sherman) because they were interested in increasing their current club membership.

PID Bill's enthusiasm was contagious, and not only did we learn new techniques but felt energized, especially those who canvassed with Bill in Ansonia on Monday in the rain (bless their hearts). PDG Rose went above and beyond by providing maps, information on the local businesses and allowing us to use her name and office as a local contact for future references. For the 15 who signed up and gave us their checks, plus approximately another 10 who expressed interest, there will be an informational meeting Wednesday, March 18th at John J. Sullivan's, where guiding Lions PDG Rose, VDG Mark and Lion Ed Haberli will be on hand to answer any and all questions about Lionism and on chartering a new club. The Oxford Club has graciously agreed to sponsor the new club in Ansonia, and the district will do all it can to help this new club become chartered.

MERL team members PDG John Gagain and Walt Sherman were also busy that weekend working on forming a new Dominican club in the Waterbury area. Again, we the district have offered any assistance they may need in their endeavors. PDG John and his son John Jr. recently attended a ceremony, as John Jr. represented the Dominican President, where the Mayor of Waterbury presented a key to the City and offered office space to a Dominican man who is attached to the UN and lives in NY to support the services to the community by the Dominican population in Waterbury.

We'll keep everyone updated on the progress on these 2 new clubs that could be chartered soon.

### CLERF SIGHT SAVER DAY—APRIL 18TH

Hopefully by now your clubs have picked up the cans for this year's Sight Saver Day. I know many clubs are doing this fund raising event on a different day...whatever day you choose, please remember clubs can keep up to 40% of the donation monies raised or give it all to benefit CLERF. When sending in your donations, please mark in the memo area "Sight Saver Day." For more information, please contact Lida Pelletier -203-753-7558 or Rick Zappone 203-756-3824.



### EYE SCREENINGS

During my club visitations, I continue to encourage clubs to hold eye screenings in their local communities. If your club wishes to hold one, please contact me via phone (203-23408531) or email [lionjoanbennett@snet.net](mailto:lionjoanbennett@snet.net) and if the date is available, I and other Lions will do everything possible to assist your club in doing an eye screening. To date the following clubs have scheduled eye screenings which means the equipment is not available for those dates.

Ridgefield—March 28th   Meriden—April 5th   Madison—April 8th   Bethany—April 14th  
Darien—April 23rd   Georgetown—June 3rd

What better way to have those in your community recognize your Lions Club and all the wonderful work you do. You can and should promote all the other activities your club does as well at these events.



## 1st Annual CT VIP FISHING TOURNAMENT

We need your help in identifying participants for CT Visually Impaired Person (VIP) Fishing Tournaments to be held in April and May this year. Visually impaired youngsters have an opportunity to participate in one of two tournaments this year depending on their age. The youngsters will be divided into two ages groups, 3-7 and 8 -16, for a fun time fishing at Sage Park in Berlin, CT.

Adult VIPs are invited to Spring Pond on May 31<sup>st</sup>. The top three adult fishing champions, based on total weight caught, will be invited to participate in a National VIP Tournament to be held on the Outer Banks of North Carolina in October.

The VIP committee will provide poles, bait, trophies and volunteers to work alongside our VIP participants.

The VIP experience provides a Lion with the opportunity to share in the life of the people We Serve. The goal of the event is to develop confidence and courage, and promote safety, while having fun. VIP Tournaments not only raise our awareness of barriers faced by the visually impaired, but allow us to share in the joys of their lives.

Please contact me with your recommendations for VIP participants as soon as possible. If you would like to volunteer your services as a sighted fishing assistant, just give me a call.

Bob Christensen  
[Rachristel@cs.com](mailto:Rachristel@cs.com)  
 1-860-680-7227



## FIDELCO OPEN HOUSE

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation will be hosting their annual Open House on Saturday, April 18th, 2009 from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. This year, Fidelco will be combining the Lions Open House with their "General Public" Open House. However, there will be special "Lions Only" hours between 8:30 and 10:30 am, with a special Welcome Lions reception and clubs will be given the opportunity to present donations to Fidelco. Kennel tours and blindfold walks with guide dogs in training will be available most of the day. AT 10:30, the event becomes open to the public, and lunch will be available for purchase. You are encouraged to stay and show off your Lion colors, meet some new and interesting people and maybe sign up new members.

For more details go to [www.fidelco.org](http://www.fidelco.org)



## INTERNATIONAL LIONS CONVENTION

You and your fellow club members are cordially invited to attend the 2009 International Lions Convention being held from July 6th-10th in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Delegate forms have already been mailed to all Club Secretaries, and the Registration form can be found both on the CT Lions Website and the LCI one. The International Show on July 7th will feature the Beach Boys, and Wednesday's Opening Plenary Session Keynote Speaker will be Former Secretary of State Colin Powell. There will be much to do and see in Minneapolis as well as many exciting things happening at the Convention itself. I encourage each club in District 23A to send at least one member.



**Joan Bennett, District Governor**  
11 St John Street #A-1  
North Haven, CT 06473  
lionjoanbennett@snet.net  
203-234-8531

**Mark Lyon, Vice District Governor**  
118 Long Meadow Hill Road  
Brookfield, CT 06804  
203-775-6190  
lyonpride@charter.net

**Jim Bennett, Cabinet Secretary**  
11 St. John Street, #A1  
North Haven, CT 06473  
pdgjim98@snet.net  
203-234-8531

**Linda Maggs, Cabinet Treasurer**  
118 Ramapoo Road  
Ridgefield, CT 06877  
lionlinda@earthlink.net  
203-438-4192



### CLUB REPORTS

A reminder to all clubs-your **PUI01** reports will be due soon. This information is very important to the incoming District Governor, so please make sure you complete all the required information and send them in to LCI. In this newsletter I've also decided to show the current last date LCI has received a Membership Report from your club. This is not meant to embarrass any one club but to offer assistance in getting your reports to LCI. I know using the online reporting system is not easy for everyone, so please don't hesitate to contact your zone or region chairs or me...we'll be glad to help you.

- Beacon Falls-3/2009 Bethany-2/2009 Bethel-1/2009
- Branford-2/2009 Bridgeport Host-1/2009
- Brookfield-2/2009 Cheshire-3/2009 Danbury-2/2009
- Darien-5/2008 Derby/Shelton-6/2008 Devon-9/2006
- East Haven-10/2008 Easton-3/2009 Fairfield-2/2009
- Georgetown-10/2008 Greenwich-11/2008 Guilford-2/2009
- Hamden-1/2009 Madison-1/2009 Meriden-2/2009
- Middlebury-3/2009 Milford-11/2008 Monroe-2/2009
- Naugatuck-8/2008 New Canaan-2/2009 New Fairfield-2/2009
- New Fairfield/Candlewood-12/2008 New Haven-2/2009
- Newtown-3/2009 North Haven-2/2009 North Bridgeport-2/2009
- Norwalk-3/2009 Old Greenwich-10/2008 Orange-2/2009
- Oxford-9/2008 Prospect-2/2009 Ridgefield-3/2009 Seymour-2/2009
- South Meriden-2/2009 Southbury-9/2008 Stratford-6/2008
- Stamford North Stamford-3/2009 Trumbull-2/2009
- Trumbull Center-2/2009 Waterbury-1/2009 West Haven-1/2009
- Western Greenwich-12/2008 Wolcott-3/2009 Woodbridge-7/2008
- Yalesville/Wallingford-12/2008

### COUNCIL CHAIR'S CORNER Dr. Stephen Polezonis



Can you believe we're more than half way through our Lions' year? Time really does fly when you're having fun! I trust that we're all having fun serving as only Lions can. This is a great time to take stock in our activities of the past few months and be sure we're doing all we can in our communities. Do we have service projects that are meeting the needs of our communities? Perhaps a "Community Needs Assessment" needs to be performed to be sure. Are the fund-raising projects successful? Are meetings well attended? Perhaps the "How Are Your Rating?" guide needs to be completed. These tools (and more) are available on LCI's website lionsclubs.org. Now's the time, too, to be sure your membership goals are being realized. Having an active, vibrant club that is serving its community is one tool to attract members, but, we as individual Lions need to be active recruiters as well. Have you asked anyone to join lately? And while losing members is inevitable, are we doing all we can to keep them in our clubs? Make sure your club offers those who want to be active ways to participate and offer one of the alternative membership categories to those who may be less active. In these waning months there is no reason to report drops on the MMR as those members have already been paid for. I know that I'm speaking for every Past District Governor in the world...there is nothing more aggravating to a current District Governor than to see members dropped near the end of the fiscal year...**don't report any drops to LCI until July!** Let's all work together to make this the best Lions year in Connecticut history. We have the people (Lions) and we have the means (Lions Clubs) to make great things happen in our communities and our state. "We Serve".