

Our History

Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-five

AFTER several impromptu meetings, a small group of professional and business men of Webster Groves, Missouri, through diligent and concentrated efforts, succeeded in persuading enough of their fellow men to join with them to better serve their community, to plant the seed and give root to the formation of a service organization which was shortly thereafter to be known as the "Lions Club of Webster Groves." This group, twenty-five in all, called a meeting to order on March 5th, 1925, for the election of officers and pledged themselves for service, betterment and higher standards of living, to their city as well as fellow neighbors. And on March 12th, 1925, they were presented with a charter at an impressive banquet held at the Kirkwood Country Club, thereby uniting themselves with similar clubs throughout the nation, under what is known as Lions International.

After much floundering about, due to the fact that none of the members had had any previous experience as a member of a civic club, we slowly and conservatively shaped the organization into a going, aggressive group. But to gain this goal, many obstacles, trials and tribulations presented themselves, yet each, in turn, was gradually conquered and we finally succeeded in methodically planning the tasks before us. To accomplish this end, required the selection of appropriate committee members best suited for the respective problems and ordeals which the club expected to encounter and service.

The club was fortunate in electing, for its first officers, a group of able men who cooperated in the work of coordinating the various necessary departments of the club. This meant carrying the club over each hardship as well as developing many worth-while activities and creating a firm foundation for the future. Many of our early hardships were greatly lightened through our success in locating an appropriate meeting place and much of our success can well be attributed to Mrs. George Addy, our hostess, whose excellent meals, pleasant hospitality and cordiality were constantly enjoyed, all of which were conducive to good fellowship throughout the entire membership.

With the committees ready to function and good-will established among the members, we immediately began casting about for possibilities and worth-while things to make the club useful and productive. It was unanimously agreed that the club's activities should be to help others rather than to be used for the personal benefit of its members. To bring a ray of sunshine into the lives of the unfortunate.

In view of this, our first acts of charity were to send fifty dollars to help in caring for those made destitute by a storm in southern Missouri and Illinois and shortly afterwards fifty dollars was donated to the Webster Groves Playgrounds Association to assist in the development of this splendid project. A school boy was taken under our wings, employment found for the lad and a committee appointed to advise, guide and lead him towards the betterments of life.

Next our civic committee discovered that work among our local Orphan Homes would be a step toward our civic duties, so the club immediately organized afternoon parties for these unfortunate children, sometimes taking them for long automobile rides into the country and on other occasions to the St. Louis Zoo. Much to our surprise, we found in a number of instances that this was the first time many of them had ever been away from the home and also to learn the capacity of these children for ice cream,

candy and what-nots. As a further benefit, these rides served a two-fold purpose-recreation for the children and amusement to our members. Large or small, significant or insignificant, it is things of this nature that do the heart good and make the Lions Club worth-while.

With the approach of mid-summer, eyes were turned to the selection of a delegate for the convention of Lion's International at Cedar Point, Ohio, which finally resulted in delegating our President, Herb Barthels. In this instance many helpful ideas were obtained, one of which culminated in the Lions and Rotary Clubs jointly erecting "Welcome" signs on the main highways entering our city, inviting guests and visitors to meet with us.

After accomplishment of these few major projects, in the fall of 1925 an orchestra of six pieces was formed from members of the club, which greatly added to the spirit and enthusiasm of our meetings, as well as nobly lending their musical talent to our numerous social functions then and in years to come.

During the course of the year the club accepted an invitation to visit Eden Seminary for luncheon and an inspection tour of the school. Another memorable session was a joint meeting with the local Rotary Club in which a rumor was circulated that the Rotarians were blessed with horseshoe talent. Challenges from both clubs were promptly made and accepted. A tournament was arranged to see whether Lions or Rotarians had the best ability in this line of endeavor and when the dust had cleared away the Lions walked off with the prize, a solid "Silver" loving cup, which had been made by a local tinner out of material so well known to his art. Because of this embarrassment to our opponents, a stag party was held at Cub Fred Holekamp's farm with the Rotary Club as our guests. This was the first of many meetings that our club held at Fred's farm, which were of inestimable value in developing a fraternal feeling among the members.

Through our ever thinking members and their unceasingly, tireless efforts to gain the pinnacle of success, it was decided, as a climax of our first year, to sponsor a Christmas party for the children of our Orphan Homes. It was held at the Webster Groves Baptist Sunday School. Here approximately one hundred children were started off with a grand march headed by a real Santa Claus and the afternoon devoted to story telling, moving pictures and music by the club orchestra. To complete this occasion, the club members, assisted by their wives, fittingly arranged to see that each child was sent home with a big hag full of goodies-apples, oranges, figs, nuts, candies and toys. With the conclusion of this party our members were entirely convinced that it had been a success, and if they had done nothing else during the whole year than to give this pleasure to those youngsters, they were amply rewarded. Besides, it proved the club to be worthwhile, showing the way to unlimited fields of opportunity and thereby creating the adoption of a club policy to henceforth sponsor such a party annually.

OFFICERS 1925

Herbert Barthels..... President
C. A. Reichardt..... First Vice-President
Francis Mueller..... Second Vice-President
A. L. Prehn..... Third Vice-President
Kenneth W. Howe..... Secretary

W. V. Brennan..... Treasurer
Andrew W. McDonnell..... Lion Tamer
Floyd Davis.....Tail Twister

DIRECTORS 1925

J. B. Chipman, Jr..... Dr. W. F. O'Malley
Dr. C. W. McGee.....W. C. Gebelein