Albany Lions Club, Inc.

40th Anniversary History

February 23, 2008

Prepared By: Dean A. Houlberg

Albany Lions Club officially began on February 08, 1968 and it became incorporated in 1985. The Brodhead Lions Club was our sponsor. Tom Flynn found potential Lions members with the help of Father Wilfred Shea. Wisconsin Lions State Secretary, Shafec Mansour, helped organize our club. Charter night was held on March 27, 1968 in Saint Patrick's Catholic Church basement. There were 225 people in attendance. There were 50 charter members and Albany was Wisconsin’s 350th Lions Club to be chartered. The guest speaker was Past Lions International President, Clarence Sturm. Our first $100 of income was generated that night. Melvin Ingwell was our Charter President, Daniel Weber was our Charter Secretary and G.E. Heitzman was our Charter Treasurer.

Our first moneymaking project was a Pancake Day, which was held in March and generated $125 income. We just finished our 41st Pancake Day on February 9th and we generate about $3,000 on that project annually. Our first service project was to clean up the Sugar River banks from the dam to Lake Winnetka. 40 loads of trees were cleaned out of the Sugar River. Our club cleaned out a building downtown that was used as a meeting place for several years by the Girl Scouts, TOPS Club and Albany Lions Club board. That first year our club collected 357 pairs of used eye glasses, installed 2 Lions Club highway signs, sponsored a child to the Wisconsin Lions Camp, bought a blind woman a white cane and entered a float in a parade in Monticello.

Our highest membership was 82 and our present membership is 62. Many people have been members of the Albany Lions Club. Membership in Lions Clubs, and in Albany Lions Club, began as exclusively men. The Lioness Clubs’ memberships were exclusively women. I remember discussions held at our Board meetings in 1986 that Lions International was discussing permitting women into Lions Clubs. Some of our members thought that we would never allow women members into our club, and if we did, it would be the beginning of the end for the Albany Lions Club. I told two of those members that allowing women into our club would become a reality and they could do a lot for our club. At that time several wives of Albany Lions Club members did a lot of work for the club, even though they were not members of the club. Today we have several very dedicated women members that we are very thankful for. Val Roberts and Judy Kehm have been Presidents of our club. Val Roberts has also been Zone Chairperson and Regional Chairperson. Our club has had 2 past District Governors – Glen Spring and Walter Althaus. We have had 2 past District Secretary-Treasurers – James Haddinger and Dean Houlberg. We have had 4 Zone Chairmen – Glen Spring, Mike Glass, Sr., Walter Althaus and Val Roberts. We have had 3 Regional Chairmen – Glen Spring, Walter Althaus and Val Roberts. Through the years we have given 8 Melvin Jones awards to Albany Lions Club members. These awards have been given in recognition of the dedication these members have given to Lionism. The Melvin Jones recipients are: Glen Spring, Walter Althaus, Daniel Weber, G.E. Heitzman, Fred Baertschi, Robert Derendinger, Gordon Mauerman and Bruce Kehm. Six of these people are still members of the club, one is deceased and one dropped his membership. We have many very dedicated Lions club members, past and present, that have given many untold hours of their time to make life better for their fellow man, in this community and around the world. These Albany Lions Club members don’t serve for their personal recognition, they serve unselfishly to help others in need.

I will now summarize the service projects that our club has successfully completed during the past 40 years. Many of these projects have been annual projects and many of these projects were completed for several years.

1. Collected untold thousands of pairs of used eyeglasses and lenses that were given to untold thousands of people in need of eyeglasses.
2. Cooked sausage each year at the Green County Dairy Breakfast since its inception in 1980.
3. Assisted the bloodmobile for the American Red Cross for many years.
4. Helped with eye testing of children each year.
5. Sponsored the All Sports banquets for Albany High School.
6. Hosted the annual Lions Clubs Zone Socials and then the Regional Socials every year since 1980.
7. Sponsored and officiated the Cub Scout Pinewood Derby for many years.
8. Sponsored senior citizens free picnics.
9. Patrolled intersections on Halloween nights for many years.
10. Adopted 2 miles of Highway 59.
12. Patrolled highway intersections and served water during running marathons.
13. Cut and donated firewood used for home heating for several families in need.
14. Installed siding, a garage door and shingled a house for a family in need.
15. Sponsored Lions Quest in Albany Public Schools.
16. Hosted District Lions’ conferences.
17. Sponsored Lions Club floats in many parades.
18. Donated and built a picnic shelter in the Village Park.
19. Donated many picnic tables for the picnic shelter in the Village Park.
20. Sponsored a physical fitness running program.
22. Sponsored Little League Teams.
23. Picked up trash along country roads around Albany.
24. Sponsored benefits for injured and sick people.
25. An Albany Lions Club representative was included in the Albany Park Commission.
26. Sponsored a Leader Dog presentation at the school.
27. Helped finish building a house for a fellow Lion whom was laid up from an accident.
28. Distributed 500 copies of Albany Lions Club 10-year newsletter for public relations purposes.
29. Sponsored Albany Brownie Troops
30. Sponsored Albany Cub Scouts rechartering.
31. Planted 25 trees throughout Albany, as suggested by Lions International President, Kayoru Marakami.
32. Sponsored Albany Cub Scouts.
33. Sponsored health day programs.
34. Sponsored drug & alcohol abuse programs.
35. Loaned a remote control TV to a disabled Albany man.
36. Roasted 4 hogs & served dinner to 400-500 Barneveld residents following their tornado disaster.
37. Hosted a Lions Club Zone mini conference.
38. Participated in National Care & Share Day.
39. Provided meals at the New Member Day held at the Wisconsin Lions Camp.
40. Purchase & placed Lions Drug Awareness posters around Albany.
41. Sold tickets for Albany Yesteryears & street dances.
42. Hosted District Lions Slowpitch Tournament.
43. Sponsored Senior Citizens Appreciation Days
44. Sponsored Lions Peace Poster contests in Albany Public Schools.
45. Collected food for Green County Inter-Church Food Pantry.
46. Shingled an elderly woman’s house.
47. Prepared & served dinner to Albany EMS.
48. Shingled Albany Senior Citizens building.
49. Shingled Bowman shelter house in Albany Village Park
50. Let the Brownie Troop use our building for meetings.
51. Let people use hospital beds owned by the club.
52. Let people use wheel chairs owned by the club.
53. Cleaned garbage from part of the Sugar River State Trail.
54. Installed playground equipment in the Village Park.
55. Removed an old building in the downtown business area.
56. Fried hamburgers at Albany Public Schools during Drug Awareness Week.
57. Hosted Zone & Regional Lions member orientations.
58. Helped transport supplies to Mission to Mexico many times.
59. Helped at Wisconsin Lions Camp cleanup weekends.
60. Held eye-screening clinics for preschool children.
61. Hosted District Lions Officer Training.

I had planned to go through the financial records and give totals of the various donations that our club has generously provided through the past 40 years. That task is overwhelming for our very active Lions club. Our budget for our first year 1968 – 1969 was very limited and was probably less than $1,000. Our present annual budget has grown to $47,800. I will not list monetary totals, however, I believe it is very important to summarize the hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations that we have provided to improve the lives of many untold thousands of people, living in our local community, the State of Wisconsin and worldwide.

1. Purchased many pairs of eyeglasses for people in need.
2. Purchased materials and built the picnic shelter for the Village of Albany.
3. Purchased Sugar River Trail signs & shrubs.
4. Donated funds for flood disaster victims.
5. Purchased Little League equipment & ballpark improvements.
6. Donated thousands of dollars for Leader Dogs.
7. Donated funds to Managua, Nicaragua.
8. Donated funds to Lions clubs in Sao Dos Campos, Brazil, San Isidro, Costa Rica and Rivas, Nicaragua.
10. Provided ice cream cones at the Albany Bicentennial.
11. Paid for new ceiling & utilities for many years in the old Village Hall building that was used for Boy Scouts, Lions Directors and other meetings.
12. Numerous monetary and gas donations to many families in need - for sick and injured people.
13. Donated thousands of dollars to Wisconsin Lions Foundation.
14. Purchased a pool table for the elderly housing.
15. Purchased a tent for the Albany Boy Scouts.
16. Youth Exchange – Albany student in International Farm Youth Exchange Program.
17. Numerous donations to Wisconsin Lions Camp in Rosholt.
18. Paid a portion of an eye operation for an Albany boy.
19. Purchase & installation of a storm door and canopy for the Albany Senior Citizens building.
21. Purchased cabinets for the Albany preschool.
22. Lions’ Youth Exchange.
23. New village ball park rest rooms.
25. Dairy Queen activities for many years.
26. Purchase picnic tables at elderly housing in Albany.
27. Donated funds to many other Lions Clubs, Lioness Clubs and Leo Clubs.
28. Purchased Jaws of Life cutting tool for Albany EMS.
30. Several donations to Albany Library including furniture & equipment to the new library.
31. Donation to an Albany Lion whose house burned.
32. Food for an Albany man who was injured and unable to work.
33. Wisconsin Lions CARE program.
34. Funds toward the Barneveld tornado disaster.
35. Purchased flexible stretcher, blood pressure cuff & Ked sled for Albany EMS.
36. Monroe Christmas charity.
37. Annual contributions to each of the 4 Albany Churches that prepare dinners to Albany Lions meetings.
38. LCIF for many years.
40. Green County Crimestoppers.
42. Kreative Korner Nursery School.
43. Albany Fire Department
44. Youth Exchange Camp & Youth Exchange
45. Albany American Legion
46. Gift to a child who underwent heart surgery.
47. Cement ramp at Albany Library.
48. Wisconsin Lions Fight For Sight program.
49. Lions Mission to Central America.
50. Albany Historical Society.
51. Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Green County – many thousands of dollars.
52. UW Eye Research lab.
53. Lions Campaign Sight First
54. Helped purchase a typanometer for local schools that is used for detecting fluid behind the ear.
56. Funds for bone marrow transplant for two local people.
57. Donated fluorescent trick or treat bags.
58. Purchased History of Lions books for the library, school & our club.
59. Lions Mission to Mexico
60. Apostolate to the Handicapped.
61. American Cancer Society Relay for Life.
62. Purchased an air conditioner for an ill man.
63. Purchased a camera used in LEHP eye screenings.
64. Purchased a bicycle for a child whose bicycle was stolen.
65. Purchased a Thermal Imaging Camera for the Albany Fire Department.
66. Funds for Shop with a Cop program.
67. Purchased a Lensometer to read used eyeglass prescriptions.
68. Funds to the HOBY program – a drug awareness program for children.
69. Golf outings for Lions projects.
70. Paid for shipping care packages to soldiers in Iraq, an Albany American Legion project.
71. Sharing Resources Worldwide – a worldwide medical assistance.
72. Prevent Blindness in Wisconsin.
73. Vision Screening.
74. Donated funds to a wheelchair basketball team at UW-Whitewater.
75. Lions Pride Campaign – Endowment Fund for Wisconsin Lions Foundation.
76. LCIF – Hurricane Katrina.
77. Albany Daisy Scouts.
78. Lions Campaign Sight First II.
79. Albany Village Police vehicle computer.
80. Donated funds for the Albany Easter Egg Hunt
81. Funds toward the Ladysmith tornado disaster

In addition to the above donations, our club has donated many thousands of dollars to Albany Public Schools throughout the past 40 years. These donations have included the following:
1. Router for shop classes.
2. Trophies for World Champion 8th grade marathon runners.
3. Certificates of Achievement & dinners for Cross-Country runners.
4. Basketball Camp funds.
5. Awards to school classes for collecting used eyeglasses.
6. Sponsored the Athletic Banquets for many years.
7. Funds for AHS band to perform at Wisconsin State Lions Convention.
8. FFA National Conventions & Leadership Conferences.
9. Purchased athletic equipment.
10. Funds for American Foreign Exchange Students.
11. Funds for Albany students as Foreign Exchange Students.
12. Purchased uniforms for 5th & 6th grade basketball teams.
13. Funds for AHS photography dark room.
14. AHS Salutatorian scholarships since 1981.
15. Badger Boys State sponsor for many years.
16. Funds for band & music members on tours in Europe.
17. Helped purchase 2 athletic scoreboards.
21. Funds for students to compete in Wisconsin Visual Arts Olympics.
22. Funds for training and materials for the Lions Quest Program for several years.
23. Funds for Post Prom Parties for several years.
25. Funds toward 2 Village welcome signs celebrating Albany Boys Cross Country State Championships.
26. Dinners & achievement awards for Boys & Girls State Cross Country Champions.
27. Purchased basketball uniforms for 5th & 6th Grade Girls Teams.
28. Purchased basketball uniforms for 5th & 6th Grade Boys Teams.
29. AHS class donations.
30. Funds for Albany Sports Boosters.
31. Served Albany FFA banquets.
32. Funds for Albany Youth Futures.
33. Funds for AHS Girls Basketball.
34. Use of grills at various events.
35. Funds for POPS Program.
36. Funds for High Mileage vehicle contest.
37. Donation of flag and flagpole.
38. Funds for AHS Boys Basketball.
39. Funds for AHS Wrestling.
40. Sponsored girl to Badger Camp.
41. Funds for Wisconsin Ambassadors to Europe for music.
42. Funds for school event sign.
43. Funds for Junior Comets – Grade & Middle School basketball program.
44. Funds for new floor in gymnasium.

Fund raising has included many different activities throughout the past 40 years. These activities have included:

• Pancake Days – 1st one profited $124.23 in 1968 and is about $3,000 per year now
• White Elephant Sale
• Auctions
• Horse Shows
• Light Bulb Sales
• Broom Sales
• Garbage Bag Sales
• Dances
• Snowmobile Derbies
• Athletic Banquets
• Fruitcake Sales
• Raffles
• Hog Roasting – had a high of 78 hogs roasted in 1994 and runs around 60 per year
• Catering
• Food Stands at Dairy Day, Country Music Fest, Yesteryear's Weekend
• Card Parties
• Halloween Candy Sales
• Pancake Griddle Rentals
Hog roasting, catering, steak fries, raffles, pancake days, rose sales and building rental have been the largest fund-raising activities for our club throughout the years. The car show is a newer project that is increasing in size and has the potential to become a large fund raising activity.

The Albany Lions Club has been involved in the following athletic events:
- Softball Slowpitch Teams
- Lions Club Softball Slowpitch Tournaments
- Lions Club Bowling Tournaments
- Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Green County Bowling Tournaments
- Curling Tournaments
- Lions Club Golf Tournaments
- Donkey Basketball

In 1986-1987, President James Graves requested that we form a committee that would consider long-range plans for buying property and constructing a building. 1st V.P., James Runaas was quick to suggest that I (Dean Houlberg) should be the chairman of that committee, since I was a local banker and I had some knowledge of the local properties. The immediate needs of the club were to gather all of our accumulating equipment and supplies and store them in one location instead of in Glen Spring’s garage and other various locations. It was suggested that we buy a lot in Albany and build a garage to store the pancake griddles, hog roasters, Nesco roasters, charcoal and many other items that were accumulating. Our committee considered long-range goals. We saw a need for a community building in which wedding receptions, graduation parties and other large receptions could be held, since there were no large restaurants or reception halls located in Albany. Donald Olin heard about our situation and he offered to sell us 1.8 acres of land along Cincinnati Street for a very low price of $3,700. Our committee recommended that we buy the lot from Donald Olin. We would plan to build a building on the Corner of Cincinnati Street and Briggs Drive for storage, roasting hogs and holding directors’ meetings. We had also planned for future possibilities of adding on a community reception hall. Our club voted on buying the lot at a regular dinner meeting in September 1987. The committee continued to collect information regarding building a storage building. At a regular dinner meeting held in October 1988, the committee presented a budget to build a 40’ X 60’ building. The meeting was well attended and the vote was unanimous to construct the building. Ten Lions members guaranteed the loan and it was paid off in four months from hog roasting income and member donations. Construction of the storage building began in May 1989 at a cost of $20,936. In December 1993 the club voted to allow outside groups to rent the building. William & Karen Hauri donated a small adjoining piece of land to our lot in 1995. A building expansion committee was formed in 1997 to consider building an addition to accommodate a community room, kitchen and bathrooms. Daniel Kauk was the chairman of that committee. The committee recommended that the club build a 4,000 square foot community room, kitchen and bathroom addition. The club approved the addition in September 1998. The construction of the building addition was completed during 1999. The cost of the addition was about $125,000. A $75,000 loan was taken out in 1999 and it was fully repaid on June 17, 2005. A small attached storage area was added to the building in 2002. Kitchen equipment was purchased and the kitchen was remodeled in 2002 at a cost of about $20,000. The parking lot was blacktopped in 2003. Many people contributed untold money, equipment and labor for the construction of this building and its contents. This facility is a huge and ongoing testament to the commitment and dedication of the Albany Lions Club membership to its community. Many banquets, Lions Club events and community events have been held in this building and on our premises. Some of these events have been the following:
- Albany Lions Club dinner meetings
• Lions Club regional socials
• Wedding Receptions
• Funerals
• Church Services
• Graduation Parties
• Albany Alumni Banquets
• Albany High School National Honor Society banquets
• Albany High School All Sports banquets
• Albany Lions Club, EMS and Albany Firemen’s banquets
• Fundraising events
• Albany Lions Club annual car shows
• Albany Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby
• Special meetings for businesses and organizations
• Wisconsin Farm Technology Days meetings
• Green County Dairy Day
• Animal Encounters day
• Library summer programs
• Bloodmobile
• Albany Firemen’s dance
• Sugar River Trail Committee meetings
• 4-H Club meetings
• Hunter Safety Classes

I read through 480 monthly Membership Reports to compile this 40 year history of Albany Lions Club, Inc. I apologize if I omitted any important information. The Albany Lions Club and all of its members have made a profound impact on the lives of untold thousands of people. Every one of our members, past and present, can be proud of the Lions’ motto, “We Serve” and know in their hearts that they have served well.

Lion, Dean A. Houlberg