



Monthly Bulletin of the Venice Lions Club, Venice, Florida
November, 2024

The President's Message

When I drive through Venice, I see our beautiful green trees are brown from the salt water tossed into the air from Hurricane Milton. I see piles of broken tree limbs turning dry and brittle beside the roads. Signs are down and my former community and others have piles of aluminum, insulation, and waterlogged furniture outside waiting to be picked up by road crews.

I and all of you, as far as I know, sustained no or minimal damage, and we are so profoundly grateful. But all around us homes were destroyed or damaged so much, that families have been left wondering what they will do now? Do you feel as helpless as I do?

Our members have done their very best to shelter neighbors and friends, distribute food, water and ice, serve meals. Some of our members did the heavy work of removing tree branches from neighbors' lawns and chain-sawing fallen trees. Everyone did what they could to help. But still...it felt like a pebble thrown into the ocean.

I try to take comfort in what I saw in the aftermath of the hurricanes. There was a HUGE community outreach response immediately after Hurricane Milton.

Sarasota County sent emergency supplies of water, food, diapers, and baby food to several locations. In Venice I saw the National Guard distributing those supplies at the Venice Community Center. The National Guard in Venice!

Lions District 35 I sent their Disaster Trailer out to provide free meals. The Englewood Lions offered free meals on Mondays and Saturdays to their community. Our Venice Board of Directors sent \$1,000 to help with the cost of the meals, and our members helped to serve them.

The most impressive response to the disaster I saw was mounted by the local Rotary Clubs. A Venice Rotary appealed to Rotarians from across the country to help us, and they responded! For days young men reported for work, divided into teams, and fanned out into the neighborhoods most damaged by the hurricanes. They ripped out drywall, tore out mildewed carpet, and hauled appliances to the street.

I regret I am not a cleric or a philosopher and don't have words of wisdom or comfort to share. But I know our club and our District will strengthen its response to future disasters and we will continue to do what we can. We will rely on each other for assistance and we will appreciate the kindness and generosity of each other and our fellow citizens who have the grace and generosity to come to our aid. Spring will come, and the trees will turn green again.

Serving with you,
Lion Pamela



CELEBRATE!



11/7 Bonnee Hagen



No Anniversaries this month

Lions Toast and Song

At every meeting we hold up our glasses and offer the Lions Toast:

Not Above You, Not Below You, But with You.

The toast has been used by Lions Clubs as early as 1923 and emphasizes the Lions goal of working together with the people we serve.

The history of the song we sing at the end of our meetings is unclear. What we know is that it was Lion Barbara McGillicuddy who brought it to the club in 1994 when she became a Lion in Venice. It was sung by the Lions in her New Hampshire Club. Thanks, Lion Barbara; we love that tradition!

Reading Action Program



Lion Bonnee delivered a red "Books Post Office Box" to the children of Laurel Civic. Each Friday, as they go home, the students, grades 1-8, may take a free book from the box.

Getting to know our Lions

Lion Christal Snell and Lion Sean Higginbottom

Christal Snell was born in Boston, more specifically, Lexington, Massachusetts. Her parents were wheel chair bound due to polio. Christal learned that determination and hard work were a way of life. She began a career at 15 doing nails, taking on her Mother's profession. By the age of 16, she was a licensed nail technician.

She and her husband, Patrick, were married in 2004. By 2007 this entrepreneurial couple formed their own businesses. Hers was a nail salon and his a construction company.



In 2021, Patrick had a life changing fall while working on the job. This fall resulted in a concussion which took several months to regain any type of "normal" life style and left him with seizures, tremors, brain trauma, dementia and eventually death (January 16, 2023).

Patrick was an organ donor. In June of 2023, Christal received a letter from the Tampa Lions Eye Institute stating how Patrick's eyes had given the gift of sight to 2 individuals (one in Winter Haven, Florida and one in Ecuador). The receipt of this letter prompted Christal to think about the Lions Club as not just a great local organization but also an international world changer.

So, on the one year anniversary of Patrick's passing (January 16, 2024) she called the Venice Lions Club office. Lion Barbara answered the phone and encouraged her to come to a meeting. She did come and thankfully joined our flock. She not only joined but jumped in with both feet helping with many many projects, helping in the office with vision clinics, answering phones, taking applications, assisting with billing, becoming a 2 year director on the board and planning events such as the fun Octoberfest. She also is responsible for bringing us our other new member, Sean.

Sean Higginbottom is our newest enthusiastic member. He and his sister were also from the Boston area and spent many hours with Christal and her parents. He and his father, Michael, have been so supportive of Christal especially since the passing of Patrick. Due to Patrick's illness, Christal needed to take a more active roll in the construction company they owned.

Sean and his father assisted her in completing unfinished projects for the company so it was possible to close it out. When Christal could wrap things up with the businesses she decided to make a clean break and move full time to Florida.

Michael and Sean decided to come with her.

So January of 2024 they all moved to Nokomis.



As Sean adjusts to Florida living with a new job at a private yacht club, he has also found time to work on several Lions projects including helping to plan and serve at our Octoberfest social.

We are looking forward to working with these two new members as they share their expertise, energy, and enthusiasm with us in the future. Helping hands together!

Fall Social – Oktoberfest

What a great time we had at the Oktoberfest social. Lions Christal, Sean and Tim were our hosts for the evening. The food was *wunderbar* with the classic German menu. It was a relaxing evening with our fellow Lions after dealing with the stress of the hurricanes. A special thanks goes out to Lion Bonnee for finding a venue when the original was canceled due to the hurricane. Great Job Lions!



July 13-17, 2025

Convention is coming to Orlando.

Orlando, Florida welcomes Lions and Leos from around the world for sun, fun, service and the 107th Lions International Convention. Famous for its theme parks, exciting attractions and vacation vibes, Orlando is a top global destination and an exciting site for our biggest event of the year. Come celebrate service in a city that's pure magic – more info coming soon!



July 13-17, 2025

The Englewood Lions Offered Free Dinners after Hurricane Milton

“Where’s There’s a Need, There’s a Lion”. That motto was put into action by the Englewood Lions after Hurricane Milton. The Englewood area was hard-hit by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Many homes were severely damaged or destroyed leaving a large number of families in desperate need of almost everything. With professional caterers as members, a good kitchen in their clubhouse, and a great group of hard-working Lions, , Englewood was perfectly suited to the task. For two Mondays and two Saturdays, hot dinners were served to anyone who walked in the door. Venice Lions helped with this project. The Board of Directors voted to donate \$1,000 to help with expenses, and Venice Lions helped to serve the meals. Between 60 – 90 meals were served each day. Congratulations to the Englewood Lions for such a compassionate response!



Lions Peace Poster Contest

Lion Agnes has reported that the winners of The Venice Lions Peace Poster contest have been announced!



Lions International created The Peace Poster Contest in 1988 to give students ages 11-13 the opportunity to express their feelings for world peace in a creative way and to share their visions with the world.

Each year approximately 600,000 children from 75 countries participate in the contest. The contest starts at the local level with Lions clubs sponsoring the contest in the schools in their service areas and goes all the way to an international competition!

Each year there is a theme to help spark the students' imaginations. This year's theme is "Peace Without Limits". The posters are judged for expression of the theme, artistic merit and originality. The winning posters at the local level travel to the District, the Multi-District, the national and finally to the international competition. There are financial prizes along the way, with the international winner having an opportunity to address the United Nations!



Our Venice Lions Club supports three schools' participation by donating funds to each school for art supplies. Art teachers introduce the contest to the students and each school chooses their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners.



Lion Agnes has been working with the Peace Poster contest for four years. She visits three schools: Laurel-Nokomis, Venice Middle School and Epiphany Cathedral to introduce the contest and the deadlines, delivers a check for art supplies, and she returns to help award the prizes.

Lion Ages reports that a teacher said “this contest makes a big impact on the kids.” They discuss the concepts of peace and kindness as expressed in the contest’s theme and hope that the children will learn lessons they will carry with them in life.

Cleaning Up the Urban Forest

A chance encounter and conversation with a volunteer with the Venice Area Beautification team led to a conversation about Hurricane Milton’s effect on Venice’s Urban Forest. Lions might remember we heard a presentation about the Urban Forest several years ago.

We learned that the two mile stretch of land just south of the Venice Railroad Station and ending at Center Road was to be restored as a native forest. Now, several years later, the Urban Forest is home to native trees and plants and has seen the return of native animals, birds, and small creatures.



Then along came Hurricane Milton. There was some tree damage, but the biggest problem was the litter that the hurricane wind deposited all over the forest.

Styrofoam and insulation from the Seaboard Industrial Park and the mobile home park on the other side of the Intracoastal Waterway was deposited all along the trail and it was tangled in the shrubbery and vines along the pathway.



But it was Lion Bob Winstel to the rescue! Lion Bob put out a call for a team and 8 Lions responded. With buckets, bags, and “pickers”, the team plucked foam out of the shrubbery and vines. The team cleaned about a half mile of foam and debris, leaving the area looking much better to the enormous gratitude of the Urban Forest volunteers.

Where there’s a need, there’s (a TEAM) of Lions. Thanks, Lion Bob!



Trick or Treat

Thanks to Lion Judy R and Lion Paddy, we had a successful Halloween event in downtown Venice. Nine Lions distributed almost 400 bags of candy members had donated and packed into little Halloween bags. This was the first year there was no parade. Instead, Venice Avenue was closed and children walked from table to table filling their bags with candy. We also had an information table to let folks know what Lions are all about.



At an information table right next to us at the event was the manager of the Women's Resource Center here in Venice. She complimented our Venice Lions on a **job well done**. Her father is in the process of getting cataract surgery via our vision clinic process. She and her father are very delighted with the results. The Venice and Englewood Lions Vision Program at work!

Short Reminders

Win \$100 worth of scratch-off tickets! Buy a \$5.00 raffle ticket at every meeting through November 21, when we will draw the winning ticket. Write your name on the back of ticket and put it in the jar. If you win, you might need some help scratching off all those tickets, but some of them might be worth something! We are raising money for our Administration Treasury. That is the money we use for paying bills related to our operation: paper, dinner supplies, signs, awards.... the behind-the-scenes expenses we have that keep us in business. Thanks to Lion Pat McNally who brought us this idea from her previous club. Lion Pat arranged all those scratch-off tickets in a cornucopia, perfect for a fall fundraiser.

Honor Flight is Soon! The honor flight had been postponed due to the hurricane, but it has been rescheduled! Lion Veteran Alf Kirkeeng is going and we will be there to welcome him home! The Honor Flight will be November 13th. Lion Tim Werla says, "We can do a rideshare / convoy from the Lions club at 7:45 P.M. for those who are interested. Wear your vests and something red white and blue.



Stuffed Animals for the Venice Police Department. This year we will be have two short stuffed animal campaigns. The first one is going on now and will continue through November 21, so bring in those cuties! We will be taking the stuffed animals to the Police before Thanksgiving so the officers will have them during the holidays. We have learned that the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas are times of added stress for

families, so we want to have the toys available to comfort children caught in a difficult situation. Our Teddy Bear Team will tie a yellow ribbon on each teddy bear, kitty, or dog...maybe even a unicorn, and attach a sticker on it: "A Gift from the Venice Lions Club".

Collecting Food for the South County Food Pantry. Lion Judy Terrell reminds us that the Food Donation Bin is now placed in Winn Dixie on Jacaranda Blvd. When it fills with donations we will carry the food to the South County Food Pantry on the island of Venice. If you shop at Winn Dixie, consider tossing your extra BOGO in the container so we can help to address the hunger problem that is all around us. Another good project by Lion Judy!



Left to right: Lions Sharon Wilkins, Bonnee Hagen, Pamela Brown, Jody Fall, Judy Terrell, and Winn Dixie Customer Service Manager, Sara Hall.

BIG NEWS

The Start Time for Dinner and the Meeting has CHANGED!



At the request of several members to start our meetings earlier, the members discussed the options at the October 3rd meeting. The decision was to start dinner at **5:30** and the meeting at **6:15 pm**.



1st Annual Holiday Fundraiser

Presented at Englewood Lions Club

4611 Placida Rd. Englewood, FL 34224

December 7, 2024

10:00 – 2:00PM

Complimentary Mimosa's and Chocolate Fountain 10:00-11:00 AM

\$5.00 Entry Fee

(Waived Entry Fee with Pre-loved Jewelry Donation)

Jewelry to The Rescue

<https://jewelrytotherescue.org>

50/50 Raffle

Silent Auction

Baked Goods

Poinsettia's



Proceeds Benefit Englewood Lion's Club Charities

Seeking Donations for Silent Auction and Various Items

Please Call or Text Karen Miller (941) 445-1541

Come join in the fun at the Englewood Lions Club