

The Quyon Lions and Lionettes Club

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The Lions movement and lionism

The Lions Clubs are organizations dedicated to serving the community, or what is called “service clubs”. This is the largest philanthropic organization in the world. Founded in the U.S. in 1917 by a businessman convinced that local businesses should give back to the community that supports them and contribute to their success, these clubs have spread in Canada from the 1920s, and worldwide after World War II.

The members, volunteer citizens who share the common values and the desire to work together to improve their community’s quality of life, meet on a regular basis. They conduct various charitable, educational and preventive activities, either by funding them themselves (through fundraising events), or by contributing to projects (monetarily or by volunteering their time) organized by other associations with similar goals to their own. Of course, the Lions Club and by extension, the Lionettes is a place for members to socialize, which contributes to strengthening the social fabric¹.

The Quyon Lions Club

The Quyon Lions Club was founded at the beginning of 1967 and was given its charter on June 9 the following year. Its creation was sponsored by the Shawville Lions Club. At the beginning, the club had 33 members. The first president was Stan Callaghan, teacher at the Saint-Mary’s school and later, was an announcer at the CHIP FM Radio station². Early on, the Lions of Quyon were very involved with the youth. A father-son banquet is organized annually since at least the 1960s, a tradition that continued into the 1980s. The members who have no son could “adopt” one for the evening, the objective especially being to make the youth learn the importance of community involvement and the “lionism philosophy”.

At the end of the 1960s, a particularly dynamic youth committee (a « Leo Club ») consisting of young men and women who supervised the younger children at the skating rink and organized

¹ For more information on this international movement, please consult the [Portal on lionism in Québec](#).

² Scott Campbell, « Quyon Lions celebrate 45 years », *The Equity*, June 27, 2012; Hamish Mckillop, « Quyon Lions turn 45 », *The Equity*, June 9, 2012.

movie nights on Saturdays for them³. In 1968, a public speaking contest, in French and in English was organized by the Lions for the high school students. Concerned about healthy eyesight, as it is essential to academic success, the Lions members sent twenty children for an eye examination and paid for glasses, if they were needed⁴. In the 2000s, this concern for children's health was still present. Actually, the Quyon and Shawville Lions united their efforts to cover the cost of « Medic Alert » bracelets for children in need of quick and immediate medical intervention⁵.

The Quyon Lions' first community project would have been the lighting of the Quyon baseball field, for which a group of citizens (women) had already raised part of the funds (ie. \$3,000). Thanks to these ladies and to the Lions, Quyon had the first lit baseball field in all of the Pontiac. The Lions then organized swimming lessons (1970) at the river for the youth and built floating docks for pleasure crafts to anchor to in Quyon, for a few hours or overnight. Also since the 1970s, the Lions have ensured that senior citizens who are alone or have few caregivers, are not left alone over the holiday season. In fact, each year they organize a hearty Christmas supper where they can be in good company and enjoy a moment of comfort⁶.

In 1980, with the financial support of several local businesses, the Lions organized a day camp during the summer months for children aged 5 to 12. Twice a week, 120 children participated in the activities under the watchful eye of five students who were hired, thanks to a subsidy from the Federal government as part of the Young Canada Works program. The young employees also took two other days to take care of properties of 42 senior citizens, and spent the remainder of the day beautifying the municipality and taking care of the maintenance of the exhibition grounds⁷. Therefore, while organizing day camps for the children, the Lions Club "killed two birds with one stone" and helped create jobs for the youth in the municipality. Irish parties, where the youngsters can express their talent on stage, either through dance or music, were also held annually in the 1980s and the early 1990s⁸.

Since 1972, the Lions have managed the Quyon Lions Hall, also known as the "Beach Barn". The rental of this hall for events such as weddings, anniversaries or other special events, is the organization's primary source of funding, monies that they reinvest into the community through multiple projects and donations.

³ « Quyon Lions plan beauty contest and other event », *The Equity*, November 30, 1967; « Leo Club Charter Night », *The Equity*, July 9, 1969.

⁴ « Quyon Lions sponsor public speaking contest », March 28, 1968.

⁵ Leah Iverson, « Lions Clubs equip students with medical bracelets », *The Equity*, February 25, 2009.

⁶ Merry Reardon, « Quyon Lions ensure that singles enjoy a good Christmas dinner », *The Equity*, December 15, 1993.

⁷ « Quyon Lions Club youth development », August 20, 1980.

⁸ Colette Blain, « Quyon Lions present: "A Wee Bit O'Irish" », *The Equity*, March 20, 1991.

In 1994 for example, through the increase of events which might generate a profit, the Lions raised over \$40,000 which was re-distributed among various organizations or used for holding community events. Thus, for several years they organized a winter carnival, made donations to the municipality's fire department so that they could purchase material that they needed (new truck, oxygen tanks, etc.), as well as to the organizers of the minor ball league. Being a worldwide organization, the Lions also contribute financially to larger scale projects, such as training guide dogs for people who are visually impaired⁹. In the 1990s, organizing the Pontiac Pride, a music jamboree, allowed them to raise over \$30,000 over the period of three years for the Pontiac Hospital¹⁰.

As of 2009, the Quyon Lions Club has played a leading role in the community centre revitalization project and the development of the river's shorelines. In fact, the members of the Lions Club, supported by the Lionettes and several citizens of the municipality, as part of an informal group, the Waterfront Revitalization Committee, have proposed to replace the existing centre and to develop the river banks (beach, historical boardwalk, marina, etc.) so that more people can enjoy this enchanting site¹¹. As a fundraising event, the committee organized days dedicated to the discovery of heritage (2009), breakfasts and suppers, at which they paid tribute to different people or families who have played an important role in the community's history, such as Laurie and Mona MacKechnie, Rollie Bernier, Mae McCann and the Kennedy family¹².

Several members were involved in the Lion movement at the regional level as well as the district level. Thus, Laurie MacKechnie was governor of the A4 District in 1981-82¹³. Basil Murphy and Daryl Leach were, on their part, Deputy Governors. In 2011, at the Club's 45th anniversary, three founding members were present: Lester McCann, Bob Young and Laurie MacKechnie. The organization also counted on 16 active members.

To name a few presidents (in no particular order): Stan Gallagher, Gus Peppard, Laurie MacKechnie, Lester McCann, Daryl Leach, Eddie McCann, Glen Leach, Adam Bernier and Bill Young.

⁹ Merry Reardon, « Quyon Lions and Lionettes », *The Equity*, March 16, 1994.

¹⁰ Richard Wills, « Pride and Lions give \$10,000 to hospital », *The Equity*, December 1, 1993.

¹¹ Kate Aley, « New community centre, board walk vision for Quyon », *Pontiac Journal*, May 20, 2009; Kate Aley, « Phase one of the new community centre revealed », *Pontiac Journal*, June 27, 2012.

¹² Leah Iverson, « Roast and toast for couple who gives the most », *The Equity*, February 18, 2009; Cory Wilson, « Quyon "shovel ready" for new centre », *The Equity*, April 24, 2013.

¹³ See in particular « [The detailed facts](#) », on the [Portal of Lionism in Quebec](#).

The Quyon Lionettes

The Quyon Lionettes received their charter on October 22, 1983 as support group to the Lions Club. At the time, they had 21 members (consisting of Anne Clarke, Glenna Campbell, Donna Provost, Pat Lusk, Charlene Graham and Alice Dolan) and the first president was Mona MacKechnie¹⁴. True to their motto « Caring and Sharing », the Lionettes provide help to the community, in particular senior citizens, low-income people and youth. They regularly help victims of fire or other disasters.

Over the years, they have supported various organizations and causes, such as the Camp des Voyageurs Tim Hortons, the minor hockey league, the organization in charge of the fairgrounds (the Quyon Recreation Association and Quyon Ensemble), the Pontiac CSSS, CHEO, Canadian Cancer Society, Arthritis Society, Canadian Liver Foundation and many others. Every month of April, they participate in the fundraising campaign of the Canadian Cancer Society. In April of 1996 they raised \$5,500, which was the greatest amount per capita in all of the province of Quebec (\$8.95 per person, compared to \$2.30 at the provincial level)¹⁵.

In order to raise funds, the Lionettes organize annual events that have become quite popular in the municipality. To name a few, murder mystery nights and the duck race on the Quyon River. The 1995 edition allowed them to raise \$3,000 and \$5,000 was raised in 2006¹⁶. The funds were used for various projects, ie. for the beautification of the village cenotaph, the purchase of new chairs for rooms in the Shawville Hospital to accommodate visitors who often spend long hours there¹⁷.

Since 1988, they have been organizing a car rally to which, up to fifty teams consisting of two to six people participate¹⁸. In fact, a car rally already existed in 1960 in Pontiac, each Lions Club in turn being the host¹⁹. The teams competing must find the hidden clues along the way, and each year a different theme is chosen, inspiring the competitors to dress up in costumes, one more original than the other. In 2001, money raised by the competitors, (ie. \$2,000) was paid to the Red Cross' Emergency Assistance Fund in case of a disaster, in memory of Frank Doyle Jr., a former resident who died in the September 11th attacks²⁰.

¹⁴ Christina Gray, « Quyon Lionettes celebrate 25 years together », *The Equity*, June 11, 2008.

¹⁵ Sylvia Bakker, « Quyon Lionettes raise most for cancer », *The Equity*, January 15, 1997.

¹⁶ Sylvia Bakker, « Duck race brings in \$3,000 for Lionettes », *The Equity*, May 19, 1995; Wilbur McLean, « Duck 831 champions annual Quyon duck race », *The Equity*, May 24, 2006.

¹⁷ Carole St-Aubin, « Bridge construction halts duck race », *The Equity*, May 12, 2010; Andrea Cranfield, « Quyon Lionettes buy new chairs », *The Equity*, September 1, 2010.

¹⁸ Jonathan Crowe, « Competitors dress up selves, cars for Lionettes' car rally », *The Equity*, October 29, 2003.

¹⁹ « Quyon Lionettes host 27th annual Lionette Rally », *The Equity*, April 20, 1988.

²⁰ « Quyon Lionettes car rally raises \$2,000 », *The Equity*, November 7, 2001.

With Christmas around the corner, the Lionettes see to decorating Quyon main street and organizing a Santa Clause parade in December. Early July, they are always on hand for the Canada Day parade, contributing in organizing the event and decorating the streets. They are hostesses for a weekend in August, celebrating Community Days, an event which in the Summer of 2015, was in its 18th edition. A barbecue, music and activities for children and adults are part of the festivities. These events present an opportunity to conduct a fundraising campaign, be it for the purpose of beautifying the main street or for the graduating 6th grade class in either of the two schools in the village²¹. In recent years, the Lionettes proposed a costume party in the Fall, open to everyone in the community, entitled: « Guys, Girls and G'Dolls ».

In 2013 there were nearly forty members in the Lionettes Club and are assured the organization will be well represented for years to come.

A few of the presidents: Mona MacKechnie, Charlene Graham, Jean McCann, Judy Proulx, Glenna Campbell, Pat McConnell, Donna Provost, Donna Kennedy, Cathy Emmerson, (Pat Lusk?), Barbara Meredith, Patti Davis, Janet Graham, Kathy Young²².

²¹ Hamish McKillop, « Roast beef, country folk and dirt dance », *The Equity*, September 10, 2014.

²² « Quyon Lions and Lionettes new executive », *The Equity*, July 11, 1990.