



What's Involved in Becoming a Lion?

Before joining the Albany & Troy Lions Club, most people wonder about the money and time commitments they're signing up for, and they may have other questions about who we are and how we operate. This document tries to address those concerns.

THE CLUB

The Albany Lions Club and the Troy Lions Club were both founded in 1925. In July 2006, the clubs merged to form the Albany & Troy Lions Club.

MEETINGS

Our club holds general membership meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, except during July and August. Most meetings are held at the Red Front Restaurant, 71 Division St, Troy. They start at 6:00 PM and are usually over by around 7:30; try to get there by 5:45 so you can get your dinner order in, have a drink and socialize for a few minutes before the meeting. We usually have a speaker on a subject of interest. We order dinner from a broad menu that includes most of the restaurant's standard fare. The price ranges from \$11 to \$15, which includes tax and tip, but not your beverage. You are also free to choose not to order a meal.

Our December meeting is typically our holiday party, and the June meeting is our annual installation of officers (the Lions year runs from July 1 to June 30). These two are usually held at locations that vary from year to year. The cost for these special occasions will also vary. Guests are welcome at any meeting, but spouses and "significant others" are especially encouraged in June and December, since these are primarily social events. Other meetings may be moved from time to time for a special purpose or to visit another club.

Meetings of the Board of Directors are held immediately after the general meeting and usually last about an hour or so. The time and dates of the June and July board meetings (when there is no general meeting) vary from year to year. All members are welcome, but only board members can vote.

We encourage all members to attend as many general meetings as they can, but we have no attendance requirement. In practice, about 1/3 of our members attend meetings regularly; others come occasionally, and there's another 1/3 that we never see.

TIME

We participate in a variety of service projects or fund-raisers throughout the year that require our time. Typical events may include working at the registration table or canteen at a blood drive; helping at a vision screening of preschoolers; selling popcorn at the Victorian Stroll;

screening and qualifying applicants for eyeglasses or hearing aids; manning an information table at a health fair; picking up used eyeglasses and hearing aids at various donation locations; participating in Channel 10's Coats for Kids program by picking up kids' coats from drycleaners and delivering them to distribution points; working at the Regional Food Bank; and helping CEO with the distribution of backpacks for students in September or food for the needy in November. Participation is purely voluntary, and we recognize that many people have day jobs that keep them from taking part in day-time activities. We also need people to run the club: be an officer or board member, chair or work on a variety of committees, manage or work on a project. As with meeting attendance, about 1/3 of our membership can be counted on to help, and about 1/3 we never see. We hope you will remember the Lions motto, "We Serve," and do what you can.

COST

Our annual dues are \$75, payable in the spring. New members are required to submit a dues check with their application.

In addition to dues and the meeting costs, you might incur these expenses:

-) The Tail Twister's job is essentially a "fun-raiser." At membership meetings, he or she will typically query individual members on a variety of topics. If you don't know the answer, you will be fined \$1. You can also be fined for other infractions, such as not wearing your name badge or a Lions pin.
-) We hold various fund-raisers that may involve selling things, such as holiday greens in November or chocolate Easter bunnies, or it may be a request for a donation; your participation is purely voluntary, and we never publicize whether or how much anyone gave.

MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION

As of this writing, we have 36 members who range in age from 23 to 88, with an average of 64. (We really need more under-50-year-olds, and the further under 50, the better.) Gender-wise, we're split evenly at 18 each. We've been Lions for anywhere from a few months to 38 years, with an average length of service of 15 years.

We hope we've answered most of your questions, but if you have any more please don't hesitate to contact the Lion who asked you to join, or our Membership Chair, Ruth Sano, at (518) 869-5669 or rmsano@gmail.com. Or you might find the answer on our web site: AlbanyTroyLions.org. Another way to get a good feel for what we do is to flip through some back issues of *Rare Meat*, our monthly newsletter; you'll find several years' worth at albanytroylions.org/RareMeat.htm. But the best way to learn about us is to come to a meeting, or to several; you're always welcome, and we won't pressure you (too much) into joining.