

LIONS CLUB HAS A LONG HISTORY OF SERVING PALISADE

The Palisade Lions Club was organized July 26, 1930. In the past 90 years, it has been responsible for many of Palisade's most successful endeavors. Its focus is on helping children and schools, as well as undertaking projects which no other group—volunteer or government—could complete. At their 1930 beginning, their stated intent was to “make Palisade a better place to live, work and play by virtue of its Lion's Club.” Their motto is: “We Serve.”

Charter members included Postmaster Roswell H. Bancroft, banker J. H. Rusk, Independent Lumber Co. Manager J.V. Barnes, Sr., Palisade High School Principal W.J. Stebbins, Mark McCoy, C. W. Culhane, James J. Tweedale, Cameo Mercantile owner Filmore Duncan, Fruit Grower A. M. Echternach, grocery store owners Rowland Bancroft, Paul Rice, Walter R. Hill, and Claude E. Smith, Ford Dealer and Garage Owner Duane Hoffman, Harold Crick, F. L. Tilton, E.R. Mulvihill, Band Director Cleon E. Dalby, Dr. A.C. Smith, and Howard Roepack. The first President was J. H. Rusk. Every year, a new president is elected.

It is hard to summarize 90 years of the Lions' Club members' tireless volunteer work to make Palisade better. In fact, every park, most buildings, and local organizations have benefited from the Lions' generosity.

From the very beginning, they helped Palisade High School with football equipment, and raised over \$3,000 to secure approval for the gymnasium and auditorium addition to the high school in 1939. For the football field – originally where Peach Bowl Park is now – the Lions Club donated lights for night games, as well as a surrounding track field, rest rooms and a concession stand. More recently, Palisade High School got a new scoreboard in 2012, and the Girls Softball team got new equipment from Lions Club donations.

Taylor Elementary received \$900 in 1966-67 to improve the athletic field where High School baseball games were played. The elementary school also received \$5,000 for a weather station in 1998. More recently, in 2012, the Club donated money to purchase new electronic equipment, including a

document camera, LCD projector and laptop computer.

The sprinkler system at the Little League baseball field west of the current High School is the result of an \$8,500 donation by the Club for a pump and accessories.

The fireplace at the Veteran's Memorial Park was built in 1953 with a Lions Club donation. The shelter and BBQ grill at Riverbend Park and the shelter and trees at Peach Bowl Park are Lions Club projects. In 2004, the Club even got an award from the Lions Club International to recognize the many improvements the Palisade Lions have made to Peach Bowl Park.



Summer recreation programs for youth received support from the Lions Club, starting in the early 1950s. Among other projects was the first tennis courts built next to the Veteran's Memorial Building. The Building itself has been a frequent recipient as well. The Lions Club joined with the American Legion and the Town to pave the parking area. The Club purchased a dishwasher and in 1970, a new gas range for the kitchen. It has also provided money for repairing the roof.

It was a Lions Club suggestion to the United Fruit Growers' Association for building restrooms to better accommodate the influx of migrant workers here for peach harvest every summer. The brick building on South Main Street and 2nd Avenue was completed in 1945 and is public restrooms again today.

For the fruit industry, they secured appropriation of \$10,000 for investigating Peach Mosaic which was disastrous to Palisade's fruit industry and another \$89,000 to eradicate the disease in the 1960s. Lions also come to the aid of fruit growers in need, including pruning 13 acres of fruit trees for someone whose wife was extremely ill.

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Maybe the most visible project which greets locals and visitors is the lighted double-faced marquee sign installed by the Lions Club in Palisade Memorial Park in 1994. It is updated by Lion Rick Fox with greetings and events. The Wayne Aspinall Memorial in that park was dedicated in 2007 with support from the Lions Club, as well.

Community health and wellness programs also have received generous donations. In the Great Depression, the Club collected and reconditioned discarded toys for poor children at Christmas time, contributed to the state Blind Committee, trucked surplus vegetables into Palisade for poor families and inoculated 300 children against typhoid fever. The Club has purchased back braces for crippled children and provided eyeglasses and optical treatments for countless children and adults. The Club has given money to the Palisade Fire Department for a cardiac monitor, a unit to assist in CPR.

In the 1980s, the Club assisted health related projects including vision and hearing screening for preschool children, a camp for handicapped children, a defibrillator for Community Hospital, and a drug awareness program, among other projects.

Local non-profit organizations receiving support include the Palisade Historical Society for our Walking Tour Brochure and PHS Senior Class Photo display. Others receiving Lions Club funds over the years include the Palisade Women's Club, Altrusa, and the American Business Women's Association.



Palisade Historical Society's Charlene Weidner shows Lions Club members the Walking Tour Brochure published by the Historical Society at a Lions Club meeting in February 2015.

In the 1990s, the Lions Club ensured there would be fencing along the Riverfront Trail, and continued support for the Fire Department, the 9 Health Fair, the schools, and parks including two basketball backboards for Isaac O'Neil Memorial Park. They purchased trees for Peach Bowl Park

To fund projects, the Lions Club created popular community events, including Annual Carnivals which in the early years netted between \$1,000 and \$1,200. In the 2000s, the Carnival would net at least \$12,000 while the 2004 carnival was the most successful with net profits of \$19,064 thanks to enthusiasm in the club and help from the Palisade Bulldog Football team.

Besides the popular annual Carnivals, another fundraising effort first held in 1955 was the Pancake Breakfast. That year, the proceeds went for recreation programs, including tennis, volleyball, badminton, and shuffleboard. Charity Balls were also held to raise funds. In recent years, the Lions Club had daiquiri booths at the Peach Festival as well as the Pancake Breakfast.

At its 30th Anniversary in 1960, the Palisade Lions Club had 61 members who enjoyed weekly dinner meetings. For Ladies Night, wives attended, and programs included speakers or programs from school musical groups. The Lions Club was a wonderful place to enjoy social interaction when there was no Internet, and only one television channel.

By 2010, there were 44 members. For the 90th Anniversary, unfortunately, the number of Lions Club members has fewer members, though it is faring better than other organizations which disbanded due to dwindling membership. The Palisade Lions Club is still active and would welcome new members to continue this incredible work to benefit our community.

For their 80th anniversary in 2010, the Town of Palisade recognized their countless hours of fundraising and volunteer time and donating more than \$250,000 to make Palisade better with a proclamation.

For more information and to join the Palisade Lions Club, contact Donnie Bishop at 970-948-7049.

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Lions Club Stilt Walkers

The Lions Club Stilt Walkers made Palisade more famous than for just our delicious peaches. Five original members, including Lyndon Granat, Ray Denison, Gene Taylor, Bob Ames, and Carl Hampton displayed their amazing stilt walking skills on parade routes starting in the mid-1950s. These men were fruit growers who used stilts to prune dormant peach trees in the winter.



The Palisade Lions Club Stilt Walkers at a parade in Grand Junction. (Courtesy of Bill Floryancic)

On July 9, 1958, the Stilt Walkers and their wives who served as “Banner Girls,” went to Chicago for the Lions Club International Convention parade.

In 1959, the event and parade were in New York City. In 1967, they participated in another parade in Chicago, this time with Larry Clark replacing Gene Taylor and adding Theo Eversol.

Local artist Lyle Nichols created a sculpture honoring these hardy Lions Club members. After several years in front of the Municipal Building, it is now inside the Municipal Building lobby.



Lyle Nichols' sculpture of the Lions Club stilt walkers