



Monthly Bulletin of the Venice Lions Club, Venice, Florida

December 2025

Guest Member Message – Lion Keith Backhaus

A SEASON OF LIGHT

It is December!

With many traditions, many celebrations, December is one season of love and light.

It is packed with holidays and observances from the Winter Solstice to New Year's

Eve, to Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa. There is something for everyone. Even December 21st is "Bah Humbug", a day for the "Scrooges" among us. December actually has 45 awareness events.

December is also called the "Season of Light" as there are many religious holidays during this time. Their themes span cultures that emphasize sharing with others, connecting with family, and of course delicious holiday foods and meals from around the world. These major holidays all center around a theme of light overcoming darkness, a time of peace. December 21st is the Winter Solstice — the shortest day of the year and the longest night— If we pay attention we will see, in amazement, how quickly the light overcomes the darkness. The long sunrise of December 22nd is followed by those that come faster and faster each day. Darkness can be overcome by the light of a single candle, or a pair of new glasses that brings sight. A Teddy Bear to hug can bring calm when fear is all around. Darkness can be overcome by a smile of welcome, kindness, and respect for all. Our World today presents us with many attractions and distractions making it easy to lose sight of the true meaning of this 'Season of Light.' But in fact, the 'Season of Light,' whether from the glow of Advent candles, the lights of a Christmas tree, the flame of a Menorah, or perhaps simply, the welcome light on our neighbor's front porch. These all let the light shine. May this season of light not only be a time of celebrations and merriment but also a time of reflection. Let us celebrate the possibility of peace. Let us be centers of peace and light to help speed the day when we all may be one, let us Share it!

Lion Keith Backhaus



Happy Holidays, Lions!

As we wrap up another incredible year of service, may this season bring you joy, peace, and time to reflect on the difference you've made in our community. Thank you for your dedication and compassion. Wishing you and your families a wonderful holiday and a happy, healthy New Year!

It is my privilege to serve with you,
FVDG Lion Bev Flynn, Guest Newsletter Publisher

Mutt Strutt Volunteer Opportunities



LIONS AND DOGS...Oh my! **Lions, we need your help!!!** The **Mutt Strutt Fundraiser** is fast approaching. In order for this event to be successful, we HAVE to have businesses sign up to participate either as **VENDORS** or **SPONSORS**. That's where you come in.....

VENDORS:

- We need lots of **vendors** with booths for the dog walkers to visit
- Vendor contributions are only \$100 for a booth placement
- Great opportunity for businesses to make contact with potential new customers

SPONSORS:

- **Sponsors** are asked to chose a level of \$250, \$500 or \$1000
- Each level gives them more exposure and publicity benefits
- Contact businesses such as banks, insurance companies, attorneys, real estate companies, air conditioning companies... anyone you do business with

Opportunities for Sponsorships and Vendors has been EXTENDED. It is now JANUARY 10th.

Contact Coordinator for Businesses is Lion Judy Terrell. She can be reached at Terrell.jx2@gmail.com or 813-244-1723

For all other questions: Contact Lion Tim Werla at twerla@aol.com or 941-264-5986 or Lion Jeff Sterne at jsterne1970@gmail.com

CELEBRATE!



Jill Cardinal Pat McNally
Agnes Woros Russ Klokenga
Rocky Rocquin Sharon Wilkins



Jeff and Ginnie Sterne

Halloween Parade on MainStreet



October 31: Lions distributed 400 bags of candy to costumed children who strolled along Venice Avenue with their families. Lions Judy and Rocky Rocquin have organized the event for years, but are looking for a Lion to take over this fun event in 2026.



The Lions Roar!

Why do Lions love celebrating Christmas?

It gives them a chance to show off their “paws-itive” holiday spirit!

Why did the Lion sit by the Christmas tree all night?

He wanted to catch Santa “Claws”.

Why did the Lion decorate his Christmas tree with extra tinsel?

Because he wanted it to be the Mane Attraction!



Meet Two New Venice Lions

by Lion Sharon Wilkins

Bob and Jennie Angell are new Lion members. They are from Rhode Island and have lived in Florida for about 4 years. Prior to moving to Venice, they lived in DeLand, Cassadaga and Daytona Beach.

Bob was a truck driver for many years, and a bus driver for the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority for over 23 years with no accidents! He is a great driver and an excellent cook. He loves to be in the kitchen making wonderful meals for Jennie. He enjoys a disciplined exercise routine every day, which consists of various Oriental exercises, walking 3 miles and going to the pool.

Jennie is a retired R.N., certified Psychic-Medium, author, and voice-over artist. She wrote a children's book, "Jennie and The Lazy Lima Bean" and recorded "Time for Prayer", "Time for You", and "Christ is Born".

They have 3 grown children: Robert lives in Nebraska and recently retired from the USAF, proudly serving 20 years with 3 deployments to Iraq. Carolina lives in Alaska and proudly served in the USAF for 8 years, which included deployments to Iraq and Qatar. Her husband Ken is serving in the USAF and will have 20 years of service soon. Arthur lives in Rhode Island and is enjoying his work in the medical field at the State psychiatric hospital.

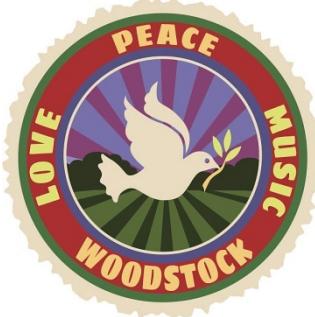
Jennie and Bob have 4 grandchildren: Elizabeth Grace, Jared Robert, Jennie Angell, and Amelia Angell. They are both so happy to be here in Venice and excited to be a part of Lions.

Venice Lions Hear GREAT NEWS

We Won a \$5,000 Grant!

Lion Jeff Sterne alerted Lions to an opportunity to apply for a service grant from The Venice Golf and Country Club. "We need a SPOT camera", Lion Pamela thought! She had been hoping to acquire a vision-screening device that would allow the club to screen the vision of adults. This was an opportunity! The Plus-Optics camera Lion Carole's Preschool Vision Team uses is excellent for screening the vision of young children through middle school, but is not useful to screen adults' eyes. Lion Carole wrote an excellent – and persuasive - grant application that described the opportunity to expand the club's vision service into the adult community. The VGCC just announced *the maximum grant of \$5,000* to the club for the camera! Thank you, Lion Carole! GREAT JOB! Training will begin shortly after the purchase of the camera and a new team will be able to travel to adult locations: the Senior Center, Libraries, and Special Events to check the vision of everyone! We ROCK! We SERVE!





18th Annual Mane Event Fashion Show

After 17 years of outstanding leadership, Lions Bev Flynn and Barbara McGillicuddy have stepped down as Coordinators of the Mane Event Fashion Show. We owe them a huge debt of gratitude for their years of dedication to this important event. For 17 years, the Mane Event has been the highlight of Venice Lions fundraising efforts. Since 2009 the event has raised over **one hundred and forty-eight thousand dollars!** The proceeds have funded countless local projects and have touched the lives of thousands in our community!

Lions Judy Rocquin and Mary Billings have agreed to take over the Mane Event Coordination. They realize they have very big shoes to fill and they will be relying heavily on the Venice Lions membership to provide support as they have in the past.

The 18th Annual Mane Event Fashion show will be held **Friday May 13th, from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm** at Plantation Golf and Country Club. **This year's Theme is "Woodstock."** We are hoping everyone will "Get Their GROOVE ON" and join in the fun.

Member information packets will be distributed at the December 4th meeting. Please be thinking about businesses you frequent that you could reach out to for a Sponsorship. Sponsorships are the main source of income for the Mane Event and currently these are mostly provided by our membership. We will also be looking for Door Prizes such as restaurant gift certificates, spa gift certificates, and massage gift certificates.

Lions Christal Snell and Sean Higginbottom are again coordinating the Raffle Baskets. Please see them if you would like to make a financial donation towards a raffle basket or would like to donate items towards a raffle basket.

We have an amazing legacy to continue and we look forward to another successful Mane Event.



Here's a blast from the past...
Our Woodstock Social in 2018



November Speakers

Day 4 Hope



Over 300 volunteers work together each year to prepare children from struggling families feel ready for the first day of school. Venice Lions check children's vision, and doctors and dentists offer health exams. The children leave with new clothes, backpacks of school supplies, and bags of groceries. This amazing free event has been organized by Fred and Cindy Gossman for 8 years. They described how this amazing project comes together at the November 20 Lions meeting.

Officer Sean Hammett Retires

Venice Lions said goodbye to the Venice Police Community Service Officer Sean Hammett. Lions thanked him for his assistance with two years of the Teddy Bear project and the "Lunch for First Responders" last year. Sergeant Sean had promised to become a Lion when he retired, so he was sent off with a referral to the closest club in his new Georgia home. President Pamela presented a crystal Lion to Sergeant Hammett and he presented Venice Lions with a certificate of appreciation.



MainStreet

Kara Morgan, CEO of Venice MainStreet, described MainStreet's mission to support Venice's businesses and to create special events such as the Eggstravaganza and the Halloween Strut to bring the community together.



Take A Chance! Win BIG!

There are two remaining meetings in December to buy raffle tickets to win \$50 of scratch-off tickets. Lion Pat McNally attached multiple scratch-off tickets to a giant Snowflake. You might win them all! Tickets are \$5.00 and will build up the club's Admin Treasury. The "Admin Treasury" pays the bills for extra meal expenses, office supplies, awards, AND...this year...gifts to the Laurel Nokomis Branch Club when they charter their own Lions club in the new year! The winning ticket of the raffle will be drawn and announced at the December 20 Holiday Party. **It could be YOU!**



Sunshine Cards

It is a big production every year: Venice Lions print, sign, stuff-and-sticker envelopes for over 1600 holiday greeting cards for residents in 21 care communities. Cards are also delivered to Mobile Meals where they are included on dinner deliveries to isolated seniors. Lion Jeannette Davis has managed this service project since its beginning. This year, Lion Sean Higgenbottom managed the off-site printing.



I wish that I could sit with you,
Hold your hand and see you smile,
Listen to your tales of life,
Share your friendship for a while.

My thoughts and blessings are with you
As we pass through these awesome days
Finding some unusual ways
To care for one another.

**How Beautiful A Day Can Be
When Kindness Touches It.**
George Ellison

**Made especially for you
The Venice Lions Club**

**Verses created by
Lion Ann Favreau**

**Graphics by
Jonathan Dziok**

Holiday Parade All Aboard the Venice Lions Service Express

The City of Venice's 49th Annual Holiday Parade Theme: **All Aboard the Centennial!**

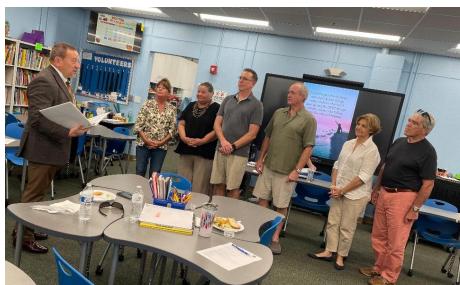
Celebrates those who rode, built and championed the train that helped create our City on the Gulf. From the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Kentucky Military Institute cadets to young families, dignitaries and circus performers, we can't wait to see how you tie your parade float/unit into this year's theme!

With the building expertise of Lions Rocky Rocquin and Bob Winstel, our Lions got to ride on the Express train "float" in the parade. Lion Mary Billings made an illuminated smoke stack to top it off. Lion Judy Rocquin made sure we were hydrated and nourished. Lion Pat McNally even brought train whistles for everyone! Thank you to the Lions that helped set up the float on Saturday morning and any other Lions that made the successful event possible....



It was a great evening with the weather cooling down enough that Roary wasn't melting inside the Lions suit. Lots of Venice Lions showed up to ride or walk as we made our way down Venice Avenue. The sides of the road were packed with on-lookers. We received lots of clapping and shouts of praise as we made our way down the parade route.

. It's GREAT to be a LION! Especially a Venice Lion!



President Peter inducted 6 new Lions at the November meeting of the Laurel-Nokomis ClubBranch. Welcome Lions!!



Mutt Strutt

January 24th
10:00 to 2:00

THE VENICE LIONS
CLUB PRESENTS



Activities:

- Dog Agility Demo
- Make a Dog Toy for your pet or the Humane Society
- Raffles
- 50/50

Highlights:

- Scenic Walk
- Vendors
- Food Trucks
- Photo Booth
- Ice Cream Truck
- GIVE-AWAYS!

Help the Venice Lions Club support a Veteran to receive a Service Dog

Laurel Civic Park
509 Collins Road, Nokomis

Pre-Registration \$20.00 On-Site Registration \$25.00

See our website at venicelionsclub.com or scan the QR code

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Give the Gift of Life this Christmas



**Join the Englewood Lions Club and Suncoast Blood Center
for our Christmas Blood Drive**

Date, 12/15/2025

Time, 8:30 to 4:30

**Location, Englewood Lions Club House
4611 Placida Rd Englewood, FL 34224**

**After you donate please stop in to our
club house to shop for Christmas
Poinsettias**

You are cordially invited to the

Punta Gorda Lions Club

HOLIDAY PARTY

December 9, 2025



To be held at the Eagles Aerie:
23111 Harborview Road
(Corner of Kings Highway and Harborview)
Port Charlotte, FL 33980

5:00 p.m. Social Hour – 6:00 p.m. Buffet Dinner

Special arrangements for a cash bar courtesy of the Eagles

OUR MENU:

Salad with Ranch or Italian Dressing
Roasted Chicken and Lasagna with Meat Sauce
Mashed Potatoes, Veggie, Garlic Bread
Beverages, Dessert



This will be the Official Visit of District Governor Linda Gregory

There will be an exchange of wrapped Gifts –
Value \$15.00 - \$20.00
Don't miss out on all that fun!



Dinner reservations are please due by December 5!

Email Lion Bill Ringelstein at biljeanr@embarqmail.com
or call him at 941 637 -9979 to make your reservation.

Cost is \$20.00 – Pay at the door

At Eagles Aerie, please use the Kings Highway side entrance.



We Serve