

## Local Club Reveals New Face of Lions

The more things change the more they stay the same. Or so the old saying goes. An example of this is how two local families have both changed and been changed by their involvement with the East Albany Lion's Club. What used to be a club where dad or grandpa disappeared for two to three evenings per month for club meetings with some fundraisers and community work projects thrown in has transformed into more of a family business.

Long known as the world's largest service club, the Lions Club has just turned the corner into its second century. As it matures in striving to meet growing needs, the club is witnessing an uptake in female members as well as multiple generation families serving together. The new Lion's Club features among other changes to its demographics, husbands and wives serving their communities together. Another wrinkle in the evolution of the Albany club is that it features not one, but two active three-generation families.

Jerry Boehme is the middle generation in one of these families. Jerry joined the East Albany club in 1984. He was greatly influenced in community service and sold on the value of civic clubs to improve their communities by his parents, who were very active in the Jaycees while he was growing up. Jerry states that participation with the Lions allows his family to "make a difference in the community. We see it every summer with our Lumberjack breakfast, which has become a community event where people will wait in line for an hour talking to friends and meeting casual acquaintances. The money that is raised stays in our local community buying eye glasses, assisting the Lion's eye bank and other local community needs." Jerry is joined by his father-in-law Jack Haines and his son Grant Boehme.

Jack joined the East Albany club in 1957. In his six decades of service, Jack has served in so many roles and countless community improvement projects. He speaks with pride of his son-in-law's involvement with the Jaycees and saw that service as a launching pad for his current service as a Lion. He notes that the advent of females in the local club was a point of contention among some members initially, but that it has borne much fruit. "We have kind, talkative, hard-working men and women Lions," he stated.

His grandson Grant is currently serving in the Air Force but has worked on Lions projects since he was very young. Grant joined in the Albany club in 2012. Whether ringing the Salvation Army bell alongside his dad, or grandpa, helping at the Gun show, or serving at the Lumberjack breakfast, Grant speaks of many fond memories and the values he's gained through his participation with Lions. These values provide a strong foundation in his service to our country.

Grant notes that Lions was his first chance as a youth to see how volunteering, community service, and so many of his other traits were forged. "All along, both my father and grandfather were there to guide me, and more importantly, lead by example."

Lou Amerson is the matriarch of the other three-generation family in the local club. Lou joined Lions shortly after moving to Baker City in 1994. "I was hooked by hands-on fundraising ... to better my community while also contributing to worldwide needs," she said. Since that time, she has "found a home in the Lion's clubs in Springfield, Junction City, and now in Albany." She's found participating in the local club as a way for her to get involved in her local community.

People join Lions for a variety of reasons. What makes them stay is stories, experiences, and life connections that affirms their service and deepens their bonds to each other and to their communities. The example Lou has set for her granddaughter Jadie De Lille Wright and daughter Jeannie Wright led to them joining her in the East Albany club in 2015.

“I chose to join Lions after seeing my mom involved in worthy, community-oriented projects.” Jeannie said. Jadie adds, “It’s empowering! It’s a great feeling where all three of us push each other and support each other within the club and in our lives.” Grandma Lion Lou echoes Jadie’s sentiments. “My heart bursts with pride when I see my granddaughter in leadership positions and my daughter taking on projects that sorely needed a leader.” she gushed. Jadie sees the value of having fun while working together to serve her community. “You can join too!” she stated. “Do you want to help out your community and those in need while having fun? Come to one of our meetings. We will buy you dinner and you can get an idea of what it is that we do and how we do it.”