



## **Chapter 1**

### **In the Beginning**

As you will see in reading this first chapter, the Lions International Trading Pin Club (LITPC) is not blessed with the maintenance of records that can be used to document the history of the organization. However, we are fortunate that this project of documenting our past and our present was begun early enough for us to be able to capture the essential facts. With an objective of making this a “living history”, it is hoped that we will be able to constantly update this accounting as events occur. In this way, we should be able to provide an authoritative and valid history of the LITPC that was started “officially” in 1973.

## In the Beginning

It has been established that the Lions International Trading Pin Club (LITPC) came into being on June 27, 1973 at the Sheraton Four Ambassador Hotel during the 56th Lions Clubs International (LCI) Convention in Miami Beach, Florida. The fact that a pin was issued to commemorate the event certainly has added a degree of “official” acceptance that the LITPC did in fact get started in Miami. That pin is shown on the cover of this publication, and is discussed later herein. However, one of our founding members, the late PID **James D. Shea**, Washington, probably best describes what happened in Miami. He stated that *“the idea of having a trading pin club similar to the Lions International Stamp Club was conceived in the minds of several long-time Lions pin traders as a very significant means by which interested Lions around the world could be more quickly brought together in friendship”*. Shea went on to state that *“an informal organizational meeting was held at one of the Convention hotels (in Miami), which was attended by about 35 Lions who were known to be seriously and ethically interested in the trading of Lions friendship pins.”* As you will see throughout the beginning of this publication, there are obviously some differences in opinions about the circumstances surrounding this Miami meeting, as well as the numbers of individuals in attendance. Lion Shea did lend his considerable support to the fact that the discussions at the Miami meeting resulted in the election of PDG **M. W. “Dutch” Blair**, Pennsylvania, as President, Shea himself as Vice President, and Lion **Dominick Pallone**, Pennsylvania, as Secretary-Treasurer. An entry membership fee of \$10.00 was also approved.

In reading a copy of “minutes” that were typed and furnished by “Dutch” Blair, and supposedly prepared on June 27, 1973 and signed by “Dutch”, it was indicated that the assembled group agreed that *“club membership should be limited in number; that a member should have attended at least one International Convention; that charter membership should be open for six months from the date of this meeting and that new members must be sponsored by a member; and that pins will be available at cost to club members”*. This quotation from Blair’s one page “minutes” probably best explains why there has been disagreement over the question of charter membership in the LITPC. When an organization leaves the so-called charter open for six months, as indicated in these “minutes”, it certainly leaves open the opportunity for many to claim the coveted title of “Charter Member”. It can be argued that the appropriate term for those individuals who gathered in Miami Beach is “Founding Members”, and is one that we will use throughout this publication. From the available input that we have, there were 22 in attendance, the names of which are listed later in this publication. The figure of 35 “Charter Members” seems to include all who joined the organization within the first six months.

## The Founders

The initial efforts to organize the individual Lions interested in the trading of Lions “friendship pins”, as they were originally called, was headed by PDG **M. W. “Dutch” Blair** of Pennsylvania. Lion “Dutch”, as he became widely known in the pin trading community, was a rather bombastic personality who had political ambitions to become an International Director. Although he was faced with an uphill battle within his State of Pennsylvania to achieve his ambition, he envisioned that organizing an entity within Lionism could go a long way in highlighting his organizational skills. Thus, he undertook the task of convincing his fellow pin traders that there was a need for a pin traders organization and one that would be recognized by Lions Clubs International (LCI). His idea was to have something called the “International Pin Collectors Club”, and he proceeded to discuss his concepts with a few of his closest associates who were similarly in favor of such an organization. This small group even went so far as to adopt a design for the organization’s first trading pin. The primary designer was PID **Jim Shea**, Washington. The group decided that the pin would be made available only to those who signed up to join the proposed organization.

Most of Blair’s initial recruiting efforts were concentrated on those who were in attendance during the LCI convention in Mexico City in 1972. We might mention that the prevailing attitude toward pin traders, at least within the leadership circles of LCI, was not too favorable, to say the least. As a matter of fact, most of the Lion leaders felt that pin traders, as a group, were a highly undesirable faction within Lionism and one that should not be taken too seriously. Anyway, Lion “Dutch” prepared a letter dated January 5, 1973, to “Dear Fellow Lions” in which he outlined his idea of meeting in Miami Beach for a possible luncheon to discuss his proposals. Unfortunately, there are no known official records of just who actually attended this meeting, and as a result, there has not been complete agreement as to who became Founding Members. Lion “Dutch” later claimed that there were 36 “charter members” and their names are shown below:

Abraham Alpert, New Jersey; M. J. Blair, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania; Dr. Jack Bishop, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada; Howard Cannon, Kokomo, Indiana; William R. Cooper, Maplewood, Missouri; Carmen De Baisi, Duryea, Pennsylvania; Gene Doering, Boca Raton, Florida; Howard Etter, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania; William H. Ferem, Alberta, Canada; E. L. Fogelman, Tieton, Washington; Rex Getz, Hoxie, Kansas; Len Grady, Chicago, Illinois; Thomas O. Haralson, Sr., Nashville, Tennessee; James Hartman, Kittanning, Pennsylvania; Robert M. Hawkins, Reno, Nevada; John Keister, Upland, California; Walter Krupa, New Kensington, Pennsylvania; Charles McCall, Loudon, Tennessee; Whitney Miller, Milton Freewater, Oregon; Abe Mills, Sun City, Arizona; R. L. Moore, North Little Rock, Arkansas; Francis Murphy, Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey; Dominic Pallone, Lower Burrell, Pennsylvania; Dennis Powell; Johnson City, Tennessee; Dr. O. J. Ratcliff, North Little Rock, Arkansas; Ken Rhinevault, LaGrange, Illinois; Richard A. Ryan, Boyertown, Pennsylvania; James Selvig, Steelton, Pennsylvania; James D. Shea, Bellevue, Washington; Francis Stockman, New Castle, Pennsylvania; Elwood Tucker, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada; Ralph Shay, Palm Desert, California; William N. Vaughan, Santa Ana, California; Andrew Zlomsowitch, Lehighton, Pennsylvania.

PDG **E. L. “Ed” Fogelman**, Washington, and PDG **O. J. “Doc” Ratcliff**, Arkansas, both of whom are listed above, claimed that there were actually only 22 Founding Members and that Lion “Dutch” added the additional ones solely on the basis that they joined later in the year and “after the fact”. Based on the word of these two dedicated members, during the 1993 LCI convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the LITPC celebrated the 20th Anniversary and honored the 22 members as Founding Members. They were as follows:

Dr. Jack Bishop, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada  
 M. W. Blair, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania  
 Howard Cannon, Kokomo, Indiana  
 William R. Cooper, Maplewood, Missouri  
 Carmen DeBaisi, Duryea, Pennsylvania  
 E. L. Fogelman, Tieton, Washington  
 Len Grady, Chicago, Illinois  
 Thomas O. Haralson, Nashville, Tennessee  
 James E. Hartman, Kittanning, Pennsylvania  
 John T. Keister, Upland, California  
 Walter Krupa, New Kensington, Pennsylvania

Whitney Miller, Milton Freewater, Oregon  
 Francis J. Murphy, Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey  
 Dominick Pallone, Lower Burrell, Pennsylvania  
 Dennis Powell, Johnson City, Tennessee  
 Dr. O. J. Ratcliff, Jr., North Little Rock, Arkansas  
 Kenneth Rhinevault, LaGrange, Illinois  
 James D. Selvig, Steelton, Pennsylvania  
 Ralph T. Shay, Quinlan, Texas  
 James D. Shea, Bellevue, Washington  
 Francis Stockman, New Castle, Pennsylvania  
 Andrew Zlomsowitch, Lehighton, Pennsylvania

The LITPC was organized for the purposes of fostering and developing friendship, good fellowship, and mutual understanding through the avocation of trading and collecting Lions friendship pins, which are more commonly referred to as “trading pins”. The Founding Fathers of the LITPC hoped that this association would have a lasting and continuing influence on their desire to strengthen international Lionism through international good will. There is no doubt that this objective was, and continues to be, achieved. Pin traders are dedicated to the principles of Lionism and are prone to remind all that they are Lions first and pin traders second. The LITPC is proud to count among their membership, International Directors, Past International Directors, Council Chairpersons, and many District Governors and Past District Governors. As a matter of fact, almost 30% of the membership carry the title of Past Council Chairpersons (PCC), District Governors, and Past District Governors (PDG).



One of the pioneers of the LITPC was Past International President **Bill Chandler** of Alabama. As you will read elsewhere in this publication, he was instrumental in gaining recognition of the LITPC from the LCI Board of Directors. Although he was never really a pin trader in the truest sense, he maintained his membership in the LITPC until his death in 2006. Contrary to the concepts of organization, as originally envisioned by our First President, “**Dutch**” Blair, membership in the LITPC is open to all Lions, Lionesses, and Leos who are active members and in good standing in their respective districts. Obviously, an interest in the collection and trading of Lions pins is important. However, just as important is the exposure that one can get in developing friendships with Lions families all over the world

## The Name

One of the first heated discussions that took place in the early days of our organization was caused by an honest disagreement over what would be our official name. On one side, the argument was that we should be called the “Lions International Pin Trading Club” since that title would clearly tell the world that we were a group of individuals who enjoyed the hobby of pin trading. On the other side was the argument that it would be more appropriate to be known as the “Lions International Trading Pin Club”. This latter title was proposed by Lion **Bill Chandler**, who later became the President of Lions Clubs International. One of our more influential supporters, PID **James Shea**, sided with Lion Bill. Their argument was that the emphasis should not be on the individuals but on the organization itself. Since the organization was dependent upon Lions Bill and Jim to take the final proposal, including the proposed Constitution, to the International Board of Directors, the so-called argument was short lived and the group adopted the wording “Lions International Trading Pin Club (LITPC)”. Over the years, this has proven to be a stumbling block for many who write about us and who mention our name in conversations. For some reason, it seems as though “Lions International Pin Trading Club” or “LIPTC” is easier to remember than our official title, LITPC. An excellent example of how some of the members seem to slip into the mistaken and easier title can be found in the pin shown below. The incorrect pin on the left was recalled and remade before too many pins found their way into some of the members’ collections.



Incorrect Version



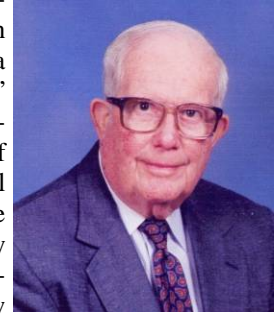
Correct Version

Pins are shown at reduced size

## In the Days Before the LITPC

Before we go any further in this publication and give you the impression that pin trading within Lionism started with the LITPC, we need to look briefly at the days and years leading up to 1973. The trading of Lions pins on an organized basis actually started in the 1950's when attendees at the LCI conventions would exchange all kinds of pins and memorabilia. There was no such organization as a pin trading club or anything like that. Lions and their families from all over the world just wanted to be able to take something to show the folks back home that they were able to meet and greet Lions from all over the world at these annual gatherings. Many of the early things that were used didn't even have the Lions emblem.

Before he passed away, one of our Founding Members, **Dr. O. J. Ratcliff**, PDG, of North Little Rock, Arkansas, shared a handwritten recollection of some of the events leading up to the creation of the LITPC. He indicated that in Chicago during the 1958 LCI convention, he saw Lions from two States with pins to trade. "Doc" Ratcliff remarked that even though the novelty of these two Lions intrigued him, he was not active in pin trading at the time. It was not until 1962 in Nice, France, that "Doc" Ratcliff again observed a number of Lions on the streets exchanging memorabilia and a few pins. He sort of got the "bug" himself and managed to collect about 20 plastic pins and even a pair of wooden shoes from Holland. Then in 1964 during the LCI convention in Toronto, Canada, "Doc" Ratcliff's home State of Arkansas issued their first plastic pin, and he was "hooked" from that point on. This wonderful human being pulled out all stops in 1973 in Miami Beach, Florida, and spent almost all of his time at that convention either trading pins or helping to get the LITPC organized. As we have already documented, Lion "Doc" Ratcliff became a Founding Member of the LITPC and served the organization as the Fourth President in 1979-1981. All of this helps one to imagine how relatively new the hobby really is. Exchanging pins and other Lions memorabilia obviously got started long before anyone even gave thought to organizing a pin trading club.



We mentioned above that many of the early collectibles that pin traders cherish today didn't even have the Lions emblem. As a matter of fact, some were not even generated specifically for Lions. Thanks to Lion **Harry Fulwiler**, Virginia, you will see below and on the next page, a sampling of some of the items from Lion Harry's personal collection.

### Early Pins and Collectibles



## Early Pins and Collectibles



A detailed and excellent presentation of these items were included in a seminar that was presented by Lion **Harry Fulwiler** during the 2007 LCI Convention in Chicago. The historical significance of this seminar is covered later in this publication.



## The Loyal Order of Lions



According to *“The Lions”*, a book that was issued by LCI several years ago, the founder of LCI, **Melvin Jones**, failed twice in his efforts to organize what we now know as Lions Clubs International. One of these attempts was an organization called the “Loyal Order of Lions”, which lasted only for a short period of time. During that period, a lapel pin was designed and issued for the members. One of these individuals was a gentleman who later became the Charter Secretary of the Baker City Lions Club in Oregon. After the old gentleman passed on, a bag of these highly prized Loyal Order of Lions pins was discovered among his belongings. The bag contained 75 of the pins, which were still affixed to the original cardboard backing. A couple of the pins were auctioned at the Western States Pin Swap in Reno in 2001 and 2002, and the remainder were held by the Baker City Lions Club.

In late 2001, through the efforts of PDG **Don Adams**, the Baker City Club disposed of the pins they had by selling them to Lions throughout the U.S.A. If you were one of the people who purchased one, consider yourself very lucky to have a memento of such significance, and one that can be traced directly to the founder of LCI, Melvin Jones. There’s no doubt that eventually some of these will find their way again to one of the several auctions that we all enjoy each year. We know for sure that one such pin surfaced at the auction held in conjunction with the 2007 Virginia Pin Swap. As the years go by, these pins will no doubt increase in value. The picture of the pin that we have shown in this Chapter is not indicative of the beauty of the actual item. The extremely dark colors used in the production of the pin hinders the reproduction process.

## The First LITPC Pin



We previously mentioned that the first LITPC pin lends support to the beginning of the LITPC in 1973. In the words of **“Dutch” Blair** in a January 5, 1973 memo to “Dear Fellow Lions”, he stated that - -

“For the past three or four years, as you know, we have discussed the possibility of some type of an International Pin Collectors club or association. I think we can say at this time that we are getting close to this goal. We are going to try to set at the convention in Miami, a possible meeting or luncheon for those of us who are interested in this venture. At the same time a few of us in contact with each other have decided to produce a pin at the Miami convention. This pin will only be available to members of our club to purchase for their own use for trading purposes. The pin that we have designed thus far is in the shape of an old four mast trading vessel, with the Lions emblem on one of the sails and the name of the ship to be known as TRADER I. Each year we hopefully plan to develop a pin relative to trading.”

We have to assume that this memo was addressed to Lions who were known to Blair to be interested in establishing a pin trading organization. We hasten to add that this memo was furnished to this writer by Blair before his demise and appears to be a retyped copy of a document. As far as we are concerned, it is not considered an “official” record of the LITPC, since all of the official LITPC records from that period were destroyed by fire, as explained earlier. Consequently, we are not blessed with “official” records., and must rely on input such as we have just cited.

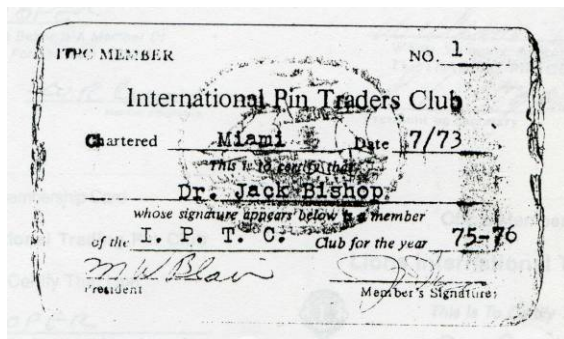
The design of the first pin has all the characteristics of one that was greatly influenced by PID **Jim Shea**. His “signature” scalloped edges on this pin, as well as on the next 6 LITPC pins, supports the belief that he (Shea) was arguably one of the most influential, if not the most influential personality in the beginning of the LITPC. Although he was not the Founding President, in the opinion of PIP **Bill Chandler**, *“Lion Jim was the most instrumental person in securing the necessary approval from the International Board of Directors for our being.”* In reading documents that were available and in discussions with several of the Founding Members before their demise, it became rather clear that Lion Jim Shea was the true leader who was accepted by LCI. The first president, **“Dutch” Blair**, could be identified as the vocal spokesman in front of the early members of the LITPC. As will be documented later, Lion Jim was recognized by the LITPC when he was posthumously elected to the LITPC Hall of Fame in 2006.

## The Early Years

As we have already stated, the LITPC official records were destroyed by fire and we are not able to give you 100% documentation of the early years of the organization. Our official records were stored at the home of PDG **Ed Fogelman**, Washington, who along with his wife, **Dorothy**, were the recognized administrators for the organization. Lion Ed also served a number of terms as Secretary and as Treasurer. Anyway, in a fire of unknown origin, the Fogelman's garage was completely destroyed. Included in his personal losses of 13 snowmobiles and a classic Cadillac, were all of our official records from 1973 to 1987. Except for copies of some early documents that were maintained by individuals, we have no documentation for that period.

## Membership Cards

The membership card shown below is the first such issue by the LITPC and was made out to Lion Dr. **Jack Bishop**, PDG, of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada. Lion Jack later became the fifth president of the LITPC.



Membership cards were provided for in the LITPC constitution with the caveat “when deemed feasible.” It should be noted here that since the cards served little or no purpose and many members did not want them, the LITPC Board of Directors in 1990 determined that under no circumstances may the issuing authority distribute the cards when such issuance would cause the LITPC to incur an additional expense. Obviously, the net effect is that membership cards have not been issued since that time.

## Early Trading Table Problems

Although LCI provided a very limited number of tables on a first-come, first-served basis during our initial year of 1973 in Miami Beach, Florida, the overall attitude from the leadership within Lionism towards pin traders was almost a hostile one. Pin traders were restricted in many ways and were looked down upon as being inferior Lions who didn't really have Lionism at heart. This is not an isolated view and can be verified very easily by chatting with many of the members who were just getting started in the hobby at the time. The accommodation by LCI seemed to go down hill after the 1973 convention and probably hit bottom by the time the pin traders arrived in Honolulu for the 1983 convention. The pin traders were assigned space for trading on the balcony of a hotel that was located a couple of miles away from the convention center where all “the action” was taking place. After a few hours of this isolation, the pin traders gathered their pins and attempted to take them into the convention center. They were stopped at the front doors of the center and told that they would have to trade their pins on the outside. The only space for this was on the ground surrounding the center. You can imagine the disruption and the unsightly appearance of a bunch of grown men and women sitting on the ground attempting to trade pins. This became a significant embarrassment to the LCI leadership when the local Hawaii newspapers picked up on the story and ran pictures in the daily issues of their publications. Needless to say, every effort on the part of all concerned was made to open a dialogue between the LCI leadership and the leadership of the LITPC.

Even though the beginning of a more friendly relationship between the pin traders and the leadership of LCI became more noticeable after the Hawaii fiasco in 1983, it was still a struggle for the pin traders to gain the recognition that was considered essential if the LITPC was to continue as a viable entity within Lionism. The prevailing attitude at the LCI level was that pin traders were in fact contributing to the success of the LCI conventions, but they should and could not be recognized any differently than any other entity of Lionism. In other words, the position of LCI was that pin traders as individuals were just members of their State or Multiple District delegations and should concentrate their interests on these delegations, and refrain from seeking separate delegation status. This is where the major differences between LCI and the LITPC began to escalate, but did not change to the betterment of the LITPC until 1996 in Montreal, Canada, as you will read later.

## The Beginning of Multiple District Pin Clubs

Let's go back to 1981 when a newly elected Director of the LITPC, PCC **Bill Smith** of Virginia, mailed out a letter (shown below) to 17 Virginia members of the LITPC, proposing the establishment of a pin trading club in Virginia. Contrary to the belief by some in the LITPC leadership that this rather unknown and newly elected LITPC Director was advocating competition for the LITPC, it was actually the beginning of a movement that eventually led to a greatly expanded LITPC. The Virginia group rapidly gained recognition within their own State and encouraged all of their members to join the so-called "parent organization", the LITPC. Before long, a similar organization was created in Pennsylvania and the idea quickly spread to other States in the U.S.A. Not only did these organizations avoid competition with the LITPC, as originally feared by some, they were singularly responsible for an unprecedented growth in the LITPC. The membership in the LITPC, prior to the establishment of the multiple district pin trading clubs had never reached more than 350. This changed dramatically when hundreds of the members within these local clubs swelled the LITPC membership to more than 800 members. As we will see later in this publication, 1986 brought about the coveted LCI recognition for the multiple district clubs, and that was the year that led to the eventual widespread recognition of the LITPC as a separate delegation by LCI.

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December 7, 1981

MEMO FOR DISTRICT 24-A PIN TRADERS

SUBJECT: Proposed Pin Traders Club of Virginia

We are now the fourth largest State in membership in the Lions International Trading Pin Club, and the interest in our State is even greater than the actual members of the LITPC. I feel that we are now in an excellent position to form a Pin Traders Club of Virginia for the sole purpose of Pin Trading.

I envision the sponsorship of a Virginia Pin Traders Day or weekend at which time we can invite Pin Traders from all of our surrounding States and Canada. Here on the East Coast, we have the majority of Pin Traders in Lions International. Also, I feel that with a unified approach, we will not have to be dependent upon the 'approval' of a District Governor to let us have a couple of hours at a Fall or Winter Conference to enjoy our favorite hobby. We could be in a position in the near future to provide meaningful suggestions and ideas to the Council of Governors on future State Trading Pins.

We have a unique hobby with extremely dedicated traders and collectors. We all enjoy 'spreading our pins out' and trying to 'make a deal.' I feel that a Club such as I am proposing can only enhance our hobby and can possibly help to eliminate some of the 'hassle' that we receive from time-to-time. Obviously, an organized Club would be in a better position to speak out for adequate space at our State Conventions for pin trading.

I am only addressing this letter to the Traders in 24-A to see if there is any interest before approaching the Traders from the other Districts. I would appreciate receiving your reaction to this proposal by mail or phone (830-1523). If there is sufficient interest, I will set up a meeting at the Holiday Inn in Manassas for further discussion, a little pin trading, and some 'refreshments.' If we have a meeting, it will be in January.

Let me hear from you.

Sincerely,