

Ron Jordan: 50 years in Lions, 50,000 pins
Reprint from the News Tribune Published February 21, 2022



It was 1973. Ron Jordan had been a member of the Jefferson City Host Lions club for a decade. As the incoming president of the local club, he was attending the Lions Clubs International Convention in Miami, Florida.

Other Lions at the event were trading Lions pins, many attempting to get one representing each state. So Jordan joined the chase. He was given several Missouri pins that he used to trade. Nearing the end of the event, he had pins representing every state -- except for a pineapple pin representing Hawaii.

"A hula girl was up on a table dancing. She got off the table and said, 'You're trying to get a Hawaii pin?' And pulled it out of her skirt and gave it to me and said, 'Here, this is my last pin.'"

Since then, he's bought, traded and been given pins for half a century, amassing a collection of some 50,000. In the process, he's made hundreds of friends around the world.

Many state Lions clubs started producing pins in the mid-'50s. They were initially called "friendship pins."

"It started as a way to connect people. You gave a friendship pin and a handshake. Now, it's gotten to be a big, big business," Jordan said. Jordan has been in insurance sales most of his life. He started West Side Insurance. He has since sold the business but still works there. By the 1960s, states started putting Lions emblems and state names on them or the year and location of conventions.

Now, there are Lions meetings just for pin traders. The Lions International Trading Pin Club has about 1,500 members.

Jordan figures his collection of pins probably ranks in the top 10 of all Lions Club pin collectors. Still, he probably needs 2,000-3,000 pins to have a complete collection. Each time he attends a pin-trading convention, he gets some of those missing pins. But he suspects he'll never have a full collection.

Jordan's wife, Carol, also is a member of the Jefferson City Host Lions club, but she leaves the pin collecting to him.

Pins typically cost \$2, but older pins can be rare and valuable.

Jordan doesn't have any favorite pins, but some have special meaning. One is a Missouri Pin Trader club set featuring Santa and five mules subbing for reindeer. It was designed by Jordan and won first place in a competition.

Jordan was offered \$1,400 for a 1959 Missouri mule pin, the state Lions Club's first pin. But he turned the person down because he received it as a gift. A friend, who collected the pins, had died, and his wife gave the pin to Jordan.

Why does he keep collecting and trading pins? In a word, fellowship. "I could sit in a bar and drink. I could spend a lot of money on fishing, buying a bass boat," he said. "I think that we're all looking for some type of hobby to fill in our spare time and this is a hobby that I've enjoyed and met friends. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

Click on the link below to see the video on YouTube

<https://youtu.be/wTravRsOu9Y>