



Nuda Veritas

Published for Members by the Grand Rapids Lions Club
District 11-C-1 --- Vol. 2016-17, No. 14, March 18, 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS

**University Club
Downtown Grand Rapids
Meetings begin at 12:15 p.m.
unless otherwise noted.**

----- We Serve -----

Monday, March 20, Lions
Bowling League, Northfield
Lanes, 4:45 pm

**Tuesday, March 21, American
Civil Liberties Union, Peter
Armstrong**

**Wednesday, March 22, Grand
Rapids Lions Club Night at the
“Drive, - A Social Event - Get to
Know Other Lions!**

Monday, March 27, Lions
Bowling League, Northfield
Lanes, 4:45 pm

Tuesday, March 28, Lions Board
Meeting, ABVI, Noon

**Tuesday, March 28, Eyeglasses
Recycling Project & Dinner,
Jamark Labs, 6:00 pm**

***Happy April Fool's Day!
Who Can You Fool Today?***

Saturday, April 1, Lions District
11-C1 Convention, American
Legion, Rockford, All Day

Tuesday, March 21

American Civil Liberties Union, Peter Armstrong

“We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Prosterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America.” . . . Then follows 7 Articles and 27 Amendments defining our government and the rights of all persons in this country. (The Constitution of the United States of America)

For almost 100 years, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has worked to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States.

“In the years following World War I, America was gripped by the fear that the Communist Revolution that had taken place in Russia would spread to the United States. As is often the case when fear outweighs rational debate, civil liberties paid the price. In November 1919 and January 1920, in what notoriously became known as the ‘Palmer Raids,’ Attorney General Mitchell Palmer began rounding up and deporting so-called radicals. Thousands of people were arrested without warrants and without regard to constitutional protections against unlawful search and seizure. Those arrested were brutally treated and held in horrible conditions.” (ACLU website) In response, a small group of people decided to take a stand, and thus was born the ACLU.

The ACLU has evolved over the years to become the nation’s premier defender of the rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. It has affiliates and local chapters in every state, over a million members, nearly 300 staff attorneys and thousands of volunteer attorneys and offices throughout the nation. The ACLU of today continues to fight government abuse and to vigorously defend individual freedoms at all levels, including speech and religion, a woman’s right to choose, the right to due process, citizens’ rights

to privacy and much more.

The ACLU stands up for these and other civil rights even when the cause is unpopular, and sometimes when nobody else will. While not always in agreement with us on every issue, Americans have come to count on the ACLU for its unyielding dedication to principle. The ACLU has become so ingrained in American society that it is hard to imagine an America without it.

Among the cases the ACLU has been involved with are cases that spoke out against the internment of Japanese citizens during World War II; the 1954 segregation case of *Brown v. Board of Education* (ending the era of “separate but equal”); the 1973 the Supreme Court case in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* (a woman’s right to privacy right to decide whether she will terminate or continue a pregnancy); in 1978 when the ACLU defended a Nazi group that wanted to march through the Chicago suburb; and the immigration struggle and the Flint water crisis which are in the news today.

ACLU’s commitment to principle in difficult situations continues today. Since the tragic terrorist attacks of 9/11, the ACLU has been working to oppose policies that sacrifice our fundamental freedoms in the name of national security. It has also been a champion of segments of the population who have traditionally been denied their rights, with much of our work today focused on equality for people of color, women, gay and transgender people, prisoners, immigrants, and people with disabilities.

The ACLU is non-profit and non-partisan, and receives no governmental funding. You can find out more information by going to www.aclu.org and by coming to this meeting to hear Peter Armstrong.

Mr. Armstrong has been a volunteer with the ACLU for over 30 years in the local chapter and as a Board member and officer of the Michigan ACLU. He is currently co-chair of the ACLU’s West Michigan Lawyers’ Committee. He says, “I practiced law for more years than I can remember at Varnum, where I am now Of Counsel.” He was born and raised in Midland Michigan and graduated from the University of Michigan and Michigan Law School. He has also been on the boards of West Michigan Environmental Action Council, the Grand Rapids Bar Association and the Grand Rapids Art Museum. “And”, he adds, “I am still enjoying downhill skiing.”

Tuesday, February 28
Eyeglasses Recycling Project & Dinner
6:00 – 8:00 pm, Jamark Labs
[No Meeting at Noon at the University Club!](#)

The Eyeglass Recycling Session/Dinner Meeting will be Tuesday, March 28 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm (with dinner about 6:00 pm). Please come and bring a guest or a prospective member who are interested in a hands-on service project. We need to empty the boxes and process more glasses for the next vision mission trip. You can come any time after 3:00 pm.

The Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center is at Jamark Labs at 4282 Brockton SE, Suite D, Grand Rapids. It is approximately 1/2 mile east of Broadmore Avenue, about 1 block north of 44th street at the first traffic light and on the east side of Brockton. It is the northern-most suite in a series of connected businesses. Parking and the entrance are available in the front of the building. If you have questions or want more information, please contact **Lion Scott Brady** at scottbrady2120@gmail.com or 616-283-0260, or one of the other committee members.

Note: *The Recycling Center is open every Tuesday from 3:00 – 8:00 pm.*

Looking Back - Grand Rapids Lions Club

As we approach our 100th anniversary in 2019, as the club looks forward, this series of articles looks back on the activities of the club, this time drawing upon the earliest Nuda Veritas editions that we have in our archives – spring 1944.

The Club met for Tuesday luncheons and had programs, as we still do. We met at the Pantlind Hotel in the Grille Room and were still meeting there until Amway bought and began remodeling it. Programs on Feb. 29 And March 1944 included:

- Dr. Stuart Bergsma, returning to Grand Rapids from 5 years of medical missionary work in Ethiopia & India;
- A “dizzying” program of fun, cooked up by Lions, headed by John VanderHeide, Sr. (son still a member;
- N.J. Harkness, General Manager of Blackmer Pump, an international company based in Grand Rapids;
- Paul Krane, Chief of the victory garden of Office of Civil Defense in Michigan;
- Dr. Wilson Hume, YMCA World Secretary, talking about India and his experience of 21 months in a Japanese internment camp.

The Nuda Veritas was published weekly. It had articles on:

- the weekly programs;
- war bond sales (recognized by Treasury Department for the purchases of 201 Lions);
- funds raised through the collection of pennies in our “Blind Collection Bottles”;
- a bowling report;
- ads by members to help pay for the printing and distribution of the newsletter; and
- jokes and miscellaneous reports on Lion activities.

Grand Rapids Lions Club Night at the “Drive” Wednesday, March 22

You should have registered by last Tuesday, March 14 with Gary Anderson for this social event. It will be the Grand Rapids Lions Club Night at the *Drive* (NBA Pistons Developmental League Grand Rapids Basketball Team). Our name will be up on the scoreboard and everyone will have the opportunity to shoot a free-throw after the game for prizes (if you want to).

The game will be held at the DeltaPlex (2500 Turner Ave NW, Grand Rapids 49544). Parking is \$5 per car, so perhaps some will carpool. The Social Committee recommends planning to arrive there at 6:30 pm so there is time to park and get inside before the 7:00 pm tip-off. Remember a flyer for the event accompanies this newsletter mailing.

A Great Evening at the 12th Annual Blind Dinner Date by the Grand Rapids Lions Club Title Sponsor: RXOptical

The Blind Dinner Date at Thousand Oaks was a wonderful evening, not only as a fundraising event, but also for the stories of the award recipients and the main speaker. Lion Hosts Shelly Irwin and President Shawn Eyestone excelled in their tasks throughout the evening. Following welcoming remarks and the invocation, our Lions Hosts asked the awardees’ colleagues to introduce award recipients and present the awards. The recipients were Dr. Lori Smolenski, Nancy Calvi, Cheryl Nametz and Dr. Kenneth Otto. They seemed humbled by the awards, and accepted them, some through tears. (more about them later)

After a delicious dinner of fillet mignon, herbed chicken breast, mashed potatoes, steamed asparagus and an array of desserts, the featured speaker William A Robinson, III, was introduced. He presented a moving story about how his life was changed when he was shot and lost most of his vision.

The following (*next page*) individuals are the award winners:

- ◆ **The Visionary of the Year** (*medical professionals who have made distinguished contributions during the past 1-3 years and significant volunteer activity that has led to major progress in the early detection and correction of vision problems*) - **Dr. Lora Smolenski**: She has worked as a certified low vision optometrist with ABVI for the past 16 years. She provides evaluations with an empathetic heart, taking the time to listen to clients and make sure they understand. She organizes and improves the low vision clinic. She keeps up with the latest developments, volunteers and is a member of several professional vision organization. She comments that she wanted to do this kind of work since she was very young.

- ◆ **Vision in Actions** (*non-medical individuals who have made significant contributions in their careers or through volunteer efforts to reduce avoidable blindness and/or provide quality of life support to those with vision loss*) - one of 2 award in this category this year:
 - * **Nancy Calvi**: She has worked in the field for 34 years, primarily as a teacher consultant in Kent County for those with a wide variety of impairments. She will retire later this year. The Lions have worked with her for a few years since the Kent County ISD centralized the special education staff. She became interested in teaching students with special needs when she saw such a student on a bus while traveling to community college for a class and decided to pursue a degree in this field at Western Michigan University. She learned Braille, earned a B.A. and Masters degrees. She is dedicated, takes a positive approach and truly cares for her students so that they can succeed. With a colleague, she developed and leads an after-school cooking class who are in middle school and need to learn these skills. She also visits student's homes to enhance living skills by labelling items or providing cooking instruction. She says, "I LOVE working with VI students!"

 - * **Cheryl Nametz**: She is a warm, hard-working teacher, touching the lives of special education children for nearly 40 years. She believes that each child is "who they are." She was exposed to her chosen field at age 9 when visiting her aunt, who was a teacher for the visually impaired, and after that always wanted to teach, especially when it would benefit visually impaired children in developing their skills and learning to become independent. She also has also loved teaching Braille to adults, paraprofessional in the field and students to help promote self-esteem and empower them to reach their full potential. He encourages students to become advocates for themselves. With an office at home now, she produces Braille materials for students, making Braille birthday card or writing letters to doctors on behalf of the students. It is a testament to her passion for visually impaired individuals that former students continue to contact years after graduating.

- ◆ **Dr. Mark Sheldon Lifetime Achievement** (*honors individuals who have made vision improvement and vision loss elimination their passionate life's work both inside and outside their profession. Their dedication and contributions have made a positive impact in reducing avoidable blindness, especially among those from economically challenged parts of our community*): **Dr. Kenneth Otto**: One of the founders of Shoreline Vision, Dr. Otto is a board-certified ophthalmologist. His surgical practice is primarily cataract surgery, refractive surgery and eyelid surgery. With a true servant's heart, he has spent a lifetime caring for those in need of vision care. He gives of his time and talent in many ways: supporting ABVI through his practice which sponsors the Run for Sight along the lakeshore, and participating in and supporting the work of the Shoreline Vision Foundation which provides vision surgical and clinical care to individuals in need. In addition, he has provided vision care in Cambodia and Japan, and aboard the USNS Mercy, a U.S. naval hospital ship, to areas in Asia and the South Pacific where medical care is limited or not available. He earned his degrees from Michigan State University (BA in engineering) and Wayne State University Medical School.

Our **Featured Speaker** was **William A. Robinson, III**. Mr. Robinson is the Director, State of Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. He told a moving true story about how he became blind and his road back from the that devastating experience. In 2001, he was accidentally shot by a fellow hunter, leaving him permanently without sight in his right eye. He also needed several operations to save his left eye. He described the long journey back, about his depression and the stages of grief through which he went to regain his confidence and the skills that he had to develop. He commented the services that ABVI provides in West Michigan simply weren't available where he was.

Before he tragedy, he was an experienced finance professional in an international company. Through it all, he never lost hope or "a sense of vision," perhaps because of "who he was". After rehabilitation, he passionately pursued sharing his wisdom, expertise and life skills with businesses and individual clients. He said people who are blind or visually impaired should never lose hope and have confidence that they can accomplish whatever they set out to do.

Mr. Robinson was a featured speaker at the National Press Club in Washington, DC where he met and was recruited by Dr. Tracy Williams, Chair of the Board of National Accreditation Council for Blind and Low Vision Services. He served time on its Board before being hired for its President/CEO in 2012.

In the fall of 2016, He began his work as the Director of the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons at the State of Michigan. In this role, he is responsible for the state agency that provides vocational rehabilitation, independent living and employment training services to Michigan's blind and visually impaired citizens. He is also responsible of the Bureau's Business Enterprise Program, Training Center located in Kalamazoo, Braille and Talking Book Library in Lansing and Youth Low Vision Program.

He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a BS in Business Administration and major in Accounting. He began his career in 1981 at Price Waterhouse. (He said he had nothing to do with the fiasco at the Oscar's.) Married with four adult children, he is a frequent speaker and volunteers his time and talent to serve on local and national boards.

The funds raised from this event will benefit local children and adults in meeting challenges caused by their vision loss so they can live independently, confidently and with dignity. The following organizations are helped by these funds: Grand Rapids Lions Club Vision Clinic at Cherry Health, Ken-O-Sha Early Vision Program, Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Grand Rapids Lions Fund at the Grand Rapids Community Foundation.

Lions District 11-C1 Convention - Saturday, April 1

Our Lions District Convention, *Endless Horizons*, will be held on **Saturday, April 1** (no April Fool's joke) at the American Legion Post in Rockford. It is close by, so let's have a good representation from our club. Our International Director from District 10, Jenny Ware, will be our guest speaker at the dinner. If you can't stay for dinner, at least come for the educational sessions in the morning and the business meeting in the afternoon. While it is late to register, any Grand Rapids Lion can attend. **Please contact Craig Nobbelin if you want to attend – c.nobbelin@yahoo.com or 616-458-0471.**

Our Club will pay for the registrations. The all-day cost will be \$40 which includes the dinner, but the day-only cost needs to be checked. Here is information from the agenda (next page).

Agenda: Lions District 11-C1 Convention

Location: American Legion, 330 Rockford Drive NE, Rockford, Michigan

- 8:30 am Coffee & Rolls
- 9:00-11:00 Registration

Morning breakout sessions

- **Noon Lunch** (honoring the International Convention being held in Chicago), featuring “Chicago Dogs”, macaroni salad, chips, light dessert

Afternoon activities

- Presentation of Peace Posters & winner from 11-C1
- Business Meeting
- Election of 2017-18 Officers
- Memorial Service for Deceased Lions
- 50/50 Raffle, Musical Entertainment

Dinner

- Guest Speaker, International Director, Jenny Ware, District 10
- “Happy Birthday Cake” celebrating the Lions International Centennial

Other Lions News:

LCI – 100 Years of Service, 200 Countries: Mark Your Calendars! The Lions International Convention will be held on June 30 – July 4 in Chicago – where it all began and right in our own back yard. This is your most convenient chance to attend an LCI convention, let alone the 100th Anniversary of the organization. Registration cost is: regular \$180 from January 14 - March 31, and late registration will be \$200 from April 1 until convention. Special notes: *Michigan Night* is an Interactive Dinner Show at Tommy Guns Garage on July 2; the *Michigan Hotel* is The Hyatt Regency McCormick; *Amtrak* is cheapest form of transportation since parking is pricey.

Lions Club Board Elections: The Lions Board will vote on a list of candidates at its meeting on March 28. Voting will take place by email from March 30 – April 15. Let any club officer know if you are interested in being a candidate – either this year or in the future

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