



Newtown Lions Club

"We Serve"

Newtown,
CT
Est. 1949

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2023

Gordon Willaims, Editor

Bob Schmidt, Designer

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LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

"It was the best of times it was the worst of times," if I may borrow from Mr. Dickens. Soon I will be going to deliver a check to the Newtown Senior Center. This check is the product of all of our efforts, by the Car Raffle, Model Train Show, Duck Race, Book sales to make life a little easier for our fellows and less chaotic. Our efforts in the blood drives, Free Dental Clinic, Stuff a Truck, Homefront, and our Diabetes Initiative, likewise help make life less stressful so, we are very lucky to be in a position to help those in need. We are lucky to be with a group of individuals who are willing to give their time, talent, and efforts so unselfishly to achieve these goals.

We will be issuing about \$41,000 in donations in January.

We have some changes to our meeting situation, after two years of no cost increases. our meals will cost \$32, gratuity included. Also, the Country Club will be closed on Wednesdays in January and February, so we will meet on the second and fourth Thursdays for those months. Afterwards we can decide to change back if we prefer. I still believe this

is a bargain, as we have all experienced the rise in the cost of food. Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 11th, where we will have an induction Ceremony for our newest members. Please plan to attend and meet them, as we plan for our new year's activities. This could be the best of times!

Proud to be a Lion, [Andrew Iorio](#)

STUFF-A-TRUCK – A BIG SUCCESS!



On Saturday, September 30th the Newtown Lions held our very first Stuff-a-Truck food drive at the Big Y. The committee wanted the food drive to be easy and fun and it was. Instead of asking shoppers to go up and down the aisles of the Big Y to hunt for items that area pantries need, we presented shoppers with an easy alternative: to buy pre-bagged groceries. We offered 3 options: a "Pasta Dinner" grocery bag for \$5, a "Family Lunch" grocery bag for \$10 and a "Family Dinner" grocery bag for \$20.

The results: A "shopper participation rate" was at least 1 in 3, and possibly as high as 1 in 2. We stuffed a wicked cool military tactical vehicle with approximately 300 pre-bagged grocery bags valued at \$3,500. Shoppers also contributed \$1,350 in cash donations.

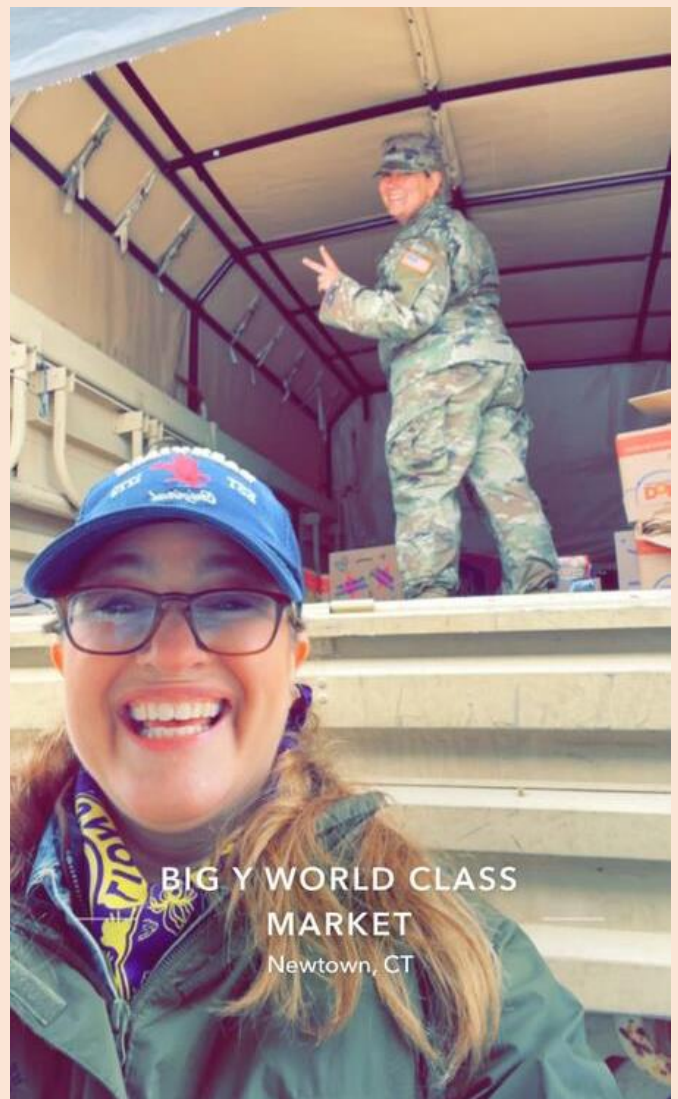
We're grateful to the Big Y and the US Army 411th Civil Affairs Battalion for making the event such a great success.



At the September 27th meeting. Arnie explained the Stuff-a-Truck Food Drive



Big Y Shoppers couldn't miss the truck and the banner. It made it easier to explain the food drive when people entered the store.



Jennifer Collins smiles as the National Guard sergeant stacks the boxes on the truck.



OMG! Look at all that food!

Four New Lions in the Pride



1. Dr. Elizabeth Helzner

Dr. Elizabeth (Beth) Helzner, hailing from Battle Creek, Michigan, has a brother living in Florida and a sister in Fairfield, Connecticut and two sons.

Jacob her twenty-one year old is a junior in college. Ben is eighteen and a senior in high school. Although a mid-westerner by birth, she has lived in NYC for twenty-three years and Connecticut for three.

Her PhD. is in epidemiology and her work involves medical research, design, and application. Of special interest to her is disease prevention. The fact that one of the Lions major interests is diabetes is one of the reasons Elizabeth was attracted to the Lions.

She also was drawn to the club for its many civic projects and says she would like to be involved in some of them. We welcome Elizabeth and feel we have many projects she would enjoy.



2. Matt Deitrich

Matt Deitrich is Elizabeth's partner, and we welcome him as well. He is proud of his two sons: Zachery, age twenty-five and Joshua, age twenty-four. Both sons live in Florida.

Growing up Matt was drawn to cameras and images. He pursued an education in several places including the Art Institute of Florida. Matt's work today is mostly involved with television. Often, he works as an editor but sometimes he does research.

Since the pandemic he has had the luxury of working from home. His interests are much the same as Elizabeth's. However, outdoor activities have been temporarily curtailed because of ankle surgery, but he hopes to get back on the trails soon. With Matt's creative abilities, we envision many ways he could fit in or direct Lions' activities.



3. Dr. Maysoon Salem

Dr. Maysoon Salem, our third new member is also a doctor. Her field is optometry. She is in process of setting up a new office in Southbury opening in January. On the side, she also helps people with skin care.

Maysoon is very proud of her Palestinian heritage and is close to her four siblings and parents. Family oriented, she spends a lot of time with them. She also shares her love with her husband, Waleed Twam, and their two adorable cats.

Loving to travel, they take trips and explore as often as they can. One of their traditions is on her birthday to plan a special adventure. As her birthday is in January, she can't wait because this year the trip is to Italy. One of their other interests is finding unique coffee shops. They will go a long way to find a delicious cup. Maysoon says she is eager to get involved in Lions' activities.



4. Chris Gardner

Chris Gardner grew up in Newtown. A graduate of St. Lawrence University where he met his wife Katherine, eventually returning to the town he loved.

Now the proud father of Andrew, age 22 an accountant and auditor in Boston, and Caroline, 19, a freshman in college, he enjoys family life and outdoor activities with them.

He is also a big sports fan and likes to attend as many games as possible, especially of the hockey team, the New Jersey Devils, and the Boston Red Sox.

Chris says he really likes his job as Director of Communications for the Department of Psychiatry at Yale School of Medicine. In his job he does a lot of writing and media research. If you do recognize Chris, it is probably because he has been such an important volunteer in the town. Just recently he was reelected to serve in the town council representing district one, the very district he grew up in. He also is active in the borough and serves as Senior Warden. If that weren't enough, he also superintends the caring of our Main Street flag. The Lions' motto is "We Serve" and Chris has always done just that!

THE LEO CLUB HAS NEW ADVISORS

We all remember Jill Gorsky and the great job she did expanding the Leo Club and helping us at the duck race and other activities. The new Leo advisor, Kristina van Heiningen, recently informed us that Jacqueline Kaplan has volunteered to be the co-advisor with Kristina.

We welcome Jacqui to the Leos Club and look forward to working with Kristina and Jacqui. If you need to reach out to them, their email addresses are listed below.

Kristina: vanheiningenk@newtown.k12.ct

Jacquelyn: ottomeyerj@newtown.k12.ct.us

Doings of the Pride

Gary Tannenbaum has recently been honored by the organization *Reach Out and Read of Greater New York*. Reach Out and Read gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together. Building on the unique relationship between families and medical providers, the group hopes to develop children's early literary skills. Gary was honored for his commitment to early childhood literacy. A dedicated board member for almost twenty years, he had served as treasurer, on the Board of Directors and in other capacities. He and his wife, Helen Mills, have also sponsored an award for children's literacy. It is estimated through his work he has impacted hundreds of thousands of children across New York City and the Hudson Valley. We are so proud of you, Gary!

Jerry Cole was all smiles a few weeks ago because of the success of the Shrimp Boil held at the Congregational Church which raised funds for teens from various churches to head out for a week to help people with significant house problems. You might have seen the colorful signs around town.

Dave Landau also was all smiles about the results of the car raffle which was excellent despite some cancellations due to bad weather. This editor was disappointed, however, to learn that only seventeen percent of the club had

taken the car out. As this is our major fund raiser that seems a bad statistic. On another matter, Dave is now recovering from his sudden surgery. He had decided to check in with a doctor because of sudden shortness of breath and chest pain. The doctor was concerned and ordered him to report to the hospital. The very next day he underwent by-pass surgery. He is now recovering well and back to doing most normal activities.

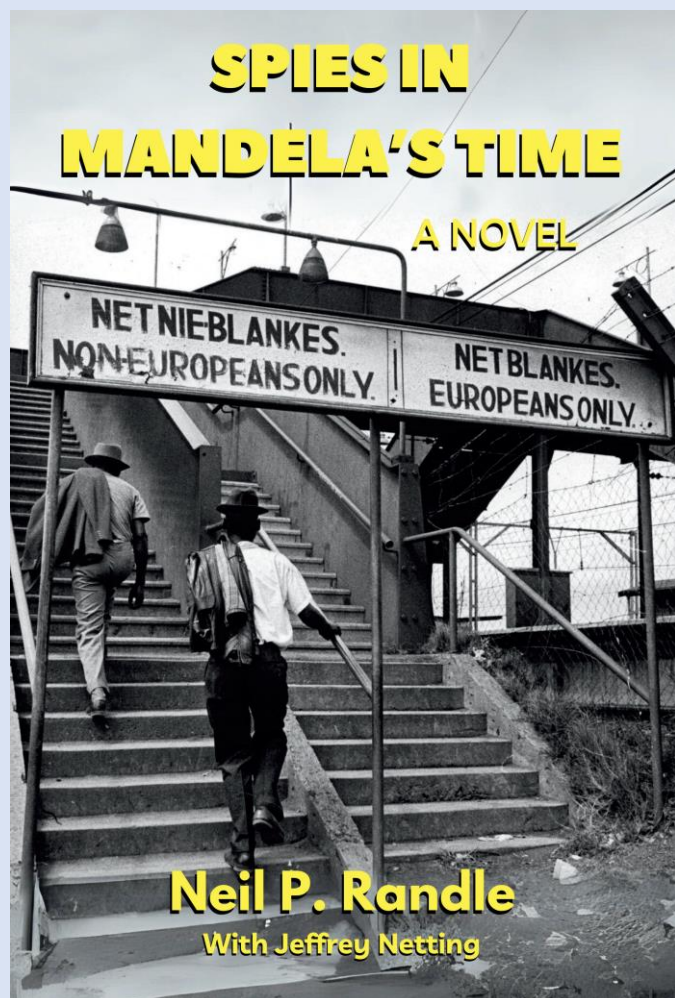
Seems like a number of other Lions are battling health issues. **Walt Schweikert** was out raking leaves one day and slipped breaking his ankle in three places but is now mobile in a boot. **Dick Kovacs** recently fought cancer on his vocal cords. Hopefully, this will be the last of a number of cancers he has met and conquered. In addition, **Kevin Corey** is dealing with prostrate problems and our **President Andrew Iorio** is passing up Florida this year in order to have cataract surgery.

Gary Fillion appeared at a recent Lions dinner with a bandage on his left hand. Seems he shot himself.! It all came about by accident as he was reassembling a small rifle. The bullet was so strong that it went through his hand, through a cabinet and into the wall. He was so lucky that the bullet didn't hit any bones or blood vessels. Gary and Peggy also recently enjoyed a reunion with four Michigan college friends of his. He hadn't seen some of them for fifty-two years. They got together at Port Jefferson on Long Island.

People are still talking about our very successful model train show chaired by Pete McNulty. It brought in many people and as a number of them left they said they hoped the Lions would have another one next year. Pete is considering that option.

Would you like a suggestion for a good Christmas gift? Think about purchasing Neil Randle's newly published second novel, **Spies in Mandela's Time** which features the engaging trio from his first novel. It is just now available on Amazon. Neil is proud that 185 copies have been sold of his first book and that all of its profits, over \$900, was sent to a group that does cancer research in Britain.

NEIL RANDLE'S NEW BOOK:
Spies in Mandela's Time
Available on Amazon.com



April 1994: South Africa is on the brink of its first multi-party election, and the outcome is anything but certain.

The Spies Are Back!

Following their triumph in ensuring the fall of the Berlin Wall in ***Spies in Their Spare Time***, Steph, Chris, and Tom return to action in this exciting sequel, taking place in the beautiful but dangerous country of South Africa.

Beginning with F.W. de Klerk's historic decision to free political prisoner Nelson Mandela, our 2nd alternate history follows agents from MI6's "Bird's Nest" team as they try to ensure South Africa remains on the path to democracy. Over the next four years, they'll battle twists, turns, and dangers from all sides, as violence mounts.

DINNER MEETING 9-27-23

At our second meeting in September Gary Peters introduced Sammy Niaza who works for Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS).



Sammy spoke about the challenges and issues facing refugees trying to find safe places to live for their families.



Rick Zappone, District Governor, Gary Peters, Kristen Peterson, President of the Bethel Lions, Sammy Niaza, and President Andrew.

Rick Zappone, spoke about what is going on in our district. He praised all the things that our club is doing and continues to do.



ORCHARD HILL CLEAN UP

On October 14th, Ryan of the Leo Club, Gordon Williams, Anita of the Leo Club, Bruce Walczak, Frank Gardner, Nate Hoag, Bruce Hoag, Skip Sims, and Kevin Corey worked hard to make Orchard Hill a beautiful place for Newtown residents to hike and commune with nature. Ken Hostetler was also there that day.

Putting up the winter flag on Main Street & Church Hill Road.

Every spring and every fall a crew of Lions change the flag at the corner of Main and Church Hill Road. Our club purchased a larger flag for the summer, but it must be taken down in the fall and replaced with a smaller flag. It is a lot of work, but the fire department assists with their ladder as shown in the photo on the right.



And there goes the winter flag, up the flagpole.

DRAWING FOR THE MUSTANG

October 22nd

It was a little drizzly that day, but nothing stops our car committee from holding the drawing.



Preparing for the drawing.



Now, give it a real good spin.



Dave, "No, I swear this is not a joke. You really won the Newtown Lions Club Mustang!"

And a few days later



The winner comes to pick up the Mustang.

Continued on page 9



Maybe the winner doesn't need the car and will give it to one of us? After all, we're nice guys.



"Wow! It's all mine now!"



**Veteran's Day Free Dental Clinic
with Lion, Dr. V. and her staff.
Thank you, Dr. V.!**

Speaker at the October 25th Meeting



The guest speaker at the October 25th dinner meeting was Julie Schmitter. Julie is the Director of Development for Newtown Youth and Family Services. Ms. Schmitter talked about the programs available to Newtown residents and families at Newtown Youth and Family Services located on Berkshire Road.

OUR MIRACLE LION

Do you believe in miracles? Do some of the miracles in the Good Book seem impossible? If so, think again for in our midst we have a Miracle Lion. The Lion who has earned this designation is **Dick Kovacs**. In March 2007 he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Nuclear seeds were installed. Three years later his annual tests confirmed that he was cured. In February 2008 while vacationing in St. Maarten, he suffered a heart attack. Three stents were installed. A year later the tear in his heart was seen to have healed. In May 2011 he was found to have A-Fib. In November of the same year his gall bladder was removed. The next month, cancer of the right lung was diagnosed. Lobectomy of the top lobe of the right lung was performed. After three annual tests he was found cancer free.

In October 2013 he was diagnosed as having breast cancer. Mastectomy of the left breast was performed. Four years later, also in October, bladder cancer was removed. In June 2023 a biopsy indicated that he had superficial cancer on his vocal cords. Just a little over a month ago he had laser surgery and 85 to 90 percent of the cancer was removed. Upcoming radiation will complete the treatment.

Our Miracle Lion attributes his survival was due to the many great advancements in the medical technology. He also adds, "It would really be a miracle, if we cured our hate for one another worldwide!!"

MOVIE REVIEW of "ASTEROID CITY"

by Oscar De Los Santos and Kelly Goodridge

Wes Anderson's "Asteroid City" (2023) stars Tom Hanks and Scarlett Johansson, among others. It's another quirky exploration of family, history, and trending American obsessions from the director of "Moonrise Kingdom, the Grand Budapest Hotel", "The Life Aquatic with Steve Zisaou" and others.

"Asteroid City" is set in the mid-1950s, the Modern Age of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs). It centers on a desert outpost on the California/Nevada border that mimics the American West at a time in America when atomic bombs were tested, and a massive UFO wave swept across the nation. Yes, despite eyewitnesses who were thoroughly convinced they'd viewed something otherworldly, the military and Project Blue Book took reports and investigated, only to control the narrative that everything could be explained as "swamp gas" the planet Venus, and mass hysteria. Anderson showcases this government suppression of truth in a small fictional town, Asteroid City. After the entire cast of characters witness a UFO descend from the night sky and a tall black alien descend from the craft, the U.S. Military arrives, quarantines everyone in town, and cuts off communication with the rest of the world.

At a glance, "Asteroid City" seems pure nostalgia. It mimics the look of cinema's pre-Panavision obsession with expansive Cinemascope and the overly saturated colors often depicted in films of the 1950s and early 60s. Anderson's cinematography offers camera pans and tracking shots that immerse viewers in comic book colorful landscapes, quirky costumes, storybook signage, 1950s-era cars, diners, trains, a large meteoric crater, and an observatory. Bryan Cranston narrates the film in Rod Sterling style as the "Host."

But there's more going on behind the captivating visuals. As is so often the case in Wes Anderson films, there are well behaved but troubled kids trying to understand the world and their parents—those present and dead. Conversely, there are parents who are struggling with their own pasts and what it means to raise children.

Something else sets "Asteroid City" apart from other Wes Anderson flicks in both place and time, the film is set near the experiments that led to the recently developed atomic bomb. Once it was birthed by Oppenheimer and his crew, the bomb became an unforgettable specter in everyone's life. It birthed fear and anxiety in many. In others, it triggered the suspicion that if life existed off world, it might take interest in a species so eager to annihilate itself. (Think of the alien's visit and warning in "The Day the Earth Stood Still"). For all its quirks and distracting visuals, "Asteroid City" resonates with the same message. It reminds us that the many human problems being tackled then are true now.

Bottom line: "Asteroid City" entertains. How much you cull from it is up to you.



JUST FOR LAUGHS



Three Stories from the Editor who Claims to be One Fourth Irish

Paddy's in jail.

The guard looks in his cell and see him hanging by his feet. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Hanging myself," Paddy replies.

"It should be around your neck," says the guard.

"I know", says Paddy, ' but then I can't breathe"

"While reading an article last night about fathers and the sons, memories came flooding back to me about the time I took me son out for his first pint. Off we went to our local pub only two blocks from the cottage.

"I got him a Guinness. He didn't like it, so I drank it. Then I got him a Kilkenny's. He didn't like that either, so I drank it. Finally, I thought he might like whiskey better than beer, so we tried a Jameson's—but nope. "In desperation, I had him try that rare Redbreast, Ireland's finest whisky. He wouldn't even smell it. What could I do but drink it.

By the time I realized he just didn't like to drink, I was so smashed I could hardly push his stroller back home!"

An attractive blonde from Cork, Ireland arrived at the casino. She seemed a little intoxicated and bet twenty-thousand Euros on a single roll of the dice. She said, "I hope you don't mind, but I feel much luckier when I'm completely naked." With that, she stripped from the neck down, rolled the dice and yelled, "Come on, baby, Mama needs new clothes!

As the dice came to a stop, she jumped up and down and squealed "Yes! Yes! I won, I won! She then hugged each of the dealers and then picked up her winnings and her clothes and quickly departed.

The dealers started at each other dumbfounded. Finally, one asked the others, "What did she roll?" The other answered, "I don't know. I thought you were watching the dice." The Moral of this story: Not all Irish are drunks. Not all blondes are dumb. But all men . . . are men.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

So now cocaine is legal in Oregon, but straws aren't. That must be frustrating.

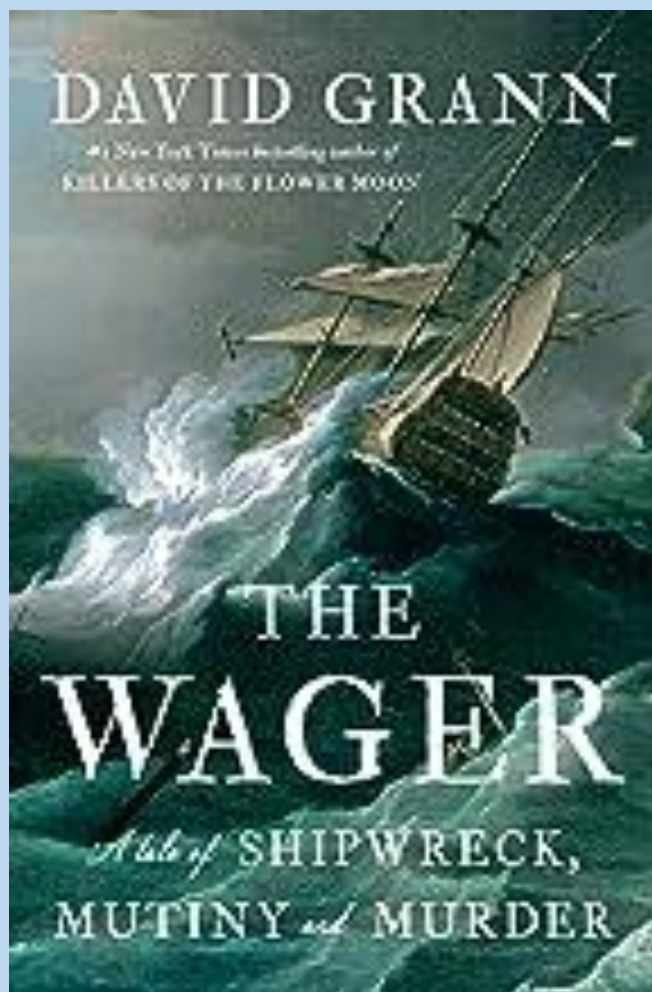
The pessimist complains about the wind. The optimist expects it to change. The realist adjusts his sails.

Apparently, exercise helps you with decision-making. It's true. I went for a run this morning and decided I'm never going to run again.

It's weird being the same age as old people.

How did doctors conclude that exercise prolongs life, when the rabbit is always jumping, but only lives for around two years, and the turtle that doesn't exercise at all often lives over 200 years.

BOOK REVIEW by Ray Keegan



While many people like to binge on their favorite television programs, my version of bingeing is with those authors who captivate me with their writing style and subject matter. David Grann is one of those authors. Some of you may be familiar with Grann's book "Killers of the Flower Moon", the movie version of which is now in theaters.

The book is a nonfiction tale of the shipwreck of His Majesty's Ship, the Wager. In 1740 the Wager set sail from England in a secret mission in the quest of a Spanish galleon laden with treasure off the coast of Chile. The book begins with Grann introducing us to the central characters; Captain David Cheap and the ship's gunner, John Bulkeley. The Wager was not the most seaworthy of vessels and by the time that it rounded the hazardous Cape Horn, disaster struck, and the Wager shipwrecked on a remote

island off Patagonia, the southernmost area of South America. And the harrowing story of the struggle for survival on an unforgiving desolate isle begins. As the months drag on, Cheap and Bulkeley separately vie for the loyalty of the 145 survivors. Anarchy ensues, and the surviving members of the crew, after enduring sickness and murder, split into two camps. In 1742, thirty survivors, emaciated and barely alive, in a battered vessel skippered by Bulkeley, washed up on the shores of Brazil, three thousand miles away. Six months later three castaways came ashore in on the west coast in Chile. The group in Chile claimed that the thirty survivors of the Wager who landed in Brazil were not exactly honorable people, but mutineers. After both groups arrived back in England, a court martial commenced. The story of human behavior at its worst was recounted by both parties at this time with the guilty ones facing hanging.

David Grann traveled the route that led to the demise of the Wager and also visited the island (Wager Island) where the shipwreck took place. His extensive research for this book and the way that it is masterfully knit together results in a delightful page turner that I thoroughly enjoyed.



Kevin Corey hands Linda Bates a check for the Newtown Fund. A nice Holiday present.

THE FABULOUS MODEL TRAIN SHOW on October 28th



Newtown Lions Club Presents
Model Train Show
An Event to Benefit
Childhood Cancer Research



Operating Layouts and Vendors
Saturday October 28th 10AM - 4PM
Newtown Community Center



Leo member, Ryan Kong and Jane McNulty



Leos Dielza Limani, Ryan Kong and Grace Fischer.



Paul Arneth shows his "Pizza Box" Railroad layout. He explains that you can have a model railroad set up without taking up a lot of space with a "N" scale train. Paul's creation was raffled off at the show and a young railroad enthusiast named Easton" won it.



Paul congratulating Easton.



Amanda, Easton's mother sent Paul a photo of the railroad set up in their home.



Bill Brett explaining the display to the public.



So many interesting train set ups for all ages to enjoy.



Lion, "Lion" returning tables to the Congregational Church that were used at the model railroad show. Last seen "Trick or Treating" at Paul Kruger's house. Who is that Lion????

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This was the first Model Train Show. From the feedback that the committee members received it looks like they will be doing this again next year. The Model Train Show raised money for Childhood Cancer Research.

A police officer came to my house and asked me where I was between 5 and 6.

He seemed irritated when I answered, "Kindergarten."

AWARD WINNING LIONS ARE RECOGNIZED



Paula Hopewell was honored with the Jim Manville Lion of the Year Award as well as the Ambassador of Sight Award.



Kevin Corey received the coveted Melvin Jones Fellow Award.



Bruce Walczak received the Loyal Shepherd Award (Fidelco)



President Andrew presents the Melvin Jones Fellow Award to **Mary Jo Brett** at the Holiday Party.



At the Holiday party Kevin presented Andrew with a collection of new events that the Lions developed including the Train Show, the Stuff a Truck food drive, David Merrill project and the inclusive playground.



A close up of Lions recent achievements!

**Don't miss this FUN CONCERT
on December 30th**

Save the Date!
Fundraiser Concert and Dinner
Benefiting
Families United in Newtown

"We Have a Voice"

With Special Guest
America's Got Talent Semi-Finalist
Amanda Mammana



Saturday,

December 30th, 2023

Newtown Congregational Church

14 West Street, Newtown, CT

\$45 per person-<https://bit.ly/FUNConcert23>

www.familiesunitedinnewtown.org

LIVE MUSIC - DINNER

FUN (Families United in Newtown) is a charity that we have supported since they formed. This fundraiser features **Amanda Mammana**, who was a semi-finalist on the show America's Got Talent! Dinner and the show: \$45. Get your tickets ASAP before they sell out at

www.familiesunitedinnewtown.org

**Behind every
husband who thinks
he wears the pants...
Is a wife who told
him which pants
to wear.**

**You'd be surprised how
quickly employees at
Lowe's assist you after
ignoring you for 20
minutes when you try and
start a chainsaw.**

**Happy Holidays to all Lions and
their families!**

from Gordon and Bob