



## **Chapter 13**

### **Pin Swaps and Conventions**

It is doubtful that one would argue too much that pin swaps and conventions are the common denominator or the glue that holds the pin trading community together within Lionism. For most pin traders, these events are like family reunions that are cherished and anticipated with great eagerness. Folks from all parts, who might otherwise not have a reason to visit, find these gatherings almost intoxicating in the sense that they get a “high” from just being in the company of their fellow pin traders. The letdown that invariably happens when these events are over is also evident in the conversations that conclude the affairs. Most pin traders who enjoy these happenings express their sorrow for the average non-pin trading Lion who doesn’t have the same opportunities to expand upon their friendship base the way pin traders do. In this chapter, we share a few tales that we hope will illustrate what we’re talking about. Also included are some snapshots to support our claim that the pin trading community is truly made up of some wonderful folks.

# Pin Swaps & Conventions

## Blandon, Pennsylvania

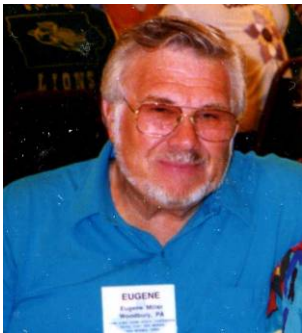


Throughout this publication you're going to see references to pin swaps. We thought it might be interesting to give you a little bit of history about how these things got started. To the best of our knowledge, the very first organized pin swap occurred in a picnic grove in the small community of Blandon, Pennsylvania, in 1980. The picnic grove is owned and operated by the Blandon Lions Club of District 14-P and is located on the outskirts of Reading, Pennsylvania. A small number of Lions from Pennsylvania and Virginia, with a couple from New York and one from Canada, agreed to get together for an April Sunday of fun and fellowship. It just so happens that those involved shared a mutual interest in pin trading and also agreed to bring some of their pins with them in the hopes of possibly making a few trades. These folks had formed a mutual pin trading friendship at previous LCI conventions. To get the weekend started, some of the traders from Virginia headed to Lion **Andy Zlomsovitch's** pin traders "museum" in Leighton, Pennsylvania, several miles to the north of Blandon. They had heard so much about the unbelievable collection of Andy's, who incidentally was a Founding Member of the LITPC. Although they were not disappointed in the quality and quantity of pins owned by Andy, the so-called "museum" was nothing more than a rundown building in desperate need of repairs. The ladies who were with their pin trading husbands tell another story about the toilet facilities that had best be left out of this coverage. Anyway, not to be discouraged by anything, the group found lodging along the way and headed back to Blandon the next morning to be greeted by members of the Blandon Lions Club. As is typical on many early spring mornings in Eastern Pennsylvania, there was a distinct chill in the air, particularly for those Virginians who were wearing shorts. One in particular comes to mind was Lion **Don Moore**, who presently lives in Alabama. Lion Don's legs actually looked the color of a clear, blue sky. However, the hot coffee and Pennsylvania Dutch hospitality of the Blandon folks quickly warmed the spirits and hearts of all. As soon as the sun helped to warm things up, the attendees began to spread out their pads of pins on the picnic tables under the pavilion. There's no estimate of the number of pins that were actually traded, but suffice to say, the pin swap was "born" on that day. Today, it's highly unlikely that you'll find very many pin swaps outside in a picnic grove, but you'll never again find one that was any more fun than the one in Blandon, Pennsylvania. To the best of our knowledge, that group included the following, in alphabetical order:

Curt Barnhill, Virginia (now living in North Carolina)  
Clarence and Catherine Becker, Pennsylvania  
Gus Brunner, Pennsylvania  
Mike and Joan Calcaterra, New York  
Jerry and Jean DeTurk, Pennsylvania  
Harry and Jennie Fulwiler, Virginia  
Reginald "Reg" Gemmill, Pennsylvania  
Dave and Ann Harris, Virginia  
Harry "Pete" Hoverter, Pennsylvania

Willi Mirth, Ontario, Canada  
Don Moore, Virginia (now living in Alabama)  
Amos Shatzer, Pennsylvania  
Larry Shaul, Pennsylvania  
Bill and Terry Smith, Virginia  
Jay Vaught, Pennsylvania  
Ray Welsh, Virginia  
Andy Zlomsovitch, Pennsylvania

## Nashville, Tennessee



**Gene Miller, Pennsylvania**

We realize that every pin swap has its "moments" and, to that end, we certainly invite any of you to provide us with the details of something that you feel would be enjoyed by most of our readers. One particular moment occurred during the early years of the Tennessee Pin Swap that was held in Nashville annually for a number of years. Seems as though a lively group had gathered a couple of nights prior to the actual start of the swap, and forsaking the trading of pins, decided to enjoy a few hands of cards. The card game was set up in the atrium of the hotel adjacent to a small indoor swimming pool. As in any gathering of pin traders, there was much laughing and talking going on by the participants as well as those who were not actually playing cards. One of the latter, Lion **Gene Miller** of Pennsylvania, was making his way around the back of the chairs of the card players. Although he was aware that the space between the chairs and the swimming pool was limited, he didn't allow that it was this close. All of a sudden we heard this yelp and sure enough, Lion Gene stepped off the ledge and plunged into the swimming pool. He managed to sink all the way to the bottom but bounced back immediately and grabbed the edge. You see, Lion Gene couldn't swim. He struggled out of that pool with water dripping from his soaked body and clothes, and without a word, headed for his room for a change of dry clothing. Obviously the howls and hoots from the card players were heard all over that hotel. From that day on, this little "side show" has been referred to as "*The Plunge*".

# Pin Swaps & Conventions

## The Snowstorm in York

In the early Spring of 2007, the Pennsylvania Pin Traders sponsored their annual swap at the Holidome in York. This site has become one of the primary stops on the pin swap circuit in the U.S.A. Normally, the weather is rather nice in late March in that part of the Keystone state. Although there had been some talk by the local weather guys on television that we might experience some light snow showers on that particular Friday, there had never been any mention of a major snow event. Sure enough, the white stuff started falling early that morning and no one really paid much attention to it. Well, after a couple of hours of nonstop snowing, we all begin to make references to the snow storm that was going on outside and rather jokingly talking about driving conditions. No one ever dreamed that it would continue snowing until it reached to over one foot of the white stuff. The next morning after the final goodbyes were said, the “fun” really began. We will refrain from mentioning names of those who really had problems getting their vehicles out of their parking places, but we will mention that Lion **Tim McCaulley** of Pennsylvania became the “hero” to several of the southern boys. Without his soliciting help from a local wrecker crew, some of those slow talking folks would have had to spend another night in York. Lion Tim could be seen attaching chains to the rear ends of vehicles and yelling at the wrecker guys to “pull ‘er out”. It doesn’t take too much to give some traders the idea that a special pin would be appropriate for something like this. To the delight of all who were in attendance, the Pin Traders Club of Pennsylvania issued a special pin exclusively for the enjoyment of the attendees. Because of the limited issue, it will obviously become a collector’s item and we thought you might like to see what it looks like.



“The Snowplow”

## The “Civil War” at the Swaps

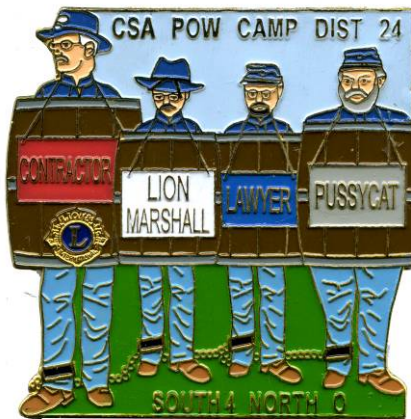
We have documented the “Civil War” elsewhere in this publication so we won’t go into any great detail about the hundreds and hundreds of pins that were issued during that series. However, the folklore that developed during that period has its place in our history. “The Judge” of the *Court of Blind Justice* was none other than Lion **Bill Hadden**, Virginia, and the ‘convicts’ that he found guilty were some of the avid traders from the north. We show an actual photo that was taken of Lion Bill during a pin swap in Virginia, and then we show a pin that was made from that photo. The next pin we show depicts the “convicts” that were found guilty by “The Judge”. The “convicts” were Lions **Larry Shaull** (PA), **Tim McCaulley** (PA), **Bob Libin** (NY), and **Jerry Craiglow** (OH). The last pin shows the response from the “convicts” and this pin was issued in conjunction with the following swap in York, Pennsylvania. These are just examples of the fun and fellowship that go along with any pins swap, regardless of its location or theme.



The Judge



Actual Pin



Larry Tim Bob Jerry



The “Convicts” Response to “Da Judge”

As many of you know, Lion Bill Hadden lost his sight in his early adult life but never let the disability get him down. He represented the Leader Dog School for the Blind for years and has been an ambassador of goodwill for all of Lionism. As a matter of fact, he is one of the few Lions who was never an international officer to be honored with the LCI *Ambassador of Goodwill Award*. His love for pin trading and the people within this community is legendary.

# Pin Swaps & Conventions

## Hospitality Rooms

We can't say for sure, but it is alleged that the idea of having a Hospitality Room as a part of a pin swap, started in Virginia. This would be logical since the Pin Traders Club of Virginia has the longest, continuous pin swap in the pin trading community. However, let us hasten to add that Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and the Western States Swap certainly take no back seat to anyone when it comes to having an outstanding Hospitality Room. Actually, most any pin swap you attend, you will experience a good feeling from the warm and friendly greetings of the hosts in one of these rooms. Each one seems to have a distinctive character and it would be completely unfair to attempt to rate or compare them. All we know for sure is that the idea of a Hospitality Room seems to be the glue that holds the assembled traders together for all the fun that one can experience from attending a pin swap. Here are a few snapshots of the hosts.



**In North Carolina.** Phil Castrovinci & Bill Russell  
Enjoy a Southern Style Hospitality Room.



Jerri & Don Peterson, Arizona  
In the LITPC Hospitality Room .



Alice and Don Montlack, Florida



**California Style.** Left to right, Jay Puls, Al Stack, Kaye Stack, and  
Chuck Weldon.



**In Virginia.** Left to right, Ann Harris, Harry Fulwiler, Terry Smith, Jennie  
Fulwiler, Susan Evans, Phil Sharpe, Bill Smith, and Penny Sharpe.



Earl Dixon, Minnesota



Dick and Barbara Lindelof  
Massachusetts



Trudy and Bob Huckelberry, Washington

# Having Fun at the Swaps & Conventions



**It's a Family "Sport" that the Kids Can Enjoy.**



**Bill Prucha (IL) and His Buddy, Angelo Strazzante (FL).**



**Harry Fulwiler (VA) and Bill Sour (CO) Enjoy a "Cool" One waiting for the Parade to Start in Detroit, 2004 .**



**Japanese Lions Enjoy Looking at their Pins in Boston.**



**Then LITPC 1st VP Larry Shaull (PA) and IPP Chuck Weldon (CA) were Discussing LITPC matters before the camera guy arrived. This was During the Western States Swap in 2006.**

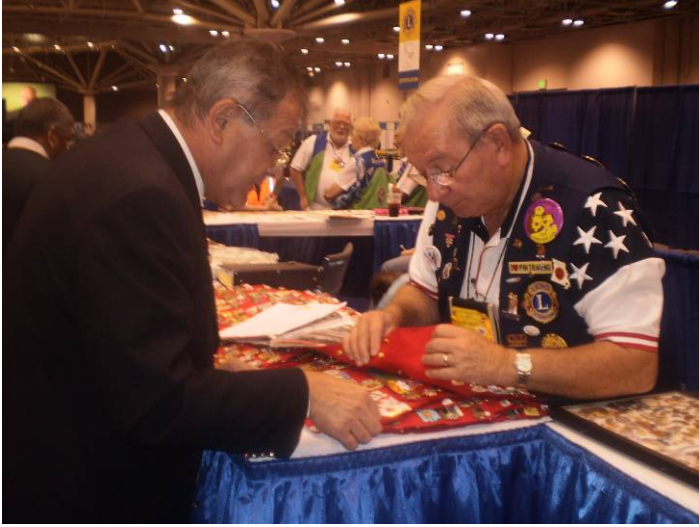


**A Bunch of Proud Old U.S. Marines Singing Happy Birthday to the Marine Corps during the 2007 Virginia Swap.**

Pictures on this page were taken from the CD presentation by Lion Harry Fulwiler during the 2007 LCI Convention in Chicago

# Pin Swaps & Conventions

Thanks to the camera work by LITPC Editor, Lion Ken Jones, Indiana, we have a few shots to show you of the action that took place in the pin trading area during the 2009 LCI Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota.



# Pin Swaps & Conventions

## The Van



This story illustrates some of the fun and fellowship that occurs almost every time the pin traders gather for a pin swap. This concerns a couple who just happens to be from Virginia by the names of Lion **Phil** and **Penny Sharpe**. Beginning back around 2004, the Sharpe's started volunteering to haul some of those heavy cases and boxes of pins that many pin traders feel that they just have to have at their disposal during a pin swap. The offer to haul the pins were aimed primarily at some of their friends who prefer to fly to the various swaps. In a relatively short period of time, Lion Phil has become legendary for his ability to pack and "squeeze" every last inch of space available in the back of their van. We might add here that the Sharpe's probably attend more swaps in all parts of the U.S.A. than anyone. Obviously, this only adds to their ability to give some assistance to their friends. In

recognition of this unique "service", a pin was issued showing in some detail, the appearance of the Sharpe's full van. That pin is the one to the right. Well, their extensive traveling resulted in the miles accumulating at a rapid pace, and the results were the Sharpe's traded their black van in for a red one. Within a few weeks after purchasing the new van, the Sharpe's loaded it up and headed for the Annual 2008 Pennsylvania Pin Swap in York. As fate would have it, when they prepared to depart the swap with another load of pins destined for the next swap in Illinois, this brand new vehicle refused to budge. As frustrating as it had to be, a call went out for a wrecker service to haul the van to a local car dealership. Lions **John Leggett** of England and **Jay Puls** of California noticed this dilemma and immediately came up with an idea for a surprise pin "honoring" the event. As you can see, it doesn't take too much to cause most dedicated traders to come up with an idea for a pin. We're happy to report that the red van is now working fine and it's jammed full of pins most of the time, as shown below.



## Noah's Ark - St Louis, Missouri - 1990

"Noah's Ark", located on the outskirts of St Louis, MO, was the LITPC Headquarters during the 1990 LCI Convention. This was prior to our being recognized as a delegation.



NOTE: We plan to continually add to this chapter to reflect current activities at the Swaps and Conventions.