

# THE LION'S CHRISTMAS SHIP



A Bellingham Central Lions Club project, the Lion's Christmas ship began in 1947 when islanders located in the Pacific Northwest, asked a boat captain to bring Santa to them since it was difficult to bring their children to Santa on the Mainland. ZC Don Wight, was the son of the original captain and now steers the Christmas ship. The ship covers 2500 square miles in two days, has a volunteer crew of 65 and visits 14 remote islands located in the Northern Puget Sound. Two of the islands, Stuart and Waldron still have no electricity. Life on some of the islands is rough and children are spotted wearing old shoes and tattered clothes. Some of the wealthier kids will ask for the things mainland kids do but most children ask for very little for themselves and instead ask for health for their parents, a job for Dad or a new frying pan for Mom. You don't see cell phones in abundance with kids texting or for that matter any electronics at all.

While the children wait in line they are kept occupied by pirates who challenge them to balloon sword fights. Clowns make balloon animals on demand, elves dance and the choir sings Christmas carols. Of course the visit by Miss Kitty, DG Judy Portas, is especially appreciated by the children. Over 600 children get to visit with Santa and receive a toy and some treats.

A trip that costs a person very little to participate, presents the true spirit of Christmas and leaves one with irreplaceable memories.

More pictures can be found on the Flickr web site of Jim Small, a member of the Barnet Lions Club.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/24306305@N04/sets/72157625595373730/>

