

Volume 96969696 I

## Special Edition

November 2023

### City of Carver Minnesota Carver Lions Club

### Celebrating Fifty Years

1973 to 2023

By this time everyone who knows anyone in Carver, Minnesota has had to have heard or at least has read about all the whoopla and excitement that was involved with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Carver Lions and their celebration.

Their club was founded on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1973. Happy Anniversary to each and every active ( and/or inactive past ) member presently, as well as thank you for all you do, did, have done, and continue to do ladies and gentlemen.

With that being said. Did you know that the Lions are the Largest Service Organization in the world? As the story goes for Carver, Chaska had a Lions Club back then. The Chaska Club President, Ray Hunziker, also a prominent Chaska businessman spoke with another local businessman. In fact, Ray was the owner of the Coast of Coast in Chaska back then. Well, Ray was also a neighbor at the lake with John Lenzen. Yep, they got to talking and it was their thoughts and opinion that this was a good idea for Carver to have a Lions group too. Not to mention the fact that the Carver Firemen did a lot for the city too, but there were also a group of residents, businessmen who all were all interested in doing things to benefit everyone over in Carver. The notion of the Lions was presented to the Carver businessman, the Fire Department personnel, members of the Carver on the Minnesota organization and a letter was circulated to the public. Many of the original members of the Lions Club were also firemen and businessmen all from Carver.

Here's a piece of history for you, as well. At that time all this business with the Lions Club was going on, women were not allowed to be Lions. Scandalous huh! Oh how far we have come from the Victorian century huh? Writer's privilege, sorry, not sorry. Later after the actual formulation of the club there were men from East Union who also joined the Carver club. Also for the sake of documentation and acknowledgement, the gals of Carver did form a Lioness Club, two to be exact later on. At some point in time, the patriarchal segregation of males on the International level of the Lions organization came to the conclusion that women should and could be allowed to be members. At first many of the prominent, strong women were reluctant and still felt slighted being banned but eventually many of the fine ladies of the Lioness Club Members did merge with the Lions group. "Yay."

We are getting off track here though. Back to the idea being tossed around among the men in town to form a Carver Lions Club. So who were these front runners in the beginning? Who had the foresight, gumption and stamina to realize that this was exactly what was needed in Carver? Who were these insightful men, you ask? As it was relayed and forgive me if we accidentally omitted someone who should be recognized and are not. From a very reliable source several of the original guys were Lee Ostlie, Tom Larson, John Lenzen and Lowell Peterson who were all instrumental in promoting the notion of organizing a club for volunteering and doing things to benefit the community. The Charter List consisted of a number of recognizable Carverites; approximately forty-two which we will get to a little later. It was said that a group of these charter members thought it would be a good idea to form a group to conduct community projects and volunteer. However, the pushers of that group were Lowell, John, Tom and Lee. Plus these four took the advocating of this idea one step even further by going door to door soliciting members. Anyone who knew any of these four men know that they took this venture seriously and devoted one hundred and fifty percent of their efforts into inciting support from others.



### 2023 Carver Lions 50th Anniversary

The Carver Lions Club is a chartered club and part of Lions International. We were chartered in 1973.





It has also been said to never underestimate what a dedicated group can accomplish either. Over the past five decades, it is safe to say and claim that the Carver Lions have made and taken their mark on the community stupendously. They have achieved, earned and deserve credit beyond a shadow of a doubt for the coveted title of the “Best of the Best Volunteers” as a grandiose, productive, wonderful bunch of volunteers who have made so much difference and done so much for this, their community. Their efforts, dedication, love and support have made, continue to make and are the most impactful group of people in the best community ever! That’s the difference that is visible in our town because of them. Hopefully throughout this walk back in time you will be able to see, appreciate and understand how important past, present and future work by the club is and has impacted where you live, work, play, support, share, gather, shop, patronize and promote.

Quoting still another strong community leader, Barb shared, “A preview of some of the highlighted projects the Lions Club have dedicated time, talent and treasures to make things happen include Steamboat Days being a standout weekend with fireworks, golf in the snow to benefit families in need, park construction, sponsorship of Little League programs, Christmas fun, Halloween games and candies, oh so many wonderful occasions when children and adults can interact having a positive outcome for all. These are just a few mentioned thus far.” Then there was the leadership of still another strong Carver individual who once told the club the following. That person being Beverly Kraemer Swanson, “It isn’t only the children who need to have fun, these events give us the opportunity to have fun together. These kids will be future leaders of Carver, so we need to teach them well the lessons we have learned through partnerships.” Barb added, “Working beside Bev and Bonnie Kraemer, who always declared ‘Carver is God’s Country’ ‘treat it and the residents as such’ .. and have FUN doing it, was a privilege. It forged strong bonds with Firemen and Fire Ladies, Second Alarm chili events for Smile Network, Flood Relief programs and many day to day activities. They had such love for the City and all citizens, and worked well with City leaders, as they put it ‘work together to get the job done.’”

The following photo was supplied by Barb Swanson.



1973 Charter Members of Carver Lions Club

Front row, from left: Tom Larson, Lee Ostlie, Floyd Holtz, Don Dahlke, Bernard Lano and Clifford Beckman. Second row, from left: Billie Lanpher, Rev. George Klima, Richard Rickaby, Rueben Heitkamp, Leon Goetze and Lowell Peterson. Third row, from left: Dale Stal, Donald Weibe, Fred Weibe, Clarence Engler, Alan Lenzen, Ken Frey and Doug Swanson. Fourth row, from left: Woodrow Swanson, Rudolph Schultz, Roman Riesgraf, John Lenzen, Jim Dauwalter, Curtiss Beckman, Darryl Swanson and Ronald Reisgraf. Not shown: Gordon Bengston, Ardell Bren, Marvin Goetze, Mark Hugel, James Hron, Gerald Jacobs, Diedrich Lenzen, Clayton Naglus, Arnold Peterson, Enerst Poppitz, James Rein, Joseph Riesgraf, Russell Robb and Fulton Schleisman.

The Chaska Herald/SW Publishing also printed an article recently about the Lion’s Club then upcoming celebration. In case you missed it, you can find it on the “Carver Current” website but you will have to scroll through the pages to find it. The caption read: “Carver Lions Celebrate 50 Years of Service” by Chuck Rupnow on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Included in the article; Darrel Swanson’s conversation from that article are below:

“It certainly doesn’t seem like 50 years ago that Darrel Swanson and about 40 others started the Lions Club chapter in the City of Carver.” Chuck wrote.

“The time has gone really fast, and it’s been enjoyable,” said Swanson, adding that he and others “have had a lot of fun helping so many in and around the community.”

Swanson, 81, who is still an active member, was on hand October 18th when the chapter celebrated its 50th anniversary at Carver Village Hall in downtown Carver. It should be noted at this point, as well that Darrel is the only remaining active member from the original charter group. Congratulations Darrel and thank you for all your dedication and work.

“This has been a club that has done a lot of things with purpose,” Swanson said. “This group has done a lot for many people, so I think the community is pretty well aware of what we do and why we do it.”

Swanson was a member of the Carver Fire Department when he and other department members were asked to be part of the inaugural Lions Club in Carver, which was sponsored by the Chaska Lions Club.

“Half the department had already said yes to being part of the new group, so I got in, too,” he said.

Also included in that article were comments from the present Club President, Bob MacMullan. Here's what he had to say, "We have a lot to be proud of and our impact can be seen all over Carver and the surrounding area. Part of our mission, however, is also to have fun, make friends and enjoy our camaraderie. Being a part of something that makes a difference in our lives as well as the lives of others has to be something we enjoy and celebrate." Bob added, "The Carver club currently has 47 members and over the past few years has been averaging more than \$100,000 per year in donations, with a majority of that going to local projects."

The list of Charter Members from the Lions Club listed back in 1973 were:

Clifford Beckman	Curtis Beckman	Gordon Bengston	Ardell Bren
Donald Dahlke	James Dauwalter	Clarence Engler	Kenneth Frey
Leon Goetze	Marvin Goetze	Rueben Heitkamp	Floyd "Stubbie" Holtz
Jim Hron Sr	Mark Hugel	Gerald Jacobs	Pastor George Klima
Thomas Larson	Bill Lanpher	Bernard Lano	Allan Lenzen
Diedrick Lenzen	John Lenzen	Clayton "Nick" Naglus	Leland "Lee" Ostlie
Arnold Peterson	Lowell Peterson	Ernest Poppitz	James Rein
Richard "Dick" Rickaby	Joseph Riesgraf	Roman Riesgraf	Ronald Riesgraf
Russell Robb	Fulton Schleisman	Rudolph "Red" Schultz	Dale Stai
Darrel Swanson	Doug Swanson	Woodrow Swanson	Donald Wiebe
Fred Wiebe			

Researching areas where this author could find information the following highlights are documented to bring to light just some of the projects the local club has been doing, and have done for the community over the past fifty years while also making everyone aware that many still take place to date. It falls far short of everything they have accomplished over these past fifty years but it was what could be found. So much was not able to be found, but will share what was documented for accreditation purposes of known accomplishments. But keep in mind, it is far from complete.

Much recorded information from earlier days was elusive and no recorded available information. It wasn't until in January of 1995 where tracking could be actually be started. It was then that an ad could be documented, but that was held in 1994. Who knows when the first feed actually was? Who remembers those delicious feasts and good times? Then there was their infamous Pancake Breakfasts too. They were also at that point reviewing and talking about their Pancake Breakfast, looking at the Gazebo park and discussion to help renovate the original, Village Hall. It was also in December of 1995 that the Lions hosted their first Annual Craft Show and a luncheon held at the Village Hall. Let's not forget the Lions participation in Steamboat Days back in the 80's as well.



#### CARVER LIONS CLUB ANNUAL COSTUME HALLOWEEN PARTY

< First poster found for Halloween event sponsored by Lions ( 1999 )

In 1996 the Lions continued their annual Bullhead Feed event with the proceeds used for the community park and shelter. They were also supporting the Little League. There was financial assistance to the Fire Department with a rescue truck purchase by having a flower fundraiser. The club continued hosting their costume Halloween Party, a tradition that continues to present day only now called Trunks and Treats these days. How things change over time? Also was able to find that their first Halloween gala was held in 1986. The parties back in the day were and are far different from what we see now days. In November the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Craft Show took place. December of the same year the Lions Club shared dinner with the Victoria Lions club. One hundred and one pounds of food for the food shelf had also been collected at that Halloween event. The entire year the club had been financially and physically involved with improvements to the Lions Park, Public Works Building, Community Park and the Village Hall. All their pull tab profits had been put back into city projects as well just so you know.



Into 1997; it was in July the club held what they called the "Jungle Dance" which involved a Golf Scramble Tournament. There also was a short lived bowling team at that point in time. Anyone remember those days? Oh to stroll back down memory lane? How many remember and how many actually knew what the club was all doing or even cared, one has to ask themselves, don't you think? Unfortunately, it was also in 1997 that the club decided to relinquish their chairing of the Steamboat Days event. However, their contribution and participation continued and continues to this day in the event and is still evident and instrumental in the occasion. In the early days also there was the annual Christmas fruit baskets, food, and gift certificates donated to the less fortunate throughout the community. They still do, but it has taken on a different format and agenda. The Park and Recreation members this year it was pointed out collaborated with the Lions Club for their Bullhead Feed. Let's not sell the Village Christmas party short or their annual Pancake Breakfast held which were also prevalent in the year of 1998 on moving forward to present day along with the other annual usual events.

East Union Church benefitted from the help of the Lion's club with their Spaghetti Dinner in 1998. Who remembers those behind the scenes days? The club were guests of the Watertown Lions club that year having dinner at the Rivers Edge Golf Course. In August and September of that year the club hit their one million dollar mark in MN with the charitable gambling funds from pull tab sales. Those profits all remained in the local area and community projects. It was in November of 1998 that the club hosted their first Steak Fry event with the proceeds donated to Joey Poppler. They closed out the year with their annual Village Christmas event, as well.

In 1999 the Lions Club continued with their annual events such as the Bullhead Feed, Pancake Breakfast to name just a few. They helped again with the Chili Feed alongside the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm Fire ladies. They donated forty-five baskets at their last Senior party the previous year the members were informed. They had also chosen to donate funds to the Chaska High School Senior party. Proceeds from the Pancake Breakfast went towards athletic equipment. They celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dinner and a cruise on Lake Minnetonka, Then they were back to business at hand again hosting their annual Halloween party. Never sitting still for a moment, the members upgraded the Lions Park parking lot, planted thirty-one trees throughout the community, gathered donations for the community, met on redesigns for the original Village Hall, worked on the Fire Department and city hall additions, began discussions for the RailRoad Water Tower project, were involved with the youth sports programs and donated funds towards the East Union Elementary playground equipment and library. Finishing off their 1999 year was the Annual Village Hall Christmas which also hosted the District Governor's attendance along with donations to the food shelf.

At this point it is worth mentioning that not only does the club support their community, they also supported state, national and world projects. Bet you didn't realize that, did you? That's right, a few of those organizations include the MN Hearing Foundation, Diabetes Research, MN Eye Bank and the International Disaster Relief Fund to name just a few.





Let's step away for a minute and just glance into those organizations supported by our very own local Carver Lions Club. Shall we?

The Minnesota Hearing Foundation basically funds hearing services and hearing research projects. For approximately four decades this association has fostered a partnership with the U of MN raising over seven million in funds for equipment, capital improvements and hearing research. They established the Lions 5m International Hearing Center, The Lions Voice Clinic, The Lions Children Hearing Center and the Lions Affordable Hearing Aid Project. Additionally the foundation has funded a newborn hearing screening program throughout MN in hospitals to ensure that little ears can hear. If you want to know more about this organization and you have computer access, their website is: [www.5mhf.org](http://www.5mhf.org)

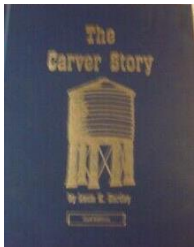
The Diabetes Research is self-explanatory. The MN Eye Bank also known as the Lions Gift of Sight. Again, for more information visit their website: [www.lionsgiftofsight.umn.edu](http://www.lionsgiftofsight.umn.edu)  
"Saving Sight for more than 60 years"

The Lions Gift of sight helps to restore sight through eye donations. It's a full-service eye bank that obtains, medically evaluates, and distributes donor eyes for cornea transplants, research and education. Together the Lions and the U of MN have combined their efforts and work to create the Gift of Sight. The groundwork for the eye bank had been developed by the Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology. An Austin, Minnesota Lions member solicited Lions club support. The Lions Eye Bank was born in June of 1960. This is a mere synopsis of the history.

Another world wide project the lions are involved in is the International Disaster Relief Fund also called the Disaster Response Emergency Fund established by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to provide immediate financial support to Red Cross enabling them to carry out their unique roles as first responders after a disaster.

This funding depends on the world crisis occurring for immediate response to the situations occurring and what is needed.

Moving right along we enter the 2000 decade where the club continued their usual annual events always adding more to their venue. Some of those contributions included the new exterior façade to the old Village Hall, the electronic messaging sign, purchase of Christmas decorations for the downtown area and the development of the Depot Park. The club was also instrumental in the New Prague establishment of their Lions Club. A Paint-a-Thon was held assisting seniors to paint their homes. There is also mention of their Youth Exchange Program where foreign exchange students are hosted by club members. This was also the decade of the initiation of an Annual Christmas Light Contest which was short-lived, I believe, but prevalent in the 2001 through 2004 years. There was no mention again of the contest thereafter. It is also important at this time to draw attention to the guest speaker who attended a club meeting. Henry Oervelt who was a Holocaust survivor and spoke to over three hundred attendees at a club meeting. Records also indicate that around this time frame that the Easter Egg Hunt festivities became an additional part of the club agenda annually.



The Lions also took on the task of the restoration of the Church-By-the-River project both internally and externally. Still another highlighted achievement in 2003 was the club's commitment to sponsor the publication of the local historian, Lucie Hartley's hard cover book, *"The Carver Story"*. Let's not forget their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary either celebrated that year. Attention also needs to be brought to the Steamboat raffled quilt. Near as it could be established, the fall of 2003 the quilt "Windows by the River" had been professionally framed and preserved which was funded by the Lions Club. The story goes that John Lenzen purchased this quilt from the winner. It is also said to be displayed in the Church-by-the-River. Also there is mention the same year of an antique desk originally used in the Feed Mill having been procured and also placed being preserved at the Church-by-the-River.

Remember the Tea and Lunch with the Red Hatters for the Garden Tour and Tea Party at the Church-by-the-River in 2004 hosted by the Carver Ovary Club? Lions also behind the scenes? You can almost bet that they were somehow involved and just not publicly recognized like so many things that occurred in the community. It is almost certain wherever and whenever something was occurring in the city, somehow, some way a Lions member was involved. The seats for the event were made and installed by the Lions Club members as one example of their modesty.

Mt Hope Cemetery fence project along with their other usual events was still another major contribution by the club, as well as fence repairs conducted by the Church-by-the-River sight, and the refurbishing of the Gazebo. There was a "Couples Outing" Golf Tournament which took place as a fundraiser for kids cancer. The proceeds going to the "Lions Leader Dog" program. Lee Ostlie was the Zone Lion of the Year that year and the Grand Marshall for Steamboat Days, That was the year too when the Village Christmas Party had hayrides, hot chocolate and cookies and Taste of Christmas and I also believe for a short lived period were house tours also.

Going back to the Lions Leader Dog Program for a minute.

"Members of the international humanitarian organization Lions Clubs International founded Leader Dogs for the Blind in 1939 and Lions have been dedicated ambassadors and loyal supporters of the mission since that time. Over 4,900 Lions clubs both nationally and internationally contribute financially to Leader Dog." To learn more, visit: [www.leaderdog.org](http://www.leaderdog.org).

It was in 2004 as well that the Senior Citizens Luncheon was established replacing the fruit basket donations. This luncheon continues to present day. And does anyone remember the Christmas music serenading the downtown residents from the Church-by-River steeple during December? Yep, that was a club member's contribution too.

By 2005, since their inception, the club had donated one point one million dollars to local and national charities and causes. The club also had a full bus load of people to attend the Twins game at the Metrodome playing the New York Yankees. For three years the club had sponsored the Carver Couples Olympics with the proceeds donated to the MN Hearing Foundation's new children's clinic. The Lions also made contributions to Operation Iraqi Children's Fund and the diabetes association, Lions Eye Bank, scholarship funds and Boy Scout troops.



Then of course there was the Community Preservation Award given to the Carver Lions Organization in 2006 for their endless hours of work done on the restoration of the 1913 Church-By-the-River. At that time, it was also utilized as the meeting spot for the city council for a while. Currently, the space is rented out for small community events. This was a prestigious and big deal for the Lions being awarded by the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota.

< Photo compliments of Peter Sieger  
Text by Bill Beyer, FAIA Emeritus

"In 1980, the town center became one of the first, and largest, historic districts in Minnesota to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places with eighty-seven buildings and four structures of significance built between 1850 and 1925."

"The Church by the River features a square sanctuary with original entry through the base of the bell tower, plus boldly colored, Gothic stained-glass windows; 300 Broadway Street." The building was damaged by the 1965 flood which had exceeded the 1953 dike and soaked dozens of buildings up to their second stories. The church was acquired in 1971 by the Carver-on-the-MN non-profit and eventually donated to the city. It was the endless work, dedication and outstanding efforts of the Lions Club members who brought the structure back to its former glory. The church was built in 1913 for \$ 600 by Carver's master builder, Olaf Hanson with the Gothic

and Queen Anne Revival architecture. The church boasted beautiful stained glass windows and a hand-crafted oak pulpit and lectern. It was two years after the 1965 flood that the last service was held and after that the bats and pigeons began taking up residency.

As history goes, the city made several attempts to restore. A grant had also been received but it was just not enough to fund the work. The stained glass windows were removed for protection. The walls were rotting. The Lions took on the service project completing their work in 2003 after thousands of hours and dollars and work all donated, along with labor and materials. Presently, the site holds a large collection of vintage photographs and artifacts to document Carver's place in history. The award was presented at the Sheldon Performing Arts Theatre in Red Wing. Those Lions present to accept the award were Harlan Thaumert, Doug Dauwalter, Ken Frey, Lowell and Cheryl Peterson along with Evelyn and Marvin Grimm.

Remember the stove donation to the city hall kitchen? Lions doing, in case you didn't catch that. Another big deal for lil' ole' Carver and Lion's members was the Robert Johnson home appearance in "Celebrity House" presently owned by Darrel and Barb Swanson. They hosted an evening with Robert and Alice Johnson's grandchildren in 2006. (if you are interested in more details about their guests and visit, an article was featured in the "Villager Tower" on the Carver Current website in issue number # 230 from 2006, the November/December issue. ) It can certainly be presumed that the hosts were honored, thrilled and cherished the experience, still to this day.



Moving forward through the years, their donations, their work, their annual events continues with vigor and never ending dedication from its members. There was their "Sight First" Campaign. SightFirst logo: "We care. We serve. We accomplish." "Since 1990, SightFirst funds have enabled Lions, health care providers, and partner organizations around the world to fight the major causes of preventable and reversible blindness and assist those who are blind or visually impaired. More than 488 million people have been impacted over the last 30 years. Millions more still need our help." SightFirst is a type of grant offered by Lions Club International Foundation.

#### Knights of the Blind

We have all heard, read and admired Helen Keller who is considered an American Author, political activist and a lecturer. The Knights of the Blind are a result of her attending a Lions Club International Convention challenging Lions to become "Knight of the Blind" in the crusade against darkness. The Lions accepted and their work had helped at preventable blindness.



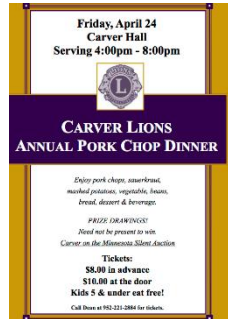
In late 2007 and early 2008 of their involvement with the Bloodmobile, blood drives. It is more than likely that their involvement took place much sooner however, mention of such was first brought to light in late 2007 while researching, it seems somewhat apparent that the members prefer to keep a low profile and not bring much attention to their goodwill.

There is also mention in research that two beautiful bronze Lion sculptures making a bold statement installed at the entrance of the Lions Park. Gee, who do you suppose financed that?

The Lions club also participate in their mid-winter conventions. One member, Linda described the experience as follows:

"February is my favorite month of the year. The annual convention in Mankato is in the month of February. Three days of world class speakers, great food and entertainment. It's the time for us to recharge our batteries and remind ourselves why we became Lions in the first place. The answer is always the same: Giving." She added, "The convention is how they learn firsthand how their efforts impacted the lives of others. They all know that fundraisers are for implants, and leader dog training. But knowing and having the visual impact of seeing their real live story and thank you is incredible. Those are the emotions that rush over you like a waterfall when you physically visualize that direct connection to their success. Knowing and giving. Two halves of a whole heart, Happy Valentine's Day."

It was also brought to light that in 2008 there were more than 46,000 clubs in 192 countries. Their focus expanded to help meet increasing needs of the global communities. Their programs continually are changing to meet new needs and greater demands, but their mission never wavers: "We Serve." There were nearly one point four million Lion members who answer needs, tackle tough problems, provide immediate relief in disasters and other long term assistance. Just so much to tell and share over fifty years of their club just hate to overlook anything of importance. Not to mention that everything the Lions touched was super important and almost certain things were and are missed. It was in 2008 that the Pork Chop Dinner was brought to light. Although, it appears that is a collaboration with the Fire and Rescue of Carver too whom they also collaborated with for their open house and golf tournament. It is also important to mention the Carver Lions club members celebrated with Chaska for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Village Hall in Carver.



Can't not mention that the Lions District Governor attended the Carver Lions Christmas party in 2008 which certainly had to be a big deal for the members. Another surprise visitor also popped in with his reindeer. Then there is the presentation of dictionaries to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Graders at the East Union School, another tradition the Lions had participated in back in the day. Wonder with computer/internet technology and the school no longer open if this is still an ongoing project or when it stopped being done? There isn't mention of it. Regardless, it is noteworthy to share that the story told was that those kids eagerly and anxiously awaited their receipt of their very own dictionaries. It was also said that the students were excited for that day in December and that they could hardly contain their excitement to receive their books. Or that the younger students comments on how they could hardly wait until they received their own listening to the older kids talking about the special gifts. These were special dictionaries too, not just ordinary ones. Two thirds of the book was a normal dictionary, the other third was filled with facts and other information. The students were then told that there was a secret in the book. Most students had figured it out, it was relayed. On the last page, the longest word in the world was written and took a whole paragraph to write it down. It was not a word one could pronounce it was said too. What a wonderful treat for those kids and all those precious memories of their experience with the Carver Lions. Not something that can ever be taken away or replaced. Wouldn't you say?

This was the year too of the "Lions Lights on For Life" promotion. A project the entire community was invited to participate in. Everyone was asked to turn their vehicle headlights on 24/7 for safety and make it the safest winter season ever.

It also appears that the Riverside Rhapsody music gala came into existence in 2008. The Lion members were active in this event through approximately 2015 when the event name changed to the concert series. Further referral to concert series ceased further recognition in 2018. Mention was made in 2009 that the Lions were responsible for food preparation for the event. Don't forget about all the other annual festivities that the Lions also performed throughout the year. These events overall continued. In 2011 the International Lions Convention was held in Seattle, Washington. Since there was no documentation of attendees, one can only presume that some of the Carver Lions attended the event, maybe or maybe not?



And here is a huge highlight that cannot under any circumstances be downplayed. It appears that in 2009 the very first Carver Lions Soggy Bottom Golf Tourney took place at the Riverside park site. This event continues to present day and is well attended with the fundraiser proceeds donated to individuals in need of medical assistance. In all fairness, there is not enough information or details to credit all recipients of these notorious events. So it is best to not mention recipient names and there were many. Their event will be repeated again hosting their 15<sup>th</sup> Annual

Soggy Bottom Golf Tourney in 2024. Quite an accomplishment, wouldn't you say?





Steamboat Days in 2011 signified a special celebration that year for residents, clubs, businesses, organizations, the city council and residents, along with Carver-on-the-Minnesota members and of course, last but not least, our very own Carver Lions members. This was the year and the celebration when the steam tug boat arrived in town and was presented to the city having been orchestrated mainly by the Carver-on-the-Minnesota organization. Not one hundred percent certain who all was involved in procuring the monumental vessel but did learn that the Lions Club and Carver-on-the-Minnesota personnel were involved in this feat. The kiosk down by the site credits only the city and Carver-on-the-Minnesota, but word is behind the scenes, once again were the Lions. The tugboat's name is "Northwind." It was on the Mississippi River and now is sitting beside the Minnesota River at the end of Broadway street in Carver, Minnesota. It arrived via truck in August of that year and was donated. There was an article in the Chaska Herald but don't have access to their archived data to get all the facts presently.

What is known and was able to learn was the following: The steamboat called the Northwind had been utilized on the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Rumor, gossip had said it's valued at two hundred to four hundred thousand dollars. The steam tug boat was built in 1890. It's thirty-three feet long and eight feet wide. Naval architects restored it. The boiler is fueled

by wood, soft or hard coal. These types of vessels were used on rivers and larger lakes since the Civil War. Gene and Joyce Cassidy was the gentleman who donated the tug boat to the City of Carver. This rare steel tugboat had been docked at Harriet Island in St Paul for fifteen years prior to its arrival in Carver. The last words entered were "Respect the efforts, respect the boat and respect others."

It was in 2013 that the topic of the Lions De-Feet Hearing Walk was brought to light. This annual walk occurs at the MN Landscape Arboretum and it is an annual walk to generate funds for the Lion's mission of research, education and promotion of hearing health with the proceeds from this fundraiser going to the Children's Hearing Center that was established in 1995. The event "Walk to De-Feet Hearing Loss" has been an annual event to present day. Did you also know or even aware that the Carver Lions Club is a Gold Sponsor for the Children's Hearing Center?

Carver Meat Raffle  
EVERY SATURDAY AT 3:00PM



Meat Raffle Mania at local bars is brought to light in 2014 along with the Carver Fall Bike Tour which was held for the first time in October of that year. The meat raffles were held alternatively between Harvey's, Lisa's and the Doghouse. Believe the term meat raffle is self-explanatory, more details unknown. What is known is that at one point the club partnered with three local groups then who benefitted. They were Flags of Honor of MN, Chaska Figure Skating Club and the Eastern Carver County Women of Today. Over the years different partners possibly changed or maybe not? Regardless these raffles continue too to date. Then there is the little known fact of the First Annual Carver Fall Bike Tour in fall of that same year. The East Union Church partnered with St Nicholas, Trinity Lutheran, Carver Lions and the Carver Fire Department. The event took place on a Saturday morning with the starting point not mentioned but that the East Union Church parking lot was one rest stop along the eleven, eighteen and twenty-four mile loops. Who remembers this?

Just goes to prove that the Carver's Lions mission is to strive to be involved in the support of our community and to gather people together to create bonds for a lifetime. This organization has certainly achieved that, don't you agree? It may also be appropriate at this point to reflect on the loss of Fire Chief Ron Riesgraf in December of 2014 who was a former charter member and had been Fire Chief for the City of Carver for twenty-five years.

Starting the year 2016 with a bang. Lion's club member Marvin Grimm became District Governor for the central Minnesota district overseen sixty-four clubs for a one year term. The Lion's became involved sponsoring the Fire Department's Spring Safety program. With all their fundraising efforts the proceeds helped not only the community, local groups but also the Leader Dog for the Blind, Can do Canines, MN Hearing Foundation, Lions Eye Bank/Diabetes Foundation and Project New Hope. Most of these have already been covered. The Can do Canines however, provides assistance dogs for people with disabilities, free of charge. Their trained dogs are sometimes adopted from local animal shelters provided to those with mobility challenges, hearing loss or deafness, seizure disorders, diabetes complications and even children with autism. They are the largest provider in Minnesota relying on contributions supporting their work and efforts. That's right, the Lions club is a contributor. Way to go huh? Interested in more information? Visit: [www.candocanines.org](http://www.candocanines.org)  
The other beneficiary of the Carver Lions contributions not covered previously is "Project New Hope." This is a non-profit organization providing family retreats for veterans and their families with educational skills to manage their lives after wartime service. These activities are free to veterans. The mission of this organization is to provide veterans, their families, the education, training and skills necessary. Interested in learning more? [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

Donna Riesgraf



Something else the Lions did in early 2016, along with all their other annual events, the club rallied to help a long-time volunteer, Donna "Ma" Riesgraf. She was plagued with macular degeneration interfering with her day to day activities. The club rallied to purchase her an LED magnifying lamp. The Chaska Herald reported "Lions Club president, Tim Craig noted that if the purchase hadn't been approved by the club, several members had offered to purchase the lamp themselves. That's the kind of respect garnered by Riesgraf, whose volunteering dates back to the Fire ladies Auxiliary in the early 1960's. She bakes treats for community events, is a member of the Carver Second Alarm and over the years, has served as an election judge, Girl Scout leader and blood bank volunteer." Just still one more example of the generosity of the Carver Lions looking out for their very own.

Some other highlights for the year 2016 where the community was introduced to still another type of fundraiser adding to their long list of other projects. This one involved the Designer Bag Bingo held at the Chaska VFW. The club members also expanded their summer involvement, such as Zootopic, Back to School Movie event or recall the Culpepper and Merriwether Circus? "Under the Big Top," all sponsored by the lions.



By this time one may be tired of reading the endless accolades to the Lions club members? However, it is imperative for people to understand appreciate and respect the hard work and dedication put forth for the community by these members. They deserve to be recognized and heralded for their tireless efforts support in their community. The community that involves you.

“Since 1917, the Lions clubs have offered people the opportunity to give something back to their communities. From involving members in projects locally such as cleaning up in area parks or as far-reaching as bringing sight to the world’s blind, Lions clubs have always embraced those committed to building a bright future for their community. Today with more than 46,000 clubs in 192 countries....Lions have expanded their focus to help meet the every-increasing needs of our global community. ....continually changing to meet new needs and greater demands, but our mission has never wavered: “We Serve.” There are nearly one point four million Lions members throughout the world. Bet you didn’t know that, did you? The Lions tackle tough problems like blindness, drug abuse prevention, diabetes awareness, provide immediate relief in times of disaster and offer long-term assistance to those in need locally and globally. The club recycles eyeglasses, hearing aids, improve the quality of life by building parks, supporting hospitals and establishing water treatment programs, just to mention a few. Whenever, where ever there is a need, the Lions are there to help.

Closing out the 2016 year was the Twin Cities Jeep Show for Epilepsy held at the Carver Station in the fall. Lions? What do you suppose the odds were that the Lions Club were involved? Also an important achievement noteworthy is the Membership Key Awards which recognizes individual Lions who invite new members. Club members can earn their first membership key by inviting two new members and may earn up to seventeen keys. Bet you didn’t know that either, did you? Each key is designed to reflect the number of new members a Lion has sponsored. The program was established in October of 1930 by the Board of Directors of Lions International recognizing and rewarding members contributing to the growth and expansion of the club. Well guess what everyone, one of Carver’s own earned that Key Award in 2016. It was none other than Marvin Grimm.



The Lions had also been temporarily meeting at the building located at 113 Third Street East called the “Carver Place.” Remember those days? This author recalls when Lee Armstrong’s Heating and Air Conditioning was housed in there...Didn’t Jeff Feltman also have a grocery store in there at one point? Peter Thiesfeld’s business was also housed there. Presently, the Carver Insurance Group has taken up residency there. Why were meetings held here? Believe there were problems with the old Village Hall ( picture above ) and it was not structurally safe while the city determined their next move and was initially the time to begin the work and decisions making on building the new city hall standing today. Correct?

It should also be noted at this time that it was in 2017 the community lost Doug Swanson who was a Lion’s club member. In early 2018 Barney Riesgraf passed away.



So what were the Lions Club members up to in 2017? The year opened with their 8<sup>th</sup> Soggy Bottom Golf fundraiser followed by their partnering with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Alarm Chili Feed and proceeded into the year with all their usual annual events. They also began planning and preparing for what they now were calling the Carver Star Light Movie Series which continued for one more year it appeared because there was no mention of this type of event after that year. The club also hosted their Zone meeting at Stick’s Tavern in November which was a big deal. Other zone representatives from other clubs attended to speak of their own club accomplishments. Which more than likely is also where some of the members ideas are conceived too. Don’t you agree? Ideas culminated with others. Anyway, moving right along since you are probably getting bored, the club closed out their 2017 year with the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Senior Luncheon, Village Christmas along with a brunch held at Sticks Tavern. It was also in November of 2017 when the first Annual Tree Lighting occurred but we will come back to that topic further down in the article here.

It was in 2018 that Greg Osterdyke became ill who was a club member and a huge promoter in community involvement. Greg was named by the City of Carver, Award Winer of Community Service Award, former mayor of the City of Carver ( 2011 – 2015 ), and a “tireless community advocate.” Greg passed away July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

Also, in 2018 the club continued their Shred-It event however, this was the first written mention of the event that could be found. However, upon further research found flyer dating May of 2015. So this was the third time the event was held in 2018. This event continues through present day. The Park and Recreation Board received a request from the club for a list that the club could donate towards. In May there was discussions and help given towards the Bike Rodeo with the Vehicle Fair following in June of that year. Reference was also given to Roadside Clean up. Also mention of participation with Feed my Starving Children project.

However, a big highlighted accomplishment in 2018 involved the clubs involvement with sending veterans who served in the Viet Nam and Korean wars for an all-expense paid trip to Washington DC that was identified as the “Memorial Trip.” The Lions Club donated a substantial amount for the veterans to be able to take the trip. Lion Doug Dauwalter was able to participate relaying that he had a great time and was impressed. Doug passed in February of 2022. The highlight for the veterans was upon their return in Waconia where they received police escort. Sheriff, Fire Department personnel and lots of people were on hand to greet them upon their return and a grand finale was a parade for them.

Back to 2018 business at hand; they reminded everyone collection of eyeglasses and hearing aids by the club was still taking place. There was the Carver Lions for Life program initiated by Past President Tim Shanahan. The purpose of this was to help those members who could no longer afford to pay their dues and became Members of Carver Lions for Life. The club also lost club member, James Hron, Sr, aka “Pommie” in July of 2018 who also owned Harvey’s Bar. The rest of the year consisted of their usual annual events which as you know, if you have paid attention is many. The 2019 year consisted of the same dedication and hard work for usual annual events with nothing documented that highlighted special events which you can bet there was. It’s just that details are not available. One would think that the members are just too modest and don’t want to draw attention to themselves to share their good will. Don’t you agree?



It was in 2020 that a shout out reminder was broadcast for the Brad Bramigk Memorial Scholarship fund applications were due to be submitted.

Who was Brad? How come he is honored with a Memorial Scholarship? Because the club supports educational excellence for one thing. For another was that obviously this gentleman was still another outstanding member whose efforts were recognized like so many past members honored, wouldn’t you say? He had also served as club president. What I was able to find out was that the young man was just that, young. He was only forty-eight years old when he passed in 2013. He had two sons that were young but it didn’t deter him from also volunteering. This author was told that he was a good guy who joined the club despite the fact that for others having two young kids would have deterred many from joining. it didn’t stop Brad. He was very active. He was a military veteran and Steamboat Days Committee

chairman. One day he felt “off.” After seeing the doctor, it was learned that he had a rare form of cancer. It was the club’s decision and determination that it would be only fitting as a lasting remembrance, the club’s way of paying respect to such a dedicated involved member and he was also well liked to have a scholarship in his memory. And now you know not only who but why there is a scholarship in Brad’s name.



It was in also in 2020 that the world ceased to exist as we knew it or at least, as we had become accustomed to living in. It was March of 2020 that the COVID affliction stopped the world in its tracks. Events were cancelled right and left and not just for the club, but for businesses, government offices, everything throughout the world. Life as we knew it then changed forever. Losses were great and disastrous. A time many of us would rather not recall at all or even think about. "Zoom" became the newest means of communication and was born. Technology huh? Where the poor, elderly and non-computer literates got or are being left in the dust and in the dark. Admit it, you know it and I know it.

Although also, that year, 2020, the Pork Chop Dinner was postponed; only to be rescheduled. Meetings were held over the computers with "Zoom." The Shred-It event did take place despite the virus. However, Steamboat days fell to the cancellation list due to that atrocity of evilness of that awful virus, as well. Oh such dark days we all faced then. Sadly, it was not only in Carver either, it was everywhere around us. It was in September though of that same year that the club held a September drive-through Pork Chop Dinner to cheer up everyone. Bless those wonderful souls huh? To the best of my knowledge and recollection, it is believed that the Annual Village Christmas event also fell to the cancellation list that awful year. Outdoor activities were prevalent along with those pesky masks. Oh the year we all want to forget, don't we?

Moving onto brighter, more hopeful times, not to mention getting back to some kind of normalcy which also changed the human's interpretation of "as the new normal." Thanks to 'you know what' which shall remain nameless like that "V" name. ( I know, don't give up your day job, never be a comedian cliché. )

Moving right along, we enter into 2021 for the Carver Lion's Club and still feeling the effects of that blasted CO-VID stuff. The Lions mid-winter convention was held which became known as 'viral' participation. The Soggy Bottom event was cancelled in 2021 too. The alternative was to take selfies, submit them to raise funds. Discussions occurred too whether or not to hold another drive-thru or sit down Pork Chop event. The bars also resumed some semblance of business with club members encouraging patronage of the local establishments. Take out became precedents to sustain their businesses. Club members made the decision to hold an April drive-thru Pork Chop Dinner. ( "Yahoo!" ) Life semi-resumed. The Shred-It event was back on the agenda in 2021 held in May. The club members prepared gift bags for mom's at the South Valley Alliance. Here's a fun fact for you, there was three thousand six hundred pounds shredded with one hundred-seventeen cars passing through the line at the Shred-It event. ( Think maybe while everyone was all cooped up with nowhere to go that they purged? ) Another fun fact, three hundred and fifty-nine meals were sold at their Pork Chop Dinner event. Lions Park also received much needed TLC attention by club members. It was that summer, too, weather permitting the club members met outdoors at the Lions Park. Something new and different in the "new normal" world we exist in now. Blood drive event sponsored by the club was also resumed. Steamboat Days was celebrated with the Grand Marshalls being Marvin and Evelyn Grimm. It was said that between the two members that they volunteered forty four years and were the heart and soul of the club. Meat raffles were resumed along with the Fire Department Golf that the Lion assist with, Trunk and Treats, the 5<sup>th</sup> Tree Lighting and the Village Christmas events and not to forget the Senior Luncheon were all held in 2021. An accomplishment after the year everything had come to a screeching halt.

Now we begin to cover last year, 2022. The usual annual events were all back on and up front happening once again. Meetings were resumed at the city hall too, the brand new one too, mind you. Marvin Grimm was also nominated for the Lions Hall of Fame. All his accomplishments, if interested are listed in the local newsletter issue of March/April, 2022, issue # 381 at the website of Carver Current. It is quite an extensive list of accolades well worth reading too. Did you know that he built the display cases for the Lion's awards? The display cases found a good home after being donated to the Belle Plaine Legion or VFW was told by a very reliable source.

Another highlight of the year was that a substantial monetary donation given to the Carver Softball/Baseball club, formerly known as the Carver Community Youth Baseball/Softball Association. The Steamboat Days Grand Marshall's were Darrel and Barb Swanson. A very sad note it was also in September of 2022 the announcement of the loss of John Lenzen reverberated throughout the area. He too, had served as the Mayor of the City of Carver. His commitment to the community was never ending for the city, the club, along with other affiliations he was associated with. John was also a Charter President for the club. The year was closed out after the resumption of all their annual events ending with the Village Christmas and Sr Luncheon events.

Opening the 2023 year of course was the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Soggy Bottom Snow Golf Fundraiser at Riverside Park. The club's business as usual was back in full force with club members ensuring the community had all the events occur so that residents could participate in their accustomed lives happening. Hope the club members are not taken for granted. These members work hard. It was also in March that members began discussing celebrating their past fifty years. Sadly, it was also in March that the club was told of Lowell Peterson's passing. He had spent thirteen years at the North Shore in Silver Bay enjoying the "Up North" dream as much as he could. Lowell had also served as a District Governor for the Lions District. Did you know that Lowell also served as Commander for the Chasias VFW? Tim Shanahan was chosen as the Grand Marshall for the 2023 Steamboat festivities this year for his tireless service to the community. He was also referred to as "utility player." Memorial benches have been built and installed throughout the community commemorating past members and an ongoing project into the future. Trees have also been planted as another project in memory of past members. Durk Peterson had also been recognized for all his unending service having joined because his wife, Diedre was a member. That's what you label as 'teamwork.' Facebook had made its debut sometime after Greg Osterdyke joined the team as a means for the members to share and inform the community of all their contributions, events, photos and marketing also. If you can, it is well worth your time and efforts to check their Facebook page out.





This brings us to present day with the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tree Lighting event, Lion's Brunch, Village Christmas and the Senior Luncheon events all to be upcoming to finish off the 2023 year for the club. Now, let's go back to the tree lighting event and elaborate on that now that we have covered the past fifty years of the Carver Lions Club members magnificent, fabulous, fantastic, plus so many more adjectives describing this club's achievements and brought to a close to move on.

#### Gazebo Lighting Ceremony

November 12<sup>th</sup> 1977

THE LIONS CLUB OF CARVER, MINN. HAS THE HONOR OF BEING THE FIRST TO LIGHT THE GAZEBO IN THE GAZEBO PARK. THE GAZEBO WAS BUILT BY THE LIONS CLUB OF CARVER, MINN. IN 1977. THE GAZEBO WAS BUILT BY THE LIONS CLUB OF CARVER, MINN. IN 1977. THE GAZEBO WAS BUILT BY THE LIONS CLUB OF CARVER, MINN. IN 1977.



The Lions have participated with Carver-on-the-Minnesota organization from the very beginning and only felt it was appropriate to elaborate on this particular event. Not that it is any more or any less important than any of the other events but in light of the holiday season, celebrating the Lions anniversary it was only fitting, along with the fact of the available recorded documentation to elaborate on this fantastic ongoing festivity. The very first Gazebo Lighting Ceremony was held November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1977. This year's event was all thanks to Carver-on-Minnesota, Carver Lions, Funky Minds and the City of Carver. The gazebo, park and tree were all decorated and an evening of fun all had been formulated for the public's pleasure. Local businesses donated for the decorations and Funky Minds made decorations. Food donations were collected. Nine Occasional Shops were open in the heart of downtown that year and joined in on the fun. Riverside Art Studio held an event to create an ornament for attendees. There were also horse drawn sleigh rides offered to the public. There was even a Homemade Cookie Baking Contest and local choirs. Participants sipped on hot cocoa and hot cider while munching on those homemade cookies. The actual official lighting took place at about 5:30 that evening. Community sharing of community spirit was born. Remember that night?

In 2018, on November 24<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual event was once again resurrected, and, repeated since everyone had so much fun the previous year. Non-perishable food items were once again collected too. Horse drawn carriages returned too. Ken Forner created a donation sign, and Lori from Cup of Carver provided hot chocolate and cider. The sound system was compliments of Rick and Chritine Ruzen, and Kristy Mock took on the flyer creation. By the way, in those days, the tree stood in the center of the Gazebo.



It was on Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup> of 2019, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Tree Lighting occurred. Not much was reported on that event and not real sure why either. I do recall that negative comments had been circulated but just as quickly ignored. After all, what do those people know if they can't appreciate effort, holiday spirit and community pride anyway huh? Or are you one of those negative souls too?

The 4<sup>th</sup> Tree Lighting Ceremony was held on November 28<sup>th</sup>, Saturday again in 2020 and sponsored by the Fire Department, Carver Lions and Carver-on-the-Minnesota personnel. Santa was scheduled to come too but on the Fire truck since the reindeer it seemed they got sick from that, that's right, that 'bloody' virus again. Did I mention? We are talking about 2020? Regardless human interaction was back on the platform of socializing outdoors. Social distancing for photos was also on the list of rules in this new strangeness of this reality.

It would also be appropriate at this point to shout out the new addition for not only the park but also to the event itself. There was something new and different with this ceremony. Anyone remember what it was? In 2020, Carver-on-the-Minnesota purchased an evergreen for the Gazebo Park, specifically for the Tree Lighting festivity in order to decorate, market and highlight the event. The tree is a Tannebaum Mugo Pine. It is supposed to or at least expected to grow to a maximum height of no more than fifteen feet. Do you also remember in 2020 that the temperatures were above normal? It also turned out that that year Santa was a no show after all. No hot chocolate, no cider and no chatting with friends



either. The germs kept people away. Few ventured out for the festive event leaving a disappointed bitter emotion in its wake. No Santa, no treats, no chatting or visiting with friends either. It was however reported, that "Only a few souls commiserating at distances. ( Six feet apart ) A young group of eager adolescents busy trying to make things cheery being artistic, creative and making the most of the bad situation. The animals didn't mind. They were busy checking out their fellow mates and eager to bump noses. Then everything went dead. The virus was not going to claim any victims with no one to attach to. The streets were empty, the park empty and nightfall falling quickly. Slowly a couple cars come to park. For anyone paying attention, it was the small, very small group to plug the lights in unceremoniously to also a very small group who had gathered. It was still warmer than usual, brisk but not as cold and brutal as in the past. Quiet and solemn time. Blink, all the lights flicked on and the hurrah was over as the few cameras took their photos. It was a plump, round and decorated enchanting tree blanketed finally with colorful bulbs for everyone to see, even though the fanfare of the whole excitement was downplayed. It's a pretty display and it embraces the attempts and care bestowed upon the times that once were full of

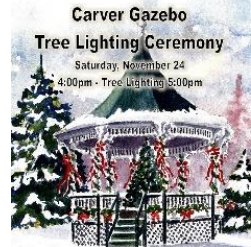
many people, children and laughter. A somber send off as the few people who did their job dispersed. The positive shall prevail. Perhaps 2021 will show us better times."

This brings us to the 5<sup>th</sup> Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, November 27, 2021. There were plans for refreshments to include s'mores hot chocolate, and hot cider along with a fire pit for the s'mores. Decorating was done earlier in the day and the park was quiet until late afternoon when the small stragglers began to appear for the event.



It was Saturday, November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 when the Sixth Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony was held in downtown Carver hosted by the Carver-on-the-Minnesota and the Lion's club. It was again an unusually warm November evening as people strolled downtown to see the event, share the experience, visit with neighbors, friends, strangers and enjoy the wood fire in the cozy Gazebo Park. S'mores were offered, along with coffee or cocoa. Not huge or a grandiose event but it is quaint, homey, charming and typical of Carver. A place to come and reflect, reminisce or just admire. But don't make the mistake of thinking that there aren't those who find this event important, worthwhile and delightful. The little lonely plump tree growing each year at its own pace; bare and naked or plain, most of the year. Then comes the holiday season and our little old tree is adorned with shiny objects, homemade items, treasured memories and strings of lights to draw attention to itself even when no one is there to take it in or even appreciate the efforts. It might seem like it is no big deal, but it is a big deal.

To date ( 2023 ) and upcoming is the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tree Lighting events in the works to happen. If you haven't taken the time to check out, maybe this year would be a good time to stop down at the Gazebo Park and meet the Carver-on-the Minnesota members and some of the Carver Lions that help and attend. I recall Barb and Darrel taking a stroll downtown to check it out, Cheryl was there too and I bet she goes every year too, Jim, Joanne, John, who else? It really is quaint, cozy and no it's not anything as elaborate as the ones you see on tv or neighboring towns but there is a lot to be said for the smallness, coziness and uniqueness that occurs in downtown Carver.



#### Carver Village Christmas and Tree Lighting Ceremony

Saturday, November 28, 2020

Gazebo Park, 307 Broadway, Downtown Carver

3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. with Tree Lighting Ceremony at 5:45 p.m.

Seats will arrive by fire truck and will be available from

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. for socially distanced photos. Children will receive a bag of goodies to take home. Apple cider and hot chocolate provided.

Please bring an item to donate to the local food shelf!

Sponsored by the Carver Lions, the Carver Fire Department, and Carver on the Minnesota. For any questions, please contact Jim at

jim@carveronminn.com or Cathy at cathy@carveronminn.com

In September, Carver on the Minnesota donated and planted a new evergreen tree in Gazebo Park. This tree will be the new focal point for the annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Don't miss the first lighting of the beautiful new addition to Gazebo Park!



Moving forward, there were a couple of other items brought to this author's attention that required attention and sharing. Furthermore, it only stands to reason that over the past fifty years, this organization has in fact done a lot for the City of Carver and deserve this small token of appreciation and publication of their achievements for generations to refer back to and read what their ancestors did. Otherwise it is lost and forgotten. History cannot be lost or forgotten at all costs. Even this small tribute is only a small portion of the achievements, accomplishments and triumphs that this organization has attained since 1973. With that being said, let's continue. If you are tired of it, stop reading and go do what you need to. Maybe later curiosity will draw you back to see what else this fantastic group of people chose to do for you and future leaders of this community. ( ? )



Can't forget about the "Catch a Dream" Life without Diabetes program that was founded by the Lions Clubs of Minnesota. Members are committed to improving those who suffer from the awful disease called 'diabetes.' They raise funds, collaborate with partners to conduct diabetes research, education and sponsor preventative health activities. There is an award given to members called the 'Dream Catcher Award.' They adopted this award as a sign of hope that a cure would be found for diabetes. If you are interested in more information, the website is: [www.mnlionsdiabetes.org](http://www.mnlionsdiabetes.org) You know there is a reason why this was brought up, don't you? One of Carver's very own was awarded this award. It was Dean Nelson. A qualifier for this award is that an individual must have accumulated one thousand dollars in donations to the MN Lions Diabetes Foundation.

Also, in case you are interested, below is the legend for the 'Dream Catcher':

#### The Dream Catcher Legend

*As the legend goes, the Dream Catcher used by Woodland Indians was hung in the lodge (near the bed), Its use was to catch dreams good or bad. The bad dreams would get caught in the webbing and would be held there till the first morning light, then burn off. Now the good dreams caught, through the center hole would filter down into the feathers and be held there, only to return another night.*

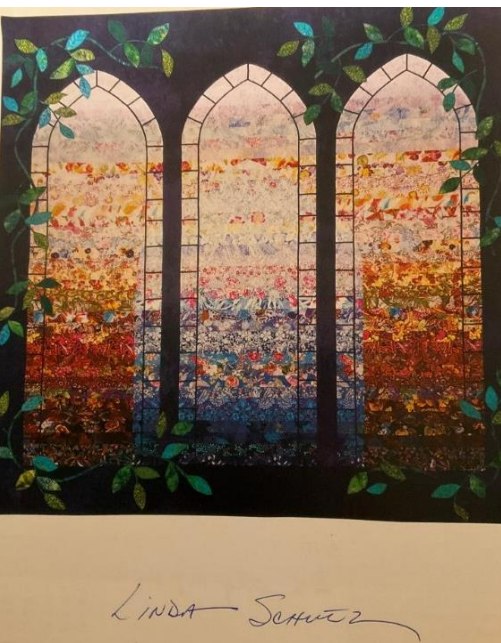
Not exactly positive but am guessing possibly that it was Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> of 2014 that the Carver Lions held what was called a "Community Volunteer Event" for "The Plant and Pick" event. The purpose of this event was to help beautify the community's parks and trails by planting 350 tree seedlings. After planting the trees, there was picking up trash and debris. On hand for the event was the Carver County Master Gardener. Anyone remember this event? Trigger good memories? So when you visit your parks, walk some trails in the shade and beauty of nature, think about the people who helped make this possible and check out the trees.



Did you know the first "little free library" was built in 2009 in Hudson, Wisconsin by Todd Bol? It was. The "Little Free Library" officially became a non-profit organization in 2012. With that bit of information out of the way and some of the significance of it explained. There is so much more but not now. It seems that in November of 2022, Dwight Schultz built a replica of his boyhood school house memories to contribute to the 'little free library' scheme of things. That little library along with a Lions member, replaced that first one this last August in 2023 being built by Marvin Grimm. Ole Steen and Dwight Schultz. There is a plague on the little replica. Stop by and check it out at Gazebo Park on Broadway. There was no explanation given why it required replacement but common sense would deem that the weather took its toll on the original.



#### The "Windows by the River" Quilt



Last but not least of the extra highlights is to expand on the Steamboat quilt, "Windows by the River" created by Linda Schutz ( Hazelart Studio ), talked about a bit earlier in the year 2003 that is in the "Church by the River"? Remember her? Here's some interesting information about that quilt provided by Linda and worthy of mention with y'all.

This quilt was voted 'Viewer's Choice Award' at the MN Quilters Convention in 2004. It was also included in the Quilt Art Calendar in 2005 for the American Quilters Society, an international calendar. Also, it was one of John's employees who had won the quilt that preferred gun raffles. Which would certainly explain their willingness if that is the proper term to forfeit the quilt. Not to downplay their obliging returning it to the community. John's intention was to have the quilt put in the Church by the River. John bought it, the club paid to have it framed and installed.

Does anyone know the symbolism behind the artistic piece of art? Linda shared the purpose of that representation. "There are three churches in Carver. St Nicholas Catholic Church, Trinity Lutheran Church and the Church by the River.

Three windows, all of somewhat different and independent entities represented by the three windows. What the parishioners and other community members all have in common and hold fast to in all of their lives is the belief in a power higher than themselves. That belief is portrayed in a very subtle clue door that unites all three windows. We are all one, no matter the belief of disbelief."

Thanks Linda.

"The Lions are on a mission to serve. Lions serve. It's that simple, and it has been since we first began in 1917. Our clubs are places where individuals join together to give their valuable time and effort to improving their communities, and the world."

The Lions Mission Statement reads:

"To empower Lions clubs, volunteers, and partners to improve health and well-being, strengthen communities, and support those in need through humanitarian services and grants that impact lives globally, and encourage peace and international understanding." Their vision: "To be the global leader in community and humanitarian service."

If you want to find more information about the international organization or the local Carver Lions. The following websites are and don't forget you can find the Carver Lions on Facebook too.

[www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) and [www.carverlions.org](http://www.carverlions.org)

At the close of this article, the above information was possible and all the thanks to the help of those who care about Carver. Some don't want to be named. My dear, dear, long time friend knows who he is. Thanks to you, "Pooh" your input is always invaluable. The others who helped were of course, Cheryl Peterson, Barb Swanson, Bob MacMullan, Cathy Elke, John vonWalter, Scheryl Goetze, Peter Haerden, Michael Quinn, Evelyn and Marvin Grimm and Linda Schutz. Forget anyone? Thank you everyone for your help putting this together. No matter how much or how little anyone feels that they contribute, don't be mistaken, every little contribution is huge when you are searching for data long gone.



The Lion's Club had submitted on Facebook a detailed accounting of their evening celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party that took place on October 18<sup>th</sup> at the City Hall in Carver, Minnesota. I would like to include that in this account of their many achievements with this piece of history that will now forever be preserved for them. To help those who have no idea of the olden days or know any of the former members who took great pride in their efforts. So much is lost over time, so many memories cluttered in our memory banks of our brains that it is nice to have a place to refer back to. An effort to refresh those good times. I hope that is what I have been able to do for you. I know it falls short, way short of sharing so much but perhaps it will trigger that small portion of memory for you and bring a smile to your face or make your day a little brighter recalling the past in more detail. It is an honor and a pleasure to have been able to backtrack and share. I know it's long, but for heaven's sake we are covering five decades and I really believe in all fairness, it doesn't do the club true justice for all they have achieved and continue to do for our community. It was all I had to find, so for that I apologize if I fell short of giving the fullest picture. In all honesty, it was more than I, myself expected to be able to retract for you all. Happy Anniversary to each and every dedicated Lion and thank you from the bottom of my heart this author feels towards all you strive to do. Amen already.

Here is the details that you can also find on their Facebook page:

Carver Lions – 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration - October 18 2023

[Carver Minnesota Lions Club](#) is 🌈 feeling festive.

Celebrating the big 50!

The [Carver Minnesota Lions Club](#) celebrated our 50th anniversary on October 18th with dinner and a program.

Thank you to everyone who helped us celebrate including District Governor Lion Christy Trutnau, Mayor Courtney Johnson, and members of surrounding Lions clubs.

Our motto is "We Serve", though Lion Tim said it best - We have some fun. We raise some money. We give all the money away 😊!



Our wonderful prime rib dinner 😊. ( pictured above on the right )

< Current and founding Carver Lion member Darrel Swanson rang the original bell from 1973 to start our meeting. Darrel was a director in 1973 and is the last remaining charter member.

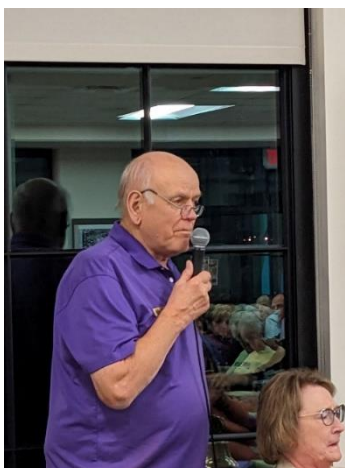
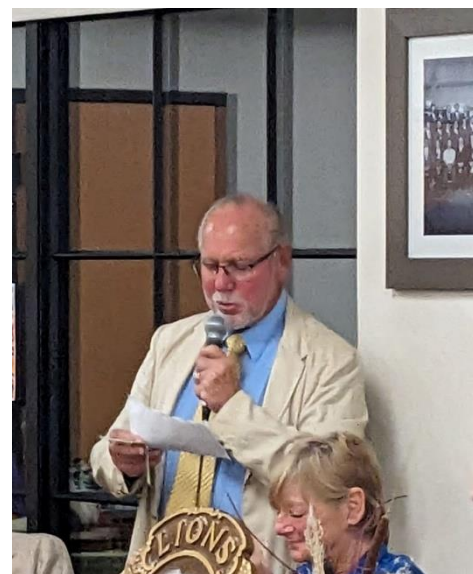
Mayor Courtney Johnson gave a welcoming speech. >

< Lion John Posselt provided the invocation before our meal.

<Lion Darrel regaled us with stories years past. One year the club had a "riding lawn mower" fundraiser. Tickets were \$1, lawn mower sight unseen. The winner got to take home their very own

In order to start our club all those years ago, we needed a sponsoring club. Thank you to the Chaska Lions for sponsoring us. Lion Jay Molnau provided some remarks on behalf of the Chaska club. >

<District Governor Christy Trutnau and current Carver Lions president Bob MacMullan.





District Governor Christy Trutnau took us on a trip down memory lane to 1973 when the minimum wage was \$1.60/hr, Michael and Jennifer were the most popular baby names, the Miami Dolphins won the Superbowl, the Oakland A's won the world series and the Montreal Canadians won the Stanley Cup. Also of note in 1973 - Lions club international welcomed it's 1 millionth member.



<Past District Governor and current Carver Lion Marv Grimm introduced our head table and special guests.



Lion Marv Grimm presented two awards. Lion Stephanie Griesinger (pictured) and Lion Darrel Swanson received awards for distinguished achievements in fulfilling the mission of Lions International.



Can you spot past president Lion Durk and Lion Christine smiling for the camera



We had a full house with Lions from a number of surrounding clubs. Many guests wore their Lions shirts and vests. How many different clubs can you identify from these photos?





**REMEMBER:**

*“Where there’s a need, there’s a Lion.”*



**Thank you Carver Lions**