

Volume 96969696 I

December 2023 / January 2024

Number Four Hundred Two



Mayor Courtney's Message

Greetings!

Happy New Year! Every year I have been Mayor, it has been my tradition to share ten items that were the most memorable or impactful in Carver from the previous year. With that, here's my list looking back on 2023:

10. Utility Billing Software – In August the City of Carver transitioned to new utility billing software (Invoice Cloud) which allows residents to sign up for autopay, pay by text, enroll in paperless billing, view payment and bill history online, schedule future utility payments and make a one-time payment.

9. Long-Term Financial Plan – In 2023 the City completed our first Long Term Financial Plan. Now, we've done long term planning previously, but this was different because it covers a ten-year period from 2023 – 2032. Not to be confused with our annual general fund budget, the Long Term Financial Plan is based on certain assumptions that reflect a snapshot in time. Find more details on the Long Term Financial Plan at CityOfCarver.com/408

8. Parks Advisory Group - The Parks Advisory Group was a new initiative in 2023 – a way for residents to explore and learn more about the City's Park system. Part educational, part community building, the Parks Advisory Group is tasked with developing new park ideas, addressing current park needs, and working on community wide events. We're always open to new members, so if you're interested in joining, email Erin Smith at ESmith@CityOfCarver.com.

7. Park Improvements – In July, we cut the ribbon on the nearly 3.5 acre expansion of Ironwood Park, which includes an outdoor classroom, skate park, picnic pavilion, basketball court and permanent outdoor yard games including cornhole and ping pong. Last fall at the site of the future Creekside Park, work to help stabilize Carver Creek started, using a toe wood method, which used trees from the site to slow erosion and improve creek health.

6. Celebrating New Firefighters – In April, Carver Fire held their first Badge Pinning and Black Helmet Ceremony. This event celebrated five firefighters who completed all training and tasks required in the probationary handbook, including 180 hours of classroom training, and officially welcomed them and their families to the Carver Fire Department.

5. Community Response on Water Quality – In December, the City heard from a number of residents who had concerns about the quality of water in their homes. With this information, the City was able to create a comprehensive report, prepared by the Water Resources Team, which addresses these concerns and describes the actions the City is taking to improve conditions. This work will be an ongoing and evolving process, but it's something I am committed to addressing. You can find the Community Response on Water Quality at CityOfCarver.com/180

4. Strategic Plan – Our 2023 – 2026 Strategic Plan has five strategic priorities: enhanced financial strength, improved operations, responsive development, stable infrastructure systems and focused communications. Under each strategic priority are desired outcomes, key outcome indicators, performance targets and strategic initiatives – all which guide our work. Read the Strategic plan at CityOfCarver.com/340

3. Changes at City Hall – Following the 2022 election, Erik Perschmann joined City Council in January. In October, following Joy McKnight's resignation from City Council, Reid Welch was appointed to serve the remainder of Joy's term, which runs through the end of 2024. Finally, after working as Carver's utility billing clerk for 22 ½ years, Brenda Efta retired on Nov. 30, 2023.

2. Bonding Money for Levee Project – The City of Carver was included in the State of Minnesota's historic 2023 Bonding Bill and received \$6 million for the Levee Improvement Project. This is the largest amount the City has received to date, and it brings the total we've received on the estimated \$12 million project to \$9.65 million. Construction is anticipated to begin as soon as 2025.

1. Commercial Development – In 2023 we welcomed five new businesses in Carver: Getaway Motor Café, Strains of the Earth, Next Steps Learning Center, Mizzy's Pizza and Healing Hands Veterinary Hospital. Coming in 2024, HomeTown Bank, Mocha Monkey and more!

Here's to a terrific 2024. As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns about anything that's going on in our community, please don't hesitate to reach out. I look forward to hearing from you!

Mayor Courtney Johnson
CJohnson@CityOfCarver.com
Cell: 612.702.7703
Facebook: [CarverMayorCourtney](https://www.facebook.com/CarverMayorCourtney)

"New Year's Day: a fresh start. A new chapter in life waiting to be written. New questions to be asked, embraced, and loved. Answers to be discovered and then lived in this transformative year of delight and self-discovery. Today carve out a quiet interlude for yourself in which to dream, pen in hand. Only dreams give birth to change."

~ Sarah Ban Brethnach

Miscellaneous

At a work session the council was presented with the 2024 Appointments. There was a discussion and then the preparation of the drafted 2024 Organization Resolution. Annually the Organization Resolution adopts this and historically at the first meeting of the new year. This resolution includes appointments of liaison positions to various commissions, boards, community organizations, and advocacy group.

New employees were welcomed. Ben Rosburg is the newest Public Services Technician II, along with three new firefighters, Eric Balloy, Ryan Seemann and Troy Walsh. Welcome to all.

The City Manager discussed the 2024 Legislative Priorities which is done annually for impending legislative session. Once these are adopted the priorities are communicated to the representative and senator.

The City Manager updated the council on the following items: Water Resource Team Update; Annual Employee Handbook Updates; Financial Policies Updates; cancellation of January 2nd work session; the Carer County Assessed Property Valuation Process; Open Meeting and Gift Law Training; Carver Place development; New Resident Communications and Maintenance for Skating Rink in Community Park; and Skate Park Removal in Community Park.

Joy McKnight was awarded the 2023 Greg Osterdyk Community Service Award at the council meeting in December. Congratulations to Ms McKnight.

The 2023 Employee of the Year Award was presented to Russell Kerber, Public Services Technician II, and Chad Rausch, Firefighter. Congratulations. Recognition Awards were also presented to recipients who were all firefighters. They are as follows: 5 Year Service Award, Ken Johnson, 10 Year Service Award, Tim Walsh, 15 Year Service Award to Bill Cochraine and 25 Year Service Award to Dan Meyer. Congratulations.

2024 Fee Schedule

The council reviewed the 2024 Fee Schedule which they annually review to establish fees for the upcoming year all part of the budget process. After adoption of the ordinance, the fees will go into effect January 1st, 2024. The council continued discussion of the drafted fee schedule at the council meeting reviewing further the proposed changes and adjustments. Revisions would be made for future meeting.

The council held a Public Hearing relating to the 2024 Fee Schedule issue. The Finance Director presented information specifically related to the Utility Rates for 2024. Question was asked about water testing fees collecting being sufficient to cover the testing costs for PFAS. Another question was posed regarding the success of the city's tiered billing intended to promote water conservation.

Long Term Financial Plan

At the council work session meeting the Finance Director presented the Ten Year Long Financial Plan submitted by Northland Securities. The council again discussed at a council meeting the Long-term Financial Plan with the Finance Director. This plan identifies future capital equipment, infrastructure projects, staffing, operations and maintenance requirements. The plan assesses the financial impact of these identified requirements, along with corresponding tax and utility rate impacts on city funds. This has been a proposal that the city has been working on through five work sessions covering various topics included in the plan. A final session had been held now presented with the drafted plan identifying the financial impact and rates over the next ten years.

Delinquent Utilities

The council held a Public Hearing for the Certification of Delinquent Utilities so that the comments or questions could be heard from the residents. It was asked that the county process be explained when certifications are sent regarding property taxes. It was explained that the fees would be disclosed on their homeowner's property taxes. The city attorney explained the process when property taxes are not paid. Question was asked about dates of past due accounts. The certified accounts being posted as past due are from October and prior. There were no public comments received at the Public hearing. Motion was made and carried with all ayes adopting the resolution accepting and certifying the assessment roll for delinquent utility bills and service bills for costs.

Kirche Hill Drive

The Assistant City Engineer discussed the information pertaining to the proposed parking restrictions on Kirche Hill Drive from 6th Street West to High Street between the dates of April 15th through September 15th of each year. Request was made to communicate these parking changes to the field rental parties in spring. Request was also submitted to notify the law enforcement personnel. Motion was made and carried with all ayes adopting the resolution establishing parking restrictions along Kirche Hill Drive.

2024 Street Maintenance Project

The Assistant City Engineer discussed the next process relating to the 2024 Street Maintenance Project which involved the preparation of final plans and specifications. The potential plan from past discussions involved a parking lot ear High Street. It was stated that presently consideration of proposal was at the right timeframe. Comment was also introduced that the Community Park parking lot appeared to be quite full during events, as well. It seemed that High Street was being utilized for the overflow. The council expressed interest in seeing how the parking restriction option was going to work out. Motion was made and carried with all ayes authorizing the preparation of Plans and Specifications for the 2024 Street Maintenance Project.

Water Treatment Plant

The Assistant City Engineer discussed the reconstruction of the filter underdrain system of the water treatment plant. Some of the failing items were discussed with the council. The system requires reconstruction to adequately address the issues. This would be completed prior to the peak summer demand season. The life expectancy for the repairs was inquired about and the response was anticipated to last for twenty plus years. Question was also asked if this would be considered an upgrade to the current type of filtration. The response was that it would be a full rehab of filters one and two to perform identically. Motion was made and carried with all ayes to approve the change order for the improvements to the water treatment facility.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

The City Manager reviewed the information regarding the Collective Bargaining discussions that had occurred. The council reviewed the motion for the 2024/2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, MN Council 65, AAFL-CIO, and Local 2789-3 formerly known as AFSCME. Non-supervisory personnel in Community Development, Finance and Public Services are organized as a collective bargaining unit. The bargaining agreement is negotiated by an AFSCME Business Agent. The existing agreement ceases December 31st, 2023. The Finance Director, Public Services Director and the City Manager represented the city during contract negotiations. The organizational structure was reviewed. The primary contract provisions involved pay increase for 2024 and 2025; Public Service Department's regular work week, differential pay paid at the overtime rate and reformatting on-call scheduling and pay system. Approval of the agreement was recommended. At the council meeting, councilmember had additional questions relating to the agreement and the council discussed further. Motion was then made and carried with all ayes approving the 2024/2025 Collective Bargaining Agreement with AFSCME.

Service Agreement

The council discussed the service agreement for Joint Assessment with Carver County. A motion was required to approve the agreement for joint assessment with the county. The city usually contacts with the Assessor's office for assessing services. It was recommended to approve this agreement.

Meadows at Spring Creek

The Assistant City Engineer discussed the acceptance of improvements and release letter of credit for the Meadows at Spring Creek First addition. Public improvements have been constructed by the developer and has requested acceptance. A final inspection concluded work was completed in accordance with approved plans. Warranty bonds were procured and there is no need to retain any amounts. The developer was responsible for overall project costs. The same applied for the second addition. Approval of requests submitted was recommended.

Charitable Gambling

The Carver Lions requested a Charitable Gambling Permit allowing the sale of pull-tabs at Mizzy's Pizza. The Carver Lions Club is a registered non-profit organization allowed to conduct charitable gambling. Documentation from the Lions Club was necessary for the city to approve the resolution for the request.

2024 Utility Improvements Project

The council discussed rejection of a bid received for the 2024 Utility Improvements project. An overview was presented regarding the city owning and operating a complex water distribution system. Continued growth, system components age, it is critical to properly maintain to minimize failures impacting system reliability. These needs have been identified and recognized by several utility improvement projects in the city's long term financial plan. The council has reviewed the scope of said improvements, approved plans and specifications, and ordered advertisement of bids. The council went over the scope of improvements. Bids were received and reviewed. One bid was nearly double the engineer's estimated cost. The project currently programmed in the 2024 long term plan to be funded by the water fund. Recently an alternate funding plan was looked at. This was as a result of the large disparity between the current funding plan and the bid received. Bonding would be necessary to complete the project as bid. Rejection of the bid was recommended. Staff is to reassess the project scope and associated funding plan to present an alternative project. Motion was made and carried with all ayes rejecting the bid received for the 2024 Utility Improvements Project.

Zoning Code

The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing regarding Zoning Code changes. The Assistant City Engineer provided an overview of the MS4 permit and the code updates required to comply with new rules. Board members asked multiple questions. The Zoning Code mirrors the state permit requirements. Motion was made and carried with all ayes approving the presented code changes recommending the council adopt the proposed changes.

The Community Development Director reviewed and discussed with the Planning Commission the old topic relating to changes to the residential zoning district.

Timber Creek

The Community Development Director presented information to the Planning Commission regarding Timber Creek Phase 4 Final Plat. The Phase 4 proposal includes sixty six single family homes. Timber Creek also anticipates to include one or two more phases. Board members asked multiple questions regarding the final plat plans presented for Phase 4. Motion was made and carried with all ayes approving the Final Plat for Timber Creek Phase 4.

Carver Place

The Planning Commission reviewed information regarding the Preliminary Plat for Carver Place. The Carver County Community Development Agency requested a public hearing and review of the preliminary plat for property located south of Carver Crossing. Carver Place is the proposed future senior facility. The facility has been contemplated for several years through the development of Copper Hills, Carver Crossing and the Carver Station. Property since 2010. A history of the CDA's plans over the decade has changed and was gone over with the Planning Commission. Many changes have occurred since 2010. Since the Planned Residential Development, the Comprehensive Plan had been updated. CDA has maintained ownership of the final multi-family site before the Planning Commission for Preliminary Plat review.

"The Planning Commission most recently reviewed a version of the CDA's plan which included 103 units of general occupancy units (60 units) called Carver Place along with senior specific units (43 units) called Carver Oaks. Due to funding availability, the project has evolved and changed since the most recent review by the Planning Commission. The proposed project is for 60 general occupancy units with a second senior building anticipated at a future date adjacent to Carver Place. The Preliminary Plat before the Planning Commission would split the existing lot into two lots to allow for development of both buildings on different timelines."

"The best way to predict your future is to create it."

~ Abraham Lincoln

Truth and Taxation

The council held a Public Hearing for the Truth in Taxation. The Financial Director gave information regarding the topic. Several residents questioned percentage increase in home valuations. Another resident inquired about the growth of the city and the correlating tax rates, along with an inquiry relating to transfer of funds. After the public hearing was closed the council discussed information and feedback.

Pera Benefits

The council reviewed and discussed adopting the resolution regarding the PERA Benefit Level for the firefighters. At a past meeting there had been discussions authorizing joining the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter plan administered by the Public Employees Retirement Association. This transition removed the Fire Relief Association formal obligation to manage pension funds. The city would now act as the primary decision makers relying on the PERA and State Board of Investments to appropriately and efficiently manage and distribute funds. For this transition to take place, the city and the Carver Fire Relief Board of Directors needs to adopt resolutions approving the enrollment and transition. At this time the city is proposing an increase in the benefit level for firefighters who have completed at least five years of good service credit as a member of the SVF Plan. Recommendation had been submitted to approve the request and resolution.

Police Services

The City Manager discussed the contract for Police Services with the council. Currently the city funds two full-time equivalent positions. The contract, does not specifically describe the agreement with the continued shared patrol services model with the City of Victoria. The costs were reviewed and discussed. The 2024 contract adjustment represents an increase over last year's costs for services. These costs were attributed to a change facilitating a county wide scheduling transition, taking the standard patrol shift hour change. Additionally, increases were recognized as part of the collective bargaining agreement negotiated between the county and the sheriff's office. Costs were included in the 2024 General Fund Budget to offset the increase associated with the 2024 contract for police services.

DNR Flood Hazard Mitigation Program

The Assistant City Engineer discussed the DNR Flood Hazard Mitigation Program Grant Funding with the council.

The council reviewed the resolution to adopt the funding assistance. As early as 2020 the city had submitted an application to the DNR. The application was associated with the concept plan to certify the city's flood levee. The city had been notified funding was received to advance the levee project and a grant agreement was executed with the DNR back in 2021. Those funds were utilized to conduct the work discussed and the necessity to move forward with the project. Those initial grant funds were fully reimbursed to date. As a result, the city applied for State Capital Budget Requests in the last two years. Notification was received this past June that additional funding had been received through the State Bonding Bill. Receipt of these funds will allow the project to move forward with design and a phased construction project. Construction phasing is dependent upon possible receipt of additional funding which the city applied for with both and state and federal requests. In order to receive this additional funding a resolution is required for an amendment of the DNR grant agreement to incorporate the additional funding. The resolution required identification of a source of funds to be utilized to satisfy the city's total local match requirement based on the 2020 census population data. The council's understanding based on discussions with the State, the city's local match requirement will be met via the Federal Community Project Funding Grant, funding from the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District in which some monies have already been reimbursed with the remaining amount to be reimbursed, as well as the monies previously spent on stormwater lift station improvements for the levee system. Approval was recommended.

"Not everything that is face can be changed,
but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

~ James Baldwin

Carver Post Office

We all are aware how frustrated so many people are at this time with the issues relating to the Carver Post Office. It is bad timing this time of the year for catastrophes to occur, the busiest and happiest holiday season of the year, Christmastime.

Hopefully, we all can draw on that inner empathy, compassion and understanding for those who are the direct targets of everyone's anger, frustration and unable to fix the problem to everyone's satisfaction. Upon good authority, was told that you can't even call and get a human without being transferred to the main office which that in itself can be aggravating too. Haven't gotten the report back if you physically go in, if anyone is there to help? Please everyone, exercise patience, understanding and put yourselves in their shoes. How would you feel?

Anyway, found on Facebook the following posting, (among many others that we won't reprint for obvious reasons.) the following explanation early in December. Not real positive how relevant the information is at this point. This author had heard that carriers are out at all hours trying to get mail to its recipients. Regardless, thought I would share.

"Carver Post Office is still open for retail operations. However, the carriers have been moved temporarily to Chanhassen. It was pretty last minute, and therefore, the kinks (such as getting held mail and po box mail to Carver) are still being worked out. On top of that, 2 carriers are out for personal/injury and a 3rd just quit. So, 1 route has regular coverage. The other 3 are being filled by subs, most of which is borrowed from other offices and have no idea of the area. The carriers are all working hard to get everything caught up. So, please have patience, and treat them with respect. They don't appreciate getting berated at work anymore than you do.

Also, if you're expecting a package, keep your lights on a little later. They are out past dark and cannot see house numbers. If it's being returned to Chan, they probably couldn't find the house. Having clearly marked mailboxes and not covering up your house numbers with decorations helps as well. Thank you all in advance for your understanding and patience.

Happy holidays!"

Carver Business Alliance

The Carver Business Alliance is a collaboration of business owners, community leaders, and local officials working together to promote, enhance, and create opportunities for commerce in the City of Carver. Business roundtable discussions are held, and City of Carver updates are provided at each meeting." They usually meet every third Friday at city hall. May's meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 19th.

Carver Current

Looking for local information? Go to Carver Current website to get information you didn't know you needed. It is also where you will find the local newsletter relating to the City of Carver, "Villager Tower." You can also post information on this website. You can find links too at Carver Current. Just another way to stay in touch and know what is happening locally in the Carver area.

© 2023 RYS CREATIONS

Carver Baseball Softball Association

Up to date information can be found at

www.ccybsa.com

Jim has been under the weather for several months and is recuperating. Check the website for any new information and updates.

Carver Black Sox

Have you checked out your local team? Check their website for additional information,

www.carverblacksox.com.

The Region 7C tournament marks 8 consecutive years that Carver has qualified for the tournament and the 6th appearance in the last 7 years in the MBA State Tournament.



Disclaimer

Any and all information used to comprise the information in the 'Villager Tower' for informing the public is by utilizing the unapproved minutes posted on the City of Carver's website. Dahlgren Township information is secured from their website. Information for events, festivities, and so forth are also found on the internet to share with the public. It is the public's responsibility to verify information by visiting sites to get all and up to date information.

© 2023 RYS CREATIONS

Southwest Transit

Check their website for all other services provided. [www.swtransit.org]

The SW Transit offices are happy to announce that again this year there will be transportation via SW Transit to the MN Arboretum Winter Lights program. A shuttle is being provided from the East Creek Station in Chaska to the Arboretum on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Bus will depart at 4:45 PM and run continuously throughout the evening until 10 PM.

The Minnesota Vikings Express is running through January 15th with service from East Creek Station, Chaska, SW Village, Chanhassen and Eden Prairie's SW Station pick up and drop offs.

Don't forget their other services offered, SW Prime, SW Perks, Prime MSP Airport, SW Prime Edge, Prime Essential and Prime MD.



Exchange Students

Kayla Merkling is a local Coordinator for the International Experience from the River Oaks neighborhood in Carver. She posted on Facebook/Carver Life on December 7th. You can search her name for more information or the Carver Life page and scroll to that date for more information regarding the four students seeking host families for the upcoming academic year. Ms Merkling currently is host for a Spanish student enrolled at the Chaska High School. Chaska hosts six students each year. You need to hurry to reach out ASAP to claim these spots. She posted what I call four resumes of some students looking for a host family. You can look up this post or you can contact her at k.merkling@international-experience.net (website: www.ie-usa.org) The four resumes listed Andrea who is from Spain along with Lucia, also from Spain, Matteo from Italy and Marie who is from Germany.



Boy Scout Troop #337

Another interesting posting on Facebook/Carver Life involved the issue of Christmas tree pick up. Only drawback was that the sign up date is before publication, but worth a try or keep for next year? Boy Scout Troop #337 is doing a Christmas Tree Pickup for residents of Chaska, Chanhassen, Carver and Victoria residents. Their scheduled pick up dates are Saturday, January 6th and Sunday, January 7th. They pick up and deliver to a compost site for \$ 10.

This event helps them to raise funds for their camping adventure. Not sure after that date they will pick up, but you can try, email bsatroop3337@gmail.com, leave your name, address and phone number. Lots of luck. Sorry, couldn't post sooner.



15th Annual Soggy Bottom Snow Golf Tourney

It's that time of year again for the Annual Soggy Bottom Snow Golf Tourney! This is their 15th event guys!

The annual fundraiser supports local/area Carver families in medical crisis, and who are currently experiencing financial hardship. We raise money through our outdoor snow golf tournament fees, food and beverage sales, private donations and day of raffles.

The date for the event is January 27th starting at 11 AM and won't end until 2 PM or later. Friends getting together and forget time, you know how that goes, right? Soggy Bottom Golf Tournament is the last Saturday in January too.

It's golf in the snow (we hope!) using a golf club, hockey stick, etc. Proceeds go to help local family (s) in medical crisis. Location: Riverside Park. Need more information? The Lion Chair: Kristy Mock.



Carver Shops

There was a time when the Carver era had multiple Occasional Shops dotted throughout Carver. That landscape seems to have shifted to Chaska, Waconia areas presently. There are lots of them all over and lots that no longer exist or you need to be on that circuit to follow. However, Carver still has two. Let's keep them here huh? Other types of small businesses have popped up all over town though, some downtown, some on the outskirts, some more modern, some more traditional, some quaint but all are unique in their own right. Not to mention all the businesses run out of private residences throughout the entire area. Be sure to support your local businesses. Carver Shops Occasional dates quickly approaching. January 2024 dates are January 18th through the 23rd.

Some Shops in Carver:

Carver Creamery – updates on Facebook - 2023 season

Closed for season

Carver General – Facebook - Occasional Shop Dates

Old Carver Fishing Bait and Tackle - Facebook

Ripple Art Studio & Gallery – www.rippleartstudio.com

Ripple Art Studio & Gallery - FB

The Good Junk Garage – Facebook

Temperance Arts & Gifts – Facebook

The Funky Dove – Facebook

Strive Nutrition – Carver - Facebook

Getaway Motor Café – Facebook / Instagram

Strains of the Earth – 300 Broadway Street, Carver / Facebook



Funky Dove Boutique

~~~~~  
“How are ya?” Rebecca asks. She would also like you to know that her shop in January will be open Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup> an Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup>, as well as the following weekend on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. And here's a twist for you, the third weekend in January, be sure to stop by and check out the fantastic things you just have to have or that special gift for that someone special. She will be open, Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, the 21<sup>st</sup>. Check her facebook page for hours and the rest of the month. February she tentatively, seriously considering a purchasing trip abroad. Did we mention she has sales? Well, she does. And if you aren't careful, one day she will be up and gone and all your “wish list” items will be forever gone. Can't let that happen, now can we?

Those gnomes are moving out fast. Like hummingbirds? Stop in and check out the beaded hummingbirds. She has them in different colors too! I'll just bet you can find really affordable Xmas stuff for next year at a substantial discount at Funky Dove? What are you waiting for, get your coat, hat, boots, mittens or gloves, scarf and get to her store. Oh that's right, it's not cold out yet. Whatever! Get over to the Funky Dove before it's too late, keep her in business and get yourself a healthy dose of positivity and good cheer. Happy New Year! Remember, check her Facebook page for your list and her hours!

## Carver General

So, what is going on over at the Carver General in 2024? Well, let me tell you, first you will want to check out their Facebook page to get all the latest news. You do know that this shop is run by two gals who are friends, don't you? If not, now you do. They consider themselves seasoned veterans in the vintage/antiques business and are frugal, they say. Their environment is considered a delightful old building and they aren't kidding. If, for no other reason, you should simply just stop in and check out the atmosphere. Heard that a ghost resides there too, but only comes out when the shop is empty. Any who, these fine ladies work hard to find that terrific, have to have décor for all of you who come to shop for your home, your garden, your friends, loved ones. Also, they cannot believe the incredible year that they have had and thank all their wonderful customers, supportive families, and loyal friends. Come and check out what the two have created for their January sales event. Their January dates are Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup> through Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> to welcome in 2024.

Don't forget to check out the Good Junk Garage too. Usually open the third Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the month. Check out their Facebook page too. They are right next door to Carver General on Third Street east in downtown Carver! Not a discount store you want to overlook or skip, by the way!

## Getaway Motor Café

The Getaway Motor Café is coming up on their 1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary in January. Kowing them, they have something spectacularly extraordinary to celebrate the landmark. What do you think? Need to know their hours of operation? Check their Facebook page and on line. Otherwise, a brief quick reference is: Monday through Wednesday, 7 AM – 2 PM; Thursday, 7 AM – 9 PM; Friday, 7 AM – 10 PM; Saturday, 8 AM – 10 PM; and finally on Sunday, 8 AM to 2 PM. Thursday through Sunday espresso/coffee services ends at 4 PM and cocktails begin at 4:30 PM.

The Patio during winter is restricted to winter activities but they still have food trucks serving delicious foods. Check their calendar of events for food vendors scheduled. ([www.getawaymotorcafe.com](http://www.getawaymotorcafe.com))

Did you hear or have you heard about their To-Go Tumblers? Or have indulged in their Hot Chocolate Bombs? They have apparel for sale too, this editor heard.

They also have six custom winter cocktails featured. One is called the Thyme Traveler Margarita. Another is Naughty and Nice Cocktail. There are six custom winter cocktails. You will have to go there to find out the other names. Can't wait to hear what their anniversary plans are or what else they got brewing for 2024. Hot spot to be in Carver.



## Mizzy's Pizza

Over on the other side of Carver you will find Mizzy's pizza who invites you to come join them for cocktails, Appetizers, pizza and above all, lots and lots of fun. Did you know that they service some pretty ingenious cocktails too? There was Sugar Cookie Martini, Peppermint Mudslide or how about Topsy Santa? Where have all these creative genius's been hiding? Have you also heard something about a Strutter's Pass-through awning? Don't forget either all the game time fun offered at Mizzy's. And oh yea, they are still hiring crew members too. Go to their website to apply.

[[www.mizzyspizza.com](http://www.mizzyspizza.com)]

Another additional announcement before it is overlooked or forgotten....watch for pull tabs to be sold at Mizzy's on January 3<sup>rd</sup>! Just another reason to order pizza, enjoy the game with friends, have a beer or drink and hang out, right? Right!





## Carver Lions

Don't forget the Lions are still collecting old eyeglasses or hearing aids. You can drop them off at Harvey's Bar and Grill, the Post Office, Carver Ridge Senior Living building or at Lenzen Chevrolet dealership in Chaska.

The City of Carver council thanked the Lions for their hard work hosting the Carver Village Christmas with Santa which as usual was a huge success....did you see the video on Facebook with Santa arriving?

There were ( are ) photos posted o Facebook for the festive Carver Village Christmas event if you missed them. Bet you can still pull them p and check them out on the Lions Facebook page, or maybe the city's new Instagram account. Someone posts great pictures. There was also some great pictures of the Senior Luncheon too which was chaired by Evelyn and Sandy. The food for that event was provided by Hillcrest Catering and the desserts provided by Carver Creamery. They had a fantastic turnout. Thanks everyone.

Then there was the posting regarding Bountiful Basket Food Shelf meeting with some members. A new member joined and a prospective interested individual attended their meeting to join in on all the crazy fun. All good reports received on recent events was shared and relished with gratitude and satisfaction. Forty two pounds of food were donated to Bountiful Basket. To top off the Lions December was their holiday party ( also posted on Facebook ). Looked like they had a terrific time with a great turnout and had lots and lots of fun. See what you are missing? If you are interested in accompanying the terrific group they will be meeting the first and third Wednesday at the Village Hall in January. Be sure to mark your calendars and show up and see what craziness they are dreaming up for 2024. Whatever it is, it will certainly include fun, work, self-gratification, giving and happiness. They start the year off with their 15<sup>th</sup> Soggy Bottom event.

Oh yea, just so you too, there are ongoing projects too, like Roadside Clean up; Blood Drive dates; and weekly Meat Raffles.

## Arts Consortium

The Arts Consortium of Carver County is celebrating youth artists with a Youth Art Show scheduled January 11<sup>th</sup> through February 23<sup>rd</sup> of 2024. It is open to all school-age artists under the age of eighteen. All themes, sizes and mediums are welcomed. There is no fee to enter either. Not required to be an All the youths are encouraged to enter their submissions soon. Where? You can drop them off at the Parks and Rec office at the gallery at the end of the building ( Chaska Community Center ) starting at 9 AM until 4 PM, Monday through Thursday. Three pieces of art can be submitted per artist. They will also try to accommodate as many as possible too! Each submittal must be ready to hang, so frame and wire is a necessity. Label each submittal with the name and the age of the artist and be sure to include contact information. All submissions will be picked up on February 24<sup>th</sup> between one and five. If you have any questions, you can call or text Liya at 612-867-9278.



March 2024

## Chaska Valley Family Theatre

The Chaska Valley Family Theater has their cast for the debut of Fiddler on the Roof. You can meet them in March when the first performance will held. Be sure to get your tickets early so you don't miss it. They were blown away by the talent at auditions. So you know, it will be worthwhile ad good. That first performance will be held at the Chaska Community Center on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Watch for more details in 2024 and check their website and Facebook page for all kinds of fun information.

"Crying is just the way your eyes speak when your mouth can't explain how broken your heart is."

~ Prakhar Sahay



## Community Highlights

January 2024

|                          |                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| January 1 <sup>st</sup>  | New Year's Day<br>No School                                                                                     |
| January 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | Council Meeting                                                                                                 |
| January 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | Lions Meeting                                                                                                   |
| January 5 <sup>th</sup>  | Happy Anniversary Daniel and Rebecca!                                                                           |
| January 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Orthodox Christmas Day                                                                                          |
| January 8 <sup>th</sup>  | School Board Work Session<br>Carver Elementary PTO Meeting<br>Dahlgren Township Board Meeting                   |
| January 9 <sup>th</sup>  | Coffee and Connect<br>Heritage Preservation Commission Meeting                                                  |
| January 10 <sup>th</sup> | Happy Birthday Jerad!                                                                                           |
| January 14 <sup>th</sup> | Orthodox New Year's Day                                                                                         |
| January 15 <sup>th</sup> | Martin Luther King Jr Day<br>No School<br>Civil Rights Day                                                      |
| January 16 <sup>th</sup> | Council Meeting                                                                                                 |
| January 17 <sup>th</sup> | Lions Meeting<br>Happy Birthday David!                                                                          |
| January 18 <sup>th</sup> | Carver Elementary – Family Game Night<br>Planning Commission Meeting<br>Happy Birthday Eric!                    |
| January 19 <sup>th</sup> | Business Alliance Meeting                                                                                       |
| January 20 <sup>th</sup> | Happy Birthday Kay!<br>Happy Birthday Jim!                                                                      |
| January 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Happy Birthday Abby!<br>School Board Meeting<br>No School                                                       |
| January 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Coffee and Connect                                                                                              |
| January 24 <sup>th</sup> | Happy Birthday Troy!<br>Happy Birthday Mike!                                                                    |
| January 25 <sup>th</sup> | Happy Birthday Ethen!                                                                                           |
| January 26 <sup>th</sup> | Happy Birthday Rich!<br>Happy Birthday Dan!<br>Happy Birthday Mary Lou!                                         |
| January 27 <sup>th</sup> | 15 <sup>th</sup> Soggy Bottom Snow Golf<br>Happy Birthday Paul!<br>Happy Birthday Henry!<br>Happy Birthday Tiu! |
| January 29 <sup>th</sup> | Happy Birthday Shawn!                                                                                           |
| January 30 <sup>th</sup> | Happy Birthday Karen!                                                                                           |
| January 31 <sup>st</sup> | Happy Birthday Trish!                                                                                           |



## Schram's Vineyards

Schram's Vineyards is introducing their Winter Wine Lodge starting Saturday's, December 30<sup>th</sup> through February 17<sup>th</sup>. After much thought and planning they are eager to debut and share their Winter Wine Lodge with tasting experiences, outdoor activities, unique vendors, attractions, and live music. BYO ( bring your own ) snowshoes and/or cross country skis. That of course means Mother Nature has provided us with that white stuff, called snow. With that in mind, you will take in the wintry landscape from noon until 4 PM at your own pace, of course. Then after a good work out, you can stop in and enjoy the "Wine Lodge"! Fires will be provided during the day with s'mores, ad mulled wine. Each Saturday will host different themed music, attractions, vendors, and so much more.



Every Saturday: Specialty: Specialty Reserved Tasting Experiences at noon; Outdoor daytime fires, s'mores, and mulled wine; Vineyard trails as winter conditions allow 12-4 PM; Winter Lodge Decor and ambiance; Winter Food Menu featuring perfect wine pairings; and Different themed vendors or music each week.

The themed Saturdays scheduled are:

December 30th - Sparkling Soirée  
January 6th - Cuddle Up (Goats)  
January 13th - Après Ski  
January 20th - Wine and Cheese  
January 27th - Fire and Spice  
February 3rd - Treat Yourself  
February 10th - Sweethearts  
February 17th - Jazz Speakeasy

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

~ Thomas Edison

## Schram Haus Brewery

There were not any postings at the time of publication for special events at the Schram Haus Brewery right out of Carver on the bluff. However, that doesn't mean after publication, that something has been added to their venue. Did note though that they are now offering Limo Tours to their three locations with their new limo and executive transportation tours. Don't forget too that they feature different music acts which you can check on their website who is playing. They have beers, the Beer Club and Bag Leagues.



## Trinity Lutheran Church

Submitted by: Trinity Lutheran Church  
JANUARY 2024: Everyone is welcome here at Trinity! Please join us for Worship services at 10 am every Sunday morning. We believe that the church is not a building, but people joined together by God through faith. Our prayer is to see our town awakened to and transformed by the love of Jesus. We would love to pray for you. Please contact Pastor Jander with prayer requests or questions at:  
Office: 952-448-3628  
Email: [office@trinitycarver.com](mailto:office@trinitycarver.com)  
Website: [trinitycarver.com](http://trinitycarver.com)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TrinityLutheranChurchCarver](http://www.facebook.com/TrinityLutheranChurchCarver)



## Stick's Tavern

What's going on over at Stick's Tavern? They are open this winter you know? While you are at it, don't forget their Sunday brunches. Stick's Tavern is on Dahlgren Road in the Dahlgren Golf Course property. Buck off Sunday Funday happens all during January but they close at 2 PM on Sundays. The Buffet opens at 9 AM. January Tuesdays are Taco Tuesdays, happy hour and music too Wednesday's are featuring Whiskey Wednesdays and Wings Wednesdays. Don't forget happy hour and bingo at 6:30 PM. What do you suppose they have planned for Thursdays? Tails for Snails, happy hour, and at 7 PM the Br Exam. You will just have to go there to see what this is all about. Fridays in January are \$2.50 Busch Light Cans, buck off happy hour and then at 5 PM is the Fish Fry. Saturdays are prime Rib Nights at 5 PM on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and then February 3<sup>rd</sup>. OM the 27<sup>th</sup> of January at 5 PM is Johnny's B's Ribs.  
( [www.stickstavern.com](http://www.stickstavern.com) )



## Minnesota Ice

### Castles

It's back again for 2024. Unless the weather doesn't cooperate. According to the article found on line by Twin Cities Mom Collective. Tickets went on sale in November. The Ice Castle is returning to Maple Grove. Exact address listed is 12499 82nd Avenue North, Maple Grove. The event is scheduled for January but didn't see a specific time schedule. Interested, will have to do some digging for that information. Some highlights though: The Ice Castles is an award-winning frozen attraction and is located in four cities across North America. They are comprised of using hundreds of thousands of icicles hand-placed by professional artists. The phenomenon consists of breathtaking LED-lit sculptures, frozen thrones, ice carved tunnels, slides, fountains and so much more. In Minnesota, this year, they are offering an ice bar serving selected adult beverages, all guests can participate in an event called Castle Quest. The description given was that it's an immersive, escape-room style scavenger hunt inside the attraction. Also there will be an enhanced lighting feature in the light walk and throughout the entire event. There will be whimsical winter characters each day greeting guests. Check it out.



"You can't use up creativity. The more you use it, the more you have."

~ Maya Angelou

## St Paul Winter Carnival

Ever been to the St Paul Winter Carnival? The event begins January 25<sup>th</sup> and runs through February 3<sup>rd</sup>. However, the fun continues but only for the Vulcan Snow Park and the MN State Fairgrounds. The majority of the events are held at Rice Park in downtown St Paul with a lot of events also happening at the state fairgrounds.



Visit their website for a full run down of what is happening and more detailed information at [www.wintercarnival.com](http://www.wintercarnival.com) There's a whole section about the legend too.

At the Button Center found the following to be quite interesting:

"The Saint Paul Winter Carnival proudly introduces Kao Lee Thao as our 2024 button artist. Kao Lee's journey as an artist is deeply rooted in her Saint Paul upbringing, particularly in the vibrant neighborhood of Frogtown. From her earliest days, the Winter Carnival held a special place in her heart. Even after her family relocated to the suburb of Savage, her family continued to return to the enchanting ice sculptures, captivating parades, and mesmerizing fireworks of the Winter Carnival. These memories have left a magical mark on her.

Kao Lee's artistic pursuits took an unexpected turn as she followed her passion, veering away from her initial dream of becoming a psychiatrist. Today, she is a partner of Folklore Studio, a 3D animation company that creates animations for television and film. Her artistic journey began when she first picked up a paintbrush, transforming her world forever. Her boundless inspiration flows from dreams and personal experiences, igniting her creative fire. The opportunity to design the 2024 buttons for the Winter Carnival was a personal and professional thrill."

## Festivus

Have been seeing and hearing a lot about this word popping up in the most unusual places all over, have you?

"Festivus," what is this? So, I looked it up to see what this new, what I call, "Fad" is all about. Don't ever recall such a big deal about this in the past? So, according to Wikipedia:

"Festivus is a secular holiday celebrated on December 23<sup>rd</sup> as an alternative to the perceived pressures and commercialism of the Christmas season." Festivus became popular in society's culture after it became the focus on and episode on Seinfeld in 1997 originally created by the author, Daniel O'Keefe. In this particular episode it is referred to as "a Festivus for the rest of us." Festivus has been also described as a parody holiday festival and as a form of playful consumer resistance. "Journalist Allen Salkin describes it as "the perfect secular theme for all all-inclusive December gathering."

Makes sense but ....never mind, my opinion doesn't matter.





## *Gossip - Not Gossip*

Ever hear of Joseph Fafinski? Maybe he's your neighbor or lives down the street from you, or even a personal friend? Did you know he's an author? Did you know he lives in Carver? Did you know he has a book out? "Jude is Rude" – Joe Egan Books.

Another author in Carver is Stacy Ingraham....she your neighbor? Friend? Acquaintance? Know her? Well her book is selling on Amazon. Her book is "The Untold Toll of a Wrongful Conviction."

At the Chaska Parks and Recreation Chaska Event Center has planned a Dr Martin Luther King Jr Day Celebration. Interested? It's a morning event beginning at 7:45 AM until 9:30 AM on Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. The keynote speaker giving the address will be Tracey Gibson, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at Anderson Corporation. The Chaska Human Rights Award ceremony will also feature music, food and other contributions from community members. The event is hosted by the Chaska Human Rights Commission.

Chanhassen Storm football team participated in their first state championship competition at the US Bank Stadium.

Another achievement for Chaska/Chanhassen students were also state participants in the state cross country competitions.

A special school board meeting was held in December to appoint an interim superintendent and authorize the administration to begin contract negotiations.

Word is that due to the warm weather this winter, the MN Ice Festival held in Eagan has been cancelled for 2024 in Edina at the Centennial Lakes Park.

East Union church is gearing up for the annual Spaghetti Dinner scheduled to take place on February 10th, so you have advance notice.

Looking for a job? Heard through the grapevine that Casey's in Carver is in need of employees and is hiring, for anyone interested. That is not gossip, that is a fact.

Also caught this interesting tid bit on Facebook/Carver Life that thought should be shared with y'all.

Carver life

[Peter Knutson](#)

[December 19 at 7:34 PM](#) ·

Hello Carver life - are you looking for a potential reading tutor for your student?

My name is Peter - I currently live in Carver and I'm looking for more families/students to help tutor. I have 2 years of elementary teaching experience and 1 year of middle school teaching experience. I have been tutoring for 5 years. I am Orton-Gillingham trained in literacy/dyslexia training. I'd welcome the opportunity to partner with you/your student. If interested, please either comment or message me directly. Thank you!

Horse racing at Canterbury is scheduled to open on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024; just so you know.

Did y'all know that Chaska has a Santa Parade? Apparently, this year, they held their third Santa's Parade leaving the Chaska Fire Department headquarters according to SouthWest Publishing report, Graham Johnson. ( This really is his story, by the way. ) Graham said with pictures posted on line that they travel down the Yellow Brick Road. No, not in Kansas with the tin man, the scarecrow, or the lion, or Dorothy or Toto. With Santa in Chaska, Minnesota. Also, according to Graham's photo, there was an awfully odd looking character resembling what, think is supposed to be Santa's Elf by the loader. By the way, welcome and thanks Graham for the article. He also said that the fire trucks, the loader and Santa take about twenty minutes for their trip before heading through the Chaska proper of downtown and probably through residential areas. They wave at people, play music and spread the Christmas spirit and cheer wherever they go. How about that huh? Third one huh? I'll just bet that there are a lot of people who had no idea about this?

Word had been spreading like wild fire, as well, when Alley Cat saw Mrs Mouse out having dinner with Mr Rat while Mr Mouse was home with the meeces.

Brownie Mouse saw Doe and Buck running into the woods when a human was chasing them and shooting at them carelessly, swearing profusely when he missed them.

And rumor has it that over in Red Oaks Red Fox was seen courting Gray Fox while Mr Wolf was stalking them both.

Meanwhile over on Fourth Street, Slithereen Snake was seen slithering through Mrs Peacock's broken basement window.

Then there were the pesky doorbell bandits that were having a such a good ole' time causing all kinds of ruckus with the two dogs inside a home on Willow Woods that none of them paid attention to the doorbell camera taking their pictures and when they got home, they were ever so surprised to find their parents up waiting for them with pictures of the evidence.

## *2024 Iconic Ball Drop*

Here's something else interesting this author stumbled across that just couldn't resist sharing. Skip it if you're not interested.

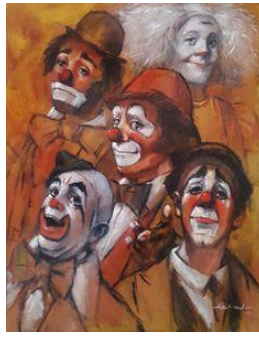
Now, we all are way too familiar with the widely televised New Year's Eve ball drop celebration in New York City? Where all the stations are overcome with different genres of covering the event? According to the news broadcasters, there's some pretty rich history pertaining to this event. We all are very aware of it being an iconic gall drop at that midnight hour with the outlandish numbers of people attending to witness the drop in Times Square?

But, did you know? Oh yea, almost forgot to mention the millions, billions, or even trillions of viewers glued to their television sets too. This ceremonial ball drop is to signify the specific moment in time dating back to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also, the ball dropping every day at 1 o'clock would allow nearby boats to synchronize their timing instruments. The first event in Times Square occurred in 1907 became the focal point, however, the celebration itself began in 1904. This iconic ball drops ten seconds from midnight on December 31<sup>st</sup> from the top of One Times Square. The first ball was made of iron and wood, weighing seven hundred pounds. In 1942 and 1943, the ball did not drop because of war time limitations. There have several versions of the design. It was said that there have been seven different designs created since 1907.

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary occurred in 2007 and LED light technology was utilized. Visitors can see the ball sitting high above Times Square throughout the year but it's New Year's Eve when the full spectacle and elaborateness is experienced. The above information was taken from the "Original article source: [The history behind the New Year's Eve ball drop ceremony in Times Square](#)"

According to "AL" ( Enhanced engine search ), has to say that this is an annual event. ( DAH! ) Sarcasm uncalled for, I know. The event was first organized by Adolph Ochs who was the owner of the New York Times newspaper and a successor to a series of fireworks displays the same evening promoting its status as the headquarters. The ball itself was designed by Artkraft Strauss. Lighting technology constituted four improvements. The event is organized by the Times Square Alliance and Countdown Entertainment, a company led by Jeff Strauss.

Wikipedia has a whole lot of information to share if anyone is interested in a lot of details. It was interesting, to say the least but not going to even attempt to choose what would or would not interest the general public. However, if you are interested in more, by all means look it up.





---

## *Orthodox Christmas Day and New Year's Day*

Ever heard of the Orthodox Christmas Day celebration or Orthodox New Year's Day? Did you even know about Orthodox Christians? Did you know that there is even a difference? If you are interested, continue reading, if not, skip....

To begin though, there is also the two calendars referred to in this article. A Gregorian calendar is used in most parts of the world. It replaced the Julian calendar. The principal change was spacing leap years differently making the average calendar three hundred sixty-five days long, solar year determined by the earth's revolution around the sun. While the Julian calendar is a solar calendar of three hundred sixty-five days in every year with an additional leap day every fourth year without exception. The Julian calendar is used in parts of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Many Orthodox Christians in the United States celebrate Christmas Day on or near January 7 in the Gregorian calendar. This date works to be December 25 in the Julian calendar, which pre-dates the Gregorian calendar. It is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, who is believed to be the son of God. Question is asked if the Orthodox Christmas Day is a public holiday? It is not, instead it falls on Sunday, January 7th in 2024. This explanation regarding the calendars also applies to New Year's Day which in the Orthodox realm falls on January 14th in 2024 again according to the Gregorian calendar. Will get to New Year's day celebrations a little later in this article. Did you know that special liturgies are held at Orthodox churches celebrating Christmas Day? I didn't think so.

Many Orthodox Christians fast before Christmas Day, identifying with Nativity Fast preparing to celebrate Christ's birthday. It is also believed in their culture that fasting helps people shift their focus from themselves onto others. Spending less time worrying about food and using more time in increased prayer and caring for the poor. In return, fasting then enables one to fully enjoy, appreciate and celebrate the Nativity of Christ. Their special church liturgy is held on January 7th where they also celebrate in various traditions. Those include lighting a small fire of blessed palms and burn frankincense to commemorate the three wise men's gifts to the baby, Jesus. Rather for many Orthodox Christians, Christmas Day is not about presents, eggnog or Christmas characters that have become so commercialized. Christmas Day is a time to heal the soul. It is also a time of peace and unity. White cloths are used on dinner tables in some countries to symbolize purity and the cloth that baby Jesus was wrapped in. Straw may be placed on these tables to symbolize the simplicity of the place where Jesus was born. Candles may be lit to represent the light of Christ and the festive Christmas meal represents the end of fasting. And now you know about another faction of our magnificent world of diversity and hopefully unity.

Now for the Orthodox New Year's Day; some Orthodox Christian church in the US have special liturgies on this day held January 14th. Their celebrations may include dinner dances and traditional buffets on some communities. Many of the New year traditions were brought over from other parts to the US. Many Americans of the Orthodox faith also attend special liturgies at their churches. Also an interesting fact is that the Orthodox New Year is widely known as the Old New Year. Last but not least in this informative narrative is that the Orthodox New Year has been symbolized in various Eastern European art, including Russian art and literary works. And now you know. Hope you enjoyed the trivia.

Everyone can and is entitled to their own opinion but just has to share this "ridiculous" creation of still another way to say or not say "Merry Christmas," "Happy Holidays" or however, one wishes to celebrate the birth of Christ. Maybe, that is the root of the problem and no one wants to say it or believe it, but it really is about Christianity's celebration of the birth of the Deity, isn't it?

---



**Pictures taken by  
Michael Quinn**

**Thanks !**





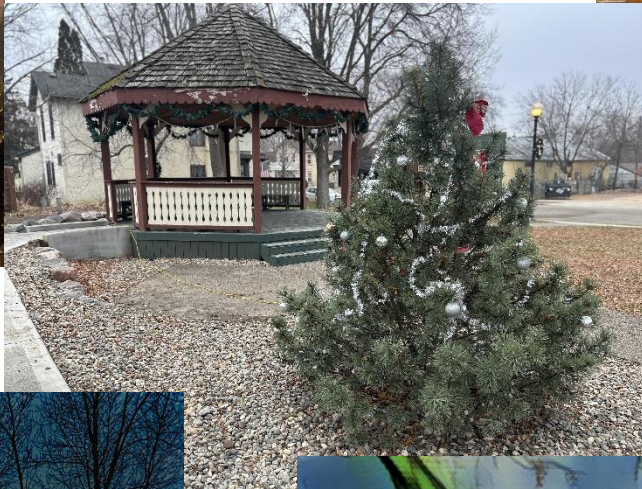
## *Seventh Annual Tree Lighting*

Hey how about that Seventh Annual Carver Tree Lighting at Gazebo Park in Downtown Carver, Minnesota that took place on November 25<sup>th</sup>? Where you there? Did you go? Shame on you, if you didn't. [ Snicker – Snicker ]

Hey how about that Seventh Annual Carver Tree Lighting at Gazebo Park in Downtown Carver, Minnesota that took place on November 25<sup>th</sup>? Where you there? Did you go? Shame on you, if you didn't. [ Snicker – Snicker ]

This author was told that there were about seventy onlookers who came into the downtown park to witness the small gathering of lighting Carver's little ole' Christmas tree in Gazebo Park. How exciting, don't you agree? Past years have only been a handful of curious onlookers with the volumes increasing each year. Thank you everyone who came out to witness the small intimate festivity as small as it might seem. It really is a big deal, you know. Look at the famous televised tree lightings covered by major networks. Do you really believe or think when those people back in the day started their traditions that they ever imagined that it would grow to the magnitude it had? Dreams and goals are what hope are made of. However, back to the cozy, warm, yet simple gathering back in Carver at hand which we were commemorating so gallantly.

Kids were running about having the time of their life being free and rambunctious wearing off all that pent-up energy. Even Kris Kringle had a hand in the event, adding to the homey atmosphere and touching the crowd gathered with snowflakes falling only to enhance the mood encircling the group. There was hot cocoa and smores, a small warm fire crackling and lighting up the blackness. Several bystanders standing alone and keeping to themselves vigilant of the surroundings about them and the activities going on all around. Couples embracing, friends talking in anticipation and coordinators satisfied with the turnout and even gratefulness warming their own hearts that none of their efforts were in vain. Then came the count down, the entire park, gazebo, trees and the little ole' decorated Christmas tree all lit up to shine brightly, warmly, and radiantly! Woo Hoo! Still another year to celebrate and come along with those we really appreciate and welcome the company. Maybe next year will draw even more? One can only hope and dream. That is what dreams are made of. Good job everyone!!!! Giving never dies!!!!





## *Fare for All*

Fare For All is a pop-up grocery store. A great way to save on quality, nutritious food. They sell packs of fresh produce and frozen meat at up to 40% off of retail prices. Everyone and anyone can shop at Fare for All. A community supported event. Shop for quality, nutritious foods at discount and budget-friendly prices. Fare For All accepts cash, credit, debit and EBT cards. For more information, [www.thefoodtroupmn.org](http://www.thefoodtroupmn.org). 2024 dates not posted at time of publication. Typically last Thursday of month.

Chaska's location is: Crown of Glory Lutheran Church at 1141 Cardinal Streets. Cancelled for December.



## *Bountiful Basket / Cologne*

Have you heard? Compliments of the Chaska Herald for the information being shared with you. The Bountiful Basket Food Shelf opened their Cologne site. It is to help those in need who live in Cologne, Hancock, Benton, San Francisco and Dahlgren townships residents. The new site is at the St Bernard Catholic School site on 300 East Church Street. They will open every Thursday from 3:30 PM until 6:30 PM and on Fridays, 10 AM to 2 PM. Depending on demand hours are subject to change, just so you know. Mi CASA will also be providing a bilingual English/Spanish interpreter on Fridays. You can also schedule an appointment by calling 952) 988-2802. Another contact if you have access to a computer at: [www.bountifulbasketfoodshelf.org/Cologne](http://www.bountifulbasketfoodshelf.org/Cologne).



## *Bountiful Basket*

Bountiful Basket Food Shelf serves Carver, Chanhassen, Chaska, Victoria, and surrounding area, helping people with hunger relief. During everyone's life there is a period when we need help. For many this help comes in the form of food assistance to get them through their time of need.

### Hours

Monday – Wednesday – 9 AM – 3:30 PM

Thursday/Friday – 9 a.m. – 12:30 PM

1st & 3rd Saturday of each month only - 9 AM – Noon



## **Bountiful Basket Food Shelf's School Snack Program**

*Providing 400 healthy snacks each month to all schools in District 112!*

Bountiful Basket Food Shelf is once again partnering with the Eastern Carver County School District to provide healthy snacks to kids in need. While all kids are now eligible for free breakfasts and lunches this school year, kids still need additional food assistance and energy throughout the day. All snacks will be distributed discreetly through school counselors, social workers, nurses, etc.

**A HUGE thank you to the District 112 Foundation for their generous financial support of this program!**

### **How can you help? ... Host a School Snack Drive!**

In addition to the amazing financial support we received from the District 112 Foundation, we also need our communities' continued support via school snack drives! Additional snacks collected from the community will be distributed at all schools and at both Bountiful Basket Food Shelf locations (Chaska & Cologne). Please consider hosting a School Snack Drive to ensure all kids can perform at their peak levels! Snack should be "smart snack certified" including items such as:

## *Ruby's Pantry*

Have you ever heard of Ruby's Pantry? Ruby's Pantry distributes food at Pop-Up Pantry locations across Minnesota and Wisconsin. There is no income or residency requirements. For \$25 donation you can receive an abundance of groceries. They gather various food overages, surpluses, and bumper crops into generous food bundles. For more information, [www.rubyspantry.org](http://www.rubyspantry.org).

The next pop-up Pantry is scheduled to be at Grace Church ( 9301 Eden Prairie Road ) in Eden Prairie on Thursday, January 4th at 5 PM until 6:30 PM. Held the first Thursday of the month, registration begins at 5 PM. Food bundles available at 5 PM.



## *Free Food Distribution:*

All are welcome, while supplies last. Old Gedney Factory in Chaska at 2100 Stoughton Ave. Next events? 2024 dates not posted at time of publication... Sponsored by CAP Agency and the City of Chaska.

~~~~~  
Minnesota Free School Meals bill was signed into law. This provides all students in our district one breakfast and one lunch each school day at no charge. A la carte items including snacks, beverages, and second entrees, are available to purchase in our elementary, middle and high schools. Students who wish to purchase a la carte items must have a positive balance in their Nutrition Services account.

Application for Educational Benefits (Free & reduced priced meals):

Your student may qualify for educational benefits. Qualifying for educational benefits may grant your student access to reduced or waived school-based fees including:

- technology insurance
 - athletics and activity
 - community education class
 - field trips
 - Parking
- Additionally, it may qualify your family for discounts in the community such as:
- 50% off Southwest Transit
 - Discounted internet service through the Affordable Connectivity Program
 - Free membership to the Children's Museum
 - Summer P-EBT benefits

Educational benefit data also qualifies our school district for additional funding that is critical to support the needs of students.

15th Annual
**Soggy Bottom
Snow Golf Fundraiser**

Saturday, January 27

11am - 2pm

Riverside Park

120 Main St E, Carver

\$25/person

**Sponsored by the Carver Lions
Proceeds to help local families in medical crisis**

**For more info about the recipient
and to register or donate, go to:**

Facebook: Carver Minnesota Lions Club

Eventbrite for Registration/Donation: Soggy Bottom

Registration available day of the event.

Registration includes Soggy Bottom hat while supplies last.

