

ROTARY LIGHTS
La Crosse, Wis.



2016



Celebrating 22 Years of
*A Million
Mississippi Reflections*

www.rotarylights.org

WETTSTEIN'S

Price, Service, Selection

Wettstein's and Lighting Design by Wettstein's appreciate the opportunity to support Rotary Lights. As a family owned and operated local business founded in 1951 by my parents Howard & Marie, we have always felt it is our responsibility to be an active supporting member of our community. Please give us the opportunity the next time you are in need of lighting fixtures, home décor, artwork, appliances, electronics, furniture, mattresses, appliance repair and parts.



Dan & Gerianne Wettstein, Owners

 **WETTSTEIN'S**

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Our 22nd Year...



We are so blessed in the greater La Crosse area to have so many involved and generous people. I am always amazed at the talent we can find, the folks willing to help, and the people of all ages that will donate their time to make this unique project work. We live in a special place.

This year, we have over 110 non-profit organizations that have registered to help and supply the “people power” we need to allow Rotary Lights to work. The decorated trees you see in the park represent these organizations. Add to that a dedicated Board of Directors and the very hard working crew of the Steering Committee (both listed in this booklet) and you have the makings for a successful project.

Everyone always asks, “What new this year”? Well, 2016 could be our most exciting year yet. Thanks to the ongoing efforts of volunteer John Corems, all of our animated displays have been redone with new LED rope light. Wait till you see the difference the LED’s make. In addition, John teamed up with Leo Chaput to build a new fire breathing dragon. Long the favorite of many visitors our old dragon had to be retired, just too many flame outs. The new version is in LED’s, has a fierce face, puffs lots of flames and even has wings. Volunteer Steve Klankowski put his skills to work building 4 singing light bulbs. You’ll love the songs they sing and it is a display that we can add to in the years to come.

There are FREE Santa Express (Kiddie Train) rides in the park this year. This 10 passenger train will run every night that Mother Nature allows. It will make for a magical time for kids 10 and under to marvel at the millions of lights as they tour the park. Loading takes place at the west end of the Ice Castle.

We teamed up with the Trane Company Graduate Training Program and let those young engineers take on the building and programming for a 100 ft. walk-through tunnel over the sidewalk on the west side of the park. This fully computerized display should be a terrific addition to Rotary Lights. Since the engineers come from all over the world, these young professionals will carry the Rotary Lights experience to all corners of the globe. We sincerely thank them for this effort.

For 21 years the #1 request we would always get from our visitors is for ice skating in the park. Thanks to the generosity of Dave and Barb Erickson through the Chad Erickson Memorial Fund, we will add a 76 x 152 ice rink at the north end of the park. The warming area will be in the igloo and cars

can park in the large parking lot on the east side of the park. Of course, ice is dependent on weather so please call Rotary Lights at 784-9993 to make certain the rink is open. Dave and Barb are excited about bringing this new offering to Rotary Lights. They are two of the most kind and generous people you’d ever want to know.

The success of the Rotary Intereact iFeed in 2015 brought back a renewed effort for 2016. On Saturday, November 5th, teams from seven area high schools will pack 60,000 meals for South American and collect thousands of food items for our local food bank, The Hunger Task Force. What an effort by the next generation!

On behalf of the Stephens Family (still with only 11 grandchildren), my fellow Rotarians in La Crosse Rotary East, La Crosse Downtown, Valley View Rotary, After Hours Rotary, La Crescent, Caledonia, Onalaska, Holmen and Onalaska Hilltoppers Rotary Clubs, along with a very dedicated Board of Directors and Steering Committee, and over 3,000 community volunteers, please accept best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season.

Irish hugs,

Pat Stephens

Pat Stephens, President Rotary Lights



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Happy Holidays



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What Is Rotary?



Rotary Lights is sponsored by area Rotary Clubs who, in turn are part of an international service organization. That organization is built on providing humanitarian aid, fostering high ethical standards, and promoting peace and goodwill throughout the world.

Any project or activity is based on the Four Way Test, questions on which Rotary decisions are based:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

As Rotary Lights entered the planning stages, these questions were addressed. Out of those discussions came the decision to collect food for hunger agencies and money for participating non profits. The questions were the basis for creating Rotary Lights as a free-to-the-public event.

Rotary does more than light up Riverside Park between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. You may recognize some of these projects, all of

which Rotarians have played a part in organizing, fundraising, and labor:

- Kids Coulee • Myrick Hixon Ecopark
- Trees for Tomorrow • International Gardens

On an international level, Rotary provides exchange programs for high school students, works tirelessly to eradicate polio, seeks ways to provide clean water, and much more.

Participating Rotary Lights Clubs are:

After Hours Caledonia

Holmen

La Crescent

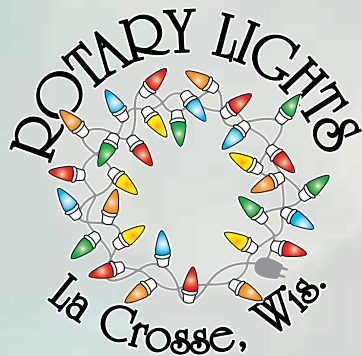
La Crosse Downtown

Onalaska

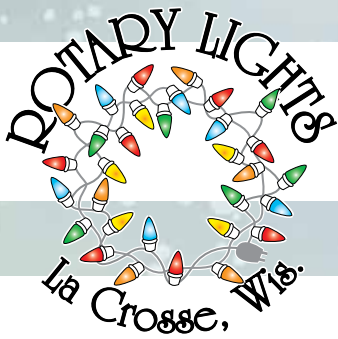
Onalaska Hilltoppers

Rotary East

Valley View Rotary



A Million Mississippi Reflections



The Mission of Rotary Lights: "To Help Feed the Hungry of the Coulee Region"



Year	Number of Food Items Collected
1995.....	13,010
1996.....	20,014
1997.....	31,482
1998.....	42,323
1999.....	66,211
2000.....	86,475
2001.....	91,634
2002.....	101,789
2003.....	121,040
2004.....	125,892
2005.....	135,756
2006.....	171,252
2007.....	186,374
2008.....	204,178
2009.....	206,479
2010.....	204,188
2011.....	226,642
2012.....	232,580
2013.....	229,173
2014.....	237,246
2015.....	296,784

21 Year Total - 3,029,896

The generous gifts of food that are collected unfortunately only last 8-10 weeks. The demand is high and growing. If you or an organization you are involved with would like to help organize an event in partnership with Rotary Lights to help us increase food collections, contact Rotary Lights at 608.784.9993.

We collected items at the gate and other food items through the efforts of:

- AFSCME Local 2484-La Crosse County
- AFSCME Local 340-Western Wisconsin Cares
- Trane
- La Crosse County Employees-Downtown Campus
- La Crosse County Library System
- La Crosse County Solid Waste Dept.
- The La Crosse Area Jeep Club
- Shamrock Club
- WTC-Automotive Classes

Over 32,000 food items from the "ifeed effort".

The Trane Company collected over 2 pallets of food in 2015. A tremendous and appreciated effort.

Rotary Lights would like to partner with any groups that would like to be involved with food drives from November 1st through December 31st.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO HIT THE 4 MILLION FOOD ITEM MARK?

Food Pantries Sharing Collections in 2016:



- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Caledonia Food Shelf | Basket | Holmen-St. Elizabeth |
| CouleeCap | New Horizons | WAFER |
| Holmen Lutheran | Onalaska Food Basket | UW-L Food Pantry |
| La Crescent Food | Salvation Army | Place of Grace |

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Enjoy the Rotary Lights!



Mayo Clinic Health System -
Franciscan Healthcare

mayoclinichealthsystem.org



MAYO CLINIC
HEALTH SYSTEM



Franciscan
Spirituality Center

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR:

**Terry
Hershey**

*author, humorist, inspirational
speaker, ordained minister and
designer of sanctuary gardens*

Community
Presentation:
Rest. Renew.
Live. April 28

Retreat:
Finding Your
Sanctuary
April 28-29



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"ruff" to enjoy the holidays?

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products and services to help
make **everyone's** holiday
a little bit better.



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Ice Castle Entertainment Schedule



Monday , Nov. 28	6:00-7:00 p.m.	UW-La Crosse Brass Quintets
Tuesday, Nov. 29	6:00-7:30 p.m.	Tugg
Monday, Dec. 5	6:00-7:00 p.m.	Sparta HS/MS Jazz Groups
Thursday, Dec. 8	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Onalaska Honor Jazz Band
Monday, Dec. 12	6:00-6:30 p.m.	West Salem HS Music Dept.
	7:00-7:30 p.m.	Winona MS 8th Grade Choir
Tuesday, Dec. 13	6:00-8:00 p.m.	Life & Harmony Music Therapy
Wednesday, Dec. 14	6:00-7:00 p.m.	Brookwood Bands
	7:00-8:00 p.m.	Bangor Jazz Groups
Thursday, Dec. 15	7:00-8:00 p.m.	Lincoln MS
Monday, Dec. 19	6:00-7:00 p.m.	Blair-Taylor Hand Bells
Tuesday, Dec. 20	6:00-7:00 p.m.	Aquinas MS
Wednesday, Dec. 21	6:00-7:00 p.m.	River City Strings
Thursday, Dec. 17	6:00-6:30 p.m.	Melrose-Mindoro select choir

Visit www.rotarylights.org or music@ssemusic.com for updated entertainment schedule

Live Nativity

Nov. 25-26-27

Dec. 3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18, 25



Hayrides in the Park

Free family hayrides in the park on Tuesday nights.

Nov. 29;

Dec. 6, 15, 20, 27

Ongoing from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Load at the west side entrance of the Ice Castle (heated tent).

Brightening our communities

For the holiday season
and all year long.

During the 2015-2016 Rotary year,
these projects and more were supported:

Viterbo University Non-traditional Students
Wisconsin Chapter MS Society • Odyssey of the Mind • Youth Home Chillville
Life Skills for Teens & Adults with Disabilities • Rotary Ethics Committee
La Crosse County Human Services Circle of Security
Riverside International Friendship Garden Expansion
Family & Children's Center • Troop 4550 Girl Scout Birthday Boxes
La Crescent Cub Scout Pack 98 Pinewood Derby Track
YWCA Teen Service • Fresh Water Wells Tanzania
Medical Closet Restoration, West Salem Lions Club



rotaryworksfoundation.org

Supported by La Crosse Area Rotary Clubs & their members including:

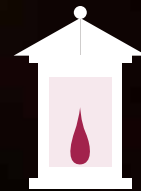
Caledonia • Holmen Area • La Crescent • La Crosse After Hours • La Crosse Downtown
La Crosse East • La Crosse Valley View • Onalaska • Onalaska Hilltopper
Interact Clubs of Aquinas, Caledonia, Central, Holmen, Logan,
Onalaska and West Salem High Schools



Proud of our many students, alumni, faculty
and staff who have enlightened our great
community for over 100 years!



UWL
Foundation



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

www.uwlax.edu



2016 Traffic & Food Assignment



Date	Traffic Control	Food Goes To
Friday, Nov 25	La Crosse Rotary	Salvation Army
Saturday, Nov. 26	Valley View Rotary	Onalaska Food Basket
Sunday, Nov. 27	Holmen Rotary	Holmen Lutheran
Monday, Nov. 28	WalzCraft	Place of Grace
Tuesday, Nov. 29	Gundersen Health System	WAFER
Wednesday, Nov. 30	Verve Credit Union	Holmen Lutheran
Thursday, Dec. 1	Reinhart Food Service	La Crescent Food Basket
Friday, Dec. 2	Fowler and Hammer	Caledonia Food Basket
Saturday, Dec. 3	Mathy Construction	Salvation Army
Sunday, Dec. 4	Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC	Onalaska Food Basket
Monday, Dec. 5	Radisson	Place of Grace
Tuesday, Dec. 6	Merchants Bank	New Horizons
Wednesday, Dec. 7	US Bank	Salvation Army
Thursday, Dec. 8	Inland	WAFER
Friday, Dec. 9	Associated Bank	Holmen-St. Elizabeth
Saturday, Dec. 10	The Shupe Family	Onalaska Food Basket
Sunday, Dec. 11	Coulee Bank	WAFER
Monday, Dec. 12	Dairyland Power	Salvation Army
Tuesday, Dec. 13	Dahl Automotive	Onalaska Food Basket
Wednesday, Dec. 14	Mayo Clinic Health System	New Horizons
Thursday, Dec. 15	Hawkins Ash/Beta Alpha Psi	Salvation Army
Friday, Dec. 16	Altra Credit Union	WAFER
Saturday, Dec. 17	Festival Foods	Holmen-St. Elizabeth
Sunday, Dec. 18	La Crosse Rotary East	Onalaska Food Basket
Monday, Dec. 19	DMI and La Crosse City Vision	La Crescent Food Basket
Tuesday, Dec. 20	Cleary Management/State Bank	WAFER
Wednesday, Dec. 21	Kwik Trip	Holmen St. Elizabeth
Thursday, Dec. 22	Co-Op Credit Union	WAFER
Friday, Dec. 23	Wettstein Brother's	Holmen-St. Elizabeth
Saturday, Dec. 24	Dave/Cathy Thurston and Friends	WAFER
Sunday, Dec. 25	Pat Stephens Family and Friends	Holmen-St. Elizabeth
Monday, Dec. 26	La Crescent Rotary	La Crescent Food Basket
Tuesday, Dec. 27	Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary	Onalaska Food Basket
Wednesday, Dec. 28	Onalaska Rotary	Salvation Army
Thursday, Dec. 29	Caledonia Rotary	Caledonia Food Basket
Friday, Dec. 30	BMO Harris	WAFER
Saturday, Dec. 31	Citizen Advocacy	Salvation Army

2016 Participating & Benefiting Non-profits

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 7 Rivers Community High School | La Crosse Dive Unit | UWL Gamma Sigma |
| ABLE | La Crosse Jaycees | UWL German Club |
| Aquinas Catholic Schools | La Crosse Lions | UWL Golden Key |
| ASAP Horse Rescue and Adoption | La Crosse Area Family YMCA | UWL Habitat For Humanity Chapter |
| “BikersAgainstChildAbuse“ | Lakeview Health Center | UWL International Business Association |
| Bluff Country Family Resources | Logan High Band | UWL Kappa Delta Pi |
| Boys & Girls Club of Greater La Crosse | LSS Foster Care Services | UWL LaCrosse Colleges Against Cancer |
| Bring Back Myrick Park Zoo | Miss Wild West Royalty | UWL Lions Club |
| Causeway Caregivers | MOMs Club of LaCrosse
and West Salem | UWL Love Your Melon |
| Centering Onalaska | Myrick Park Community and Zoo | UWL Men and Women’s Club Volleyball |
| Child Abuse Prevention Task Force | N.A.M.I. | UWL Nuclear Medicine Technology |
| City of La Crosse Human Resources | Norskedalen | UWL Order of Omega |
| Congregational Preschool | Oktoberfest | UWL Physical Education Majors Club |
| Connecting to Second Chances | Onalaska High School Choir
Parent Support | UWL REC Club |
| Coulee Children’s Center | Onalaska Middle School WEB Leaders | UWL Residence Hall Association |
| Coulee Connections | Paws for Independence | UWL Spanish Club |
| Coulee Council on Addictions | Preservation Alliance | UWL Student Council for
Exceptional Children |
| Coulee Montessori | River City Corvettes | UWL University Staff Council |
| Coulee Region Adult Day Center | Riverfront | UWL Vanguarders |
| Coulee Region Humane Society | Riverland Amateur Radio Club | UWL Volunteering Within |
| Coulee Region RSVP | RUSH WI WEST / CRUSA Soccer Club | UWL Women’s Basketball Club |
| Couleecap, | Shamrock Club | Viterbo Student Nurses Association |
| Faith Lutheran Church | Shelby Fire Dept | West Salem High School Music |
| Fuzz Nuts | St.Patrick’s Knights of Columbus | Westby Syttende Mai Royalty |
| Girl Scouts of Badgerland | Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association | Western Technical College-Human Services |
| Great Rivers 2-1-1 | The Hunger Task Force | WTC Health Information Technology Club |
| Great Rivers United Way | The Parenting Place | YWCA Teen Services |
| Gundersen Transitional Year
Residency Program | UWL Alpha Phi | |
| Health Science Academy | UWL Alpha Xi Delta | |
| Holmen DECA | UWL Athletic Training Association | |
| Holmen High Project | UWL Beta Alpha Psi | |
| Holmen High School Interact | UWL Beta Gamma Sigma | |
| Holmen Knights of Columbus | UWL Biology Club | |
| Holmen Lutheran Church | UWL Cheese Club | |
| Housing Authority of La Crosse | UWL Communications Club | |
| JC’s Village | UWL Delta Sigma Phi | |
| La Crosse Area Astronomical Society | UWL Delta Sigma Pi | |
| La Crosse Area Suicide Prevention Initiative | UWL Eta Phi Alpha | |
| La Crosse Central Dance Team | UWL Eta Sigma Gamma (National Health | |
| La Crosse Citizen Advocacy | UWL Exercise Science Club | |
| La Crosse Curling Club | | |



Sponsors



Galaxy Level(\$1000)

Altra Credit Union
 Associated Bank
 BMO Harris
 CenturyLink
 Chart Industries
 Cinderella Carriages
 Cleary Management/
 State Bank Financial
 Co-Op Credit Union
 Coulee Bank
 Dahl Automotive
 Dairyland Power
 Doug and Meri Shupe
 Downtown Mainstreet, Inc./
 City Vision Foundation
 Dynamic Recycling
 Explore La Crosse
 Festival Foods
 First Supply
 Fowler Hammer
 Gundersen Health System
 Hawkins, Ash CPA's
 Inland
 J.F. Brennan
 Kwik Trip

La Crescent Rotary
 La Crosse Rotary East
 La Crosse Tribune Jean's Day
 Logistics Health
 Mathy Construction
 Mayo Health System
 Merchants Bank
 Onalaska Hilltopper Rotary
 Onalaska Rotary
 Organic Valley
 Radisson Hotel
 Reinhart Food Service
 Rotary Downtown La Crosse
 ShopKo Foundation
 US Bank
 Valley View Rotary
 Verve Credit Union
 Wal-Mart-La Crosse
 Wal-Mart-Onalaska
 WalzCraft
 Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC
 Wells Fargo Advisors Foundation

Stars Level(\$750+)

Caledonia Rotary
 Holmen Rotary
 Insurance Center

Angel Level(\$500+)

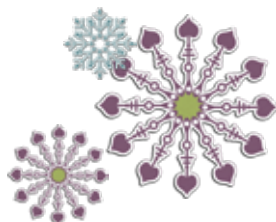
Ad Aids
 Anonymous
 Bethany Lutheran Homes
 Brenengen Auto
 Bill and Karen Hoel
 Borton Construction
 Cowgill Dental
 Drs. Andersen and Durtsche
 Fayze's
 Howie's
 J.F. Brennan Company
 Klauke Investments
 Old Crow
 Trane Company
 Trust Point
 Xcel Energy

Caroler Level(\$400+)

Bethany St. Joseph's
 Breakfast Club and Pub
 Cell.Plus
 Courtesy Corporation
 Health Traditions
 Ho Chunk Nation
 Mc Loone Graphic
 RSM
 R.W. Baird
 Western Wisconsin Cares

Rotary Lights 2016 Board of Directors

Roger Bjorge Onalaska
 Leo Chaput La Crescent
 Mike Diveley Onalaska Hilltoppers
 Bill Hoel La Crosse
 Aaron Miller After Hours
 Terry Miller La Crosse East
 Larry Peterson Valley View
 Nancy Proctor Holmen
 Jim Spencer Holmen
 Karla Stanek La Crosse East
 Beth Stempinski Caledonia
 Pat Stephens La Crosse East
 Joe Thesing La Crescent
 Dave Trapp La Crosse
 Jim Warren Valley View
 Bill Wiesjahn Onalaska
 John Wettstein La Crosse



Rotary Lights 2016 -2017 Steering Committee

Leo Chaput
 Jim Cody
 Jim Crothers
 Mark Dahlke
 Sarah Dahlke
 Mike Diveley
 Steve Earp
 Tim Ehler
 Elmer Grassman
 Jerome Gundersen
 Tom Hundt
 John Corems
 Steve Klankowski
 Butch Rogowski
 T.A. Slabeck
 Dave Larsen
 Steve Link
 Basil Martin

Dan Moen
 Loren Molling
 Pat Molling
 Phil Molling
 Jan Moore
 Mariann Peterson
 Doug Shupe
 Pat Smith
 Pat Stephens
 Tom Svec
 Dave Thurston
 Frank Tudahl
 Zach Tudahl
 Amy Wettstein
 Andy Wettstein
 Megan Whitehead
 Matt Zimmerman

Feeding the Volunteers



Each year, there are just over 3,000 volunteers who help make Rotary Lights possible. To help us feed this army of big hearted souls, we asked some of our local food vendors to provide lunches, beverages and snacks to keep our troops moving. On behalf of all the volunteers we extend a very sincere thank you for helping us out. This is another great example that we live in a very special community.

Beedle's Bar and Restaurant
Cabin Coffee
Dublin Square
Maid-Rite
Pickerman's
Pogy's
Schmidty's

Blue Moon
Ciatti's
Fayze's
Marge's on Rose
Piggy's
Radisson
Shimmy's

Burger King, Downtown La Crosse
Culver's of Onalaska, 835 Oak Ave. E
King Street Kitchen
Old Style Inn
Pizza Doctors
Rooster Andy's
Wendy's - La Crosse



Let's not forget the homemade chocolate chip cookies. We're convinced some people volunteer just because of the cookies. They are made (all 310 dozen) with TLC by Amy Wettstein with special help this year by the Alpha Xi Delta and Alpha Phi Sororities.

Gifts-In-Kind -2016



Ace Hardware
Ad Aids
Airgas
Advisors Management Group
Alter Metals
Aramark
Barb Dolato
Battery Mart
Bill and Teresa Peters
Bill Hoel
Bill Napier
Blaine's Farm and Fleet
Bob and Derk Swanson
Bobcat of the Coulee Region
Butch Rogowski
Cabin Coffee
Caribou Coffee
Carpets to Go
CenturyLink
Charter Communications
Clason's
Corems, John
Crescent Printing
Dakota Supply Group
Dan Mutch
Dan Moen

Dave and Cathy Thurston
Degenhardt Tire, Inc.
Del's-Onalaska
Diveley Electric
DS Electric
E.O. Johnson
Express Printing
Fairway Signs
Festival Foods
FABCO
GEXPRO
Hatlevig, Jerry and Nancy
Heidi Blanke
Holmen High School Project
L.I.V.E.
Jake Hillestad and HHS
Wood Shop
Jim Krueger, Sr.
Jim and Sue Crothers
John Helfrich
Kathy Jirsa
Katz Industrial Metals
Kwik Trip
L.B. White
La Crosse Beverage
La Crosse Glass and

Overhead Door
La Crosse Park and Recreation
La Crosse Public Utilities
La Crosse Police Reserve
La Crosse Radio Group
La Crosse Sign
La Crosse Tribune
Matt and Carolyn
Zimmermann
Mid-City Steel
Mike Fell
Modern Crane
Mutch Electric
Nelson Flag and Display
Onalaska Rotary
Phillips Fencing
Pepsi
Pizza Doctors
Pomp's Tire Service
P.T. Welding
Reinhart Food Service
Rita Connors
Riverview Vineyard
and Winery-Brad Helstad
Roncalli Newman Center

Ronco Engineering
Roger and Kay Bjorge
Shopko
Skyrockers
St. Joe's Equipment
S + S Distributing
SSE Music
Steve Klankowski
Sullivan's Supper Club
Target-Onalaska
Target-Winona
Terry Slaback
Tim Benson
Trane
Tudahl, Pat and Frank
Tudahl, Zach
Viking Electric Supply
WalMart-Onalaska
WalMart-Viroqua
Warriors Performing Arts
Wettstein's
Wettstein Brother's Electric
Werner Electric Supply
Wisconsin Building Supply



HAPPY HOLIDAYS
OUR COMMUNITY YOUR STATION



LA CROSSE SKYROCKER'S COUNT DOWN TO NEW YEAR'S EVE

Starting on December 1, 2016

Grandad Bluff: All at 6 pm

Fridays, Sundays & Tuesdays

December: 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 18,
20, 23, 27, 30



Pettibone: All at 6 pm

Mondays, Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Saturdays

December: 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15,
17, 19, 21, 22, 26, 28, 29



NEW YEAR'S EVE SHOWS:

Dec. 31, 2016

GRANDAD BLUFF

6 pm and Midnight

Open House
Sat: Dec. 10th 1-4
Myrick Park Main shelter
*"Learn More about
what we do."*

skyrockers.org

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Just Believe!



Great ideas often come when people have coffee together. Pat Stephens had a vision to enhance the Rotary Lights experience and raise more funds to help feed the hungry, and shared the idea of adding a gift shop to the Santa House with Rita Connors and Theresa Peters one morning over coffee. They had no retail experience between them, but being recently retired, they had the time and energy to get the job done. The two were eager to join the effort and decided to tackle the project head on, recruiting friends and families to help. Lynn Dolezel and Sue Schultz joined the team for merchandising and public outreach and together they created a welcoming Christmas shop experience from the ground up.

They named the shop “Just Believe,” because they had faith their endeavor could make a significant contribution to ending hunger in the Coulee Region. Thousands of families and children visit the Santa House each season, and local vendors and artists have been a great source of merchandise for all ages. The shop offers gifts from less than a dollar up to \$50, including items like light-up toys, books, framed art, scarves and holiday decor.

“It’s the perfect place for kids to pick out a gift

for their teacher, coach or friend, while also giving back to their community,” says Theresa Peters. “But it’s not just for kids - our goal was to offer a little something for everyone.”

The community supported the shop from day one, making “Just Believe” an instant success. Visitors love the welcoming atmosphere of the charming little shop. The twinkling lights, the Santa hat window valances, and especially the delighted faces of children who have just visited with Santa create a merry mood fitting of the Rotary Lights Experience. Merchandise is displayed on rustic white shelving, an antique marble-topped dresser and a charming red door, while friendly volunteers welcome and assist holiday shoppers.

So park the car and enjoy the sights and sounds of the Rotary Lights on foot. Stop in to say hello to Santa. If you don’t need to visit with Santa, you can still do some shopping at “Just Believe” by coming in the north end of the building.

“All purchases support the mission of feeding the hungry in the Coulee Region,” says Rita Connors. “What better way to do your Christmas shopping than by helping your neighbors in need at the same time.”



Sponsor Night In the Park



- Nov. 28-WalzCraft
- Nov. 29-Gundersen Health System
- Nov. 30-Verve Credit Union
- Dec. 1-Reinhart Food Service
- Dec. 2-Fowler & Hammer, Inc.
- Dec. 3-Mathy Construction
- Dec. 4-Wells Fargo Advisors
- Dec. 5-Radisson
- Dec. 6-Merchant's Bank
- Dec. 7-US Bank
- Dec. 8-Inland
- Dec. 9-Associated Bank
- Dec. 10-Doug and Merri Shupe
- Dec. 11-Coulee Bank
- Dec. 12-Dairyland Power
- Dec. 13-Dahl Automotive
- Dec. 14-Mayo Health Systems
- Dec. 15-Hawkins Ash, CPA's
- Dec. 16-Altra Credit Union
- Dec. 17-Festival Foods
- Dec. 19-DMI/City Vision Foundation
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- Dec. 21-Kwik Trip
- Dec. 22-Co-Op Credit Union
- Dec. 30-BMO Harris



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John Corems



John Corems isn't one to let go of a project. In 2010, when Rotary Lights approached the West Central Model Railroad Club in Sparta, of which he was a member, to build tracks and a train for the Santa House. The club declined, but John and two other members decided to take the task on anyway.

One month later, John stood alone in his endeavor. "I chose to go ahead with this project all by myself." To the delight of all Rotary Lights attendees, he's been upgrading and adding to the layout ever since.

Born in Slovenia in 1945, John suffered an abusive childhood, leaving home at age thirteen and coming to the United States in 1978. He has one daughter, who he raised as a single parent. By trade, he is an electrical mechanic, but he has also worked as a contractor.

John had never participated in a project of this magnitude before, but that didn't stop him. "I am who I am, and I never give up." Ideas popped into his head, so many that he spent many sleepless nights creating his designs.

The project, or layout as he refers to it, was, and continues to be, an ongoing education for him. He started with some tracks, which turned out to be a fairly easy process, but he was bit by the Rotary bigger-and-better bug. From his own pocket, he purchased a control box and a program. He acquired knowledge as he acquired track and was soon was planning the scenery and interactive switches.

"My layout started to shape up with tunnels, parks, an Amish farm" on one half of the layout and "a winter land on other half of the layout, with an ice skating rink and a variety of buildings covered with snow."

The first year, though successful, was a learning experience. "It turned out to be more display with few



actions; buttons operated one display at time. But kids are kids, and they show you immediately what they like. This prompted me for the next year, as my second year, to create more friendly electronics to operate the exhibits."

Up to this point, John wasn't an official Rotary Lights volunteer. As he witnessed the dedication of the volunteers, he eagerly joined their ranks. From other volunteers, he learned how to repair displays and install rope lighting. He used his newfound knowledge to improve all displays.

"I have great support from all volunteers who already make differences in people's lives by working at Rotary Lights and creating all that beauty for a little

over a month in Riverside Park."

This year, John has driven to La Crosse from his Sparta home nearly every day to volunteer at the Light House. His mind continues to churn with fresh ideas for the train layout. He calls it "the monster in my head" and is happiest when his imagination can become reality.

John has had a hand in repairing and updating over fifty displays, including the dragon and the Kiddie Express train, adding steam and sound to make it more realistic. He continues to plan improvements to the train layout, until it's as perfect as it can be.

Those improvements are one of the reasons for his dedication. "What I like at Rotary Light is the you create one idea, then implement the work to turn the idea into reality." New ideas are endless and John enjoys seeing them come to life.

Pat Stephens says he counts his blessings that he has John as part of his core of volunteers. "John is a cancer survivor so he cherishes each and every day." "He is fun to work with, has a great sense of humor, and would do anything to make the magic of the holiday season special for all the kids."



Pedestrian Tunnel



What was typically a one-time community involvement project for a group of engineers in Trane's Graduate Training Program, this year became something with staying power. The engaging new pedestrian tunnel was put together courtesy of this group and it's nothing less than spectacular.

Every year, Trane hosts engineers, mostly recent college graduates from around the world, to train in La Crosse for twenty weeks. While many of the students are from the United States and Canada, this year's group included students from places as varied as Malaysia, Chili, and Vietnam. Robert Johnson, Training Manager for the program, explained that one of the students had a connection to Rotary in his hometown. A call was put into Pat Stephens, with the idea that the group would spend an afternoon or evening working at the park.

Pat had a little more than that in mind and knew the engineers would be the perfect fit for his idea. The pedestrian tunnel was born.

Located on the north end of the park in a spot where trees were removed due to emerald ash borer, the tunnel features twenty-four lit arches. In total,

it is ninety-two feet long, twelve feet tall and wide enough to encompass benches for sitting. The two thousand four hundred LED lights are individually programmed and set to music.

The project wasn't without its glitches, including late shipments, but it all came together in time for opening night.

When the tunnel is dismantled at the end of the season, all parts will be documented so that it can be part of the park for years to come. Each year's Graduate Training Program class will be responsible for the tunnel, but Trane staff, like Johnson, will assure consistency from year to year.

Johnson sums it up. "Every year, the class wants to do something that makes a lasting impression. Most years we can't do that. This year we can."



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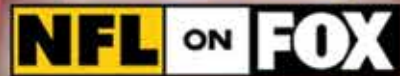


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