

Lions Club of Waterman

The Club's Beginning The organizational meeting for the Waterman Lions Club was held June 14, 1954. The first officers were: Carl Rylander, president; Russell McAllister, Kenneth Tate, and Harold Rompf, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd vice presidents, respectively; Jack Templeton, secretary; Lloyd Waldee, treasurer; Sheldon Swann, Lion tamer; and Dean Swift, tail twister. The first directors were Preston Woods, Paul Johnson, Kenneth Peterson and D. E. Stitzel.

The idea for the club started in 1953 when Carl Rylander came to Waterman to teach vocational agriculture at Waterman High School. Having been a Lions Club member in Paw Paw, Rylander started promoting a club for Waterman. The Paw Paw Lions Club sponsored the new club. Charter Night was July 29, 1954.

The Park In November 1958 the club bought 11 acres directly west of Waterman High School to be developed as a park. In 1960 it erected a large shelter house in the center of the park and set out trees and shrubs. In 1962 the club built restrooms and the following year they installed several pieces of playground equipment. Last payment on the land was made in 1964.

The club built an open shelter house on the west side of the park in 1965. A legal size ball diamond was installed south of the main shelter house in 1968. In 1977 the club leased a portion of the park west of the main shelter house to the Village of Waterman for the construction of two tennis courts which could be used as an ice skating rink in the winter. The lease ran for 20 years.

The club continued to maintain and improve the park. In 1987 bleachers were purchased for the ball diamond; in 1988 a water fountain and permanent outside picnic tables were installed around the shelter house; in 1989 new trees were planted. Ceiling fans were installed in the shelter house, a memorial to Carl Rylander. In 1995 the club entered into a contractual arrangement with Pete Robinson to build and operate a model railroad train that goes around the park.

In 2002 the club voted to donate the park to the Village of Waterman as part of a grant proposal to obtain matching funds from the state for park improvements such as winterizing the shelter house and bathroom, building a skateboard park and a sand volleyball court and purchasing and installing new playground equipment.

Waterman Lions continue to help with the park by purchasing trees, remodeling storage structures and updating electrical service.

Projects and Activities Over the years the club sponsored many community service projects. The first, in 1954, was buying and placing trash barrels in the business district in the village. In 1963 it conducted an oral polio vaccine clinic and donated an X-ray table and wheel chairs to the DeKalb Hospital. Here are some other activities:

- Each year the club sponsors the Lions Glaucoma Unit or the Lions Hearing Unit to screen local citizens for those problems.
- The club sponsors a blood drives.
- It provides college scholarship funds for students from the former Waterman High School district.
- The club donated \$5,000 to the Lions Eye Research Center at the University of Illinois, Chicago Campus.
- In 1990, the club undertook the installation of equipment at the new playground at the Waterman Grade School.
- In 2010, it completed its pledge of \$10,000 to Lions Clubs International Foundation in its campaign to combat preventable blindness.
- The club purchased handrails for the curb to sidewalk area in the business district.
- It provides funds to purchase books for the middle school.
- The club has donated funds for camping equipment for the local Boy Scouts Troop.

These projects and donations have been funded by Lions Club moneymaking activities such as selling light bulbs, putting on Home Talent Shows, auto raffles, tractor-pulls, Sandwich Fair raffles, chicken and pork chop barbecues, Christmas tree sales, fruit sales, 5K Run/Walk, pancake days and food concession sales at the Lions Club Summer fest and Antique Tractor and Truck Show.

In 1970 the club sponsored two clubs: Shabbona Lions Club and Hinckley Lions Club. The club has provided seven Lions zone chairpersons: Carl Rylander, Howard Kauffman, Walter Carroll, Robert Bronson, Floyd Johnson, Wayne Stryker, and Dave Stryker. For several years Johnson was Lions Club International Foundation chairman for District 1-J and Illinois Lions Foundation chairman for District 1-J. Lion Dave Stryker was District 1J Governor for 2000-01.

Dues The club secretary bills each member for organizational dues and meals for the monthly dinner meetings. Make checks payable to "Lions Club of Waterman" and send to the club secretary.

If you bring a prospective member to a dinner meeting, the club will pick up the cost of the meal one time for that person.

Presidents			
		Steve Bock	1986-87
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Carl Rylander	1954-55	Robert Bend	1988-89
Kenneth Tate	1955-56	Mark Fenske	1989-90
Harold Rompf	1956-57	Dave Stryker	1990-91
James Herrmann	1957-58	Kent Huff	1991-92
Howard Kauffman	1958-59	Steve Bock	1992-93
Adelbert Souder	1959-60	Brian Leifheit	1993-94
Joseph Wirth	1960-61	Paul Zeman	1994-95
Orland McAllister	1961-62	Paul Zeman	1995-96
Sheldon Swann	1962-moved	Jack Ryen	1996-97
Paul Gates	1962-63	Jack Ryen	1997-98
Herbert Strausberger	1963-64	Phil Nielsen	1998-99
Vernon Baker	1964-65	Phil Nielsen	1999-00
Walter Carroll	1965-66	Robert Bend	2000-01
William Spencer	1966-67	Robert Bend	2001-02
Clarence Baie	1967-68	Craig Rice	2002-03
Dean Bolender	1968-69	Craig Rice	2003-04
Floyd Johnson	1969-70	Steve Bock	2004-05
Vernon Johnson	1970-71	Steve Bock	2005-06
Robert Bronson	1971-72	Dale Gaston	2006-07
Robert Graham	1972-73	Dale Gaston	2007-08
Milford Clausen	1973-74	Mark Fenske	2008-09
Ivan Smith	1974-75	Mark Fenske	2009-10
Wilbert Buchholz	1975-76	Harold Giddings	2010-11
Robert Daniel	1976-77	Harold Giddings	2011-12
Wayne Stryker	1977-78	Steve Bock	2012-13
Harold Johnson	1978-79	Steve Bock	2013-14
Wayne Stryker	1979-80	Dave Stryker	2014-15
Dennis McElhone	1980-81	Dave Stryker	2015-16
Donald Wright	1981-82	Shawn Blobaum	2016-17
Craig Rice	1982-83	Shawn Blobaum	2017-18
Gary Christensen	1983-84	Craig Rice	2018-19
Neil Fiekema	1984-85	Suzanne Sedlacek	2019-20
Dave Stryker	1985-86	Suzanne Sedlacek	2020-21

Shawn Blobaum

2021-2022