

In one man's garage, Christmas carousel is crafted

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As visitors to Waunakee's Rotary in Lights display marvel at the sights, few know that one Waunakee man has been hard at work for many months in his garage.

Last year, Bob Ziegler was asked by Phil Willems of the Waunakee Rotary Club to help with the light display at Village Park. Ziegler said he was happy to oblige, and he made metal brackets that would serve as the frame for Christmas trees displayed near the entrance and by the gazebo, near the bridge over Sixmile Creek, and at another location in the park for the 2006 display.

The metal pipe used to construct the frame was donated by Endres Manufacturing here. The labor to do the construction was donated by Ziegler, and the lights were purchased from the Rotary Club's Waunakee Holiday Light budget.

This year in April, Willems again asked Ziegler to help with the 2007 Village Park Holiday Lights exhibit and suggested a carousel that would have a diameter of 12 feet and revolve under the gazebo from which the Waunakee Community Band performs in the summer.

painting the wood characters that would be on the carousel," Ziegler said.

When they were finally done with that part of the project, they had produced 12 painted character sets that are about three to five feet wide and two to five feet high.

"In October, I was able to start working with the steel framework that would form the carousel," Ziegler said. "The bottom tier of the structure has eight sides, and the metal frame on the sides narrows to a square, and the four piece train is attached to the top."

Again this year, the metal was provided by Endres Manufacturing.

"In early November, I was able to start assembling the display. I incorporated a wagon axle donated from Statz Implement. From the center axle, eight rods extend to the eight corners of the base octagon and which forms a twelve foot diameter," Ziegler said.

In the center, a 1/12 horsepower electric motor drives the structure which rotates at about two revolutions per minute. The train on the top consists of four hand-painted train cars, and at the base, the eight hand-painted character sets that include images of Mr. and



Bob Ziegler worked on this carousel project during recovery from an accident and said the project was therapeutic. (Photo by R.D. Roberts)



"Two days after I was asked to do it, I had a serious accident. The doctor said I had a fractured heel, fractured ankle, and all my toes were fractured," Ziegler said.

As a result, Ziegler said that he had a lot of time to think about his plans to build the carousel when he recovered. It became his dream to do it as he returned from his convalescence to full activity.

"I sketched a plan and reviewed it with Willems. In September, when I was able to walk again, I started gradually to work on the project with the assistance of Bill Erickson and Willems. I started cutting, sanding and

Mrs. Claus, Mr. and Mrs. Snowman, two elves dancing with reindeer and Santa and two elves going down a chimney and a moose holding a snow shovel.

Apart from the carousel, there are two reindeer waiting for a ride. Ziegler cut the plywood frame for them, but they were painted by Nancy Hoskins. All the other figures were painted by Ziegler with the help of Willems.

Ziegler and Willems contributed about eight volunteer hours to paint each of the 12 character sets. Ziegler also estimated that he contributed about 20 hours in the shop to cut and fabricate



The Village Park Shelter has also been decorated and adorned with lights this year. (Photo by Roger Hamilton)

the metal.

"I am indebted to my wife

Linda for all the encouragement and moral support she

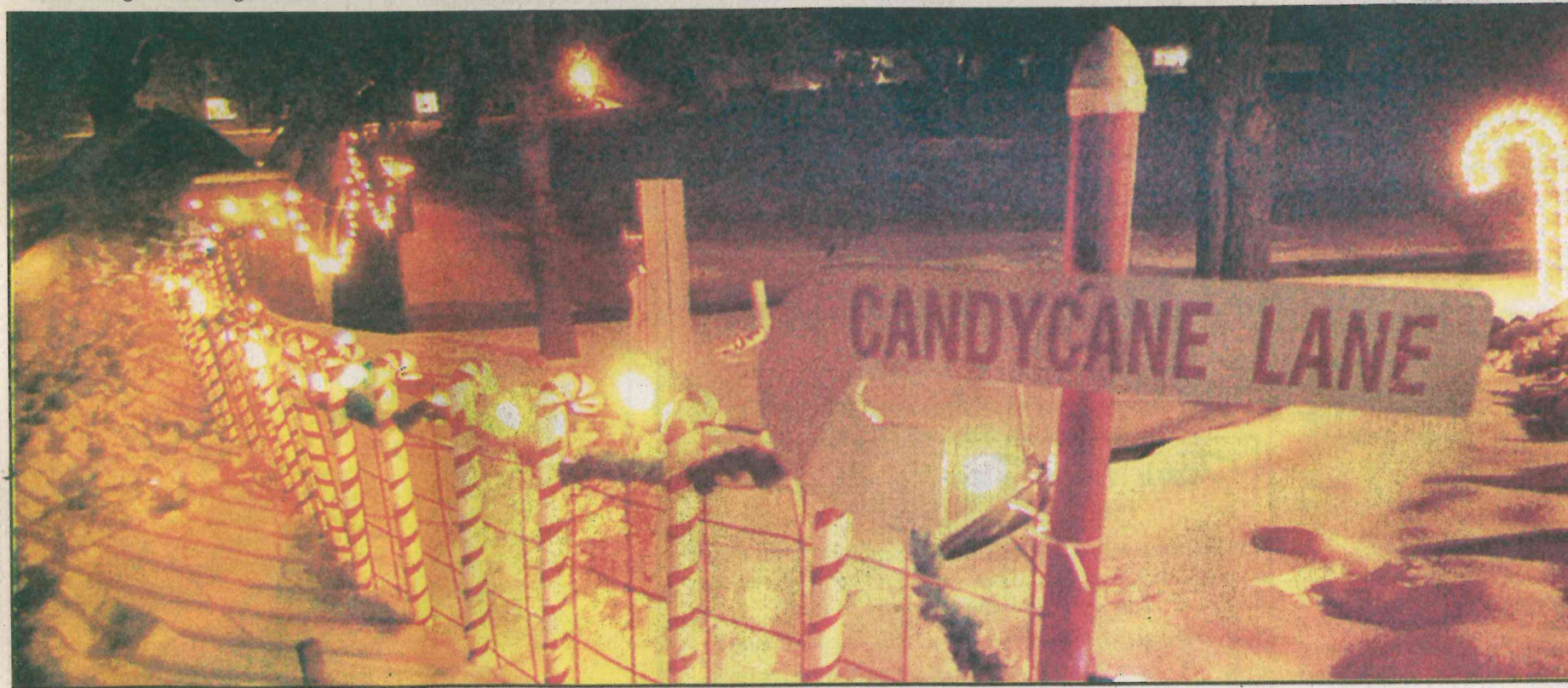
provided for me from the start of the project," Ziegler

said. "I saw the project as part of my therapy for recovering from my accident, and it served as a transition getting me back to work in November."

This project is only the most recent service to the community that Ziegler has given. He was a volunteer on the fire department for 32 years. He also had years of service to the Jaycees, Lions and Waunakee Area Soccer Club.

His commitment to projects at the Village Park is not limited to the light project. Both he and Willems were instrumental in the building of the gazebo completed in 1987 and the gazebo restrooms completed in 1991.

The expertise, time and talent contributed by Ziegler and others like him are a gift to our village this holiday season and throughout the year.



The Rotary in Lights Display includes a Candy Cane Lane which leads to one of the bridges at Village Park. (Photo by Roger Hamilton)