

# Transcending Time

Carver County Historical Society

30/2 : Spring 2009

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## The Redesigned Veterans' Gallery:

*A tribute to those who served, a place to reflect*

The long held dream of the Carver County Historical Society to better reflect Carver County residents and their stories is becoming reality.

The goals of the gallery are:

1. To serve as a memorial to Carver County servicemen and women who have sacrificed their lives in the armed forces.
2. To acknowledge the military service of Carver County veterans, both living and deceased.
3. To provide basic information about military conflicts in which Carver County has been involved, including their causes, the course of events, and resolution.
4. To provide specific information about the activities of Carver County residents during military conflicts, including the activities of servicemen and women and life on the home front.

These goals will be realized through three broad formats within the Veterans Gallery, including:

1. A central memorial area
2. An interpretive exhibit
3. A dedicated space for the Veterans Library with facilities for multimedia presentations

Gallery construction began in January with the painting of the ceilings. Construction of walls began March 30 with volunteer labor supplied by the Minneapolis Central Labor Union Council. The cost for the gallery will be approximately \$15,000 which will be generated from donations, grants and volunteer time. Donations are accepted on the CCHS website or at the museum in Waconia.



*Volunteers from the Minneapolis Central Labor Union Council look over plans for the new gallery*



# SNIPPETS

## Making a Difference for the Future

Wendy Biorn  
Executive Director

Why does a person stay at their place of employment? Is it the money, the fame or just a love of the job? Non-profit jobs are notorious for not being highly paid positions, so it is obvious that CCHS staff and volunteers do not work for the monetary satisfaction. One would like to think it is the people we work with that keeps people coming back. This is in fact true. A recent survey stated that people stay longer at a jobs where they felt they had friendships and felt like the work environment was like a family. We have a number of short-term employees and volunteers who have come back to volunteer their time once they have found regular work. Job satisfaction is the other reason people stay at place of employment. For many of the volunteers and paid staff at CCHS it is the simple knowledge that the work we do DOES make a difference

in people's lives, not only today but one hundred years from now.

The effort we put forth saving historic St. Hubert's church in downtown Chanhassen will be seen by generations of Carver County residents. The work we are doing redesigning the Veterans' Gallery will impact thousands of people, children and adults alike. What are you doing to make a difference for the future of your community? Consider making a gift to help complete the Veterans' Gallery. It will be a gift that keeps on giving for a very, very long time.



Wendy Biorn, CCHS Executive Director, and Gayle McMahon, Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, pose with some of the volunteer workers who are working to complete renovations in the Veterans' Gallery this year.

### CCHS Seeks Funding for Veterans' Gallery Renovations

Although renovations are already underway in the Veterans' Gallery at the Carver County Historical Society, we are still in need of funds to complete the project. It is estimated that gallery construction will cost approximately \$15,000. CCHS is looking for donors to sponsor portions of the display. Donors may choose which section they wish to sponsor and a plaque denoting sponsorship will be placed in the gallery upon its completion. Any amount you feel you can give will be appreciated. Please help us create a memorial to those who have served. If you would like to donate by credit card, please visit [www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org) and click on the "Donate" link on the front page. This will allow you to make a secure online donation through the Paypal service. We cannot take credit card donations at the museum.

**Support the Carver County Historical Society!  
Upcoming Fundraising Events**

**A Night with the Hysterical Society**

**Thursday night, May 14**

**Dinner begins at 6:30pm; comedy show to follow at 8pm**



**Comedian  
Pete Borchers**



**Hosted by  
Comedian  
Scott Kadrlik**



**Comedian  
Bob DeMaris**

**TICKET SALE PRICES**

**\$40/person**

**Tickets available at CCHS**

**555 West First Street**

**Waconia, MN 55387**

**(952) 442-4234**

**Proceeds benefit CCHS**

**THE LOCATION:**

**Dahlgreen Golf Club**

**6940 Dahlgren Road**

**Chaska, MN 55318**

**Event Sponsor:**



**Wine and Beer Tasting**

**Thursday, June 18**

**7–9pm**

**Dolce Vita Wine Shop  
(On the corner of US-41  
and Chaska Boulevard)**

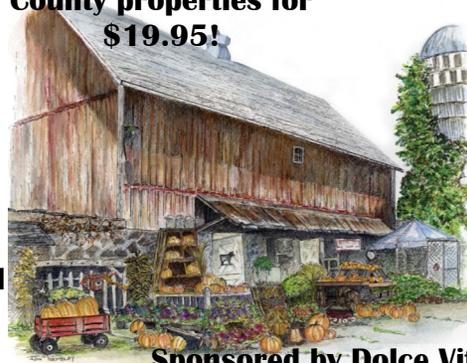
**Tickets on sale now!  
\$10/members of CCHS  
\$15/non-members  
Tickets available at:**

**Carver County  
Historical Society  
555 West First Street  
Waconia, MN  
(952) 442-4234**

**Dolce Vita  
Wine Shop  
1331 Chaska Blvd  
Chaska, MN  
(952) 361-0044**

**Proceeds and 15%  
of wine and beer  
sales during this  
event benefit CCHS**

**Available this night  
only—custom wine  
labels bearing images  
of historic Carver  
County properties for  
\$19.95!**



**7:30pm & 8:30pm  
View and learn  
about the St. John's  
Bible from Jim  
Triggs, Executive  
Director of the St.  
John's Bible  
Heritage Program**

**Sponsored by Dolce Vita Wine Shop, Chaska**



# The Essence of a Soldier: Kenny's Story

Harold and Mabel Dressel, Watertown, donated a box of things belonging to their son, Kenny Dressel, to the Carver County Historical Society in an effort to raise awareness and funds for the Veterans' Gallery. The box contained numerous items including his purple heart award, bronze star, newspaper clippings, burial flag, national defense service medal, Vietnam service medal, pictures, a letter from President Lyndon B. Johnson, baptismal certificate, confirmation certificate, Watertown High School Diploma, funeral memorial book and most notably letters from Kenny himself documenting his life in the military. It is the wish of Kenny's family to publish his account of the military to help finance the veterans' gallery at CCHS.

Kenny Dressel's story was related to me by his sister, Mary Loehrs. Kenny's letters were addressed to his parents and his brother Chuck. Kenneth Harold Dressel was born December 6, 1947 in Watertown, the fourth child of Harold Dressel and Mabel Mesenbring. He graduated in 1966, enlisted in the Army July 12, 1967 and arrived in Vietnam on December 19<sup>th</sup> of the same year. He died in gunfire January 25<sup>th</sup> 1968.

Kenny was quiet yet always kidding around and quick witted. He was a "very nice kid" who when his friend, Bruce Miller, was drafted, volunteered so that they could be together. Before he left for basic training, he told his girlfriend and sister Carol that he knew he wouldn't be coming home. This is his story, in his words.

## Thursday December 21

Hello everyone,

Well I have been here a few days already and I am still alive, no I was just joking. It hasn't been too bad yet because I have not gone out in the field because we have to have about a week of more training, before they send us out. The weather over here is real nice now because it is during the dry season, and the temp is about 85 degrees so I am getting a real nice sun tan. We got paid when we got here so I got a check of \$100.00 made up and sent it home, you maybe have it already, put it in my savings account...Bob Hope and company are going to be here on Christmas Day so they are getting ready for him....I ran into a few guys that I have been with for the past few months and last night we went out and got drunk, there were about 12 of us and we really had a good time. They changed the division I was supposed to go to. Now I am in the 25<sup>th</sup> Inf. Division; we are real close to the Cambodian Border. I got a patch that the whole 25<sup>th</sup> division wears and I sent it along...From what I hear there is a battalion of Vietnamese outside of our parameter but they aren't giving us any trouble so don't worry about it because I'm not....

Your son and Brother

Ken

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

## Wednesday (January) 10, 1967

Hello family,

It is about 2:00 in the afternoon and I am sitting on my bunker again... I got your 2<sup>nd</sup> letter today and thank you for the Kool-aid, but it should have been pre-sweetened because we don't get very much sugar out here. We are going to go down to our little river today and go swimming and wash our uniforms and other things. You wrote in your last letter that you said that you know just about where I am. Well I am 75 miles northwest of Chi-Chi and only about 4 miles from the Cambodian border. To get back to the Kool-aid if you want you can send 1 or 2 packages with every letter because water gets real sickening. One more thing that would be real nice, if you would get a subscription to the Watertown paper because there isn't very much to read around here and some days get real long if we run out of things to read....We have got about 20 guys in our platoon and I think that half of them are negroes but I get along with them real well.

Your son

Ken

*Continued on page 5*

*Continued from page 4*

**Jan 68**

Hello family

I suppose that you have read in the paper about the large fight between the Vietnamese and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> INF. On the 1 or 2 day of the year we killed over 1,000 VC and they only killed 22 of our men and wounded about 125 men that same night the VC were mortaring our post so that we couldn't leave here to help them. I glad that we could get out of here. I think that we got hit with over 100 mortar rounds but no one got hurt....

Your son

Ken

**Jan 18 1967** (*editor's note: should read 1968*)

Dear Chuck,

Well how is everything treating you back in the world? Well I'll tell you if I had my choice I would rather be back there, because this place just isn't for me, because there aren't any girls and most important there isn't very much beer to drink so I guess that I will have to make up for that the next time I come home and then I will be 21 and old enough to drink, "wow". But then again by the time I come home you will have your driver's license and that means that I will really have to fight to get to use dad's car...But if the competition is too great I will just have to buy me a sting-ray so that I will have something to drive and don't start getting any ideas about driving it either because I won't let you. Ha Ha. But meanwhile back in Vietnam, I have work to do before I can come home until my year is up and then they better hide all the girls and the beer because I will have a year to rest up for them. Putting all the kidding aside say hi to (everyone)

Your big brother

Ken

**Sun 21, 1968**

Hello Everyone,

I was sure glad to get 3 letters from you today... those pictures turned out real nice. I showed them to all the guys because everybody always shows their pictures to us... Boy do you have the wrong impression of Vietnam. You must think that they are always after us but they don't come close to the base camp unless they have about 10,000 men and it is hard to get that many together because every day we go out on sweeps to look for them and keep them from grouping together. You also asked if we get much sleep...we get 8 hours or more a night....Do you know that it is only 11 more months or 328 days. I'm not counting the days but Dick Denny said how many days we had left today. We usually get one hot meal a day and that is supper and then we get a cold soda and BEER. That is one thing a GI looks forward to when he is out on a sweep during the day hot food, cold beer and a letter from home  
Watching out

Ken

**Wed 24 1968** (*editor's note: Kenny's last letter home*)

Dear folks,

I got your letter today that had the Kool-aid in it so now we can make some Kool-aid when we come in at night.

About two nights ago we really got drunk. A convoy came in and it had extra beer so we went and bought 8 cases boy did that feel good for a change...I am starting to get more mail. That is always nice because it takes my mind off what's going on over here. Well I guess that is all for now...

Your son

Ken

Sunday morning, February 6<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Dressel was standing at her kitchen window washing dishes when a government car drove up to the house. Kenneth had been listed as missing in action. He however died in gun fire January 25<sup>th</sup> 1968, three weeks earlier at the age of 20, less than five weeks after his arrival.

A letter from Mike Esser dated February 11, 1968 surprised the family. Mike had been a friend of Ken's and was on patrol with him when he died. Mike's letters discussed that Ken "was the best of a friend." Subsequent letters described, at Mr. and Mrs. Dressel's request, how Ken had died.

*Continued on page 7*



# Upcoming Events and Programs

## Mysteries in History

For boys and girls, grades 1-5



Have you ever wondered what it's like to work in a museum? Try your hand at being a Junior Curator! (A curator takes care of objects in the museum's collection.) Preserve and protect

historic objects, explore your family history, imagine creating an exhibit, take a behind-the-scenes tour, and discover how to preserve things of your own! We'll even take an adventure to an archaeology dig site!

**Members:** \$20/student

**Non-members:** \$30/student

For more information or to register, call Erin at (952) 442-4234 or email [eranderson@co.carver.mn.us](mailto:eranderson@co.carver.mn.us)

## Wagon and Cabins

For boys and girls, grades 1-5

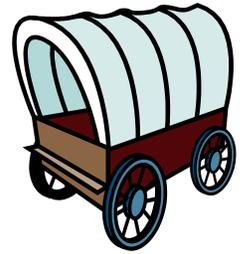
**July 27—31**

**Grades K—2,**

**9am—12pm**

**Grades 3—5,**

**1pm—4pm**



- Imagine living 150 years ago—in a real log building!
- Discover pioneer life—from going to the bathroom to growing the crops
- Experience a day in a one-room schoolhouse
- Explore churning butter and cooking over a fire
- Use an old-fashioned fishing pole and spend a day at the lake!
- Learn about Native American culture, traditions, and storytelling

**Members:** \$20/student

**Non-members:** \$30/student

## Summer 2009 Family Camping Trip



Join us for a great opportunity to learn about eco-history as a family! Special activities by the Carver County Libraries, Carver County Parks, and the Minnesota

Astronomical Society are sure to make this a trip to remember!

**Date:** July 31—August 1

**Time:** 6pm Friday—12pm Sunday

**Ages:** Fun for the whole family!

**Cost:** FREE!\*

To register, call Erin at (952) 442-4234—there is only room left for ONE family on this trip!

\*Participants must provide their own camping equipment and food



The Chanhassen Historical Society presents the Second Annual

## Celebration of History and the Arts

Sunday, May 17 at

Historic St. Hubert's Church in downtown Chanhassen  
306 W 78th Street

4—5pm Social gathering and tours of the church  
5—6pm Performances featuring

- The Chan—O—Laires
- St. Hubert's Brass Band
- Chaska Valley Family Theater
- Goddard School Children's Choir

Please join us for this community gathering and learn more about the Chanhassen Historical Society and its mission.

**March 17**

Dear Mrs. Dressel,

I am glad my first letter helped make Ken's passing away a little easier for the both of you...you had asked me if I could fill you in on the day of Ken's death. I was out there that day...We the company's of A -B-C and D 2/14 INF were making search and destroy missions out of Katum along the Cambodian border on the day of Ken's death. We were air lifted out, we were suppose to make something like a 2500 meter sweep and be picked up by choppers and brought back. Around noon gun ship's spotted hut's from the air and so we were taken off our first course to check out the report. The going was rough and the jungle thick, it was very hard to see very far ahead. Both Ken and Dick Denney were working security for the lead platoon and both were hit by the same round. The enemy first opened up with small arms fire which wounded the third person in the file twice in the arm when this happened Ken jumped in a bomb crater hole and Dick behind a fallen tree, an RPG rocket was fired which hit Ken in the leg and wounded Dick, as much as I know this was the only wound Ken had but a very bad one. People in his platoon and a medic went up and brought both Ken and Dick back where they could work on them. There were two medics working on Ken most of the time. So you know he had the most medical care we could give him at the time, and they did everything they could. After Ken did die our senior medic sat down put his hands to his head and cried. All this time Ken was with us, even though was reported missing was a mistake. After Ken was pulled back, he was like always smiling talking and smoking. The first thing he said was as soon as he gets in he wanted a cold beer. If in pain he never really complained. But being the first hit and getting a chopper in was impossible while in the fight. Loss of blood finally got to Ken. The jungle was so thick, no chopper could land so they sat at tree top level and all wounded were lifted up in baskets but his time Ken had already passed away. This is how I seen it, I have told you all I know, I hope it clears some things up for you.

A Friend,

Mike

## **Special Thanks to CCHS New and Renewing Members**

Pamela Baker	Dale Hilk	Allan Sauter
Tom & Diane Beck	Clarence & Mary Holm	Lonnie Scallen
Brian Bergs	Charlotte Johnson	Carol Schmalz
Carol Buesgens	Earline King	Vernonica Schwalbe
Margaret Bynum	Margo Klebe	Virginia Springer
Barbara Carlson	Joann Larson	Kathleen Stender
Betty Lou Cederstrom	Howard Loomis	Phyllis Stender
Barbara Drealan	Ronald & Elsie Machtemes	Dianne & Harry Strandberg
Christina Dumoulin	Connie McHale	Connie Swenson
Dale Enwiller	Richard & Pauline Molnau	Sandra Tanck
Mike Fahey	Terese Miller	Ken Thomson
Darlene Fasching	Steven Mueller	Jack & Marlene Thurk
Conrad & Lois Fiskness	Kermit Ohlsen	Betty Trende
Diane & Todd Gerhardt	Mark Olson	Deanna Turton
Jane Gehrking	Susan Olson	Mr & Mrs Steve Zeller
John Hill	Myra Quale	

## **Veterans' Gallery Donations**

Anonymous  
Joann Gorman,  
*in memory of*  
*Vince Wherley*  
Frances Vanderlinde

## **Annual Fund Drive Donations**

Carol Buesgens  
Mike Fahey  
Charlotte Johnson  
Robert & Helen Nicklaus  
Loren & Kari  
Schwinghammer  
Dianne & Harry  
Strandberg  
Vernis Strom  
Dennis VanSloun  
Wilfred Yetzer

# CARVER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

555 West First Street  
Waconia, MN 55387  
Phone: 952-442-4234  
Fax: 952-442-2435  
www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org  
E-mail: historical@co.carver.mn.us

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit 17  
Waconia, MN

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



### Museum & Library Hours

Mon.-Fri., 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

### Board Members

Mary Booth (President), Chaska  
Lori Lohman (Secretary), Chaska  
David Porath (Treasurer),  
Chanhassen  
Val Barlau, Waconia  
Al Bongard, Cologne  
Mary Eklund, Watertown  
Mike Fahey, Carver  
Doug Hoese, Watertown  
Sarah MacKay, Watertown  
Randy Maluchnik (County Liaison),  
Chaska  
Kari Myrold, Cologne  
John Varone, Chaska

### Staff

Wendy Biorn (Exec. Director)  
wbiorn@co.carver.mn.us  
Erin Anderson (Education Coord.)  
eranderson@co.carver.mn.us  
Larry Hutchings (Curator)  
lhutchings@co.carver.mn.us  
Marlene Magnuson (Researcher)  
mmagnuson@co.carver.mn.us  
Linda Nelson (Admin. Asst.)  
lnelson@co.carver.mn.us

## CARVER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### MEMBERSHIP FORM

- Senior Citizen \$10.00
- Individual \$15.00
- Family \$25.00
- Sustaining \$50.00
- Please send a gift membership to the name below.  
I understand a letter will be sent to the recipient  
announcing my gift.
- Please accept my donation of \_\_\_\_\_ toward your  
annual fund drive.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Gift Membership to: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

The Carver County Historical Society is a non-profit organization supported by memberships and contributions from county residents, business, and government. All members receive *Transcending Time*, this newsletter.