



Shorewood was a booming community one hundred years ago. In the four 2024 issues of this newsletter, our goal is to help our readers visualize and understand what life was like here in the 1920s.

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SHOREWOOD

from the river to the lake

News from the Shorewood Historical Society

Issue 1, February 2024

"THE ROARING 20s!" SHOREWOOD STYLE

by Karen de Hartog

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The sound of swinging hammers was "background music" in Shorewood throughout the 1920s.

Homes were being built at a blistering rate, averaging 180 per year. Sidewalk superintendents had endless entertainment.

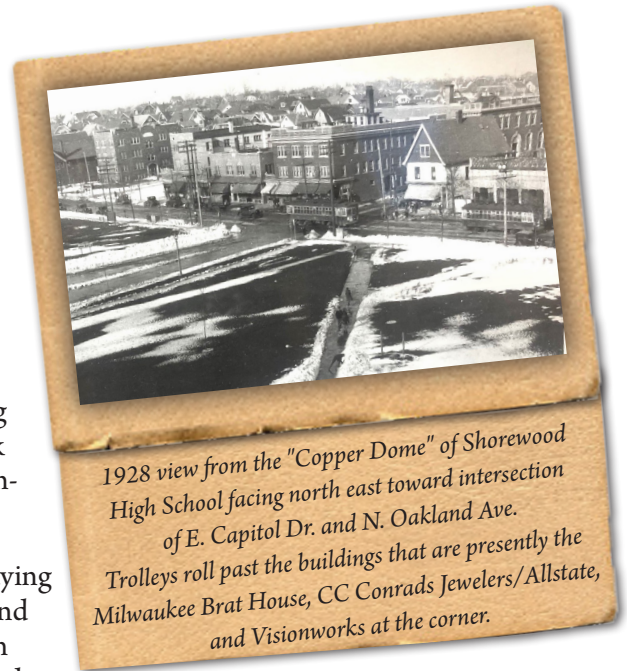
Village government was focused on laying water and sewer pipe, paving streets and installing street lights and sidewalks in new subdivisions. Milwaukee declared it would no longer provide fire protection service to the suburb, so plans had to be made to organize a fire department and also increase police service. The Safety Building was constructed in 1928.

Two trolley lines serviced the community and the rickety iron bridge that spanned the Milwaukee River was replaced with a concrete bridge in 1928.

The Bank of Shorewood opened in January, 1924. Multiple grocery stores, drug stores and gas stations were added to the Oakland Avenue/Atwater Road (later Capitol Drive) business corridors. Presbyterian and Lutheran churches were constructed.

Most remarkably, in 1924, two new schools, Lake Bluff and the high school, were approved by voters, funded, and constructed in less than a year.

In the four 2024 issues of this newsletter, our goal is to help our readers visualize and understand what life was like in our community in the 1920s. Readers who have story ideas or questions about the time period may contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com.



1928 view from the "Copper Dome" of Shorewood High School facing north east toward intersection of E. Capitol Dr. and N. Oakland Ave. Trolleys roll past the buildings that are presently the Milwaukee Brat House, CC Conrads Jewelers/Allstate, and Visionworks at the corner.

building permit report covering the 1922 and 1923.

	1923	1922
Residences	154	221
Duplexes	53	49
Filling Stations	2	1
Apt. & Store Bldgs.	8	3
Garages	129	92
Stores-Bldgs.	3	1
Excavations	19	4
Alterations	32	5
Wrecking Bldgs.	1	1
Tanks	62	31
Churches	1	--
Condemned Bldgs. repaired	1	--
Heating permits	22	--
Signs	6	--
Inspections	3337	No. Record
Notices	1160	No. Record
Fires	9	8
Electrical permits	556	547
Electrical Licenses	72	55
Total Permits issued	1085	1011
Total Fees	\$4,289.46	\$3,689.85
Total Valuation	2,449,984.00	2,791,172.00

Respectfully submitted,
Grover E. Kruecke,

A permit report highlights the growth of building activities in Shorewood for the years 1922 and 1923.

Rev. Jeannine Oaks Daugherty
Christopher Davit
David & Lauren Fey
Geoffrey Horton

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Shorewood Historical Society is Celebrating Its 40th Anniversary!

Over the last four decades, the Shorewood Historical Society has become a valuable link between residents and events of the past and the present. The Society's founders created an organization that has taken seriously the task of gathering and preserving stories, records and photos from residents, Village institutions, and businesses, and of using those records to educate the public.

Our recent activities include:



- The Snap Photo Contest encouraged photographers young and “older” to look carefully at Shorewood architecture.
- Two hundred additional granite Birthday Markers were installed bringing the Village-wide total to 700 markers.
- Archives remodeling has improved storage methods and research accessibility.
- A survey on Historic Preservation options was issued by the Village Board in January. Sam Kaufmann, University of Wisconsin-Madison student, on a UniverCity grant, prepared the survey. We provided background and editing assistance and encouraged participation. We are anxiously awaiting the survey results, which will help the Village Board decide next steps. We will continue to provide information for Village Board members and community programs that build awareness of the benefits of historic preservation and appreciation of the Village's unique assets.



Adam Nichols from Envision Outdoor Services installs a new Birthday Marker on the 2100 block of E. Olive Street. Birthday Marker installations were a bit behind schedule but better weather on Dec. 7, 2023 helped move things along. (Photo credit: Clancy Carroll)

We urge you to share your ideas with us regarding preservation and education projects and to encourage your neighbors to take an interest in our activities.

Kathy Kean

keank@aol.com, H: 414-962-2450; C: 414-581-3883



Shorewood Foundation Celebrating 60th Anniversary

Founded in 1964 as the Shorewood Civic Improvement Foundation (SCIF), the Shorewood Foundation provides a philanthropic vehicle for Shorewood residents and friends to enhance the community's social connections, civic pride and natural beauty. They support popular community events including the 4th of July parade and fireworks and the local farmers market, scholar-

ships for Shorewood High School seniors, and a variety of grassroots projects conceived and carried out by the Shorewood community. Made up of 15 volunteer board directors, the Foundation is one of the oldest community non-profits in the state and sets the standard for other municipalities wanting to replicate its successful operating model.

SHOREWOOD STREETS TELL THE STORY OF RAPID VILLAGE GROWTH IN THE 1920s: THE ARCHITECTS

(This is the first of four articles that will specifically address 1920's architecture.)

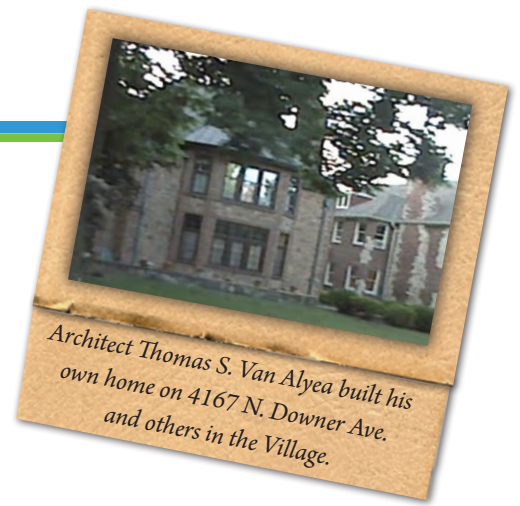
by Kathy Kean

One of the many projects undertaken by early members of the Historical Society was to create a set of walking tours which were later turned into the popular *A Guide to Shorewood's Architecture* (2001). Over the years, the research gathered has been a great starting point for the curious to explore the Village. As the introduction states, "From Shorewood's Lake Drive mansions to its many bungalows, duplexes and modern apartment buildings, it is hard to find such variety in a single square mile." Now that over 700 properties have granite Birthday Markers visible, the curious have another useful clue to learn how the Village grew and the blocks filled in as subdivisions developed.

As we wait for spring, we can start our "exploring" by learning about Shorewood architects. For instance, did you know that several leading Milwaukee architects and builders of the early 20th Century built their own homes in the Village? Among them are Charles W. Valentine who trained with the Milwaukee firm of Ferry & Clas, well known for the Milwaukee Public Library and the Pabst Mansion. Valentine started his own firm in 1912 and designed several homes in Shorewood including his own English Arts & Crafts home in 1917 (4033) and others on Richland Ct.

The firm of George Schley & Sons also built several homes in the Village. Son Perce Schley was the design member of the firm and built his English Tudor in 1928, also on Richland Court (4051). Thomas S. Van Alyea who favored French and Spanish designs built his own home on Downer (4167) and others in the Village. Several Shorewood homes with two story Greek columns were built by architect Verner Esser who also built one for himself on Prospect (4061) in 1922.

There are many other prominent architects and firms which left their distinguished mark in our Village including Russell Barr Williamson, Eschweiler & Eschweiler, Brust & Philipps, and others.



Copies of a Guide to Shorewood Architecture are available for sale at the information desk in Village Hall or contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com to request a copy. Price: \$10.

These and other topics will be addressed in the coming year. If you know an interesting story or have a question, contact us!

The 1920s — They Did ROAR!

By Margaret Mathews Sankovitz

The Roaring Twenties was a period in American history of dramatic social, economic and political change. The First World War ended in 1918 and America was ready to step out with fringe and twirling strands of pearls onto the world stage and it stepped out with panache and vigor and Jazz!

For the first time more Americans lived in cities than on farms. The nation's wealth more than doubled between 1920 and 1929 and gross national product expanded by 40 percent from 1922-1929.

It was a decade of prosperity and dissipation and of jazz bands, bootleggers, raccoon coats, bathtub gin, flappers, flagpole sitters and marathon dancers.

Two events kicked off the 1920s in America: On August 18, 1920 the Nineteenth Amendment was passed giving women the right to vote and on November 2, 1920, the first commercially licensed radio broadcast was heard from KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. (On April 26, 1922, WAAK became Milwaukee's first radio station, owned by the Gimbels department store.)

(Cont. on Page 4)



LET THE PLANNING BEGIN

by Karen de Hartog

("The 1920s — They Did ROAR!" cont. from Page 3)

The decade was characterized by economic prosperity, rapid social and cultural change, and a mood of exuberant optimism.

A surging economy created an era of mass consumerism as Jazz-Age flappers flouted Prohibition laws and the Harlem Renaissance redefined arts and culture.

The most important consumer product of the 1920s was the automobile. Low prices (The Ford Model T cost just \$250 in 1924) and generous credit made cars affordable luxuries at the beginning of the decade. By the end of the decade they were practically necessities.

Many of the defining features of American culture emerged during this decade: the record chart, the book club, the radio, the talking picture, spectator sports.

It was only in the 1920s that, for the first time, a majority of American families consisted of a breadwinner-husband, a home-maker wife, and children attending school.

Aviators made men fly and women went to work. The country was confident and rich.

Great personalities were part of the mystique of the decade: F. Scott Fitzgerald and his wife Zelda, Josephine Baker, Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, Louise Brooks, William Randolph Hearst, Charlie Chaplin, Coco Chanel, Al Capone, Salvador Dali, Babe Ruth, Charles Lindbergh, Henry Ford, Clara Bow, Greta Garbo, Sinclair Lewis, Rudolph Valentino – to list just a few.

But the 1920s were an age of extreme contradiction. The unmatched prosperity and cultural advancement was accompanied by intense social unrest and reaction.

The 1920s came to a jarring halt on October 29, 1929 when the stock market crashed, the beginning of the Great Depression.

Shorewood High School

In the early 1920s, Riverside High School in Milwaukee declared they would no longer accept students from outside the city. Adding Shorewood's high school age students to the quickly growing number of elementary students at Atwater School caused very crowded conditions. About 1,000 students, grades K–12, were enrolled at Atwater. Classes were held in the basement and in the balcony of the auditorium. By 1923, the School Board had hired architects and blue prints were being refined for two new schools.

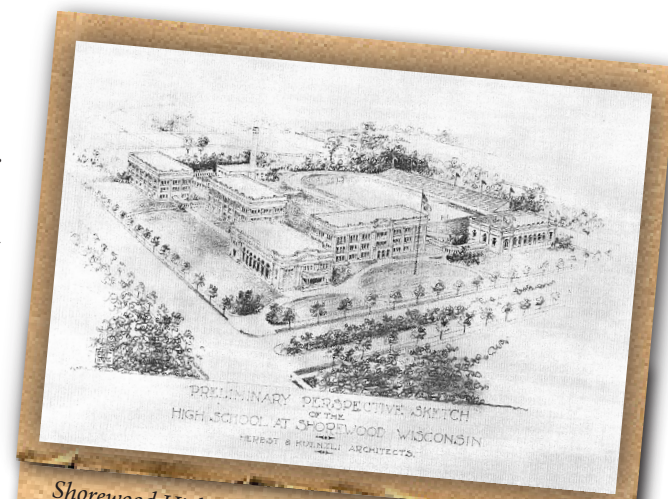
The proposed high school was to be a multi-building campus. On October 19, 1923, *The Shorewood Radio* (predecessor to the *Herald*) reported:

"If present plans materialize, Shorewood and Whitefish Bay, combined in one joint district, will have one of the finest and most unique high school plants in the entire nation. Shorewood's school board first received its inspiration as to this new type of high school from Professor Thomas Lloyd Jones, chairman of the University of Wisconsin committee of high school relations. His experience at the university taught him the absurd fallacy of any high school plan which was rigid and did not readily admit of constant expansion as the number of pupils increased to overcrowding. Hence, the development of the unit plan."*

J. W. Allerding, a local landowner of prominence, donated land on the corner of Oakland Ave. and Atwater Rd. (now Capitol Dr.) for the new high school. An additional 13 acres adjoining the property on the west were purchased by the Village. The architectural firm of Herbst and Kuenzli was hired to draw up preliminary plans.

Lake Bluff Grade School

Lake Bluff Grade School was also designed to be built in stages but the end result would be a single building. The architectural



Shorewood High School drawing by architects Herbst and Kuenzli: "The Administration building will stand upon the slight knoll well back from and facing Atwater Road. A curved walk or drive will lead up to it from both sides of the depression in front which will become a pool in summer and a skating rink in winter." Shorewood Radio (Oct. 18, 1923).

(Cont. on Page 5)

("Let the Planning Begin" cont. from Page 4)

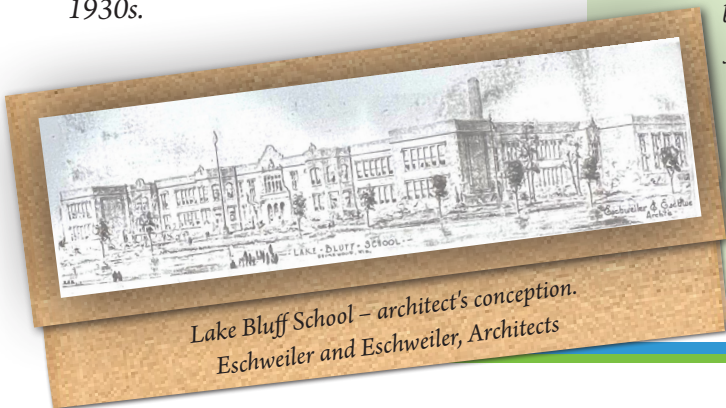
firm of Eschweiler and Eschweiler was hired to design Lake Bluff for an 11 acre site on Lake Bluff Blvd. and Bartlett Ave. The wing on the east side, facing Bartlett, would be constructed first and would house K-5 grade classes.

Over the ensuing months plans were modified and there was plenty of bickering over cost and enrollment projections in particular. Finally, on March 4, 1924, the community gathered at a Board meeting to authorize a bond issue of \$285,000 for the high school administration building. The vote was 281 for and 65 against. A bond issue of \$70,000 was approved by a vote of 245 ayes and 61 nays for the first wing of Lake Bluff.

On April 10, a steam shovel began digging the foundation for the high school. By fall, the Industrial Arts Building (current Fitness Center) was ready for student use. The Administration Building would take a little longer.

On April 18, 1924, construction began at the Lake Bluff site. Students and their teachers began the school year in their new building on September 8, 1924, just five months after construction began.

**A joint district with Whitefish Bay was apparently discussed for almost two years. Shorewood's decision to build the high school in the middle of the Village rather than near the border between the two suburbs ended the discussion. However, some Whitefish Bay students continued to attend Shorewood High School as tuition students until the Bay constructed their own school in the early 1930s.*



Above: New corbels of critters were reproduced by Continental for the 1929-30 addition to Lake Bluff school to match the originals from the 1924 section of the building.

On the right: The interior and exterior of many Shorewood buildings feature tile from Continental.

A BOOK REVIEW

by Karen de Hartog

"Carl Bergmans and the Continental Faience & Tile Co." by Ben Tyjeski, Kelly Dudley and Kathy Roberts

Decorative tile was a popular addition to buildings constructed in the early 20th century. In their beautifully illustrated new book, historian and tile maker Ben Tyleski and his co-authors tell the story of one Milwaukee area tile maker, Carl Bergmans, and his legacy.

Bergmans received early training in the art of tile making in Belgium. He immigrated to the United States and worked in factories in the Zanesville, Ohio, area to perfect his craft before moving to Wisconsin and opening the Continental Faience & Tile Co. in South Milwaukee in 1925. In a relatively short period of time, Bergmans produced tiles that can still be found in numerous schools, homes, churches and businesses in the Milwaukee area.

The book is a biography of Bergmans, a primer on tile making and technical terms, and photos of tile installations including those at Lake Bluff and Shorewood High School, the Casanova Apartments at 3950 N. Farwell Ave. and a number of Shorewood homes.

Bergmans sold the company in the early 1940s. The abandoned factory was torn down in 2008, but for many years previous, authors and former South Milwaukee residents Kelly Dudley and Kathy Roberts had been salvaging tile pieces from the property. These were used to help identify Bergmans tiles in local installations. Tyjeski located and photographed many of the installations.

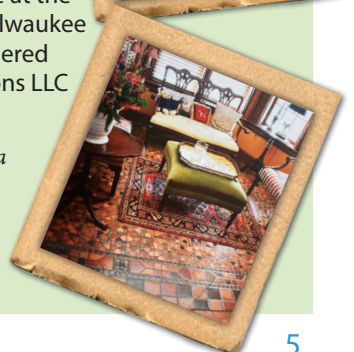
Paging through the book to look at the pictures is a delightful sensory experience. Learning about the tile making process is an added bonus.

The book is available for purchase at the Urban Milwaukee and Historic Milwaukee Inc. store fronts. It can also be ordered from Bergmans Legacy Publications LLC at continentalfaience.com

**** Ben Tyjeski is currently working on a book about all of the tile installations at Lake Bluff School. The book is due for release in September to commemorate the School's centennial year.*



Casanova Apartments (1928) feature multiple stairways with tile from Continental.



VILLAGE LIFE IN THE 1920s — *From the Notes of Suzie Centennial*

(In 1999, in preparation for the Centennial of the Village, Society member Sue Rebholz perused the issues of the *Shorewood Radio* and the *Shorewood Herald*. She compiled booklets that were distributed to the grade schools in Shorewood for use in exposing the children to the history of the Village. The following are excerpts from the booklets.)

- The first issue of The Shorewood Radio newspaper was published October 19, 1923. It sold for 10 cents a copy (\$2.00 a year) It later became known as The Shorewood Herald

(Excerpts from "A Short History of Atwater School and Shorewood" written for the school's 75th anniversary in 1990)

- The Village... was busy in the 1920s. Kids skated, swam, caught crows, picked wild flowers, tended family farms and did lots of walking. We had sewers, running water, some streets and sidewalks, two churches, streetcars, a park and a beach. There were still less than a dozen homes west of Oakland Avenue. For fire protection the Village had volunteers, and ladders were borrowed when needed. We got a police chief and the Shorewood Public School District was formed (the second oldest in Milwaukee County.)

- Shorewood... developed a reputation for being an attractive and ideal place to raise children. The land tracts known as Shorewood Gardens and Shorewood Park were opened. Dance halls and saloons were barred and no expense was spared to make the Village educational facility second to none in the state.

- By 1924, the Village saw more construction... a new police station, incinerator and a bank... in the mid 1920s the Armory moved to Milwaukee and Oakland Ave. began to develop into a business district. We had our own fire department, one engine and four men, and the Shorewood Theater on N. Oakland Ave. and Lake Bluff opened in

1927 where matinees offered Tom Mix serials.

- In 1925, the Village celebrated its Silver Anniversary with pavement dancing and fireworks. The junior and senior high moved to the new high school and Lake Bluff opened for K-5th grades.

(Excerpts from *The Shorewood Radio*)

- Ash (from coal furnaces) collection was once a week, twice in winter. Basement doors should be unlocked so men can remove.

- The Village welcomed electric lights to replace the gas light system.

- The old bridge across the river was intended for wagon and buggy traffic and was not safe for trucks and autos.

- A new convent was built on St. Robert Parish property. Five Sisters taught at the school and lived in a home on Prospect Ave.

- On June 12, 1925, a crowd gathered at the Shorewood station of the Northwestern Rail Road to catch a glimpse of President and Mrs. Coolidge as they waved from the observation platform.

- In 1926, the new park established on the location of the former amusement park, was named for William J. Hubbard, former president and longtime member of the Shorewood Village Board.

- In September 1926, 3,000 persons were expected to attend the high school football game on September 25. The superintendent of schools stated that people will not have to stand up because 1,000 bleachers have

been secured from the State Fair Association.

- A hurry call for the Police came in from Weil St. (Sheffield Ave.) to the effect that one of Grogan's goats had escaped. The goat was found calmly chewing off the sleeve of a shirt hanging on a neighbor's clothesline.

- The new bridge that replaced the old, unsafe Atwater Bridge over the river was christened Capitol Drive Bridge and was hailed as a Gateway to the North Shore. The cost was \$3,009.

- Motorists were able to obtain their drivers' licenses at the police station. No fee was charged for owners of cars. The fee for non-owners was 25 cents.

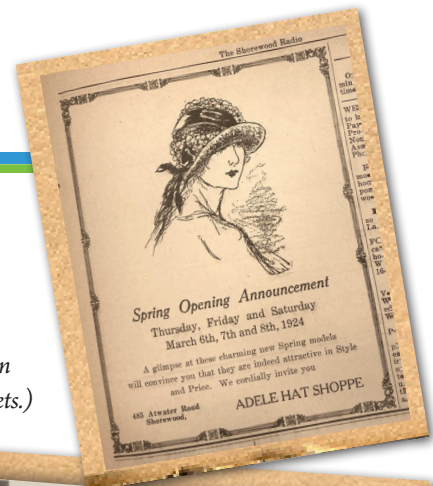
- In 1928 an editorial called for improvement of the bluff at Atwater Beach to prevent annual landslides and provide access to the shore, and similar improvement to the roadway from Menlo Blvd. under the railroad to give access to Hubbard Park along the Milwaukee River.

- In 1929 the Lake Shore division of the Northwestern Railroad tracks in Shorewood were removed.

- The Shorewood Theater had an all "Talkie" program.

- The greyhound became the Shorewood High School mascot.

- The Shorewood fire and police department moved into the new combined station on Murray Ave. Two shiny brass poles were installed for easy access to first floor for firemen responding to alarms.



Adele Hat Shoppe was a frequent advertiser in the early editions of the Shorewood Radio (ad from March 7, 1924), especially when changing seasons required a new hat. Obviously, the ladies on the Lake Bluff PTA board (photo from 1930) were good customers! Adele's Shoppe was located across the street from St. Robert Church and School.

- And one last note as the 1920s came to a close: in December 1929 it was reported that the fire department was called to extinguish a goose in a home on Morris Blvd. Grease igniting the fowl could not be extinguished and the goose was thrown out the window!

We depend upon the commitment and support of people like you to preserve and promote Shorewood's rich history.

Send your application to: Shorewood Historical Society • 3930 N. Murray Avenue • Shorewood, WI 53211

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
2024 Membership Renewal letters were recently mailed to all current members. If you have not yet completed your renewal, clip form here and mail today!

(Your e-mail address will be used only to alert you to upcoming programs and events. It will not be shared with any other individual or organization.)

- Individual \$15 Family \$20 Contributing \$35 Sustaining \$100 Associate \$250 Life \$500
 Additional Donation \$ _____ Please make check payable to the Shorewood Historical Society.

All memberships are per calendar year except the one-time payment Life membership.

- I am interested in becoming more involved in Shorewood Historical Society activities. Please contact me with further information.
- I would prefer to receive the digital version of the Shorewood Historical Society Newsletter sent via email.

Support the Shorewood Historical Society by becoming a member. Join online at shorewoodhistory.org or contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com for more information.

SHOREWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2022-2023

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Shorewood Historical Society
3930 N. Murray Ave.
Shorewood WI 53211

www.shorewoodhistory.org
Email: shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

The Sheldon Room/In-House Research is located in the Shorewood Village Center (lower level of library) at 3920 N. Murray Ave. and is open by appointment via contact by phone: 414-847-2726 or email: shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

The Shorewood Historical Society is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization. Your donations and in-kind gifts are tax-deductible as allowed by law.



3930 North Murray Avenue
Shorewood, WI 53211

Please keep the Shorewood Historical Society in mind when cleaning out your attic or basement.

We are in particular need of pictures, abstracts and other information about Shorewood homes and neighborhoods.

CONTACT US AT:
SHOREWOODHISTORY@YAHOO.COM
OR 414-847-2726 WITH QUESTIONS
OR TO MAKE A DONATION.



Every Home Has a Story.



- Are your kids mystified by that rotary wall phone in the basement?
- What makes your home unique?
- Was a part of your home ever used as a business or office?
- Many homes still have milk chutes, but how about an ice chute or a door for coal delivery?
- How does your home fit into the history of your block?
- Have renovations maintained the original style of your home?

Have you got a house story to share? Or a question?
Email us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com and let us know!

SAVE THE DATES!

Shorewood Architecture Talks with Kathy Kean,

President-Shorewood Historical Society:

A Story of Shorewood Revealed through Architecture Wednesday, February 28, 2024 1:00-2:30 p.m.

Free. Preregistration required through the Senior Resource Center:
Shorewood SRC <src@shorewoodwi.gov>

Telling Shorewood's Story Through Its Architecture Tuesday, March 5, 2024 6:30-7:45 p.m.

Free to the public.
(Sponsored by the Shorewood Historical Society
and the Shorewood Library)

* Both talks will be held in the Village Center Community Room (lower level of the library)