



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.

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1

New High School Welcomes First Students

PAGE 2

President's Column
Thank You Margaret!

PAGE 3

Lake Bluff Centennial Tour

PAGES 4 & 5

Modern Conveniences of the 20s

PAGE 6

Change Fosters Opportunity

PAGE 7

A Message from Our Editor
Society Information

PAGE 8

Lake Bluff Celebrates 100
Renewals Mailed Out Soon

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SHOREWOOD

from the river to the lake

News from the Shorewood Historical Society

Issue 4, November 2024

NEW HIGH SCHOOL WELCOMES FIRST STUDENTS

by Karen de Hartog

On January 30, 1925, Shorewood's junior high and high school students completed their first semester at Atwater school and celebrated with an ice carnival. The following Monday classes began in the new school Administration Building. After a flurry of activity over that weekend, 480 students moved into the school over wooden planks to keep them out of the "sea of mud" that surrounded the school. Since opening at Atwater School in 1922, the high school had grown from 4 to 250 students. The remaining 230 were in junior high.



The Administration Building is complete! The copper dome, a late addition, inspired students to name their yearbook "The Copperdome."



The physical education building was constructed in two parts. The North Gym was built in 1928. The south end, including the pool – the first in a public high school in the Milwaukee area – was added in 1930.

In preparation for the move, *The Ripples* (student newspaper) explained how students should conduct themselves in the "splendid" new building:

"The east and west side stairs are to be used in going up only, and the east and west rear stairs are to be used to come down only, except after school hours.

The hall floors are covered with battleship linoleum so as to deaden the noise we make when we pass between classes. There is no running or yelling in the halls.

If you spill ink either in the halls or in the classrooms, please notify the janitor immediately; ink can be easily removed before it dries."

The new building, designed in a neo-classical style by the architectural firm of Herbst and Kuenzli, was only the first step in the multi-building campus plan. The

(Cont. on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This year Appleton hosted the WHS Local History & Historic Preservation Conference on Oct. 16-18. Once again, museum staff and volunteers gathered to exchange ideas and best practices to enliven historical activities in their local communities. At a session a few years ago, Board Member Bob Dean learned about the digitation process and subsequently Shorewood now has access to decades of Shorewood newspapers, phone books and yearbooks. Board Member Christine Mueller attended a session last year on website redesign and, under the leadership of Board Member Laura Beldavs, Chris and others have updated and are improving this valuable tool.

At the current conference, finding ways of "telling stories" was emphasized as a useful tool to engage non-traditional history audiences, including "Gen Zs," in finding connections between the past and their lives today. One keynote speaker's talk focused on how historic preservation provides an opportunity for residents to feel a sense of belonging. He also stressed that **successful historic preservation efforts thrive best when the community is involved in the process.**

Fitting right in with that theme, the Village of Shorewood's UniverCity Alliance Grant Project was included in one of the sessions. I was asked to present how the Village Board, Staff, Historical Society and UW Madison students worked together to frame the Historic Preservation Survey which 900 residents replied to last January. While we continue to work on building awareness about Shorewood's unique historic character, it was reassuring to hear others re-enforce the importance

of including the community in the process. Several people attending the session were impressed with the initiatives the Historical Society has already taken to involve the community including the In-House Research Room and the Birthday Marker Program!

Overall, I came away once again reminded of the challenge of creating engaging history programming but also inspired by the many opportunities already here in Shorewood. Fortunately, for the past 40 years, the Shorewood Historical Society has had active volunteers, curious about the past, who have helped us build a valuable foundation to continue our understanding of why and how things came to be the way they are today. The tasks of finding creative ways to "tell stories," that create a sense of belonging for community residents of today, is our mission.

We also need new voices to think of new ways to tell more stories! **Look for the annual membership renewal coming soon. Invite your neighbors, old and young, to join us in telling more stories in 2025.**

Kathy Kean

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Margaret Sankovitz in 2023 with husband Jim and great granddaughter Marley Sue Singstad.

THANK YOU MARGARET!

Margaret Sankovitz has been the editor of the Shorewood Historical Society Newsletter since 1995. The current issue will be her last as editor.

Margaret has lived in Shorewood for most of her life. Her memories have added rich detail to our stories. She used her skills as an historian and a journalist to correct our content errors and our grammar. She leaves us with a newsletter we are all proud of and high standards to maintain into the future.

Best wishes, Margaret, your contributions have been immeasurable and your legacy continues on. We will miss you!

Cover Girls

Society board member Carol McWade and her daughter and grand daughters grace the cover of the Fall 2024 issue of *Shorewood Today*. They are members of a five generation group of Shorewood school students. Carol '70 and her daughter Sharon '93 are graduates of Shorewood High School as was Carol's mother, Virginia Slovak Ladwig '43. Sharon's daughters are enrolled in Shorewood schools and are on track to graduate in 2029 and 2033.

LAKE BLUFF CENTENNIAL TOUR

by Karen de Hartog

Smiles, laughter and even a few exclamations of “Wow” filled the halls of Lake Bluff School on September 21, 2024. Former students, school neighbors, retired staff and even current Lake Bluff families enjoyed the opportunity to look closely at the architecture and interior design elements in this wonderful old building. Visitors were encouraged to

“Look up” at colorful tile installations (old and new), leaded glass windows, and rabbits, frogs and owls hiding in the corners. Everyone was pleased to note that much of the original Eschweiller designed building has been preserved and that even with additions and renovations, it is still an inspiring, child-centered environment.

Tour-goers were introduced to the tile and mosaic installations throughout the school in a video prepared by Ben Tyjeski, Milwaukee’s favorite tile expert and historian. We hope to have that video available for online viewing soon.

Ben has also written a book entitled *The Lake Bluff Story in Art Tiles*. This beautiful little book is available for purchase on Ben’s web site: <https://www.tyjeskitile.com/>. It would be a delightful holiday gift for anyone who attended Lake Bluff and for decorative tile enthusiasts.



Society President Kathy Kean introduces a visitor to the Eschweiller & Eschweiller designed school building.



Ben Tyjeski's book, The Lake Bluff Story in Art Tiles is available for sale on his web site.



Visitors to Lake Bluff took a close look at a contemporary tile installation (from 2011-2012).

The 350 tiles were designed by students and staff and were finished and glazed to honor the Arts and Crafts tradition that is found throughout the school.



Tile from the Shorewood High School Arts & Science Building constructed in 1929.

(“New High School Welcomes First Students” cont. from Page 1)

“University style” school unit plan called for a six–seven building campus. Buildings would be added as enrollment increased.

Enrollment quickly doubled to 1,120 students. The addition of the Science and Art building in 1928 somewhat eased the crowded classroom conditions. The North Gym was built in 1928 to provide facilities for different sports and physical education. The South Gym, including the swimming pool, was completed in 1930.

The final building from the original plan, the Performing Arts building, was completed in 1936 in the midst of the Great Depression with considerable help from the Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA).

The arena and VHE (Verner H. Esser) pool were added later and all of the buildings have had several renovations to meet changing facility needs. The most recent addition/renovation added a new entrance to the south side of the Administration Building and significant technology upgrades. However, the 100-year-old buildings continue to be a credit to the original planners who had faith that the community would grow and expect and appreciate excellent education for their children.

MODERN CONVENIENCES OF THE 1920s: THE DEMISE OF THE HAND PUMP, ICE BOX AND WOOD STOVE (AND THE LITTLE HOUSE OUT IN THE BACK!)

(This is the last of four articles that will specifically address Shorewood's building boom in the 1920s.)

by Mary Jorgensen and Karen de Hartog

The exteriors of Shorewood homes built in the 1920s look much the same today as when they were built, but the interior areas, particularly the kitchens and bathrooms, may have had the first of many renovations shortly after the homes were built. Improvements in water and power utilities were inspiring many new home products.



Bathrooms

New construction in the 20s probably included a bathroom with the three standard fixtures of a “water closet” or toilet, sink and bathtub, but that was a fairly recent development. The blue prints for the Shorewood Village Hall, built as a school in 1908, included two out-houses.

Rapid improvements in the availability of clean water and concerns about the need to provide sterile conditions to avoid disease – not to mention convenience! – influenced the development of the indoor bathroom. Changes to the fixtures since that time have been fairly minor: improvements to flushers, and the addition of showers and the single head faucet for controlling hot and cold water.

Kitchens

More significant changes took place in the kitchen.

Plumbing

By 1920 most Shorewood homes would be connected to the municipal water system. Early sinks were mounted on the wall, sometimes with attached drain boards, and often had two or four legs. It was considered important to leave the space under the sink open, to allow air to circulate and prevent moisture and decay. Leaving the pipes exposed also showed that the house was equipped with modern plumbing—a status symbol!

Refrigeration

Homes built in 1920 most likely had an ice box in the kitchen for storing perishable food. Ice boxes, which became popular at the end of the 1800s, were typically made of wood with a tin or zinc lining packed with straw, sawdust, cork, or seaweed for insulation. A large block of ice held in a compartment or tray near the top of the icebox kept food chilly for a reasonable period of time. Standard models had a drip pan at the bottom which had to be emptied daily. Fancier models had spigots that led to a storage container or a drain.

(Cont. on Page 5)



(*"Modern Conveniences" cont. from Page 4*)

Large blocks of ice were delivered by the ice man. Some Shorewood homes built in the 20s still have an odd, small closet or shelving unit near the back door (different than a milk chute) which may originally have been an opening for the ice man to refill the ice box.

An ice delivery ad from the Shorewood Radio newspaper, dated Oct. 3, 1924, reads:

The Thermometer Cuts Capers
In October

If "past performances" mean anything, September will be a month of rapidly changing temperatures.

And varying temperatures are particularly hard on foods. The only proper guard against sudden food spoilage is ice – and plenty of it.

This should make you think of our service, because our business is solely that of furnishing food protection.

Once you think of ice in terms of food saved, you know it more than pays for itself – and join our growing list of year 'round customers.

RANDOM ICE & COAL CO.

The first refrigerator to become widely popular was made by General Electric in 1927, which customers could purchase for \$520 – over \$7,000 in today's money! By 1935, the era of electric refrigeration had truly begun, and by 1944, 85 percent of American households featured a refrigerator in the kitchen.

Cooking

Homes built in the 1920s probably did not have to accommodate the large, black wood burning cooking stove popular at the turn of the century. Gas service was available to fuel much smaller gas stoves. Electric stoves had been available for a number of years but did not become a popular choice until the late 20s. Improvements in heating elements and amount of electricity used made them more desirable.

Two of the appliances we now take for granted in our kitchens did not become readily available until after WWII: the dish washer and the microwave oven (based on technology developed during the war).

For more information, see:

The Comforts of Home: The American House and the Evolution of Modern Convenience, by Merritt Ierley, c. 1999

Bungalow Kitchens, by Jane Powell and Linda Svendsen, c. 2000

How the Working-Class Home Became Modern, 1900-1940, by Thomas Hubka, c. 2020

Do You Have a "Pittsburgh Potty"?

Named for the city where it was first used, a Pittsburgh Potty was placed in the basement of early 20th century homes, usually close to a drain. As sewage backups tend to flood the lowest fixture in a residence, a Pittsburgh Potty would be the fixture to overflow, containing the sewage leak in the basement.

Even our basements have a story to tell. Take a look around for remnants of early plumbing and electrical service.



An oak ice box like this would contain a large block of ice that was delivered by the ice man.



G.E. "Monitor Top" refrigerator, c.1935, with cooling unit on top.



Hot Point range with electric stove top c. 1922

CHANGE FOSTERS OPPORTUNITY

by Margaret Mathews Sankowitz

Change fosters opportunity. Never more true than, for instance, when the Milwaukee Country Club moved to River Hills in 1911, freeing up the southeast portion of the Village for development. The golf club extended from Edgewood Ave. to Capitol Dr. and from Downer Ave. east to Lake Dr. The area now is a residential area of stately homes.

In 1927, the Northwestern Railroad Company abandoned the tracks of the Lake Shore Division that were laid along what is now Ardmore Ave. and made the area attractive to developers and home builders.

The Lake Shore Division tracks ran in a northerly direction from a station just south of Capitol Dr. through Shorewood and adjoining Whitefish Bay. The main line of the Northwestern Railroad followed the Milwaukee River along the western limits of the Village.

In the 1939 WPA project book *Shorewood*, it is stated that “some prominent citizens of the village openly advocated that the entire area west of Oakland Avenue be relinquished to the city of Milwaukee, for they believed it to be a liability that would tend to lower the value of the village as a residential site.”

The area west of Oakland was, at the time, occupied by the Light Horse Armory, small farms, and the railroad tracks. The Armory was moved to Richards St. and the land vacated in about 1930.

In 1925, Shorewood, jointly with Whitefish Bay, proposed that the Lake Shore Division tracks be removed. Some residents found the idea to be impractical and some deemed it visionary. Examination of the proposal showed that the plan would be profitable to the Village and to the railroad. Engineers for both entities – the Village and the railroad – agreed that a cut-off line north of Whitefish Bay would effect large savings and make operations over the Lake Shore Division tracks unnecessary.

The cost was high: \$1,600,000. Shorewood agreed to pay \$46,000 and Whitefish Bay agreed to pay \$125,000 for the abandoned right-of-way. The project was begun in June 1927 and finished two years later. The railroad track was gone and the removal of the tracks greatly increased assessments in the area, benefiting most of the taxpayers of the Village. Property owners whose lots adjoined the railroad promptly bought up portions of the right-of-way from the Village for a total sum of \$25,000 thus reducing the Village government’s contribution to \$21,000.

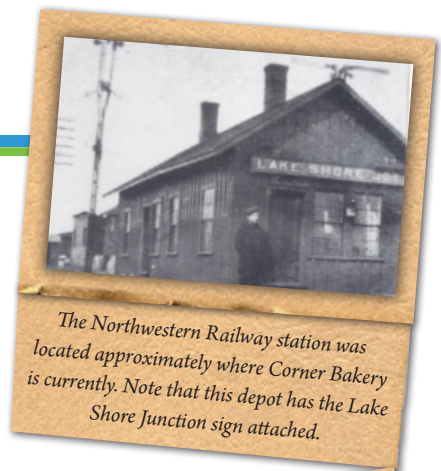
The newly acquired land provided the green light to build substantial homes and raised the amount of taxes that the Village received annually.

A perc of great value resulted also: the railroad company, that had owned a large tract of land lying between the two railroad lines, had intended to use it as a freight yard. The land was sold to subdividers and the freight yard was built elsewhere.

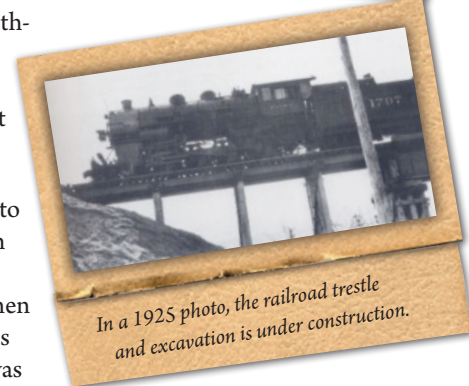
The railroad events of the late 1920s led to the development of Ardmore Ave. The late Dorothy Hoffman grew up in a home on Ardmore Ave. She recalled standing in a window of her house facing the Northwestern tracks when a train went by. She saw a man on the passing train standing at a basin shaving!

Originally Capitol Dr. rose to the level of the tracks which was at a considerable elevation. The traffic back up when a train was on the tracks was so severe that a police car was present every day to control traffic. Sometimes as many as 50 cars were waiting in line for the Minneapolis-bound train to pass. In about 1925 the railroad company began a project to ease the traffic pattern. The hill under the tracks was excavated to make way for the road on the underpass. It took about two years to excavate and to build the new trestle. Four tracks were installed to Hampton Ave. in Whitefish Bay. The Northwestern Railroad passenger cars and freight trains continued to cross the Capitol Drive trestle until 1970 when the service were discontinued. The removal of the tracks followed and today the right-of-way is part of the Oak Leaf Trail.

A new bridge was built in 2011 and now features “The Ghost Train,” a simulation of the round trip journey of the Twin Cities 400 which was operated by the Chicago and Northwestern Railway and crossed that same location from 1935-1962.



The Northwestern Railway station was located approximately where Corner Bakery is currently. Note that this depot has the Lake Shore Junction sign attached.



In a 1925 photo, the railroad trestle and excavation is under construction.

The “400” routinely covered the 400 miles between Chicago and St. Paul, Minnesota, in just under 400 minutes including its travel through Shorewood along the route of today’s Oak Leaf Trail. The Ghost Train project was an effort of the Village Public Art Committee. It made its inaugural run on Halloween, October 31, 2016.

So change does invite development. Without the abandonment of the Lake Shore Division tracks there would not be the lovely residential northwest side of Shorewood. Without the move of the Milwaukee Country Club to its northwestern location, there would not be the substantial homes of the south east part of the Village. Without the discontinuance of the Northwestern railroad there would not be the Oak Leaf trail that winds through the western part of Shorewood.

Change brings opportunity. Change is part of life!

THAT'S -30-

I have been privileged to be editor of the Shorewood Historical Society Newsletter, beginning with the Fall (October-December) 1995 issue.

It was a four page issue – a remembrance by Ralph van Briesen found in the archives was the lead story. President Dorothy May provided her column and Virginia Palmer contributed a story about the Shorewood Herald and its predecessor newspapers. This past year of 2024 has been highlighting the 1920s.

I have enjoyed being part of this endeavor through many changes: several IMacs, three mastheads, color printing, digitized records to research, two owners and locations for the Shorewood Press, several presidents and many board members.

Each issue has been an adventure.

I thank each and all of you who have contributed in any way to the success of the newsletter.

Thank You!

Margaret Mathews Sankovitz

- 30 -



**WELCOME
NEW MEMBERS**

Mary & Doug Armstrong

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, 2024-2025

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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.



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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.



Visitors toured Lake Bluff Elementary School on
September 21, 2024.

Lake Bluff School
celebrated its
100th Anniversary
this year.

See more about the
Lake Bluff Centennial
Tour on Page 3.

Membership Renewals Will be Mailed Soon

Shorewood Historical Society
membership renewals for
2025 will be mailed to all
current members soon.

In the past year our archives
renovation, Lake Bluff Centennial
tour and our Newsletter
were all supported by our
generous members.

We are counting on your
continuing support – and
Thank You!