



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 3, August 2024

## LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL HAS A LOT TO LOOK UP TO

by Karen de Hartog

Look up!

Can you spot the frog holding up a column?

Can you see the fairy sparkling in a stained glass window?

Can you find the mural of a young Abe Lincoln reading by firelight?

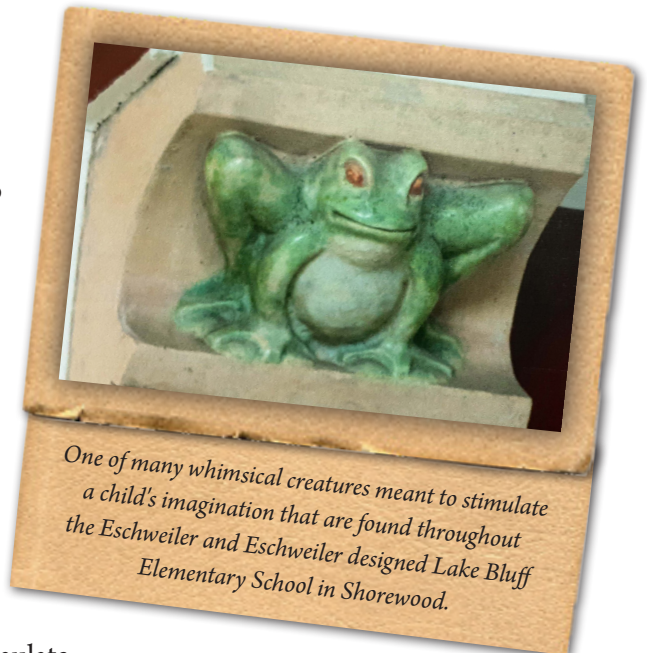
Lake Bluff School was designed for children, to be a place where they could master the basic skills and grow physically and socially. It was also meant to be a comfortable place that would stimulate their imagination.

Most of the imaginative whimsy has survived for 100 years to the delight of current students and visitors.

**Join us  
for a Centennial Celebration  
Tour of Lake Bluff School**

**1600 E. Lake Bluff Blvd.  
Saturday, September 21, 2024  
10 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

Visitors will tour the building and grounds at their leisure. Docents will be available to point out building highlights. A 10-minute video presentation by tile artist and historian Ben Tyjeski will be available for viewing and will run continuously during the open house. Ben's newest book, "The Lake Bluff Story in Art Tiles" will be available for sale.



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

"Hey, that's my school" and "look, wow...Lake Bluff is 100 years old!" Shouts of astonishment could be heard from kids all along the 4th of July parade route as Society members carried signs wishing Happy Birthday to both the High School and Lake Bluff. It was a good reminder of how much history we have around us!

As we continue to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Shorewood Historical Society and focus on the immense growth that transformed the Village in the Decade of the 1920s, we realize we are indeed fortunate to have such a historically rich environment in our mile-by-mile square Village.



### SHOREWOOD CELEBRATIONS

#### *In May:*

Society members gathered for the 40th Annual Dinner Meeting on May 16 at Hubbard Lodge. Charter members were recognized, board members were elected, and Annemarie Hawkins presented an enlightening program on mid-century architecture (see pgs. 4 & 5).

#### *In July:*

Board members participated in the 4th of July parade and carried signs noting that the high school and Lake Bluff Elementary School are 100 years old.

Bringing awareness to that rich past has been made easier by the growing collection of interviews, photographs and school, government and business records in our archives. We welcome any and all donations to our collections that will help us tell Shorewood's story.

The mission of the Historical Society's founders was to enhance life in the Village by providing context from the past to help explain and enrich the present and support wise future decisions. Relating the story of the 100-year-old Eschweiler and Eschweiler designed Lake Bluff School, which still serves us well today, is an excellent example of that mission. Please join us for the **Lake Bluff Community Open House Sept. 21** and a chance to bring "history alive" (see pg. 1).

As summer vacations come to an end, we will renew on our efforts to encourage historic preservation of our built environment. Please contact me if you can help us work with the Village Board and staff to develop targeted preservation programing.

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Susan Drone  
Tiffany & Jessie Grosskreutz  
Sarah Keefe  
Jane Knetzger  
Mike & Tracy Nickolaus  
Kathleen Rollins





## LAKE BLUFF SCHOOL OPENS: SEPTEMBER 8, 1924

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

by Karen de Hartog

One hundred ninety-four children in kindergarten through fifth grade were enrolled at Lake Bluff on its opening day, September 8, 1924. The opening had been pushed back a week to complete the building interior, but the muddy grounds were still littered with construction materials. The students were welcomed by Principal Beulah Delight Kobler and six teachers.

The six-classroom building which faced Bartlett Ave., was designed by Eschweiler and Eschweiler in Old English style and was intended to be informal and homelike. Carvings of animals tucked away in corners decorated the hallways; each classroom was dedicated to a famous figure who was immortalized in an etched profile above the door and a mosaic mural in the classroom. Those honored were Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Robert Lewis Stevenson, John J. Audubon, George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt.

The classroom furniture was movable so that desks could be easily rearranged. This was in keeping with the progressive education philosophy inspired by educational philosopher John Dewey that was adopted by the school. Dewey believed schools should be democratic rather than authoritarian, and linked to student's interests and strengths. Often that meant learning by doing or "hands-on" projects. For a unit on nutrition, students might recreate a dairy farm on a sand table and plant their own garden in the school yard.

During that first school year, a student newspaper began publication, and a form of student government called

School City was established. A branch of the Milwaukee Public Library with both children and adult books was set up in the hallway, and a PTA was organized.

Meanwhile, enrollment in the district continued to grow. Between 1923 and 1928, the number of children in grades kindergarten through sixth grade jumped from 608 to 1,170 district-wide. The second section of Lake Bluff School (facing Lake Bluff Blvd.) was completed in 1928. By 1930, the southwest section was added to complete the original Eschweiler-designed building. The new additions included spacious kindergarten rooms with fireplaces, tiled fish ponds, and drawing easels. The library also included a fireplace that the children could gather around for story time.

The depression brought further construction to a halt, but by mid-century, the increase in enrollment once again was overwhelming the district. Four classrooms plus a gymnasium were added to the north east corner of the building. The stand-alone kindergarten building opened in 1969, and a final addition of classrooms and a new gym was completed in 1993. Internally, the building has had several renovations to meet the needs of changing curriculum, technology and maintenance on the 100-year-old building, but the original architecture and interior design is still visible, still telling the story of a delightful building.

*(The primary source of information for the above article was "The Lake Bluff Story," written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Lake Bluff in 2000 by Joan Lucke and Priscilla Tolan.)*



*Lake Bluff Elementary School, 1600 E. Lake Bluff Blvd.*

## SHOREWOOD MODERNE

by Annemarie Sawkins, PhD (excerpted by Karen de Hartog)

*When describing Shorewood architecture, we generally focus on the classic revival styles popular in the 1920s, and on bungalows. However, we also have a significant number of homes built post-WWII that can be described as Modern architecture.*

*At our Annual Meeting on May 16, Society member and architectural historian Annemarie Sawkins used Shorewood examples to describe mid-century architecture. Following is an edited excerpt from Ms. Sawkins' presentation. Use this information to identify and appreciate the Modern homes sprinkled throughout the Village.*

Modernism was not an overnight reality. Rather, as a cultural phenomenon, it is the product of many different sub-movements—Art Moderne, Streamline Moderne, Prairie School, and the American Ranch to name a few. The development of Modernism was heavily influenced by the World Wars, which brought the need for rapid rebuilding in Europe, and the rapidly increasing population of the U.S., in part due to “baby boomers.”

Characterized by social, political, and economic change, mid-century witnessed a clash of artistic ideologies. It was a time when architects believed that by using industrial and humble materials to create good design that was affordable, they could, in essence, change society for the better.



Picture No. 1 - 1300 E. Lawnwood Pl. (1941)

**Picture No. 1** – My first example is a house at 1300 E. Lawnwood Pl. (1941.) Newer ideas seen here included the avoidance of historical references and details, free and open floor plans, and a low-pitched roof. Truth in materials, or the practice of letting wood be wood and stone be stone rather than introducing veneers or fake surface treatments, is also a characteristic of the era. A clean boxy large window creates a bright open interior. The walls feature cinder block, glass block, and simple brick to create a horizontal accent or lintel with mortar articulated every other row. In the interior, the first floor is not cut up unto smaller rooms but rather left open. There are no built-in cabinets, Spanish plaster or decorative details or arched walls. This is the new clean look that characterized mid-century architecture and design.



Picture No. 2 - 4200 N. Morris Blvd. (1945)

**Picture No. 2** – The home at 4200 N. Morris Blvd. (1945) is a distinctive Art Moderne property potentially individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, according to the “*Architectural Survey of Shorewood, Wisconsin*,” done by Carol Lohry Cartwright in 2011. It takes inspiration from Streamline Moderne. The low-pitched roof and the emphasis on horizontality are elements found in Prairie School architecture. The house was given a two-tone, stone veneer and stucco finish with horizontal string courses dividing the façade into thirds. The first is at the level of the window and door transoms and the second is just below the second story windows. Over the south façade’s French doors, which overlook the front garden of this half-trapezoidal shaped property, there are visible remnants of the original arched eyebrow accent.

There are two types of windows found at this address that were modern features in mid-century design: the strip windows at the corner of the west and south façades, united by louvered shades that are more decorative than effective, and a pair of porthole windows. The former derive from International Style architecture. The latter are often seen in

(Cont. on Page 5)



*("Shorewood Moderne" cont. from Page 4)*

Streamline Moderne, an international style of Art Deco first seen in the 1930s, that found inspiration in industrial design. As its name suggests, Streamline Moderne architects looked to the sleekness of aerodynamic design—steam ships, railroad locomotives, some automobiles, and even modern toasters served as references for this new style.

**Picture No. 3** – The two-family at 4106-4108 N. Ardmore Ave. was built in 1950. This is not an architect-designed structure but rather probably a builder's effort. It is not by Mikkelsen, the house builders that made a name for themselves erecting relatively inexpensive two-tone box houses in the 1950s and 60s in Shorewood and Whitefish Bay, but it is characteristic of post WWII vernacular housing. In this case—a duplex built to accommodate the spike in population after the war.

The living room-dining room is one single open space, an ell formed by the intersection of two rectangles. The galley kitchen features Formica counter tops, a new product patented in 1927, and the bathroom is tiled in the most standard of ways. The design is efficient and was practical to build at the time. It also lent itself to endless variation.

**Picture No. 4** – Modern-style architecture in the twentieth century is multifaceted. A new homegrown style was the American Ranch, a perfect example of which can be found at 2601 E. Menlo Blvd. This emphatically single-story ranch house was designed by Carl Liebert in 1951. Ranch houses are known for their "close-to-the-ground" profile not unlike Prairie School designs. Ranch houses are also known for their wide-open layouts. This house was constructed of Roman brick to accentuate the horizontality of the structure. It has a barely visible hipped roof. The west façade, which faces the street, includes a garden wall that further attenuates the horizontality of the building.

Like an ancient Roman house, the emphasis is on the interior and enclosed garden. This variation on the modern aesthetic has a prominent west-facing Moderne glass brick or glass block strip window, white accents and shielded entrances along the north and west façades.

**Picture No. 5** – Architect Donald Grieb designed the home at 2415 E. Kensington Blvd. (1954). Major renovation in 2017 resulted in the addition of a two-story cube.

The original Grieb designed house is structurally innovative. It was built with a recessed entrance and low-pitched roof anchored by a massive chimney block. The ceiling is dynamic meaning not flat but sloping and its interior beams are not hidden. The house also boasts ample windows. The architect dissolved the section of the east façade between the chimney and the northeast corner into a glass curtain wall. At the opposite corner of the main façade, large abutting strip windows flood the interior with light from the outside. Inside and out, there is a respect for new and natural materials in their raw forms, a feature common to Mid-Century Modern homes.



*Picture No. 3 - 4106-4108 N. Ardmore Ave.  
(1950)*



*Picture No. 4 - 2601 E. Menlo Blvd. (1951)*



*Picture No. 5 - 2415 E. Kensington Blvd.  
(1954)*

## MARQUETTE HIGH OWL IN SHOREWOOD HOME

by Ben Tyjeski, Milwaukee Artist and Historian

If you have taken a moment to admire Marquette University High School on Milwaukee's West Side, you may have noticed the terra cotta owls on the parapet. They are quite a delight, all 22 of them, but did you ever wonder if one is missing?

Marquette University High School was erected a hundred years ago, with designs by architects Herbst & Kuenzli. Not long after, the architect William G. Herbst was building a new home for himself and his spouse, Eleanor, at 4314 N. Stowell Ave. in Shorewood. Interestingly, one of the owls from the high school appears in the basement of Herbst's home.

A terra cotta owl is something you would expect on a historic school building. But

above someone's fireplace? Now... this is interesting!

The owl was manufactured by the Northwestern Terra Cotta Company in Chicago, order number 24271. The owl in Herbst's home was likely an extra, though it is possible the architect requested one, too!

Fortunately, after a hundred years and several homeowners, the owl remains intact above the fireplace, nestled between handmade tiles by the Moravian Pottery & Tile Works. What a treasure to celebrate indeed!

*Editor's note: The Architectural firm of Herbst and Kuenzli also designed Shorewood High School 100 years ago.*



*Owl in the basement.*



*Herbst home at 4314 N. Stowell Ave.*

## ARCHIVES IS BRIGHT AND SHINY!

by Karen de Hartog

Our renovated archives, with new lights and shelving, bright white paint, tile floor and air purifier, is now a pleasant place to work. Dan Vison, librarian and archivist at Mount Mary College, has organized our many boxes by subject and checked contents to make sure they are properly recorded. A new collection policy is being drafted. When Dan's work is done, maintaining the archive will once again be handled by volunteers.



*The new and improved archives room of the Shorewood Historical Society, located in the lower level of the Village Hall.*

We are ready and able to accept new donations of pictures or other items that pertain to Shorewood history. In particular:

- Pictures that show changes to your home over time; abstracts, blue prints or other home related items that don't need to stay with the house.
- Summer celebration pictures: Family Day, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Men's Club BBQ, church fairs, block parties.
- Information about Shorewood grads who have been particularly successful in their chosen field – or notorious!
- Pictures and other memorabilia that illustrate the second half of the 20th century.

Keep us in mind as you clean closets and sort through pictures. Contact us at [shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com](mailto:shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com).



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 \_\_\_\_\_

(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](http://shorewoodhistory.org) or contact us at [shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com](mailto:shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com) for more information.

### SHOREWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2024-2025

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414-962-2450

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**Email: [shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.



*Fifth grade students in their classroom at  
Lake Bluff Elementary School in 1924.*

1924 – 2024

Shorewood Schools  
Celebrate 100 Years

Both Lake Bluff Elementary and Shorewood  
High School turn 100 years old this year.

See Pages 1, 2 and 3 to find out more about  
the construction of Lake Bluff school beginning  
in 1924.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Lake Bluff School  
Community Open House**

**Saturday, September 21, 2024  
10 a.m.- 1 p.m.**

1600 E. Lake Bluff Blvd.

*Free. Celebrate Lake Bluff's  
Centennial! Tour the school  
building and grounds at your  
leisure.*