



Summer 2018

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society

Calendar of Events

For more information and to register for Guided Walking Tours, visit waukeganparks.org

July

July 1, 1 p.m.

The Waukegan Historical Society is the Grand Marshal, all Society members are invited to ride/walk in the parade!

July 13, 12 p.m.

Jack Benny Center Theatre - Lunch & Learn Abraham Lincoln Visits Waukegan

July 14, 10 a.m.

Guided Walking Tour Waukegan's Top 50 History Events

August

August 10, 12 p.m.

Jack Benny Center Theatre - Lunch & Learn Celebrating Ray Bradbury

August 16, 5:30 p.m.

Guided Walking Tour Ray Bradbury's Green Town

August 25, 10 a.m.

Guided Walking Tour Historic Homes of Sheridan Road

September

September 22

Oakwood Cemetery Walk

October

October 7

Waukegan Tour of Homes

WHS Board

Officers

President

Josh Bill

Vice President

Chris Lanning

Treasurer

Patrick Cosgrove

Secretary

Vicki Mattson

Directors

Jennifer Berzin

Hary Came

Margaret Capitani

Matt Crabb

Mary Goljenboom

Lori Nerheim

Sanra Pokett

Maryfran Troha

President's Letter

Josh Bill

After a later-than-usual spring, I think we can all agree that we are ready to welcome summer with open arms. Although I have an affinity for elements of all four seasons of the year, as a high school teacher, summer brings about many opportunities for rest and rejuvenation so that I am ready to welcome students back in the fall.

As we continue to celebrate our fiftieth anniversary throughout the year, this summer brings numerous opportunities for you to visit the museum, attend one of many free programs we are offering, and vote on which event you think was the #1 history event to ever happen in Waukegan! You may pick up a paper ballot and vote using the “Tournament-style” brackets. There, you will vote on each of the events (ranked by a select committee of society members). You may drop off the paper ballots at the museum, library, or at the Benny Center. However, keep your eyes on the “Waukegan History Museum” facebook page to engage in our online voting. We are hopeful to engage the entire community with this exhibit in the way that our “Pieces of the Past” park experience did last year.

Hopefully you will be able to join us on several walking tours this summer or perhaps a “Lunch and Learn”. We are also excited for the Society to be the Grand Marshal in the Independence Day parade this year to mark our fiftieth anniversary! Please join us in the parade or pick your spot early along the route and get a look at the float that is currently under construction by society members and volunteers.

It was wonderful to see so many of you in April to celebrate the founding of the society. The luncheon at Bonnie Brook was an auspicious event, and we were grateful that several founding members were present, entertaining many with stories of the early days where a handful of dedicated volunteers who started this society that we all continue to enjoy today. I also wanted to thank the Park District, city of Waukegan, our generous sponsors, and many volunteers who worked behind the scenes to make the event a great success. Here’s to fifty more years!

The Waukegan Historical Society is the Grand Marshal of the American Independence Day Parade.

All Society members are invited to ride/walk in the parade. If you want to join us or if you have any questions, please call 847-336-1859 or email info@waukeganhistorical.org.

American Independence Day Parade
Sunday, July 1
Kicks off at 1 p.m.
Sheridan Road



Society founders Sara Griffin and Charles Lange at the 50th Anniversary Luncheon

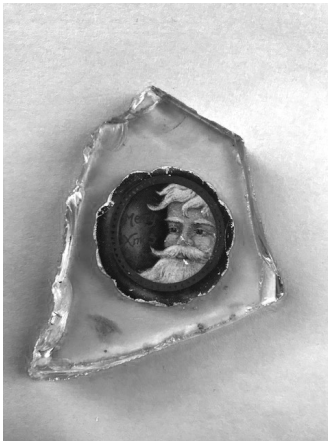
See It Now: This Issue's Unique Artifact

Broken Glass from the Sugar Refinery Explosion in 1911

Josh Bill

The society's new exhibit featuring the history and artifacts that reflect the fifty most significant events in Waukegan is now on display at the museum. There, you can see a shard of glass that was broken in one of several explosions during the Sugar Refinery's brief, but lively, twenty-three-year history on the lakeshore. Each time the refinery exploded, it shook foundations of houses and broke many windows of homes and businesses on the south side of Waukegan.

In the aftermath of the explosion, many city residents would rush to the scene to assist with fire and rescue operations, and in the days that followed, many citizens picked up pieces of glass from local windows. Co-founder of the historical society and first president, Charles Lange Jr., told a story at the fiftieth anniversary celebration last April about his mother picking up pieces of glass the day after the explosion and keeping them as a souvenir of sorts.



Waukegan High School Students Wrap Up Another Successful Year of Researching Waukegan History

Josh Bill

Prior to students making a mass exodus from Waukegan High School to their summer vacations and summer jobs, many students were able to engage in the process of being a historian of their city as they participated in the Chicago Metro History Competition. This contest challenges students to study a topic of local significance, where they compete with students across Illinois to see who can create the best project.

Beginning this past winter, students trekked to the Raymond Research Library, where the outstanding volunteers assisted students with their projects. The students investigated the history of several industries, prominent figures, immigrant stories, and other conflicts and compromises within the city.

Four Waukegan High School projects advanced to the state contest and two of them featured Waukegan topics: one was a project detailing the history of the Waukegan Park District, while the other talked about a controversial advisory referendum on urban renewal. The later project was awarded the Historical Society's 11th Annual Award for Outstanding Scholarship at a society program in May. The project on Urban Renewal also was awarded the Studs Terkel Award for Outstanding Oral History Research from the Chicago Metro History Education Center.

The students and I want to thank all the volunteers for making this year's history fair experience a success, and I wanted to extend a special thanks to the board for continuing to sponsor this generous award for our students.

Marianne Chuy, Jessica Lechuga, and Giselle Thompson accept the society's award, with their teacher Josh Bill



The Historian's Desk

Waukegan and the Illinois Bicentennial

Ty Rohrer, Manager of Cultural Arts

Lake County Historical Alliance Publication:

200 Objects That Made History in Lake & McHenry Counties

On sale at the Waukegan History Museum and the Downtown Waukegan Ace Hardware.
\$15.00

On April 29, I had the pleasure of presenting alongside Jennifer Berzin (Society Board Member & employee at the Waukegan Public Library) at the 4th Annual Lake County History Symposium at the new Bess Bower Dunn Museum. This year's theme was "History from Objects." Jennifer and I teamed up to tell the stories of Waukegan's favorite sons, Jack Benny and Ray Bradbury, through two special artifacts.

I told the story of Jack Benny using the clothes steamer trunk from the collections of the Waukegan Historical Society. This trunk was used by Jack Benny during his first year from home while he was traveling the vaudeville circuit. This object comes from the start of his career and it is during this time when he starts his path towards becoming the comedic legend of radio and television.

Jennifer did a contrasting evaluation of an object from Ray Bradbury's life. This object, the last typewriter that he used, is from the collections of the



Jennifer Berzin and Ty Rohrer at the Dunn Museum

Waukegan Public Library. Despite the future depictions that Bradbury often wrote about, he preferred a typewriter over a computer.

Waukegan is lucky to have these two unique objects that represent Benny and Bradbury. The Benny Trunk is currently on temporary loan for an exhibit in the Bess Bowen Dunn Museum (formerly the Lake County Discovery Museum) at 1899 W. Winchester Road, Libertyville, IL. The Bradbury Typewriter can be found among the stacks at the Waukegan Public Library at 128 N. County Street, Waukegan, IL.

“Pieces of the Past” Wins Award

The Waukegan Historical Society received the Superior of Achievement Award in the Special Projects category from the Illinois State Historical Society on May 5, 2018 for “Pieces of the Past.”

William Furry, Executive Director of the Illinois State Historical Society stated, “This creative and original inter-active project, initiated to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Waukegan Park District, was simple in design, inexpensive to build, and far-reaching in its impact on the community. Fifty large puzzle pieces scattered throughout the district, each telling a unique story about the parks and holding a secret code that leads to special prizes—What fun! Ty Rohrer and the Waukegan Historical Society have demonstrated that imagination and creativity are still our best tools for engaging audiences.”

Ty Rohrer, accepted the award on behalf of the Waukegan Historical Society at the Illinois State Historical Society Annual Awards presentation at the Old State Capitol in Springfield, Illinois.

Ty Rohrer, Manager of Cultural Arts, and Leah Axelrod, President of the Illinois State Historical Society.



Moving Towards Digital

Bryan Escobar

With another great school year of programs and museum visits coming to an end, we are shifting our gears for summer. One of our goals is making the information at the Waukegan History Museum accessible to a wider audience. Recently the last exhibit, Sweetheart Mine, was placed online which includes all of the panels and scanned letters from the exhibit. For the current exhibit, Waukegan's Top 50 History Events, information on each of the events will be available through our website. We hope to add some of the older exhibits online as digital exhibits in the near future.

Aside from some digital initiatives that we have in store, a more traditional project we are working on starting this summer is an interpretative signage project at the Waukegan Lakefront. In partnership with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Center for Conservation Leadership, Waukegan Port District, and the City of Waukegan, we will be creating and installing informational panels at the lakefront that will discuss the history, nature, and remediation of our Great Lake. Be on the lookout in the Summer of 2019 for the completed project.

Although our summer will be busy with various new projects we are already planning for the fall as well. Starting around September, we will be working on an oral history project. We recently purchased two voice recorders, one will live at the museum and the other will travel. Our hope is that anyone who wants to drop in to share their stories will do so, and one of the recorders will always be available for that purpose. Ultimately, the histories that are collected will be digitized and available online for anyone to listen. As we get closer to the fall more details on this exciting project will be sent out.

Congratulations to Bryan Escobar and Ty Rohrer on another great year of school & community outreach programs.

They presented 256 programs (a new high record) this past school year, reaching 6,843 students and 1,045 adults. Great job!

Thank You, Sponsors and Donors

Preserving the past—Preparing for the future

It was great to see so many of you at our Annual Meeting and luncheon as we began the celebration of our 50th Anniversary. A special thanks to both the businesses and our sponsoring members whose contributions covered the cost of the luncheon.

In addition, we wish to thank those of you who, in recognition of this milestone, have contributed to our Building Addition Fund. A total of \$2,620.00 has been received from the following donors:

Todd Johnson
Gregory Alloian
Vicki Mattson
Charlotte Renehan
Patrick Cosgrove
Diane Verratti in memory of Patrick Jimerson
Sara Griffin in memory of Walt Griffin
Mary Rinehart
Nancy Inskeep
Lori Nerheim
Peter and June G. Zaragoza
Ann Rippel
Robert B. Barnett & Rita Braver in memory of Bernard and Betty Barnett
Douglas & Marianela Peterson
Sharon Labelle in honor of Shelly Clausing





Find Us on Facebook!

Like the "Waukegan History Museum" on Facebook!

Thank You!

New Life Members

Patricia Hogan
Lori Nerheim
Ty and Rachel Rohrer
Emmy Gottschalk and Joe Moglia
Sandra Pokett

Financial Donors

S. and J. Larson
Waukegan Woman's Club

New Members

Louis and Barbara Marello
Kenneth Hernandez
John McCain
Cristian Antonio-Santiago
Jaselyn Gallegos
Ethan Ashworth
Angel Leon
Nancy Pulido
Erick Bravo
Rose Coulson
Sydelle Brahin
Larry Desmond
Bruce Levy
Selene Alvarez

Angel Powyer
Angelica Favela
Holly Anne Rosales
Joselyn Duvon
Yazmin Nona
Iris Cantu
Roxana Izaguirre
Jacqueline Alvarado
Julianne Ballard
Aurora Flores-Gaytan
Chase Williams
Yajhaira Vargas
Marcos Garibay
Diego Garcia Sanchez

Bryan Escobar with North Elementary third grade students at Bradbury Park



Join Us!

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

Senior (age 60+)	\$15.00
Student	\$5.00
Individual	\$20.00
Family	\$30.00
Patron, Organization	\$100.00
Life, Individual	\$150.00
Life, Couple	\$300.00
My additional gift	\$ _____

Make checks payable to
Waukegan Historical Society.

Volunteer

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Waukegan Historical Society

Founded in 1968, the Society collects, preserves, interprets, and exhibits significant materials about the history of the Waukegan area. The Society, in cooperation with the Waukegan Park District, operates the History Museum and Raymond Library and publishes this quarterly newsletter.

1917 N. Sheridan Road
Waukegan, IL 60087
847-336-1859
www.waukeganhistorical.org
info@waukeganhistorical.org

Visit our website for more information
about events, exhibits, and our
extensive library.

www.waukeganhistorical.org

Waukegan History Museum in Bowen Park

1917 N. Sheridan Road
Manager of Cultural Arts: Ty Rohrer
847-360-4744
haines@waukeganparks.org
Arts & History Specialist: Bryan Escobar
847-360-4749
bescobar@waukeganparks.org
Tuesday, Thursday: 10am - 4pm
Saturday: 1pm-4pm

John L. Raymond Research Library

1911 N. Sheridan Road
Librarian: Beverly Millard
847-360-4772
library@waukeganhistorical.org
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
10am - 2:30pm



WAUKEGAN
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1917 N. Sheridan Rd, Waukegan, IL 60087