## **Making History, Here and Now**

By Steve Cotherman

an you imagine the commu-Unity of Washburn without the cultural center? Without the Washburn Area Historical Society and its museum or the Washburn Heritage Association and its efforts to promote historic preservation? Picture a vacant lot where the historic DuPont Civic Center used to stand. What would the region be like without the Chequamegon Bay Arts Council and its support of artists through grants and exhibits? Imagine Washburn without the Beautification Foundation promoting citizen efforts

to spruce up our city through the planting of lovely gardens and maintenance of our parks. What kind of place would Washburn be without the efforts of the city's Historic Preservation Commission and the commitment of our elected officials? Sounds like a pretty forlorn, neglected and dull place to me.

Fortunately, Washburn is not that place. All of these organizations and a motivated and committed corps of volunteers are actively at work to make Washburn a great place to live and visit, to preserve the area's history and architectural heritage, to promote beauty through art and gardening. In our hearts we know that "past is prologue," that employing our cultural heritage to inform our present and guide our future is essential to the health of a community. After all, it is in part a community's cultural resources that appeal to new families, nurture long time residents and retirees, captivate tourists or lure new businesses.

Just look at how we're making history right now at the intersection of Central Avenue and Bayfield Street. On one corner sits Chequamegon Books, housed in a fine old brownstone building saved by the efforts of Richard and Carol Avol and turned into the region's "go-to" bookstore. Catty-corner from the bookstore is the historic DuPont Civic Center, arguably the most significant



Making history now, the Cultural Center, Civic Center and Chequamegon Books—all alive and well! Photo courtesy of Oxygen Imagery & Web Design LLC

historic building in the city. You may remember that it nearly bit the dust a few years ago. With the efforts of the Washburn Heritage Association and the Historic Civic Center Foundation it has been saved, but although stabilized still needs additional funding so that its rehabilitation can be completed. Then it can once again be one of our community's key public spaces. And across the street from the civic center sits the grand old Washburn bank, saved by the efforts of Skip Un-

grodt and hundreds of current and former Washburners to serve as a community center and art gallery and home of the Washburn Area Historical Society and museum. But because it is such a big building with enormous overhead costs, the cultural center also needs continual support for maintenance and preservation.

Each of the organizations that comprise the Washburn Legacy Consortium is committed to working together to make our city a vibrant and engaging place, relevant and meaningful to all. Your support is absolutely critical to their efforts, whether you volunteer, become a member, make a donation to support the civic center rehab or maintain the cultural center, attend a lecture or art exhibit opening, use the cultural center for a meeting, workshop or reception, or voice your opinion at a city council meeting. All of us are so very thankful for your continued support.

Let us hear from you. Contact us at washburnculturalcenter @gmail.com, drop us a line to P.O. Box 725, Washburn, WI 54891, or give us a call at (715) 373-5591. As the home of the Legacy Consortium, we'll pass your ideas and concerns on to our member organizations. We're listening!

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#### **New Legacy Member**

# Washburn Beautification Foundation

**MISSION:** Our mission is the beautification of the city of Washburn.

**DESCRIPTION:** WBF began in 1907 as the Washburn Women's Civic Club. During the intervening 111 years, the club has changed names to better address the growing City of Washburn. Our club's history includes the fight to save Wikdal and Legion Parks from sale, thereby preserving valuable green space for the people of Washburn. We are a non-profit, non-sectarian, non-partisan, non-stock Wisconsin corporation.

#### **ACTIVITIES:**

- Seasonal banners on Bayfield Street
- Flowers provided for Wikdal and Legion Parks, Library and Washburn Cultural Center
- Hire and pay a gardener to plant and maintain the flowers
- Financed the major 2016 landscaping of Wikdal Park
- Christmas lighting in both parks
- Purchased permanent benches for Wikdal and Legion Parks
- Sponsor "Yard of the Month" and "Business of the Month" awards during the growing season
- Garden Tour during Brownstone Days
- Funding comes primarily from Memorial Donations

**OFFICERS:** Kitty Wilson, Sharon Hacker, Sara McCreery. Advisory Board Members: Linda Leis, Shirley Midthun, Dona Copperrud.

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Washburn Beautification Foundation PO Box 334, Washburn, Wisconsin 54891 Facebook: Washburn Beautification Foundation



# What's New on Washburn's Main Street?

By Carla Bremner

Did you know that grants were available this spring for the repair, refurbishing or enhancement of the exterior of commercial buildings on Bayfield Street in Washburn? Thanks to some very generous gifts from several donors over the past few years, the Washburn Heritage Association (WHA) has enough money to take on a substantial project. We wanted to choose something we thought our members and donors would endorse. With our mission in mind, that is, to preserve our buildings, culture and stories, we are offering monies to businesses for façade improvements. And, in addition to preservation, we hope to help our main street reflect the vibrant, welcoming and caring community that it is.

Grant applications were distributed to businesses in March with a submission deadline of April 30. We were delighted and gratified to receive 12 applications and wish we could fund them all! At the time of publication of this newsletter, the grant review process is underway.

We are looking forward to seeing the construction activity on Bayfield Street this summer and are grateful to the donors, businesses, and members who make this possible. ■

# Greetings from the New Mayor of Washburn!

By Richard Avol

What makes a place special? Why would anyone want to visit, stay, or live in a particular place? One part of the answer to these questions is that these places are interesting. And a great part of that interest is the history surrounding that place.

Those that know me are aware of my love of history and know my wife Carol and I renovated a historic brownstone building. Indeed it was what brought us to Washburn instead of other places. Our concern for the history of Washburn can be seen in our everyday lives. We know we are only maintaining our historic building for future owners.

As Mayor, I commend all of Washburn Legacy Consortium's work and efforts. You can be assured I strongly support your organizations. Continue the fine programs you offer, and if there is anything the Mayor of Washburn can do to assist, please don't hesitate to contact me. You are some of the ones who make Washburn special. Thank you.



Richard and Carol Avol Photo courtesy of Catherine Lange

## 'A Midsummer Night Fundraiser' at Wild Rice Retreat

By Joanne Meierhofer

The Chequamegon Bay Arts Council (CBAC) is very excited about this year's "Art on the Bay," which will be held on July 21 at a new venue—the new Wild

Rice Retreat Center, formerly Wild Rice Restaurant. The festivities begin at 5:30 p.m.

Gayle Chatfield is heading up the decorating committee, which includes Betty Sitbon and CBAC Board Member Dorothy Hoffman. They've created an enchanting theme for the event: "A Midsummer Night Fundraiser." Come join us and enjoy an evening of enchantment, delectable food, beer, and wine, music by the Chequamegon Quartet, silent auction, wine pull,

live art making, and selections from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" performed by the Chequamegon-dwelling Groundlings.

Tickets go on sale in June (\$30 in advance; \$40 at the door) and will be available from CBAC board members, Salmagundi in Ashland, Karlyn's in Washburn, and Stone's Throw in Bayfield. ■

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## **Norwegians in Washburn**

By Tom Cook

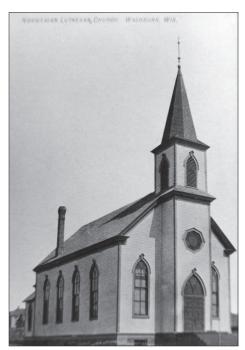
My dad's great-grandparents, Hansine and Oluf Olson, emigrated from Norway to Washburn in the mid 1800s. They were college-educated and spoke English. The other Norwegians in Washburn would gather in their home in the evenings to learn the old Lutheran hymns in English. In the winter they would "perch" on the beds, chairs, and tables because the dirt floor was so cold. Washburn's Norwegians got organized and built a beautiful church, which today is called Messiah Lutheran.

Poverty was rampant in Norway. The rich Norwegians could buy fresh, delicious cod, but the poor could only hope for the partially decomposed cod preserved in wood ash or lye. The wood ash was rinsed from the fish, and the spoiled fish was reconstituted by soaking in water and then boiled or baked. The immigrants suddenly found themselves rich with fresh Lake Superior fish, plentiful game, land, firewood, homes of their own, etc. After a year or two,

the adults began to whine and pine for "the old country." Absence made people idealize and fantasize about how good life had been. Several of the old Norwegian mothers sent an order to Norway for a couple of bags of the spoiled fish, or lutefisk, as it was called. It was Christmastime when the foulsmelling food was served. Memories of the poverty and hunger were soon clear again as the Norwegian mothers questioned, "Now do you miss the old country?

Some of the Lutheran pastors had become corrupt and greedy. They had more power than politicians and their signatures were necessary for a Norwegian to emigrate. Great bribes and extra money were demanded from people before permission was granted. When the Norwegians arrived in America, the new pastors were stripped of this power by the formation of many church committees and a church council that the pastor was accountable to.

Almost all of the old Norwegians in my family are gone now. They were kind and generous with us kids and delighted in the



Washburn's Norwegian Lutheran Church, now called Messiah Lutheran.

prosperity and fullness that life had given their children, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren here in Washburn, and America. ■

# **Join today!** Receive discounted membership when you join three or more of the following groups working to preserve Washburn's heritage and history!

For each organization you wish to join or contribute to, please check the box that corresponds to the membership level and amount you choose.

Washburn Cultural Center  \$5,000Lifetime  \$500Benefactor  \$75Business  \$40Family  \$25Individual  \$20Senior/Student  In Memory In Honor  of:	Washburn Area Historical Society  \$25Busine: Profess  \$15Family \$10Individu  \$	sional ual	Washburn Heritage Association  \$500Benefactor  \$100Business  \$50Patron  \$35Family  \$20Individual	Washburn Beautification Foundation  I would like to make a contribution in the amount of:  \$	Historic Civic Center Foundation  I would like to make a contribution to help fund the next phase of restoration of the Civic Center in the amount of: \$	Chequamegon Bay Arts Council  \$1,000Champion \$500Benefactor \$250Patron \$100Part \$75Business \$50Art Enthusiast (Family) \$25Art Enthusiast (Individual) \$15Senior/Student/ Starving Artist
Tally the amounts you've WCC\$			Name			
If you've given to three or more groups, subtract \$10.			IS\$ \\$	Organization		
		☐ WBF\$		Mailing Address		
Mail your check made		☐ CBAC\$		City	State	Zip
Center, P.O. Box 72	5, Washburn WI		al\$ roup discount: _\$10.00	Phone		
54891. Funds will by WCC to each g		outou		Email		



#### WASHBURN LEGACY CONSORTIUM

Washburn Cultural Center P. O. Box 725 Washburn, WI 54891

#### Visit WCC's new website and...

- Become a WCC member online
- Read about the "Antique of the Week"
- Get news and info about WCC's programs

#### washburnculturalcenter.com

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#### **CURRENT RESIDENT OR**

#### CONTACT INFORMATION:

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#### **Washburn Area Historical Society**

P.O. Box 272, Washburn, WI 54891 washburnhistorical@yahoo.com

#### **Washburn Heritage Association**

P.O. Box 814, Washburn, WI 54891 www.washburnheritage.org (715) 373-5212

#### **Washburn Beautification Foundation**

Washburn Beautification Foundation PO Box 334 Washburn, Wisconsin 54891

Facebook, Washburn Beautification Foundation

#### **Historic Civic Center Foundation**

3 West Bayfield Street, P.O. Box 144 Washburn, WI 548891 www.washburn-hccf.com

#### **Chequamegon Bay Arts Council**

Joanne Meierhofer, Pres., (715) 685-2350 P.O. Box 25, Washburn, WI 54891 www.cbayarts.org

#### Calendar—June 1 to November 1

#### **Washburn Cultural Center**

**June**—Inspired by Nature: Master Gardeners Mixed Media Show

**July**—Superior Artists Group: Jan MacFarlane, Royanne Goossen, Wendy Deerly Reese, Birgit Wolff and Dora Kling

**August**—Greg Alexander Paintings and Recent Cyanotypes by Kate Greenough

**September**—Black Bear Studios: Mixed media by Gina Winther and Selections from the WCC Permanent Collection of Art

**October**—The Gathering: CBAC Member Fall Exhibit

**November**—Ruth Lull Paintings

#### **Chequamegon Bay Arts Council**

**July 21**—Art on the Bay Annual Fundraiser, Wild Rice Retreat. 5:30 p.m. to closing.

**October**—*The Gathering,* CBAC's member show at the Washburn Cultural Center.

**November**—Small Works Exhibit and Auction.

#### **Washburn Heritage Association**

**July 28**—Self-guided tour, "Living on the Lake," five Washburn historic cottages, including the Pump House. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. \$10 tickets at Karlyn's.

**July 28**—WHA-sponsored free, hourlong trolley tours of historic Washburn sites. 11 a.m., noon, 1 p.m. Leaves from in front of IGA.

## Washburn Heritage Association & Washburn Area Historical Society

Tony Woiak History Festival At Harbor View, Washburn. 7:30 p.m.

June 26—Karlyn's Pretty Good Pot Shop. Karlyn Holman shares the 50year long history of her shop. Music by Russ Darwin and Dan Holman.

July 10— The Great War Comes to Washburn. With Bob and Susan Mackreth. Music by Rick Gilman.

July 24— Sata Ratkaisau: A Look Back at the Finn Settlement. With Irene Blakely and Betty Ferris. Music by Jan Lee and Kris Edmunds.

July 31— Ballyhoo! Backstage! Big Top Tent Show Memory Wars of the Song and Chance Man. With Warren Nelson. Music by Warren Nelson.

#### The Washburn Cultural Center gives special thanks to the following for their very generous support during 2018:

Mary E. Franza
Bob Ungrodt
Ron & Kay Maassen
Kitty & George Wilson
Richard J. Gierzak
Sara Ungrodt
Sandra Raspotnik
Don Ekstrom
Ronald & Grace
Hutchinson

Betty Lindsey Knoll Bob & Sharon St.

Germaine Washburn Lions Club

#### In 2018 generous gifts were made to the Washburn Cultural Center in memory of:

Albert Blakely Catherine Ekstrom John Foltz Phyllis M. Gierzak Ronald W. Johnson Beatrice R. Pajala Donald Smucker Skip Ungrodt Tony Woiak