

WASHINGTON
Historical Society

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HERITAGE HERALD

www.washingtonilhs.com

June 2024



2024 GARDEN WALK SATURDAY, JUNE 8

It's not too late to purchase tickets for our bi-annual Garden Walk held with Town and Country Gardeners. We have some beautiful gardens for you to tour this year! This will be a great opportunity to see what your friends and neighbors in Washington have done to beautify their little corners of the world. The Garden Walk will take

place on Saturday, June 8 from 1-4 pm. Advance tickets are available for \$17 at Step Back in Time, Kimpling Ace Hardware, LeFleur, and at www.washingtonilhs.com prior to the event. Tickets on the day of the event are \$20 and can be purchased at the Historical Society's office on the square between 12:30 and 2:00.

ROOTS 2024

The Washington Historical Society is accepting nominations until July 15 for the 2024 Roots recipient, which has been presented annually since 2013 when Dr. David Hunt of the Smithsonian became the first recipient. Since then, accomplished surgeons Dr. Marcus Jarboe and Dr. Christian Vercler, award-winning high school band director Tim Allshouse, cancer researcher Dr. Pamela Kreeger, and others have been honored with the Roots Award.

To nominate someone to be this year's recipient, please complete and return the nomination form on the next page. The form is also available on the Washington Historical Society website, www.washingtonilhs.com and at the Washington Public Library. Roots Award nominations are kept on file for three years. The nomination forms must be submitted by July 15 to the Washington Historical Society P.O. Box 54 Wash-

ington, IL 61571. Presentations by previous years' recipients are on the Historical Society's YouTube page.

Nominees must have spent a portion of their youth in Washington and have excelled in any of these areas: government, fine arts, charitable work, sciences, medical, business, or sports.



PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS:

2023: Dr. Tim Allshouse
2022: Gene McCoskey
2021: Dr. Christian Vercler
and Dr. Marcus Jarboe
2020: Dr. Pamela Kreeger
2019: Phil Bremen

2018: Dr. Tom Gross
2017: Kate Gorman
2016: Gene Thrailkill
2015: Tejas Shastry
2014: Dave van Dyck
2013: David R. Hunt, Ph.D



WASHINGTON
Historical Society

2024 Roots Award

Applications due: July 15, 2024

General Information and Rules:

1. Eligibility: Nominees must have spent a portion of their childhood in Washington and have made significant contributions in one of the following areas: science, government, arts, sports, business, science, or charitable work.
2. The recipient will be honored during the high school homecoming festivities weekend. The recipient will speak at an awards reception on Thursday evening of Homecoming week (date TBD) and will ride in the homecoming parade as the award recipient on Friday.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Please detail the accomplishments the nominee has achieved.
2. What impact has the nominee had on his community and/or area of work?
3. How did life in Washington contribute to the nominee's success?

Please complete and return this form with any attachments to Washington Historical Society, P.O. Box 54, Washington, IL 61571.

Nominee's Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Why do you feel this nominee should be the recipient of the 2024 Roots Award? Please attach additional pages, if necessary.

Nominator's Name _____ Phone _____

THE TALE OF THE BRATZELI COOKIE



Longtime WHS member, Jim Arn, shares his delicious Bratzeli cookies with us at the Historical Society each December. We love them. We love them with a cup of tea or maybe some coffee, and we love them on their own. So we asked Jim to share the story behind the Bratzeli cookie and he obliged. He also generously shared his recipe!

According to Jim: Bratzeli cookies are a traditional Swiss cookie. It seems like each Swiss family used to have their own recipe. Mine is from my Grandmother, Lena Arn, who immigrated from Switzerland. As a young child, I remember my Grandmother making them at Christmas for the family. They were made on an iron pot on the stove to heat up. Very labor intensive as one cookie is made at a time. I now carry on the tradition. I make mine on an electric iron (no longer made). They can be made on a pizelle iron. I make them for family and a large group of friends – about 3,000 cookies each year. Thank you Grandma for making this Cookie Ministry possible every year.

Bratzeli Cookies

- 12 eggs, room temperature
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 ½ lbs butter
- 3 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. almond extract
- 2 tsp salt
- 13 cups flour

Use a mixer that can handle 6 quart. Cream together butter, sugar, milk, then add eggs, vanilla, and almond extract. Sift flour and salt together and slowly add to mixture. Mixture should be slightly tacky. Let rest two hours at room temperature. Ready for the iron!

BE A PART OF OUR 2024 MURAL

The Historical Society is continuing our efforts to create one new mural each year leading up to Washington’s bicentennial celebration in 2025. We started in 2020 and have so far created three beautiful murals in Washington, as pictured here. This year’s mural will be painted in a different part of Washington, away from the square. We have received a generous proposal from an anonymous donor who has offered to match all donations for the mural. Wouldn’t you like to be a part of bringing another beautiful piece of art to Washington? We would love to include your name as one of the benefactors of our beautiful public art which tells a story of Washington’s past. If you would like to make a donation to this year’s mural, please send it to:

Washington Historical Society, P.O. Box 54, Washington, IL 61571



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Remember: 2024 dues should have been paid by April 15. Our members sustain our organization; we literally would not exist without you! As a reminder, you can be as involved in the organization as you want to be; you don’t have to attend meetings, but you can; you don’t have to volunteer, but we would love to have you as a volunteer; you get the idea. We are proud of the work being done by the Historical Society, and that work cannot happen with YOU!

If you have not renewed your membership yet, please fill out the following form and return it with a check to: Washington Historical Society; PO Box 54; Washington, IL 61571. Thank you for your support!

2024 Membership- Washington Historical Society

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Choose your membership level:

- Student/ Free Single/ \$30 Family/ \$45
- Business/ \$75 Golden/ \$150 Lifetime/ \$400

Employee Matching: _____

(employer name & address) _____

Please send a gift membership to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Choose their membership level:

- Student/ Free Single/ \$30 Family/ \$45
- Business/ \$75 Golden/ \$150 Lifetime/ \$400

Return to: Washington Historical Society; PO Box 54; Washington, IL 61571

ANCESTRY.COM PROGRAM – THURSDAY, JUNE 6



Have you been thinking about doing family research? It can seem intimidating to get started, but we can help! Following up on the popularity of her programs last summer, local genealogist Diana Sluder will host an upcoming session on using Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org on Thursday, June 6 at 10:00 a.m. She will show you how to get started and what kinds of information you can discover. If you already have been using Ancestry.com or FamilySearch.org and have questions or want to take your research to the next level, this session is for you, too. Diana will be able to answer questions and provide individualized assistance. While it's not necessary to bring your own computer to attend, you will be able to participate and follow along if you bring your own laptop with you.

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FOLLOW UP OF ANNUAL MEETING

Thank you to our members and friends who attended the Historical Society's annual membership meeting on Monday, April 15. We had about 45 people present for our meeting, which included the approval of officers for 2024-2025: President – Jewel Ward; Vice President – Pat Wagner; Treasurer – Jennifer Essig; Secretary – Sue Freeberg.

Those at the meeting were treated to a wonderful presentation by researcher and anthropologist Dr. Michael D. Wiant who spoke about the history of Native Americans in this area. It was a fascinating presentation! We are grateful to those who attended and to Dr. Wiant for his wonderful presentation.



VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Yes! The Washington Historical Society has a YouTube Channel! It is chock full of videos of past Historical Society programs and community events. Our site can be found by searching for Washington Historical Society on YouTube or the Research tab on our website.



NEW MEMBERS

The Historical Society is pleased to welcome these new members in 2024:

Judith Boring
Bobby Martin
Bart and Mary Penn
Nancy Silverthorn
Craig, Julie, and Anderson Rogers
Culver's of Washington

OPEN HOURS AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Historical Society building will continue to be open to the public on Thursday mornings from 10:00 – noon during the summer, and on the first Saturday of each month from 10:00 – noon. We hope our members and friends will stop by to say 'hello' and take advantage of all the Society has to offer.

If you need to do research or would like to view the displays at the Historical Society and the above times do not work for you, we are happy to accommodate your schedule by appointment. Please contact Melissa at www.washingtonilhs.com or 773-425-0499 to find a time that you can visit the building.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVING UPDATE

Those of you who attended the annual meeting were treated to a report of all that the Historical Society has been up to over the last year. Or, at least, you thought you heard it all. Unfortunately, we left out a report of all that our Archivist and Washington Rewind Committees, led by volunteer archivist, John Stromberger, have been up to. Here is just a sampling of what those vital committees do:

Almost daily archiving of contemporary articles, obituaries and photos into the digital library. Over 500 “current event” items have been digitized just from 2023 and the first part of 2024 alone. In addition, over 7000 older photos/documents have been digitized in the past year. All of these are accessible to members through the Chromebook in our library.

An insane amount of articles were written and released on the Washington Rewind webpage, which is the webpage intended to be the WHS’ sponsored telling of Washington history for the bicentennial. This includes all of the Hope Lives On memories of the Washington Tornado and a Year-by-Year feature where there is an article for every one of Washing-

ton’s 200 years of existence. The Washington Rewind page can be accessed at www.washingtonilhs.com/research.

Approximately 20 videos were released on our YouTube page in the past year.

The “Scenes from Washington IL” Facebook page has become our de facto posting page for historic photos, separate from our official site, which is mostly used for current WHS news and promotion. That Facebook page has close to 5,000 members, almost a third of them joining in the past year for a page that is 15 years old. The “Washington Historical Society Photo ID Helpers” page has almost 2,000 members, and the Washington Rewind page has almost 1,000. Wouldn’t it be great if even 20% of those 2,000+ people who enjoy viewing our old photos on Facebook would become supporters of the Historical Society by becoming members?

Our archivist worked with WCHS to secure the donation of thousands of old yearbook photos and negatives, which are now currently in the digitization process.

John worked with the Cullom-Davis Library at Bradley University to digitize more parts of their Leo Clark collection as a service to them. The physical photographs, slides, and negatives, which will remain in their possession, will be available through our digital library for the Historical Society and our members.

We are so grateful to John Stromberger and his team of researchers who are truly doing the day-to-day work of preserving Washington’s history.



YOUR HISTORY MATTERS, TOO!

Yes, your history is important! We are asking members to share their remembrances of Washington. Responses will be compiled and shared in the next newsletter and archived to help future historians learn about OUR time in Washington.

What did you do for a summer job when you were in high school?

Please return your remembrance to the Historical Society at P.O. Box 54, Washington, IL 61571 or via email to washingtonilhs@gmail.com

RESPONSES TO OUR LAST QUESTION:

How did you get to school as a child? Do you recall any interesting experiences that you had on your way to or from school?

From Karen Ghigi:

From where we lived on Washington Rd. in Sunnyland, there was no bus pickup so my sister Valerie and I walked to John L. Hensey. It was about a mile and those were the days when girls did not wear pants of any kind. No matter the weather - freezing temperatures, mounds of snow, rain or sun, we walked in our dresses to school. I know some of you remember those days.

In high school, the bus picked me up across the street at the Sunnyland Christian Church. I had an opportunity to ride with a group of girls my junior year in 1964. I was 100% excited and informed my mother of my decision. She said, "the bus picks you up across the street and you are not riding in a car with a bunch of girls." I obeyed with great reluctance.

From Kelly Imhoff:

We lived on Pine Street and I had to walk to high school. I did walk up and down a hill both coming and going to school. But I remember if it was raining or very cold, some nice person would stop and pick me up, getting me to school dry and warm. I really appreciated those people but can't remember any of their names.

From Sue Freeberg:

Since I grew up on a farm several miles north of Greenville, my ride to school was always in a bus, hardly ever a car. We three kids would watch for the bright, yellow bus to turn a corner at the intersection just south of us, and that was our signal to gather our pile of books, lunches, and whatever needed to go to school that day. (For years I had the anxiety dream of seeing the bus coming toward our house and me not being able to find my books or my shoes and I'd miss the bus!) One winter afternoon our bus broke down on a remote country road. Of course, this was before cell phones or radios for vehicles to communicate with a school headquarters. We were sitting without heat as the dark settled around us. I don't know if the driver thought about trying to walk to a home, but I do recall where we were, and there were NO houses nearby. Finally, a parent or school official found us after realizing his or her children had not arrived at home or the bus had not arrived back at the school. I remember this feeling of being stranded and no one knowing where we were for a while. God bless bus drivers!

From Patricia Liston:

1936: Miss Lottie Vogelsang's first grade was a block west of the square.

1937: Miss Hart's second grade was many blocks east of the square in a brick building and it had grades 2 through 12. On cold mornings those tall big girls (high school) gather to talk outside before Mr. Bell, the janitor, unlocked the front doors. They wore slacks under their skirts. I was unhappy that I wore snow pants with cuffs at the ankle. The new high school opened the next year.

1940: In 6th grade, eight or ten of us had class in another room with eight or ten 5th graders. Just in the morning. I think Miss Diefenbarker taught.

1941: Our class stayed in our room and different teachers came throughout the day. And I don't think we had recess in 7 and 8 but we did have gym class. Mrs. Whitaker walked from the high school on Wednesdays to give me clarinet lessons when I was in 4th grade.

From Paula Prutsman:

It was post WWII when the majority of our families were limited to one car (most often an old and/or used model) so our small group of first and second graders would be expected to bundle up like we lived in Alaska by wearing "snow pants," etc. while walking from where we lived on Hilldale to Lincoln Grade School, considerably less than two miles although, of course, we were convinced it HAD to be five or ten.

The experience I recall would not be what I considered "interesting;" more like "devastating." I vividly remember, as if it were yesterday! We were on our way to school, early in December, and while crossing the intersection of Hilldale and N. Main Streets, one of our "friends" announced that there really was NO Santa Claus.

In an instant, our lives had been shattered, or so we thought! The "traitor's name? How could I ever forget? Nevertheless, I won't expose the culprit in an effort to "protect the guilty!"

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FROM THE TAZEVELL REPORTER NEWS— JUNE 1974

Teamsters' Strike Stops Local Projects

If the rain doesn't get the high school or Peoria Street, the Teamsters' strike will.

"If it lasts very long, we're in trouble," said Art Johnston, administrative assistant at Washington Community High School.

Work on the \$1.5 million renovation and addition halted June 4 when pickets appeared at the construction site. Johnston explained that other trade unions refuse to cross the picket lines. He said the critical situation at the high school concerns projects scheduled for completion by the opening of school in August.

The strike also has stopped work on the Peoria Street project. A spokesman for R.A. Cullinan and Sons said, "We can't turn a tap."

The project, which includes installation of storm sewers, widening and resurfacing from Washington Square to Wood Street, was scheduled for completion in July. "As of May 1," said Phil Jacobs of Daily and Associates Engineers Inc., consultants to the City of Washington, "the work should have been done the first week of July." But Jacobs said the 23 days of rain in May delayed that timetable to the end of July, "without thinking of the strike occurring." Jacobs said there was a possibility that the completion would be well into August. "Things could change quite drastically," he said.

The high school faces the most critical schedule. Johnston said that remodeling and installation of lighting in the old business offices would be delayed. Those offices are scheduled to operate as further guidance counseling offices and another office beginning in August. Present classrooms will have their windows closed because they face the new addition in the high school's front. The project overseer said the pipes which will bring in fresh air may not be installed in time for the school opening. Heating of classrooms would also be affected. "We won't have any heat in some classrooms," Johnston said.

Police Investigate Wieners Theft

Wieners, a stereo and a bad check entered into Washington police investigations last week. Richard Metzger, 108 North St., reported to police June 22 that when he returned home he discovered 24 packages of wieners missing and \$8 in pennies missing from a container. The wieners were valued at \$11.76.

Convenient Food Mart, 101 N. Wilmor Road, reported an employee unwittingly cashed a bad check worth \$75 for a customer. Police said they are working on leads as to who cashed the bad check.

Ronald H. Shaffer, 1045 Meadowview, told police June 19 that when he returned home he found the stereo missing from the living room. The value was placed at \$175.35.

Two juveniles were arrested June 19 for violation of curfew at 916 Walnut Street.

A bicycle belonging to Kevin Ryan, 702 Devonshire, was reported missing June 18 from the Washington Park Pool parking lot. The bicycle was valued at \$50. Also reported missing the same day was a billfold belonging to Merle Lee Jr., 511 W. Jefferson St. The value of the wallet was set at \$10.

Weaver Seeks EP Site for Landfill

Glenn Weaver, RR2 Washington, filed a petition with the Tazewell County Zoning Office May 29 asking for special use of 115 acres of land to operate a landfill.

The proposed landfill operation would be located at the Peoria Concrete Co. site in East Peoria, off meadow Avenue (U.S. 150) and Hill Rad. The land is in the county although the City of East Peoria surrounds the area.

Weaver's petition will go before the Zoning Board of Appeals July 2, according to James C. Hoyt, county zoning administrator. The application for a special use permit will then be presented to the zoning and planning committee July 8 and finally the County Board of Supervisors July 17.

According to Charles Skogley, environmental health director for Tazewell County, the proposed landfill site meets with his approval.

"For two reasons," he said. "First, it has a permit before they start. The existing system

(outside Washington) doesn't have one and never did," the director said. Skogley said the second reason is that the operation is a corporation. "The other fellow has extensive experience as an operator," Skogley said. "There's no question, it (new site) is considerably better. Just the soil alone and the type of disposal," he added. He said the operation would employ a trench type system.

Hoyt noted that boring tests made by the state were satisfactory from what he knew. He also said the residential areas near the site would be screened. The back side of the site is a cliff which falls straight down into Farm Creek. Hoyt said the location for service to East Peoria, Washington and Morton was "better."

Life expectancy of the landfill is projected to 25 years by Roger Keefauver, consulting engineer from KHM Engineers Inc. of Washington. Keefauver is the engineer for the project. Skogley, however, estimates the lifetime would be no more than 15 years. Keefauver said he based his figures on the addition of several communities using the site. "If they wish to dig out you could get more," he said. "Twenty years from now," Keefauver pointed out, "Technology may change and landfills may become outdated."

Health Department Recovers Items Possibly Anthrax-Contaminated

The Tazewell County Health Department's director wishes to thank the persons who have so readily responded to the department's plea for possibly Anthrax-contaminated articles made of goatskins from Haiti. Thus far, three drums and a goatskin rug have been collected from the area.

"We would like to thank those individuals who so willingly gave up their mementos of their trip to Haiti," Gordon Poquette, director of the county Public Health Department, said. Poquette expressed regret that these articles could not be returned. "However, in order to eliminate the possibility of further contamination, these souvenirs must be burned," he said. Any other persons having products made of goatskin from Haiti are asked to contact the Tazewell County Health Department. "All products are to be considered potentially dangerous," Poquette said.

WEDDING DRESS FASHION SHOW

Thank you to everyone who attended, lent a dress, modeled a dress, or otherwise helped with our wedding dress fashion show. It was such fun and a great way to get people together to celebrate love!

Many of you asked for a list of the dresses and who wore them. Here is that list!



DRESS _____	WORN BY
Mary Kerr's Great, Great Grandmother	On display
Ella Nafziger (1897) __	Susan van Dyck
Marvine Engel _____	Norah Westphal
Joan O'Dea _____	Jennifer Essig
Sue Freeberg _____	Sue Freeberg
Melissa Heil _____	Abby Monahan
Diane Hoover _____	On display
Susie Brunner _____	Joyce Hunnicut
Judy Gross _____	Liberty Pritchard
Ann Williams _____	Amelia Metzloff
Wilma Hunzicker ____	Kim Earle
Joan Ruppman _____	Joan Ruppman
Sally Smith _____	Jill Cranford
Bev Riggins _____	Erika Schierer
Laura Sweetland ____	Abby Monahan
Roger Stevens / _____	Calvin Edwards
Lilija Stevens ____	and Kim Earle
Kristi Howell _____	Jennifer Essig
Sarah Tellefson _____	Faith DuBois
Kara McClintock _____	Kara McClintock
Lori Weston _____	Wendy Norlin
Winnie Ebert _____	On Display
Mary Penn _____	Kim Metzloff
Leri Slonneger _____	Amelia Metzloff
Kim Metzloff _____	Abby Monahan
Joyce Hunnicut _____	Joyce Hunnicut
Jewel Ward _____	Tarynn Gambill
Connie Stromberger __	Kaci Stromberger
Jennifer Lersch _____	Jennifer Lersch
Mindy Freeberg, bride	Erika Schierer
mother of the bride_	Sue Freeberg
Wendy Norlin _____	Wendy Norlin
Kim Earle _____	Kim Earle
Jana Hunzicker _____	Kim Metzloff
Suellen Goken _____	Jennifer Essig
Jeanette Pritchard, __	Amelia Metzloff
bride, bridesmaid __	Abby Monahan
Jennifer Tallman _____	Amelia McClintock
bride, bridesmaid __	Elise McClintock
Corinne Zimmerman __	Corinne Zimmerman,
mother of the bride_	Missy Zimmerman,
bridesmaid _____	Kristin Imm

WHS SEEKS VOLUNTEERS FOR "TIME TRAVELS IN TRUNKS" '24-25

Do you live near or in Washington, Illinois?

Do you have a love for education and/or a love for Washington history?

Do you enjoy working with youth in grades K-5?

Do have good communication skills.....or would you like to improve the public speaking skills you have?

Would you be willing to spend a couple of hours a week at an area grade school helping K-5th graders learn about Illinois & U.S. history?

If you answered "yes" to at least three of the above questions, then please consider becoming a member of the Washington Historical Society's "Time Travels in Trunks," an amazing educational program that originated within the Washington Historical Society almost twenty years ago.

According to "Time Travels in Trunks" co-chairpersons Julie Smith and Sarah Butler, TTNTs reached out to at least 2,260 grade school students in over least 80 classes in District 50, District 51, District 52, and St. Patrick's Grade School along with a few special request groups.

"Time Travels in Trunks" was originally spear-headed by WHS members Pam Tompka and the late Mary Kerr in January 2005. This unique program allows local grade schools and public libraries to add a special "hands-on," "eyes-on," and "ears-on" to the history education appropriate for various elementary grades. The program now needs to expand with more trunks and more presenters to meet the demands of local schools for the 2024-25 school year.

Often referred to as "Trunk Ladies/Gentlemen," volunteers of this group originally developed 10 thematic trunks based on the background behind the historical development of Washington, IL, the state of Illinois, or the United States. The ten original trunks were: Washington history, Vintage Kitchen, Vintage tools, Vintage Toys, Independence Day, Veteran's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr, the Westward Expansion, World War I and Colonial Life. Since the original travel trunks made their first debut, other trunks have been added to or have been restructured to include emphasis on American Military History, African Americans, Civil War, Clothing, Colonial Times, Household Items, Native American Indians, Vintage Tools, Westward Movement, World War II, and Seasonal Traditions.

To become a TTnTs presenter, please contact Melissa Heil at 773-425-0499 or washingtonilhs@gmail.com

NEPTUNE SWIM CLUB

The Washington Park Pool property has been a source of childhood memories for sixty years. Whether you were a member of the old Neptune Swim Club, rode your bike to the Washington Park Pool every day during the summers of the 80's to hang out with friends and enjoy a frozen Snickers during adult swim, or were lucky enough to grow up with today's modern facility, the pool has been a memorable part of your life. This is its story.

As the 1950's ended, Washington had never had a community pool. As the 1960's dawned an opportunity arose. An advertisement appeared in the local paper about the construction of a new private pool west of town. It is unclear exactly where this pool was to be, but probably in the area of Hillcrest Golf Course. A January 1960 advertisement spoke of the Dip & Dive Swim Club which to open June 1, 1960. Membership to this swanky facility was \$50 per year or \$100 for a lifetime membership, and only granted through an interview process.

Not much is known as to why this pool never materialized, but by May over \$17,000 in membership fees had been returned to members because the pool hadn't been built.

Fascinatingly, at the same time the Dip & Dive memberships were being returned (May 1960), another Swim Club announced a membership drive for its proposed pool. This club, called the Neptune Swim Club, was to be located in Devonshire Estates. Initial costs for a family membership were a \$100 initiation fee and \$50 yearly cost. Original advertisements list a limit of 750 families, and like the Dip & Dive, there seems to have been an interview process for acceptance.

Owners were in a rush to get the pool completed by August in order to save at least a part of the 1960 swimming sea-

son and they did meet their deadline. In August 1960 the pool opened, but construction of the clubhouse and kiddie pool had not yet begun.

In the first couple years of the pool's existence, approximately 300 families were members, far short of the 750 limit, and many of those families were given memberships as incentive to purchase lots in Devonshire. Suffice it to say the pool was not making a ton of money in the early years.

The owner of the Neptune Swim Club was Don Smelz, also the key developer of the entire Devonshire subdivision. As early as February 1963, Smelz was approaching the city council asking for a rezoning of the property to commercial so he could convert it to a dining establishment and cocktail lounge. Devonshire residents attended meetings in droves to oppose such a change. Smelz went back and forth with the city for years seeking a liquor license for the property to try to make it profitable, although one of the worst kept secrets in town at the time was that liquor was being consumed there routinely during evening functions.

A solution for Smelz eventually came from the Washington Park District. When the Park District was first formed in 1969, it was looking for properties to acquire for its first venture. Three were presented to them, one of them being the Neptune Swim Club for purchase as a park pool. The park district passed on the offer at that time because they directed all of their focus and resources on a different option: the Heyl property which became Washington Park.

Fast forward to 1972. Washington Park had been basically completed and Smelz was offering the pool to the park district for the discounted price of \$165,000.

After a thorough study of the property was done, the park board went to the voters with a \$260,000 referendum to cover the purchase of the pool, and the construction of a second pool on the property to handle expected attendance bumps with the switch to a public facility.

When the votes were tallied on May 20, 1972, the referendum passed. It was not a landslide victory, as it only passed 472-337 with 25% of Washington's registered voters showing up to vote, but it got the ball rolling.

Construction of the second pool began in Fall 1972 and continued as weather permitted to be ready for the 1973 swimming season.

The next order of business was to hire a pool manager. Very early in the process the park board knew someone in the teaching field would be an ideal candidate for the mostly summertime job, so that is where they put their focus, hiring Mike Adams.

From 1973 to 1986 the pool changed very little, but in 1987 a study was done which revealed some glaring needs for renovation. For the next few years improvements were made, the most noticeable of which was an expanded kiddie area including shelters and a second pool.

In late 2005 a complete overhaul of the Washington Park Pool began. The clubhouse was torn down and replaced, and the kiddie area was modernized.

The new and improved pool opened to the public on June 10, 2006.

You might see an old friend in our special display in the main floor window this summer: Reddy Kilowatt! The Historical Society was recently gifted a large-scale Reddy Kilowatt along with lots of CILCO-related souvenir items from long-time Historical Society supporter, Mariann Maxheimer. The items will be on display until August 2024. We hope you will have a chance to stop by to see the great collection of items from the 1950s-1970s.

NEW DISPLAY



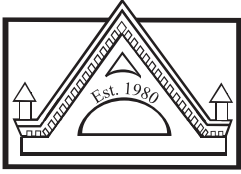
June 6, 10:00 a.m. –
Genealogy Program

June 8 –
Along the Garden Path –
Garden Walk co-sponsored with
Town & Country Gardeners



HELP THE WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Remember: an easy way to help support the mission of the Washington Historical Society is to designate us as your preferred beneficiary through Kroger Community Rewards. This program sends money back to your designated charity based on your everyday purchases. We currently have 13 families supporting the Historical Society through this Rewards program and would love to double that number in the coming year. To select the Washington Historical Society as your preferred beneficiary for Kroger, please go to: <https://www.kroger.com/#!/community/community-rewards>. Every dollar helps!



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