



## President's Letter

This newsletter is truly a celebration of all that the Washburn Heritage Association has accomplished under the leadership of Carla Bremner since 2009. Several of the articles reflect on these achievements that were made possible by a very active board focused on having fun and fulfilling the association's purpose, "To protect, preserve, interpret, and increase awareness of architectural and cultural history of the City of Washburn and its surrounding area." It goes without saying that many of the projects were made possible by the generous donations and support of our membership.

As noted within, Covid-19 has not slowed us down, but rather refocused our efforts to reach out to the residents of the City of Washburn and the world by providing access to nearly all of the past Tony Woiak History Festival presentations via YouTube thus increasing awareness of our City's rich and unique history.

I would like to extend my sincere THANK YOU to Carla for all that she has done and continues to do for the WHA and the City of Washburn, and for her support in helping me transition into her position.

*Mary Gruhl, President*



## Carla Bremner Steps Down From the WHA Presidency

*By Sharon Stewart*



In anticipation of the annual meeting in January, the WHA board meeting in December looked back at the eleven years that Carla Bremner served as president. Carla was front and center in 2009 when the City closed the Civic Center and announced their demolition plans. She organized us to make speeches to city council, host public meetings, and circulate petitions and citizen surveys. Within a year we also incorporated and found grant money to fund a reuse study. We developed budgets to cover needed civic center renovations and proposed program operation. We all breathed a collective sigh of relief when the Nowakowski's bailed us out of this enormous undertaking by negotiating with the city to purchase the building. Then we refocused our energy to support the City's application to gain Federal recognition for the East Third Street Historic District.

Under Carla's leadership we were never stagnant! The Tony Woiak series of 8 lectures per year started in 2012. To entice tourists to explore our town, we designed and printed placemats with maps to distribute to restaurants. We printed historic sites notecards to sell at Christmas bazaars. We recognized businesses that renovated their facades. Trolley tours and house tours became part of Brownstone Days. And when our treasury got too big, we gave grants to three Bayfield Street businesses to update their storefronts.

Carla didn't let Covid-19 slow us down. In 2021 WHA uploaded past history lectures to YouTube, worked with the chamber to produce a new Walking Trail Brochure, and installed a public information kiosk at Wikdahl Park.

While celebrating Carla Bremner's success in December, we recognized that a significant part of her effectiveness is maintaining a board with diverse talents who are willing to share the workload and have fun while making WHA projects reach fruition.

Thank you for your leadership, Carla.

Visit our Website at [www.washburnheritage.org](http://www.washburnheritage.org)



## The Year 2020

By Carla Bremner

Oh, how we have missed getting together at history festivals, our home tour and the Brownstone Days Trolley Tours – all cancelled when the pandemic set in last March. Hope is on the horizon, and we look forward to the day when we can all gather again to learn and talk about the fascinating history of our area.

Nonetheless, we had a busy year. The kiosk now stands proudly on main street near the grocery store. See Patra Holter's article for more details, and do stop by and take a look.

A significant event for the future of our organization is that Mary Gruhl emerged as our president-elect and, in fact, took over as president in January. She spent countless hours in the past year getting ready for this change and as a result, the transition has been smooth. Mary brings management knowledge, great ideas and many skills to this job, and we are excited about her leadership. In addition, we were delighted to welcome Peggy Smith to the board.

The winter portion of the Tony Woiak History Festival took place just before pandemic lockdown restrictions went into effect. Andrew Grimm has uploaded many previous presentations to the WHA YouTube Channel.

The old Houghton Train Depot was moved to its new location in Bayview Park, thanks to the work of the Bayview History Committee. Much of the outside restoration work on the building was completed, and the process will continue next summer.

We collaborated with the chamber and the city on the production of a new Walking Trail brochure which highlights area history on the waterfront and includes a trail map. You can pick one up at the Chamber of Commerce. WHA members continue to work with the city on trail signage and other details.

We are excited about the formation of the new Building and Sites Committee. Their mission and work is described elsewhere in this newsletter.

Thanks to some generous donations, we provided financial support to "The Club" for building renovations. We also completed many administrative tasks. In spite of the challenges of 2020, thanks to Zoom and a versatile, talented board, we accomplished much.

## The Tony Woiak History Festival Presentations Are Now on YouTube

By Andrew Grimm

Greetings! Recently the Washburn Heritage Association has begun to upload the recorded presentations from the summer and winter Tony Woiak History Festival onto YouTube. People will be able to watch these presentations from their computers. To view these presentations simply do the following:

1. Search for "youtube.com" on the internet and go to the YouTube website.

2. On the YouTube website, search "Washburn Heritage Association" and you will find the videos.

3. If you click on the circled image of the Washburn Cultural Center it will take you directly to the Washburn Heritage Association YouTube page and you can bookmark it. This will have all of the videos we have loaded updated.

29 presentations have already been uploaded to the YouTube website. We plan to upload more presentations that have been or will be recorded in the future. A list of all presentations as well as the YouTube link can be found on the WHA website.

[www.washburnheritage.org](http://www.washburnheritage.org)

Thanks and Enjoy!

## Buildings and Sites Committee Established

Washburn Heritage Association (WHA) announces the formation of a new standing committee. The Buildings and Sites Committee (BSC) advocates the significance of historic buildings and sites by promoting awareness, encouraging improvements and collaborating with relevant property owners and community organizations.

Initially, the BSC will focus on the following areas:

- \*collaborating with the various organizations in the community concerned with preserving and safeguarding historic buildings and sites

- \*encouraging and recognizing building and site improvements that enhance the community

- \*celebrating Preservation Month in May, 2021.

Planning for the Preservation Month celebration has begun. BSC plans to create a poster announcing the event by requesting a Mayoral Proclamation and by identifying all historic buildings and sites with signs or balloons. In addition, they will have a map of the buildings and sites available so residents can drive-by or walk-by the various locations during the month. Additional activities may be added in the next few months as planning for the celebration continues.

WHA believes this committee will assist in enriching the experience of living in our community with its attention on building and site improvements and preservation.

# WHA Kiosk Project

By Patra Holter



The long-awaited kiosk is now finished and installed on the corner of Bayfield Street and 3rd Avenue in Washburn's Wikdal Park. The kiosk was designed in the bungalow style of architecture as reflected in many of the charming homes of our city. It was constructed for the purpose of displaying Washburn's considerable history and current events. It will be of interest to visitors and residents alike.

On September 21st, despite Covid-19, a well-attended dedication ceremony was held in the park. Speakers were Carla Bremner, WHA president, and Karen Novachek, who explained that her son left the Eric R. Novachek fund so the

city could celebrate its life and heritage. Sharon Stewart explained the project process and finally our mayor, Mary Motif, gave the project her congratulations.

The WHA kiosk committee (co-chairs - Ginny Pedersen and Patra Holter with Carla Bremner, Sharon Stewart, Lynn Adams, Jill Lorenz, Karen Novachek and Kitty Wilson ) worked in partnership with the city, the Chamber of Commerce, the Beautification Committee, other organizations, businesses, and many community members to make this project a reality.

The master carpenter was Mike Pedersen with assistant Pete Dagsgard. John Cook provided the lightning rod atop the building as well as overseeing the cement patio. Aaron Irmiter crafted the Brownstone around the base. Two Aldo Leopold benches were built by Jim Pedersen and decorated by Ginny Pedersen. Bob Sanger was the project manager.

The kiosk is about 10 feet tall and 4 feet square. It has cedar siding, exposed eave rafters and decorative supports. There is an ample cement patio that surrounds it and a handicap-accessible ramp from the sidewalk to the kiosk. A large window is on each side of the kiosk. The front window is reserved for the Chamber of Commerce to post current events and notices. The other three windows display aspects of Washburn's history. Currently one window displays the DuPont Legacy, one is about the Washburn Historical District and the third describes the Washburn Museum.

A committee consisting of Sharon Stewart (script), Lynn Adams (graphics), Ginny Pedersen, Patra Holter and Susan Mackreth (museum research) is working on future display panels so we can interchange them. We have completed panels on logging and sawmills, brownstone buildings and quarries, the library, Homecoming, and WHA. We are working on The Club (Dupont Civic Center) display and for this one we need some assistance.



We are having a difficult time finding pictures of activities and uses of The Club from the past. If anyone has photos they could lend us it would be greatly appreciated. The pictures would be

returned unharmed. If you have images to share, please contact any member of the committee.

The WHA Kiosk has been given to the city to celebrate the pride in and love for our town.



# New WHA Board

## Member

### Peggy Smith



After a first vacation to Chequamegon Bay in 1993, Peggy Smith and her husband began looking for ways they could make this area their home. They happily began calling Washburn home when Peggy was hired by the Washburn School District in 1996 and they moved here from the Madison area with their son, Andrew.

Peggy graduated from the University of WI-Madison with an undergraduate degree in Education and 2 graduate degrees in Educational Leadership. She served as an administrator in Washburn and 2 other area school districts as well as abroad in Brazil, Russia, and China.

Both of the homes the family has owned here reflect the interesting history of Washburn - one of the historic DuPont homes on 3rd Street and an original (read *old*) farmhouse in the Finn Settlement. *Learning the history of Washburn's community through investigating and renovating these homes has been interesting and rewarding.*

Peggy also serves on the Board of the Storm Shelter Sled Dog Sanctuary & Rescue. She and her husband are loving retirement and are spending it hiking, kayaking, gardening, and dreaming of travel again soon.

## Tony Woiak Summer Festival

Tentative plans are in the works for a summer Tony Woiak History Festival in July and August. We are looking at indoor and outdoor venues and will try to find a safe and workable site, but it will ultimately depend on Covid conditions and Bayfield County recommendations. Watch for future announcements.



# Heritage

WASHBURN HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

## WHA Board of Directors

**President:** Mary Gruhl

715-685-8363, mary.gruhl@gmail.com

**Vice President:** Sharon Stewart

715-373-2556; © 715-292-1889,  
Sharonstewart08@gmail.com

**Secretary:** Lynn Adams

715-209-6784, ladams1055@gmail.com

**Treasurer:** Jill Lorenz

715-373-5908. Jill15908@gmail.com

Carla Bremner  
Steve Cotherman  
Don Ekstrom  
Andrew Grimm  
Patra Holter  
Sandy Johnson  
Dora Kling  
Karen Novachek  
Dave Nyhus  
Ginny Pedersen  
Peggy Smith

**Advisory Board:**  
Gary Holman  
Ken & Jane Weiler

## We Love our Members and Donors

Thank you for your support of our activities and programs.  
If your name isn't on the list below, please consider joining  
the Washburn Heritage Association.

**Individual**

Terri Bahe  
Andrew Grimm  
Richard Gierzak  
Peter Systma  
Peter & Jana Van Evera  
Jill Lorenz  
Patra Holter  
Virginia Hirsch  
Walter Pearson  
Mary Hudson  
Louis Schindler  
Nancy Hanson  
Kristin Christensen  
Vernelle Mercer  
Chris Lindsey  
Rita Foltz  
Dora Kling  
Catherine Lange  
Gary Holman  
Mary Gruhl  
Dawn Bellile  
Leila Fischer  
Irene Blakely

**Patron**

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Karen Novachek  
David Nyhus  
Craig Florine  
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Ken & Jane Weiler  
Carla & Peter Bremner  
Karen Crowell  
Sharon & Jack Stewart  
Ann & Don Christensen  
Jim & Judy Edwards  
Carol Lindsey  
JoAnn Baker & Dale Nelson  
Lorraine & Phil Norrgard  
Bill Hagstrom  
Ruth Kressel

**Business**

Monroe & Carol Sprague  
Brownstone Pharmacy  
Hansen's IGA  
Sara Ungrodt  
Washburn Hardware  
Edmunds & Company  
Blue Water Realty  
Adeline Swiston  
Don Ekstrom

**Benefactor**

Ron & Kay Maassen  
Millicent Foundation

**Donations**

Dan & Sally Larson  
Millicent Foundation  
Richard Gierzak  
Patra Holter  
Dennis & Katherine Kilbane  
Kris & Matt Edmunds

**Family**

Mark Abeles Allison  
Steve & Mary Cotherman  
Jan MacFarlane  
Kim Bro & Becky Brown  
Kristi Jensch  
Dick & Sandy Johnson  
Eric & Lynn Adams  
Hank & Marty Cole  
Mark & Shari Eggleston  
Charly Ray & Julie Buckles  
Kenner & Kimberly Christensen  
Louis Schindler  
Jim and Carol Dibbell  
Peggy Smith & Dave Awtrey  
Kathleen Russell & Joyce Zifko

Join

us!

If you are interested in any of our projects and would like to volunteer to help, or of have ideas for new projects, please talk to any board member. You can join the Washburn Heritage Association by filling out the form below.

### Thank You for your Membership/Donation!

\$20     \$30     \$50     \$100     \$500     \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Individual    Family    Patron    Business    Benefactor

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

The Washburn Heritage Association is a non-profit citizen group with no overhead expenses.  
We appreciate your support. Please send this form with your tax deductible donation to:

**Washburn Heritage Association ~ P.O. Box 814 ~ Washburn, Wisconsin 54891**