

THE REPORTER

Waupaca Historical Society, 321 South Main Street, Waupaca, WI 54981
Open Wednesdays, 12-3, Thursdays, 10-2, Fridays, 12-3

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Spring 2019

Rummage Sale to Raise Funds for the Waupaca Historical Society

Doing some spring cleaning? Have a few things you are ready to give away? Then donate them to the upcoming Waupaca Historical Society Rummage Sale and Brat Fry!

The Waupaca Historical Society will host a rummage sale and brat fry fundraiser on Thursday, May 2 and Friday, May 3 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Holly History and Genealogy Center. All proceeds will benefit the Waupaca Historical Society, and all items have been donated specifically for the rummage sale.

Food will be served all day, including coffee, doughnuts and muffins in the morning.

On Friday, May 3 from 2 to 4 p.m., all items at the rummage sale will be \$5 per bag.

WHS will accept donations for the sale on Monday, April 29 and Tuesday, April 30 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the lower level of the Holly Center. Unfortunately WHS cannot accept large appliances or electronics, baby furniture, car seats, strollers, computers, computer



monitors or televisions. WHS also reserves the right to refuse any materials.

The sale and brat fry will take place at 321 S. Main Street. Please contact the Waupaca Historical Society at (715) 256-9980 with any questions.

Local Sites, People Featured in Upcoming Holly Center Programs

Waupaca and the Chain O'Lakes area provide no shortage of history, stories and memories for residents and visitors alike. The Waupaca Historical Society will feature three of these prominent sites and people in their upcoming spring/summer programming.

On Thursday, May 16 at 6 p.m., Michael Telzrow, the director of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison, will present, "From Cottages to Commandants: The History of the Wisconsin Veterans Home."

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Hutchinson House is Gearing Up for the Summer Season!

By Katharine McArthur

It's that time of year again, and the Hutchinson House is getting ready for its big opening Memorial Day weekend! The house will be open this summer season on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays from 1 to 4 p.m. We would love to see all of you as visitors this summer!

Even more than that, the Waupaca Historical Society needs your help bringing early Waupaca history to life for this season's visitors. We are looking for volunteers to

document at the museum this summer. No experience is necessary and training is provided—all you need is to love local history and to enjoy talking to people. We are happy to have any level of commitment—even a few days is very helpful!

For more information, contact Katharine McArthur at katharine.mcarthur@gmail.com or come to our recruitment event at the Hutchinson House in South Park on Saturday May 18 at 2 p.m.

At the Depot: Opening Up from the Long Winter

By Mike Kirk

Things quieted down at the Depot this winter after the rush of Christmas activities and a couple building rentals. It has given me time to get some interior woodwork done. There were still quite a number of missing baseboard, door and window molding pieces. Lane Streck supplied part of the oak lumber and together we milled it in his home workshop. I made the rest from some oak boards that were left over from an Episcopal Church remodeling project a number of years ago.

When I originally painted the lettering on the Depot ticket window, all I had to go by were some black-and-white pictures. So I took my best guess and painted the letters white with black trim. I have since learned that the lettering was gold with black trim. Since I was working on the window trim anyway, I repainted the lettering. The finished woodwork and the gold lettering really turned out nice. It is the first thing people see when they come in the door and should give them a good impression of the Depot.

Before we know it, we will be starting our spring and summer hours. Jeff Weasner is starting off the season by having the Depot

open during the Green Bay Titledown Train Show April 27 and 28. After that it will be open Saturdays in May until Memorial Day weekend. During the summer, the Depot will be open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays through Labor Day from 12 to 5 p.m.

We also have an opportunity to host a railroad webcam. We applied for and received a Waupaca Area Convention and Visitors Bureau

grant to pay for faster internet service. Virtual Railfan is doing the installation and agreed to pay the \$3,000 to \$5,000 for it. But the project has been delayed and, as of now, we do not know when the cameras will be installed. However,

if we raise the money through donations or sponsorships, Virtual Railfan could do the installation right away. Sponsors would receive advertising on the website, which typically gets five to seven million views per month.

Producer Ron Scott has also approached the Waupaca Historical Society about doing a PBS-quality documentary about the Depot. He would also lead the fundraising for it. You will likely hear more about this in the future.



The Depot will be open on April 27 and 28 from 12 to 5 p.m. The building will also be open Saturdays in May.

Eddy Hanson, Whispering Pines To Be Featured This Summer (Continued from p. 1)

Telzrow's program will feature the early years of the Veterans Home, the unique idea of cottages and the Home today. The program will take place in the lower-level meeting room of the Holly History and Genealogy Center. The program and refreshments are sponsored by Jack and Glenda Rhodes and Charles Larson.

The sounds of musician Eddy Hanson will once again be heard in Waupaca on Thursday, June 20 at 6 p.m. at the Danes Hall on North Main Street. Hanson was born in Waupaca in 1893 and eventually returned after years in Chicago as a studio organist for theaters and radio stations. He composed numerous songs, including the Wisconsin Waltz, the official state waltz. He was a later a staple at Simpson's Restaurant.

Michael Koehler will present a program on Hanson's life, with musician Linda Harmon playing select compositions. The program is sponsored by the Danes Hall and the Waupaca Community Arts Board.



The Refreshment Hut was a popular stop at Whispering Pines Park, offering ice cream, beverages and much more.

On Thursday, July 18 at 6 p.m., Jeff and Joel Jenswold will present, "The Story of Whispering Pines Park." The Jenswolds, summer neighbors and volunteers at the park, will recall the history and their memories of the Hyldgaards and the park. The program and refreshments are sponsored by John and Gretchen Kelley, Bob and Anita Olson, and John and Karen Hebring.

Shop, Save and Donate to WHS!

If you shop online or have a Thrivent account, you have access to new ways to donate to the Waupaca Historical Society!

Amazon.com operates AmazonSmile, a website with the same products, prices, and shopping features. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. All you have to do is visit smile.amazon.com and choose the Waupaca Historical Society!

Thrivent policy or account holders can also direct their Thrivent Choice dollars to WHS. Members are eligible for Thrivent Choice dollars based on insurance premiums and

contract values. Members then obtain Choice dollars that they can direct to certain organizations. If interested, contact your Thrivent representatives or log into your account for more information.

Thrivent members can also apply for Thrivent Action Team grants. These grants provide \$250 gift cards for you and your organization of choice to put on a one-time fundraiser, service activity or educational event. Last year, WHS was able to hold its 4th of July Fundraiser and December program with Laura Ingalls Wilder with the help of Thrivent Action Teams!

If you have Action Team grants and would like to work with WHS on an upcoming program or fundraiser, please let us know!



Waupaca's Ground Observation Corps

By J.J. Johnson

During the Cold War in the 1950s, many Americans, including the government, feared an attack from Communist forces around the world. In 1952 the United States Air Force were increasingly concerned of attack through so-called "hedge-hopper aircrafts," which were capable of flying under the radar to reach key targets.

To protect the United States from an air attack, the Air Force Civil Defense service organized the Ground Observer Corps (GOC). The Air Force established 82 filter centers to oversee about 9,000 observation posts. One filter plant was located in Green Bay, Wisconsin and was responsible for gathering information from observation posts in northern Wisconsin and northern Michigan.

The GOC enlisted the volunteer services of men and women, ages 18 through 60. The volunteers were trained to spot a low-flying plane, identify the type of aircraft it was, its approximate speed and its direction of flight. This information was then reported to the filter station, which notified the Air Force so interceptors could be sent out to handle further assess and handle the situation.

In Waupaca, around June 24, Harold Holly was appointed supervisor for the city's aircraft warning service. Holly was expected to put several GOC volunteers on 24-hour surveillance duty and obtain adequate staffing as soon as possible. Observers were also asked to report any unusual activity, even when not on duty. The observers were issued identification cards and buttons validated by an adjutant general in charge of civilian ground defense.



Observers received both identification cards and buttons to identify them as Ground Observer Corps (GOC) volunteers.

Starting on July 14, in an action called Operation Skywatch, the Air Force ordered 27 states onto a 24-hour alert for an indefinite period of time. This order affected more than 150,000 volunteers at 9,000 observation posts, which reported to 82 filter centers. Waupaca's GOC was among those activated.

Holly immediately set up a schedule of two-hour blocks and put in a request to the surrounding area for additional volunteers to fill the slots. John O. Brown was designated the chief observer. It was Brown's hope that enough people would volunteer so that eventually no one would need to volunteer for more than a four-hour shift each week. Brown set a schedule where a volunteer would come on duty during the last hour of the previous shift and, during his last hour, he would be joined by the next volunteer. In this way, all the volunteers would be fully aware of what was happening throughout the day.

By February 1953, John W. Glaeser was the supervisor of the GOC. Elmer Enz was the chief observer in charge of training and scheduling. Sheriff Auggie Kruse was named assistant chief observer and was in charge of registering volunteers who lived within five miles of Waupaca. Applicants were asked their gender (to ensure female volunteers would not be scheduled during hours of darkness), height, weight, hair color, eye color and blood type. Volunteers had to be able to see and hear "very well." They also needed to be able to climb a few flights of stairs.

On March 1, Waupaca's GOC was to go on 12-hour-a-day duty. It was not expected that Waupaca would ever be attacked, but it was deemed a vital post because of its proximity to Milwaukee, Chicago, Gary, Ind., and St. Louis, Mo. The government believed the Russians would want to destroy these industrial production areas. It was estimated that planes could reach Chicago from Russia in a matter of seven or eight hours, making Waupaca a vital point over which the planes would likely fly to reach their destination.

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Ground Observation Corps Builds Observation Center in Waupaca (Continued from p. 4)

A warning from Waupaca could get a jet from Truax Field in Madison in the air to intercept it in 10 minutes. Planes were kept fully armed and ready for take-off 24-hours-a-day. With all of this in mind, Glaeser's other concern was where to set up an observation station.

While the government required a GOC in Waupaca, no funding was provided for a building or its maintenance. In mid-March, Dr. Sam Salan was named assistant chief observer in charge of finances. Local lumber companies offered building materials at cost and various people in the community volunteered their labor. Initially the GOC looked at erecting the tower either on the Waupaca High School building on School Street, the Farmer State Bank building at the corner of Main and Fulton Streets, or on the hill on the north end of Main Street. Glaeser and an Air Force officer from the Green Bay filter center met with City Council on June 23. After listening to the men, the councilmen were favorable to the possibility of creating a civil defense program that could last up to 50 years.

On the weekend of July 11, the Air Force ordered a field test as part of a test of the coordination between the United States and Canada. Waupaca's GOC was put on 24-hour alert from 4:30 p.m. Saturday until 4:45 p.m. Sunday, after which they were to continue on standby. Without an observation tower, spotters set up at Louie Waush's Sinclair Station at the corner of Royalton and Churchill Streets. Volunteers manned the post until midnight on Saturday, at which time Waupaca police officer Angelo Tomaras took over until 8 a.m. Sunday when GOC volunteers again resumed the watch. According to the *Waupaca County Post*, "several flights of multi-motor planes were reported...between 8 and 10 a.m. Sunday."

The test revealed that noise from the highway hindered the effectiveness of the spotters in hearing airplanes overhead. Despite this challenge and that of overcast skies, the



Waupaca's observation center was built on the hill to the east of the Danes Home. The location provided a clear view of the sky and was removed from highway noise. This artwork was painted by Edith V. Peterson.

American and Canadian R.A.F. planes taking part in the test were successfully spotted and reported by Charles Booth, during whose watch the planes made their appearance. As reported by the *Waupaca County Post*, "the Waupaca detachment of the Ground Observer Corps, U.S.A.F. ... received a commendation from the Air Force for its efficiency during the ... test alert." Glaeser reported the results at the next City Council meeting and advised the councilmen of the urgent need to have an observation tower located away from the highway noise as soon as possible. Until a building could be constructed, spotters worked from Glaeser's house when not at Waush's Sinclair gas station. But military officials were applying pressure on him to get a suitable building erected and properly manned.

Initially a tower was begun on the roof of the Armory on Washington Street with the approval of the City Council. However, obligations to the National Guard and high school caused a conflict with volunteers going in and out 24-hours-a-day. Some people also complained that it changed the appearance of the Armory, so the city ordered it removed.

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Ground Observation Corps Builds Observation Center in Waupaca (Continued from p. 5)

Before construction could continue Alderman Erik Lindskoog said he wanted a complete run-down of the costs to build and maintain the observation tower.

On January 14, 1954, Maj. Alfred Sadler from Madison and Lt. L.H. Waring from Green Bay met with city officials along with John Glaeser (Waupaca GOC supervisor), Francis "Skipper" Cary (assistant supervisor), George Notman (from Fuller Goodman Lumber Company) and a representative from the newspaper to reach an agreement regarding the GOC's observation post. It was decided to cut three trees near the flag pole on the hill at North Main Street and purchase a Quonset house for the GOC's use. The building was placed on skids, which could allow the building to be raised to 10 feet if needed or, when no longer needed, could be moved to serve as a warming house at the ice rink. Electricity, heat and a telephone were installed, with the city agreeing to cover their installation and on-going expenses. Jewelers donated both a mechanical and electric clock and others donated linoleum flooring, a table and chairs for the spotters' convenience. The building was completed February 9. It had sliding glass doors installed at the top to aid spotters watching for aircraft and full screened windows on the sides. Later insulation would be added to help muffle the noise from the traffic on Main and Fulton Streets.

The building was completed February 9. On March 12, an Air Force representative and the

GOC supervisors held a special meeting to acquaint all volunteers with the procedures for making reports to the Green Bay filter center. The GOC was again put on 24-hour duty for an unspecified length of time starting at midnight Sunday, March 14. Shifts were two hours each, and the volunteer filling each shift was listed in the local newspaper. For national security all GOC volunteers were fingerprinted

The *Waupaca County Post* on April 15, 1954 reported that Herwin Winters, Mrs. Rougina Schweitzer, Mrs. Rob Holly, Mrs. John Glaeser, Skipper Cary, Louise Waush and Harold Holly had each volunteered 250 hours or more with the local GOC. On April 17, in recognition of their dedication, the Air Force rewarded them with an all-day tour of the radar station in Antigo and the Green Bay filter center. In mid-August, one of nine models of the North American F-86 was presented to Waupaca's GOC by the Air Force's Green Bay filter center. The models were given in recognition of its "outstanding contribution to the national defense alert."

By February 1955, the post was operating only a small portion of the time, according to Chief Observer Polly Georgeson. A drive was started to recruit volunteers in order to resume 24-hour service. It was kicked off with speeches and movies on air defense by Lt. Stanley Kaiser of the U.S. Air Force, supervisor for the observer post road team at the Green Bay filter center.

Waupaca Historical Society Wish List

The Waupaca Historical Society is thankful for in-kind donations of new or gently used items. If you can donate or sponsor a Wish List item, contact Tracy at (715) 256-9980 or director@waupacahistoricalsociety.org. Thank you!

Slate chalkboards for children (\$30)
Legos (\$50-\$100)
Child's table and chairs (\$100)
Steel shelving with powder finish for storage (\$140)

iPad for historic photos (\$200) and
iPad stand (\$100)
Plastic needles and yarn (\$25)
Mesh plastic canvas (\$40)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All programs are held at the Holly History and Genealogy Center, 321 S. Main St., unless otherwise noted.

- Thurs., May 16, 6 p.m.** “From Cottages to Commandants: The History of the Wisconsin Veterans Home in King” with Michael Telzrow, Wisconsin Veterans Museum
- Thurs., June 20, 6 p.m.** “Waupaca’s Eddy Hanson” with Michael Koehler (**program held at the Danes Hall, 301 N. Main Street, Waupaca**)
- Thurs., July 18, 6 p.m.** “The Story of Whispering Pines Park” with Jeff and Joel Jenswold
- Thurs., August 15, 6 p.m.** “The Holly Family and the Holly Funeral Home” with Steve Johnson
- Thurs., September 19, 6 p.m.** “The Building of the Town of Dayton” with Diane Pinkalla

Staff:

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