



January/February 2023

Join Us February 22nd for Our First Program of 2023

“DON’T MAKE ME PULL OVER!
An Informal History of the Family Road Trip”
Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 p.m.
Hales Corners Library / Hunt Room
— Presented by **Richard Ratay**, Author of the best-selling book, *Don’t Make Me Pull Over!*

Richard Ratay’s program comes highly recommended by several HCHS members who have experienced it. His presentation is part history and part whimsical memoir in the spirit of *National Lampoon’s Vacation*. In addition to being a brief history of America’s first interstate highways in the 1950s, it is also a nostalgic look at the golden age of family road trips - before portable DVD players, iPods, and Google Maps - that many of us experienced.

In the days before affordable air travel, families didn’t so much take vacations as survive them. Between home and destination lay thousands of miles and dozens of annoyances, and with his family Richard Ratay experienced all of them -

from being crowded into the backseat with noogie-happy older brothers, to picking out a souvenir only to find that a better one might have been had at the next attraction, to dealing with a dad who didn’t believe in bathroom breaks.

The birth of America’s first interstate highways in the 1950s hit the gas pedal on the road trip phenomenon and families were soon motoring - sans seatbelts! - to a range of sometimes



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Housefuls of Christmas!

HCHS’s annual Christmas window display was installed at the Hales Corners Library from December 1 - January 4. The theme of this year’s window was “Christmas Houses in the Village.” A special thank you to **Katy Galewski**, **Mary Javorek**, and **Al Strekow** for assembling the items into the window you see here. The display featured photos of the decorations at several Christmas houses in Hales Corners from 2003 - 2012, along with miniature ceramic houses from various private collections.



TALES OF THE CORNERS - JANUARY

From the files of the *Tri-Town News and Hub*

90 YEARS AGO (1933)

- State Bank Hales Corners is saved by depositors who raise \$38,500 in less than 48 hours to prevent the bank from being closed.
- In a straw poll conducted by the Hales Corners Advancement Association, Hales Corners residents vote overwhelmingly in favor of changing the name of the Village. Hale Park is in the lead of new names with 59 votes, Halecrest receives 19 votes, Halewood five votes, and 19 votes are in favor of retaining the present name.
- The August Giese Meat Market advertises boiled ham for 35 cents per pound, porterhouse steak for 30 cents per pound, and pork loin roast for 12 cents per pound.
- Hockey skaters organize a Hales Corners team to play on Mud Lake.
- St. Mary Catholic Church votes 51 to 11 in favor of building a hall.
- Bosch Auto Sales adds auto painting, body repairs, and welding to the services it offers.

80 YEARS AGO (1943)

- Classified ad: "100 Adult Cats. Bring your cats with you next fair day. I will be on hand to buy them at 50 cents each."
- Whitnall Park Lutheran Church accepts 10 new members on Sylvester Eve (the German name for New Year's Eve).
- Albert Meares is elected president of the Hales Corners Volunteer Fire Department.

70 YEARS AGO (1953)

- Rates for the pay telephones on the Hales Corners exchange go up to 10 cents.
- Services are held for the first time in the Hales Corners English Lutheran Church building. The church seats 430 persons and includes facilities for Sunday School and social functions.
- Emanuel Evangelical and Reformed Church buys the land in front of its building. The Village Post Office, Hales Corners Body Shop, Ross Builders, and a house are currently located on the site.
- James Burton takes over as the new president of the Hales Park Highlands Civic Association.

60 YEARS AGO (1963)

- The A&W Drive-in advertises perch and haddock fish fries for 50 cents and shrimp plates for 95 cents.
- Helen Jeffers opens her own Gloria-Lyn Beauty Salon, 5971 S. 108th Place. She has moved her business after 22 years at the Godsell Building on Highway 100.

50 YEARS AGO (1973)

- Hales Corners Village President Howard Graves appoints five residents to a library formation committee.
- The 14th green at the Whitnall Park Golf Course is being moved.
- Hales Corners Fire Chief Karl Kearns is named to the Board of Trustees for the Milwaukee County Association of Fire Chiefs.

Research by Katy Galewski

DON'T MAKE ME PULL OVER!

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stirring, sometimes wacky locations. Frequently, what was remembered the longest wasn't Mount Rushmore, Yellowstone, or Disney World, but such roadside attractions as "The Thing" in Texas Canyon, Arizona, or "The Mystery Spot" in Santa Cruz, California. In this road tourism-crazy era that stretched through the 1970s, national parks attendance swelled to 165 million, and a whopping 2.2 million people visited Gettysburg each year, 13 times the number of soldiers who fought in the battle.

Now, decades later, Ratay offers a paean to what was lost, showing how family togetherness was eventually sacrificed to electronic distractions and the urge to "get there now." In dozens of ways, he reminds us of what once made the Great American Family Road Trip so great, including 20-foot "land yachts," oasis-like Holiday Inn "Holidomes," "Smokey"-spotting Fuzzbusters, 28 glorious flavors of Howard Johnson's ice cream, and the thrill of finding a "good buddy" on the CB radio.

"Don't Make Me Pull Over!" reveals how the family road trip came to be, how its evolution mirrored the country's, and why those magical journeys that once brought families together - for better and worse - have largely disappeared.

TALES OF THE CORNERS - FEBRUARY

From the files of the *Tri-Town News and Hub*

90 YEARS AGO (1933)

- Classified ad: "Expert skate sharpening, (push) lawn mowers sharpened, repaired and adjusted... Fred Bischoff Blacksmith Shop Hales Corners."
- Dr. Dennis Pierce walks a mile in bitter cold weather to reach a patient. The doctor's car was blocked by a snowdrift.
- A one-day Farmers' Institute is scheduled to be held at the Fairview Hall (now the Bosch Tavern).
- The Freede-Eckel American Legion post holds a Monte Carlo night at Heiden's Hall.

80 YEARS AGO (1943)

- Hales Corners Red Cross headquarters reports 23 volunteers put in 124 hours to produce 1,000 bandages in January.
- B. Ohnstad, Commander of the local American Legion, has applications for the WAACs and WAVEs.
- The Hawthorne Garden Club announces that "More and Better Victory Gardens for 1943" will be the topic at its next meeting.
- Confidence that the citizens of Hales Corners will give their full cooperation to the shoe rationing program is expressed by J.R. Ambruster, chairman of the local War Price and Rationing Board.
- Mrs. Dennis Pierce is in charge of the local Red Cross War Fund Drive.
- Plans are made by the American Legion Auxiliary to open a branch of the Milwaukee Public Library in Hales Corners. The first shipment of books is expected next week.

70 YEARS AGO (1953)

- The Hales Corners Village Board votes to annex a 40-acre area belonging to the Hale Park Development Corp.
- More than 1,600 people attend dedication ceremonies at the new Hales Corners (English) Lutheran Church.
- The Hales Corners Plan Commission approves a petition from the Nathan Hale Masonic Lodge for permission to move the former Hales Corners (English) Lutheran Church building to the lodge's land on Highway 100 between W. Grange and W. Luther Avenues.
- Milwaukee orchestra leader Joe Gumin buys the Candlewick Inn (now Clifford's Supper Club). His recording of "Jingle Bells" has sold more than 1,000,000 copies.
- Hales Corners Boys Scouts in Pack 598 receive silver bars signifying a quarter-century of scouting in the Village.

60 YEARS AGO (1963)

- According to a report by the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, the Hales Corners Fire Department has the lowest per capita cost for fire protection in the state at one cent per person.
- Barczak Bros. advertises picnic ham for 31 cents per pound and beef chuck for 69 cents per pound.
- Contracts are awarded to improve Forest Home Avenue between S. 108th and S. 84th Streets. The total cost of the project is expected to reach \$1,536,070.
- Plans are made to install the Reverend Edwin Peiplow as pastor of Hales Corners Lutheran Church.
- Hales Corners Trustee Don Wilson and Norbert Besson win the Hales Corners Jaycees' Good Government and Man-of-the-Year awards, respectively.
- Rehearsals are held for the Hales Corners Community Theater's presentation of *The Girls in 509*. Shirley Weber and Page Fitzgerald head the cast.
- Plans are made for the second annual Little League Sports Night dinner to be held at Clifford's Supper Club. Ernie Johnson, former Milwaukee Braves pitcher, will be the special guest.
- Hales Corners Jaycees sponsor this year's Wisconsin Junior Miss pageant at Hales Corners School.

50 YEARS AGO (1973)

- Hales Corners issued a total of 70 building permits in 1972 for a value of \$2,108,615. In 1971, 52 permits for \$524,390 were issued.
- The Wisconsin Telephone Company's facility in Hales Corners serves 23,527 phones. It is estimated that Hales Corners residents make about 55,528 calls daily.
- The Whitnall School Board votes to borrow \$100,000 to cover the budget deficit. The School District will receive \$104,692 less than anticipated in state aid this year.
- An architect's sketch of the planned Todd Wehr Nature Center appears in the *Hub*.
- A collision at S. 108th Street and Edgerton Avenue revives a request for traffic signals at the corner.
- Linda Menden reigns as queen of Whitnall High School's Girls' Athletic Association Annual Turnabout Dance.
- Michael Stupar is the new president of the Hales Corners Fourth of July Commission.
- A donation of \$421 is presented to the March of Dimes by students at Whitnall Middle School.

Research by Katy Galewski

In Memoriam

Our Society lost two long-time members in the past few months. **Bette Arey** passed away at age 85 on November 20, 2022. **Bob Ruesch** passed away at age 78 on October 5, 2022. Our sincere condolences go out to their families.

Bette Arey was born in Missouri, raised in Tennessee, and educated at Vanderbilt University. She moved here in 1972 to take a position as editor for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. With her affinity for local history and political science, she was called on to help found the Hales Corners Historical Society. Her mark in that effort remains in our Bylaws and state charter.

Bette made local history in 1974 by becoming the first elected female member of the Village Board. She quickly established herself as a strong voice supporting a number of worthy causes. Primary among them were ecology and historic preservation. She was instrumental in creating recycling



Bette Arey, 2004



Sherman Stock joins Bette Arey at the reinstallation of the display next to the Seneca Hale Summer Kitchen, 2019

programs in several communities near Hales Corners.

In 1995, Bette headed an HCHS project to save Seneca Hale's Summer Kitchen, the oldest surviving building in the Village. With the help of local volunteers and historic preservationists, it was taken down stone-by-stone, moved from a site near Forest Home Avenue and Highway 100, and reconstructed at its present location in Cobb Park. The current site was selected because it was farmland owned by Seneca's daughter, **Harriet**, and her husband, **William Cobb**.

Adjacent to the Kitchen, an interpretive display structure was designed and installed by local artists **Sherman Stock** and Bette's husband, **John Arey**.

Bette also was a driving force behind the purchase and establishment of the Stahl-Conrad Homestead, which took place in 2003. She served on

the Board continuously until 2017 when she left for health reasons.

During that time, she served as president for a number of years, handled publicity and grant writing, and did stints as the newsletter writer and membership chair. She was instrumental in starting the farmers market that was held there for a number of years, and helped put together exhibits. She also provided significant financial support.

Bob Ruesch, a long-time member of our Society, was involved in the creation of our *Neighborhood Walking Tour* book. He and **Audrey Reineck** were responsible for writing Tour #6 in the booklet, which focused on the earliest buildings in the Village. Bob also narrated stories about that area

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as he led groups through the streets.

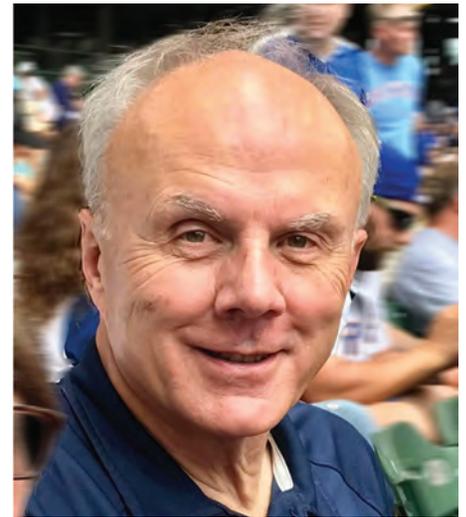
Bob and his wife, **Bonnie**, were long-time residents of Hales Corners. Their three daughters attended St. Mary's School and Whitnall High School. Later on, their grandchildren were in the Whitnall system. After graduating with a degree in education, Bob started a career as a parochial school teacher. In the 1970s, he joined Prudential Insurance, where he worked for 40 years.

Bob was elected as a Trustee of the Village in April 1984. His objective was to serve and not be served, and to be actively involved in the process of municipal government. His objective never changed. He served under Presidents **Fred Licau**, **Henry Poehler**, and **Jim Ryan**. Those gentlemen and Bob shared the same values, goals, and vision for the Village. His fellow Trustees were also in sync with those concepts. Bob was appointed Village President in November 2007 following the unfortunate passing of President Jim Ryan. Bob filled

out President Ryan's term and was subsequently elected in 2008, and re-elected in 2010 and 2012, serving until 2018.

From 1984 on, there were a number of accomplishments that Bob was involved with as Trustee and President. The ones of which he was most proud were:

- The building of a new Village library that became a wonderful educational center and community asset.
- The original 2020 Plan for the redevelopment of the Highway 100 Corridor.
- Successful TIF districts that have increased the Village's tax base and improved its Highway 100 commercial district.
- The idea to rename the Village Hall as the James R. Ryan Municipal Building before Jim Ryan passed away.
- The renovation of the Village Hall and Police Department along with a sorely needed garage for the Police (thanks to a large contribution by the Holz Family Foundation).



Bob Ruesch, 2022

- Working to help resurrect the Chamber of Commerce, maintain the Hales Corners Pool, and erect the Veterans Memorial.

But Bob wasn't all work. He was always quick with a joke, had a smile for everyone, and a nickname for almost everyone. An avid sports fan, he loved baseball and coaching basketball, and would regale listeners with stories about the Milwaukee Brewers. He also loved bad jokes, Leon's Drive-In, classic cars, sports memorabilia, and '50s doo wop music.

Happy Valentine's Day 1958!

Clipped from the local newspaper, the photo at right provides a glimpse of a Valentine celebration in the Village 65 years ago. The caption reads: "Members of the Hales Corners Woman's Club met last Friday and enjoyed the Valentine Tea arranged by **Mary Jensen** (center), Social Chairman for the day. Sandwiches and tea cakes along with a Valentine tree set the mood for the party. **Eunice Kerner** pours tea for **Kay Nelson**." (Frey Studio Photo)



Who Remembers Carlson's?

These images are from the HCHS collection. Unfortunately, we have very little information on **Carlson's Service Station**. We don't even know the owner's first name. The Carlson's ad and photos shown here were chosen because they focus on winter weather preparation and snow.

Here's what we do know: Carlson's Service Station was located at 108th Place and Highway 24 (Janesville Rd.), which is now part of Holz Motors' car lot. Carlson's first station was built in 1934. It was a very small building (below left). There was no grease rack or any inside working area, which made it very difficult to provide service during winter. In 1948, Carlson's opened a new Cities Service station (below right). That building offered all the modern conveniences of the time: inside working space, grease rack, high-pressure greasing equipment for efficient lubricating service, and the latest devices for ignition checking and general motor tune-ups.

If anyone has more information about Carlson's, please email us at info@halescornershistory.com



Carlson's Service Station ad from 1950



Carlson's Service Station in 1934



Carlson's Cities Service Station in 1948

Please Return Your HCHS Membership Renewal Form

Our membership renewal letter was mailed to members in December. If you haven't yet done so, we hope you'll renew your membership and continue to support our efforts to preserve the history of the Village - and attend all four of our FREE historical programs in 2023. Thank you!

Have you liked us lately? Go to [facebook/halescornershistory](https://www.facebook.com/halescornershistory)

Thanks to Board member **Mike Fischer**, our audience on Facebook sees photos from our collection as well as from Mike's own sources, including information about them. So, check out our page and enjoy your Village history!

HALES CORNERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

5885 South 116th Street, Hales Corners, WI 53130 • 414-529-6150, Ext. 24

info@HalesCornersHistory.com • www.HalesCornersHistory.com • www.facebook.com/HalesCornersHistory