



January / February 2025

Join Us February 26th for Our First Program of 2025

JOHN MUIR: FATHER OF THE NATIONAL PARKS
February 26, 7:00 p.m.
Hales Corners Library / Hunt Room
— Presented by **PAUL AKERT, Wisconsin Storyteller**

John Muir was one of our country’s most famous naturalists and conservationists. Born in Scotland in 1838, Muir came to Wisconsin at age 11 with his family. They built a home in Marquette County, midway between Wisconsin Dells and Oshkosh. In 1860, Muir enrolled at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Although he never graduated, he learned enough botany and geology to fuel his lifelong passion for nature.

Muir was the driving force behind the creation in 1916 of the National Park Service. His activism helped to preserve Yosemite Valley and Sequoia National Park, and he co-founded the Sierra Club, a prominent American conservation organization.



Journey with **Paul Akert** as his portrayal of Muir takes you from Wisconsin to California and around the world. Paul took up storytelling professionally after retirement and has enhanced his performance through association with organizations such as the Kenosha Story Circle and Milwaukee Area Storytellers.

Happy New Year from HCHS!

Be sure to save these dates for three more informative and entertaining presentations:

- **May 21 — WHEN FIRE ENGINES WERE RED**
PETER JASKULSKI, Fire Chief, Hales Corners Fire Dept.
- **August 13 — HISTORY OF THE PFISTER HOTEL**
LESLIE HEINRICHS, Archivist of the Marcus Corporation
- **November 12 — MITCHELL PARK AND THE DOMES**
CHRISTA BEALL DIEFENBACH, Executive Director, and KATHY KORTES, Advancement Director, Friends of the Domes

For more information on each program, click on EVENTS at www.halescornershistory.com.



In Memoriam

Our Society lost one of our founding members recently. **Kathy O'Brien** passed away at age 88 on December 5, 2024. Our sincere condolences go out to her family.

Kathy served on the Hales Corners Bicentennial Committee from 1974-1976. Also in 1974, she became a charter member of the Hales Corners Historical Society (HCHS), and held several offices and positions until 2020, including president at three separate times. An untiring volunteer for HCHS, she was involved with the preservation of the Society's two major attractions: the **W. Ben Hunt Cabin** in 1986 and the **Seneca Hale Summer Kitchen** in 1996.

Kathy personally hand-cataloged all the books in Ben Hunt's private collection. In 2000 and 2010, she helped organize the HCHS photography project entitled "Moments in Time," which provided a visual record of every property in Hales Corners for future generations.

Hales Corners history was always a focus for Kathy's



talents. She became the secretary of the first Historic Preservation Commission of the Village in 2000 and remained in that position for two decades. The Commission was tasked with surveying historic properties for inclusion in the National Register. She also helped to preserve local history by assisting with dozens of HCHS fundraisers such as the annual sales of bedding plants and open houses at Christmas time.

Kathy became a member of the **Stahl-Conrad Homestead** in 2003, assisting in its restoration and functioning as a site dedicated to the history of agriculture in the area. When the Homestead presented a traveling exhibition from the

Smithsonian Institution entitled "Between the Fences," she led a book discussion group during its visit. In 2005, a diorama of an old Village landmark, the **Western Hotel**, was created for display alongside a major street in Hales Corners. Another of her talents was displayed when she sewed the period costumes worn by the two dozen figures in the diorama.

Although personal recognition was not important to Kathy, she received two very prestigious awards. In 2004, she received the Paul Harris Fellow Award from the Rotary Foundation for her contributions to its humanitarian and educational programs. In 2006, Kathy was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Village of Hales Corners.

Kathy was the co-chair of HCHS Neighborhood Walking Tours in 2007, which included a 60-page booklet still available today. Another book project she took on was *Hales Corners Wisconsin: A History of the Village Since 1837*. From 2011-2015, she and three other HCHS members oversaw the creation of this updated history, now in its fourth printing.



**The two photos below should have appeared in the previous issue.
Better late than never!**



Celine Kashishian (third from left) and members of the **XYZ Group** (eXtra Years of Zest) toured the Hunt Cabin. Celine is our main cabin docent and she is also a member of this group from Gethsemane United Methodist Church.



Members of the Lions Club of Hales Corners prepared their Christmas tree lot for another holiday season. (L to R) **Jim Bain, Kevin Pook, John Pook, Tom Smyczek, Scott Dorenbos, Jon Drew, and Dan Besson.**

TALES OF THE CORNERS - JANUARY

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

90 YEARS AGO (1935)

- Plans are announced for Gov. Philip LaFollette to speak at the dedication of the new Hales Corners School building.
- The Hales Corners branch of the Socialist Party schedules a card party to be held at Mike Majdecki's Fairview Hall (the Bosch Tavern).
- About 40 area boys join a new basketball league that will play in the new Hales Corners School gym as soon as it is completed.
- R.W. Holz is re-elected president of the State Bank Hales Corners. He is also re-elected president of the Hales Corners Advancement Association.

80 YEARS AGO (1945)

- A new Veterans of Foreign Wars post is being organized in the Hales Corners area.
- Ladies of the Freede-Eckel Legion Auxiliary hold a luncheon and card party at the legion clubhouse. The money raised will go to the Veterans' Hospital at Wood.

70 YEARS AGO (1955)

- The first printing of 60,000 copies of W. Ben Hunt's new book, *The Golden Book of Indian Crafts and Lore*, is sold out in three months. The second printing will begin soon.
- A group of 40 Hales Corners mothers are slated to conduct a Mother's March on Polio to raise money for the annual March of Dimes Campaign.

- Johnny Logan, shortstop for the Milwaukee Braves, speaks at a meeting of the Hales Corners Business and Professional Men's Association.
- Bids are being accepted for the proposed parish hall addition to Whitnall Park Lutheran Church.
- Holz Motors advertises a mid-winter used car clearance. Prices range from \$75 for a 1941 Chevrolet four-door to \$1,595 for a 1953 Ford convertible.
- Trimborn's advertises Swiss steak for 69 cents a pound and two cans of asparagus spears for 45 cents.

60 YEARS AGO (1965)

- The Hales Corners Village Board sets a tentative date for a public hearing on rezoning seven acres along Forest Home Avenue for the Village's first apartments.
- Art Kilps is elected president of the Hales Corners Fire Department.

50 YEARS AGO (1975)

- The Hales Corners Bicentennial Festivals Committee organizes a winter carnival.
- The Parkland Travel Agency opens for business.
- Julie Wall is crowned queen of the dance sponsored by the Whitnall High School Girls' Athletic Association.

Research by Katy Galewski

Noted Local Artist Judith Reidy Donates Her Prints to HCHS

Late last year, HCHS was contacted by **Judith C. Reidy**, an artist who has lived in Hales Corners since the late 1980s. She generously donated 43 matted prints representing multiple copies of her drawings of Village homes and businesses. Among the prints are existing buildings like the **Bosch Tavern, Your Father's Mustache**, and the **Telephone Exchange Building**. Examples of buildings no longer around are **The Olde Store** and the **Mary Schmidt House**.

Judith is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin School of Fine Arts. She has done graphics work for community organizations, designed theatrical sets, and created personal family portraits before endeavoring to capture the significant buildings in Hales Corners. Her "Building Portraits" eventually included more than 20 buildings and were featured in a display at our Library in 1999.

Today, Judith teaches art and continues to exhibit her paintings and graphics in galleries throughout Wisconsin and Illinois. She works in oil, acrylic, pastel, and watercolor, plus pen and ink. In 2024, she was awarded a three-month exhibition at the Anderson Arts Center in Kenosha. Recently, Judith received the "Best of Show" award at the David Barnett Gallery in Milwaukee. To see the other examples of her work, go to www.judithreidy.com.

Thank you so much, Judith, for these wonderful additions to our collection!



(Detail) Telephone Exchange Building - 5801 S. 109th Street



The Bosch Tavern - 5871 S. 108th Street



*The Olde Store - 10526 W. Forest Home Avenue (Razed)
Formerly Welch's Hardware Store*



*Your Father's Mustache - 9855 W. Forest Home Avenue
Formerly the Jacob Wagner House*



*Mary Schmidt's House -
10900 W. Janesville Road (Razed)*

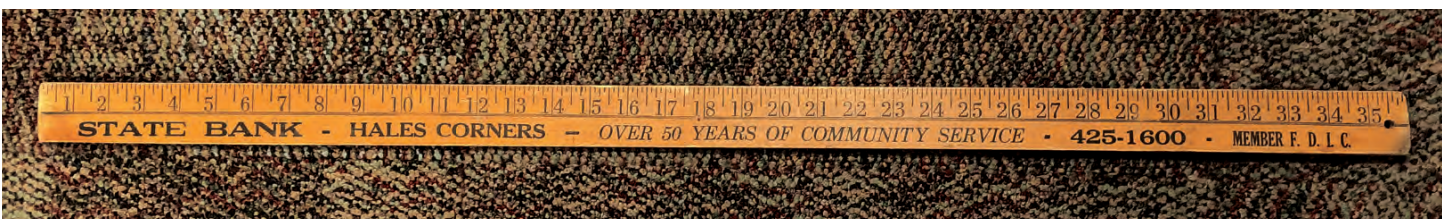
Not Every Business Can Measure Up to These Promotional Items

Two more practical household items from Hales Corners' past have been donated to our collection. Ironically, both are yardsticks that promote local businesses.

The first one features primary colors and folds down to 12 inches in length. It was donated by **Kate Lageman** and advertises **Wisniewski & Sons Furniture & Upholsterers**, once located at 11831 W. Janesville Road.

The second yardstick, a standard version, was donated by **Steve Muhich**. It advertises **State Bank Hales Corners**, once located at 5863 S. 108th Street, and claims "Over 50 Years of Community Service."

Thank you, Kate and Steve!



Check Out This New Sign Installed Beside the Prairie Garden

The Prairie Garden is slumbering right now but its 10 native plants will return in the spring. Meanwhile, you can read all about them on a wonderful new sign that has been erected next to the garden at the Hales Corners Library. The sign's colorful design features information about the Prairie Garden's native plants, storm water runoff, and native pollinators, plus a brief history of the Ben Hunt Cabin, just behind it.



TALES OF THE CORNERS - FEBRUARY

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

90 YEARS AGO (1935)

- The old Hales Corners School on Forest Home Avenue is being torn down to make room for construction of Highway 100. The building materials will be saved and used to construct a building in Whitnall Park.
- The addition to Hales Corners School is opened and the first four grades are moved from the old building on Forest Home Avenue to the new school on Janesville Road.
- Hales Corners farm equipment dealer Robert Ludwig schedules a tractor day. A talking motion picture will be featured.
- William Rynders tries to get a community brass band started in Hales Corners.
- Rose Weiss, manager of the Hales Corners Beauty Studio, advertises a beauty show to be held at Schubring's Hall. Admission, prizes, and facials will all be free of charge.
- About 100 fathers and sons attend the Hales Corners English Lutheran Church's banquet.

80 YEARS AGO (1945)

- The Hales Corners PTA holds a square dance.
- The Freede-Eckel American Legion Post announces it will sponsor a baseball team for boys under 17.

70 YEARS AGO (1955)

- The Hales Corners Village Board votes to repeal sections of the Village bylaws which give the constable the powers of a Village marshal. The action is taken to set up a Village police department.

- The Hales Corners Village Board names David Geary, a Greendale patrolman, as chief of the new Hales Corners Police department at a salary of \$325 a month. Currently, Ralph Chatfield is the constable.

60 YEARS AGO (1965)

- A belated Christmas party for a group of orphans is held by members of the Whitnall Girls' Athletic Association.
- The Hales Corners Jaycees' annual Good Government Award is presented to Marilyn Hoellen, a member of the Whitnall School Board.
- Joseph Ward is elected president of the Hales Corners Auxiliary Police.
- Patricia Ann Hirst, a senior at Whitnall High School, is chosen to go to Norway this summer as part of the Experiment in International Living program.
- Hilbert Drews is elected president of the Hales Corners Business and Professional Men's Club.

50 YEARS AGO (1975)

- Dog sled rides and an ice sculpting contest are part of the Hales Corners Winter Carnival sponsored by the Hales Corners Bicentennial Festivals Committee.
- The Hawthorne Garden Club celebrates its 50th anniversary.
- The Hales Corners A&W restaurant advertises five carry-out hamburgers for 99 cents.
- Betty Maloney wins a trip to Las Vegas in a contest sponsored by the Hales Corners Woman's Club.

Research by Katy Galewski



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