



September 2025

Austin Archiquette Recreates Ben Hunt's Orange Crate Canoe from Wood Pallets

Austin Archiquette, a scout from Troop 598, decided to pursue his Eagle Scout badge by building a canoe from wood shipping pallets. Austin was inspired by an article in a *Boys' Life* magazine from 1951, in which **Ben Hunt** authored a two-page article on how to build a canoe from orange crates. The article included a detailed drawing of the canoe's structure and 18 step-by-step photos taken inside the Ben Hunt Cabin. Like Austin, the boys shown working on the canoe were from Troop 598.

Austin chose wood shipping pallets as modern analogs of orange crates. He named the canoe "Topsy" after his family's late dog. The name proved prescient, since his cell phone is now somewhere at the bottom of Upper Kelly Lake, where the canoe was first launched and tipped over.



On August 13th, the Eagle Board of Review was held at the Ben Hunt Cabin to determine whether Austin had met his Eagle Scout requirements. They compared his canoe to the orange crate canoe on display in the Cabin, and quizzed him on his experience designing and constructing the canoe, managing volunteers, and documenting the process.



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Nikko Russell and Austin



Alejandro Austen and Austin Archiquette

HCHS 4th of July Floats Receive “Best In Show” Award

HCHS recently received recognition for its two historic floats in this year’s July 4th parade. **Olivia Sterny** was the Chief Parade Judge of the Hales Corners 4th of July Committee. On August 13th, she presented the award for the “Best in Show” floats to HCHS President **Randy Sannes**.

Judging was based on creativity, craftsmanship, and visual appeal. Village Trustee **Todd Brinkmeier** was instrumental in the design of both floats, with construction assistance from several HCHS members.



Olivia Sterny and Randy Sannes



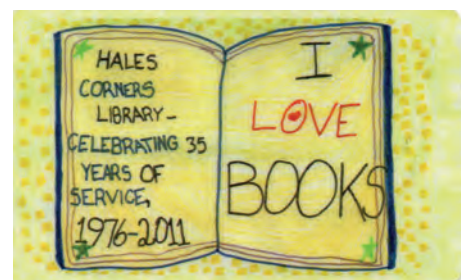
The Hales Corners Library Will Celebrate Its 50th Anniversary on September 6th!

You’re invited to visit the Hales Corners Library and view the window exhibit commemorating “50 Years of Smiles: 1975-2025.” With the aid of the HCHS archives, photos of both library buildings and its four library directors are gathered there along with the history of the buildings’ construction and the various organizations that have made them both possible.

Congratulations to the library on its first half-century of service to the community!



Milwaukee Bookmobiles served the Village before it had a library



Library card designed by 4th grade student Jennifer Ndjomou in 2011

Leslie Heinrichs Presented a Multi-Century Tour of the Pfister Hotel and Its History

On August 13th, **Leslie Heinrichs**, archivist of the Marcus Corporation, took an audience of 50 people on a virtual art and history tour of the Pfister Hotel during the third HCHS program of this year. In addition, Leslie included a few other properties owned by the Marcus Corporation such as Marcus Theatres, Big Boy Restaurants, and, surprisingly, the Treasure Island department stores.

The Pfister Hotel first opened in 1893 as the culmination of a dream by its namesake **Guido Pfister** (1818-1889). Guido emigrated to Milwaukee from Germany in 1847. He established a tanning business that eventually became the Pfister and Vogel Leather Co., one of the largest leather companies in the Midwest. Guido envisioned a grand hotel in the heart of Milwaukee's east side. He wanted to build a hotel that could speak of Milwaukee's hospitality, and become a host on a grand scale.

Although Guido never saw the completion of his dream, the concentrated efforts of his son and daughter, **Charles** and **Louise**, produced an edifice of beauty that today is recognized the world over as an official historical landmark. The hotel was built by architects **Henry Koch** and **Hermann Esser**, who also built Milwaukee's City Hall. The hotel originally contained 200 rooms, 61 of them with private bathrooms.

According to Leslie, the Pfister was the first hotel in the United States to provide all-electric lighting and the first in the world to install individual thermostats in each room. It was also the most expensive hotel in the world, costing one million dollars.



Leslie Heinrichs



With the passage of years came the transition of ownership. From the Pfister family, the hotel changed hands in 1927, and was turned over to the **Ray Smith** family. It was formally purchased in 1944 by **Lawrence Smith**. From the Pfister Hotel's first redecoration in 1927, each succeeding decade produced a form of "modernization" that all too often clashed with the old-world vestiges of its early 19th century charm.

In 1962, **Ben Marcus**, Chairman of the Board of the Marcus Corporation, purchased the hotel. He had the insight to retain the elegance and traditional feel that was originally intended by Guido Pfister. Through hard work and dedication, Ben insured that this landmark of Milwaukee's

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The Pfister Hotel under construction, 1892



The original Pfister Hotel lobby, 1893

culture was indeed reinstated. He and his son, **Steve**, president of the Marcus Corporation, restored the grand hotel to its original Victorian elegance.

Leslie noted that the uniqueness and timeless value of the Pfister is not limited to the building alone. Adorning the lobby and every floor throughout the hotel are antiques and works of art. The main staircase in the lobby is guarded by two Italian bronze lions donated to the hotel by **T. A. Chapman**, owner of Chapman's department store, when the Pfister first opened. The intriguing lobby also features statues of two bronze pikemen (French guards) that stand in the corridor connecting the old hotel with the newer tower structure.

The paintings that hang throughout the hotel are priceless works of art. They are Guido Pfister's original collection of 19th century paintings, and are the largest collection of 19th century art to be found in any hotel in the world. Leslie provided information on eight of the 79 paintings that represent the work of artists from seven countries.

In 1966, the Pfister's addition of a 23-story circular tower was completed. The necessity for this type of structure was born out of Milwaukee's need for more event facilities, as well as the desire for additional guest rooms. The entire



"The Fan" is a collection of 11 miniature oil paintings on wood, each by a different artist, and displayed in a frame of carved wood, plastered, and gilded.

seventh floor of the tower is devoted to providing convention space. There you enter a series of rooms entitled the Hall of Presidents. Leslie mentioned that many U.S. presidents have visited the Pfister since its opening.

The top floor of the tower once housed a night club known as the Crown Room. Totally glass-enclosed, it provided a relaxing atmosphere as well as breathtaking views of the city and Lake Michigan. It featured top name entertainers such as **Al Jarreau** and **Joan Rivers**, who credited the Crown Room for her start in show business. The room has changed through the years and is now known as Blu. It continues to attract visitors day and night, as well as **Greg Marcus**, grandson of Ben and CEO of the Marcus Corporation, who sometimes drops by to play the piano.

Leslie pointed out one of the most unusual features of the Pfister Hotel...the Artist in Residence program. Since 2009, the Pfister has featured a working studio and art gallery open to hotel guests and the public. Visitors are encouraged to interact with the artist while watching the evolution of each piece of work firsthand. Each artist receives a stipend for one year, and leaves behind one piece of his/her work that was inspired by something in the hotel. Examples of work have included paintings, photographs, fiber artworks, quilting, etc.

After a lengthy Q&A session, Leslie invited interested individuals or groups to visit the Pfister and tour the art collection on-site. If she is available, she offered to conduct those tours herself. Thank you, Leslie!



The Fern Room, circa 1900, now known as the Imperial Ballroom

In Memoriam

On July 6, 2025, our Society lost another long-time member when **Bob King** passed away at age 98. He was the husband of **Dottie King**, who also is a member of HCHS. Bob was an Army veteran, a disc jockey, and an accountant with the General Electric Company.

He rarely missed one of our programs through the years, and he always managed to make his presence known by teasing various board members in his own gentle way. Bob did the same thing at St. Mary's Catholic Faith Community where he and Dottie were Hospitality and Eucharistic Ministers for more than 40 years.

Bob's sense of humor was probably fine-tuned by being the 13th of 14 siblings. You have to be quick-witted to hold your own in a family that size!

We at HCHS extend our sincere condolences to Dottie, her daughter **Carole Ann**, and all of Bob's family.



The Last Hales Corners Labor Day Fair Was in 1957

In the early 1950s, farmers' markets and fairs were a monthly occurrence in Hales Corners, starting in spring. It seemed everyone loved a fair, except perhaps some city, village and town officials, peace officers, homeowners living near the fair's noisier activities, and cleanup crews. For a few years the monthly fairs continued, always with more people, more traffic problems, and the need for more auxiliary police. The Labor Day fair was by far the biggest, with an attendance in the tens of thousands.



Almost 40,000 people attended the last fair, 1957

Extremely heavy Labor Day traffic was rerouted from portions of Highways 100 and 24, and Milwaukee County billed Hales Corners for the related expense. In January 1958, the State Highway Department decided to ban the upcoming Labor Day fair, due to the tie-ups on important travel arteries. An attempt was made to continue with the smaller, monthly fairs but those were also banished from the Village limits. Since then, bargain-seeking crowds have traveled to the Town of St. Martins where the Labor Day Fair survives. It is now called the "St. Martins' Fair," but some still nostalgically refer to it as the "Hales Corners Fair."



Looking east on Forest Home Avenue, 1957

Austin passed his review and shared the news on August 13th with the audience attending HCHS's presentation that evening in the library's Ben Hunt Room. He plans to donate the canoe to HCHS after his Eagle Court of Honor ceremony.

After that, Austin intends to publish the updated plans so other scouts around the world can build their own canoes much like Ben Hunt did back in 1951.

Congratulations on your achievement, Austin!

TALES OF THE CORNERS - SEPTEMBER From the files of the *Tri-Town News and Hub*

90 YEARS AGO (1935)

- What was once farmland is now scenic Whitnall Park. About 180 Civil Conservation Corps (CCC) boys and County Relief Workers spent the summer working on the grounds.
- Business is brisk at the Hales Corners Labor Day fair. Yellow transparent apples sell for 25 cents a peck (a quarter of a bushel), kohlrabi and beets at three bunches for a nickel, and carrots for 10 cents a dozen.
- Hales Corners wins the Community Valley Baseball League championship with 16 wins and 4 losses.

80 YEARS AGO (1945)

- The Hales Corners Labor Day fair attracts a crowd of 20,000 people. That's the largest attendance in its history.
- Approximately 87 residents in the Hales Corners exchange are on the waiting list for telephone service.
- Private First Class Edward Nolan is awarded the bronze star for bravery under Japanese fire.
- After three years of faithful work on behalf of the local men and women in the service, the Hales Corners Special Service Club disbands. The group plans to continue meeting as a social club.
- The Hales Corners Businessmen's Club appoints a committee to contact Milwaukee authorities about the possibility of moving the Milwaukee County Zoo to Whitnall Park. The Washington Park zoo is becoming inadequate.
- William Puetz is installed as commander of the Freede-Eckel American Legion Post in ceremonies at Kelly's Hill hall.
- Mmes. Robert Froemming, Fred C. Marquardt, and SM O'Malley, members of the Whitnall Park Garden Club, exhibit floral arrangements in the September Exhibit at the Milwaukee Art Institute.

70 YEARS AGO (1955)

- Hales Corners Police and three sheriff's deputies prevent a threatened gang fight. They turn around cars filled with young people after learning that the Waukesha youths were coming to the Village to avenge an "insult" allegedly made by youths in Hales Corners.
- Opening of Valley View School is delayed due to the polio situation.
- Enrollment at Hales Corners Elementary School increases from 385 to 417 pupils. St. Mary's goes up 50 students from last year.

60 YEARS AGO (1965)

- Three bond issues are passed by Whitnall School District voters in a special referendum. Electors support building a new elementary school on Edgerton Avenue, an addition to Whitnall High School, and grant permission to purchase land for a new intermediate school.
- The U.S. Air Force donates a Culver PQ-14, a drone target in WWII, to the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Museum on Forest Home Avenue.
- Hales Corners Lutheran School offers kindergarten through eighth grades for the first time. Last year classes went through seventh grade. This year there will be two kindergartens and two first grades for the school that opened in 1960.
- Residents complain about the "mountain" of dirt at Whitnall High School's Edgerton Avenue entrance. The school board explains that it is being stored there for future use.

50 YEARS AGO (1975)

- Of the public and parochial schools in the Whitnall School District, only Whitnall shows an increase of enrollment at 1,083 compared to its previous 1,024 pupils.



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