



WESTERN SPRINGS

# Historical Society

Spring 2019 Newsletter



## Celebrate Spring with the WSHS 2019 HOUSE WALK

*Six local families will open their homes to the public for a good cause on Sunday, May 19 from noon until 5 pm. This year's walk features a variety of stately, older homes, newer residences and sensitively remodeled properties in Old Town, Field Park, Ridge Acres and Old Town South.*



Tickets for the 2019 House Walk are \$35 in advance and \$45 the day of the walk. They may be purchased online at [westernspringshistory.org](http://westernspringshistory.org) or at any of the following locations: Clever Girl, Thomas Ford Memorial Library and the Water Tower Museum (10 a.m. to noon on Saturdays). Our popular "Split the Pot" Raffle is back as well! Tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20 and can be purchased in advance from WSHS Trustees or on the day of the event at any ticket table.

An exciting addition to this year's House Walk is a trolley service that will take visitors from house to house. The trolley ticket cost is \$55. This cost includes admission to all houses on the walk and allows early entry to the event—one hour earlier than regular ticket holders. Three trolleys, each holding up to 30 guests, will depart from the Water Tower at 11 am. These tickets must be purchased in advance, so gather up your group now to guarantee a spot on a trolley!

The Village Green will be the central staging area, with a drive-thru pick up lane allowing those who purchased tickets online or in advance to exchange their tickets for the program booklets that are used to gain entry to the houses. Online/advance sale tickets may also be exchanged for program booklets at any of the six homes. Ticket sales on the day of the Walk will only occur at the Village Green (via the drive-thru lane)x and a limited number of homes. Visit our website for more details. The First Congregational Church (1106 Chestnut Street) will serve as this year's oasis, with water and restrooms available for House Walk participants.



Proceeds from the biennial House Walk benefit the Western Springs Historical Society, an all-volunteer organization dedicated to preserving the Village's rich history and instilling an appreciation of that history in residents of all ages.

Event co-chairs Julie Kenmitz and Carolyn Tobin have been energetically guiding their team of over 200 volunteers, coordinating with village officials and local businesses and organizing the ticket sales for what promises to be another special day. Besides viewing the homes themselves, House Walk participants will see lovely tablescapes and floral arrangements created by a talented team of professional designers and florists.

We are so grateful to everyone that has helped with this event, especially those organizations that have stepped up as sponsors: @Properties Western Springs, Berkshire Hathaway (Amy Avakian), Clarity Physical Therapy, Community Bank of Western Springs, D'Aprile Properties (Dierdre Rudich), FNBC Bank & Trust, Graziano Architects, j2Santi Builders, McNaughton Brothers, Re/Max Properties (Coya Smith), Riordan Signature Cabinets, Riordan Signature Homes and Trish Orndorff Real Estate.

We look forward to joining our generous homeowners in opening their lovely homes to you on what is sure to be a fun day for all!

*House Walk sketches by local artist and Trustee, Mark Tobin*

# Old Traditions & New Looks

*At the Western Springs Historical Society, one of our favorite traditions is the biennial House Walk, showcasing local homes that highlight our town's character.*

We like to find a mix of new homes, older homes that have been preserved, as well as older homes that have been updated and renewed — and this year is no exception. The 2019 House Walk features six wonderful homes that represent Western Springs, and the families who live here, perfectly. Our homeowners have been so gracious to open their homes to us. Thank you from all of us here at WSHS! We would also like to thank all of our sponsors, florists, table-scape designers and volunteers for making this all possible!

WSHS is pleased to announce that our updated website, [westernspringshistory.org](http://westernspringshistory.org), is coming soon! The redesigned site will feature a brand new look, easier navigation and a fully responsive layout for all platforms. Our goal is to make the Historical Society, and the stories of Western Springs, more accessible to our supporters. We are very grateful to Michele Jackson of Lots of Luck Design for her time and patience, as we carefully piece this together. Our new site should be up and running this summer.

Enjoy the warm seasons ahead! If you're out and about, stop in and see us at the Tower Museum or the Archives. We'd love to hear about your own Western Springs stories!

Cheers!

*Susan Wyckoff*  
President, WSHS

## We Need You!

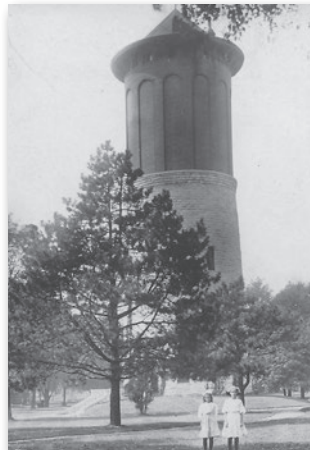
The Western Springs Historical Society is always looking for volunteers. Currently, we are seeking Trustees to join our Board and copywriters to contribute to our newsletter. Whether you like history, architecture, or just getting to know your neighbors, helping out at the Historical Society is a great way to share your talents with the community while making new friends and acquaintances.

If you have any interest in helping us out please give us a call at 246-9230. We would be happy to discuss these and other volunteer opportunities with you!

## House Plans

Are you planning on building a new home or remodeling your existing one? One of the primary functions of the WSHS is to document the changing face of Western Springs for future generations. Over the years, numerous historical homes have been razed and in many cases, no written history or image of these homes was ever assembled.

If you know of any house or business that is scheduled to be torn down, or if you have built a new home, please contact us so we can arrange to photograph and document the structure.



## Love History?

Come join the docent team at the WSHS Tower Museum! It's a great way to learn more about the history of this wonderful community, meet your neighbors and make new friends!

The museum is open Saturday mornings from 10 am–12 pm, so the time commitment is minimal, yet the rewards are many. Training is provided. It's easy, it's fun and you will be helping this worthwhile organization to thrive.

Interested? Please contact Susan Cardamone at [s.cardamone@att.net](mailto:s.cardamone@att.net).



# FLOWER POWER

## OUR VILLAGE'S "LILAC SHARING CAMPAIGN"

*By John Devona: On May 15, 1929, the Chicago Tribune ran a short editorial entitled "Lilacs and What to Do With Them." The article encouraged readers to harvest their lavender and white blossoms and bring them to local hospitals on a single day to be enjoyed by the patients.*

And, the public reacted in a big way. This became an annual tradition in the Chicago area under the sponsorship of local garden clubs. It was especially true in Western Springs.

By 1940, the program had grown to the point where, in just one or two days each May, lilac bouquets were being brought to more than 21,000 patients in 136 Chicago-area hospitals. Also included were orphanages. And, no town was more involved than Western Springs. According to a news report from May 5, 1940, Western Springs was one town in particular that became "lilac conscious" each year. Here, the Garden Club encouraged commuters and other residents to bring their freshly cut blossoms to the Chicago-bound 7:03 a.m., 8:02 a.m. or 8:30 a.m. trains. In fact, one account described "...men of the village en route to the station, their arms filled with flowers." On that day, the equivalent of two truckloads of flowers was carried from just Western Springs.

Once in Chicago, the flowers were collected at special booths in each of the city's railroad stations, as well as the Tribune Tower and Tribune neighborhood offices. From there, Tribune delivery trucks transported the lilacs to various hospitals where more volunteers handled their distribution to patient rooms. Other volunteers delivered them to orphanages and shut-ins. Planning the program each year was a major challenge due to the variable weather and the resulting uncertainty as to when the blossoms

would be in abundance. In addition, south and west suburbs would typically see their blooms earlier than those on the north shore.

With the onset of World War II, mandatory fuel rationing almost brought the program to an end. Without extra gasoline, the Tribune's trucks were no longer available for flower deliveries. So, volunteers used their own precious gasoline to deliver them in private automobiles; the number of recipient hospitals also had to be reduced to just 35. The tradition continued through the war years and, on Lilac Day 1950, the Burlington railroad even added an extra car to its mid-morning train just to carry the 10,000 bouquets going to Cook County Hospital. And, by then, the Railway Express Agency was providing free floral delivery to downtown hospitals.

In some communities, the event began evolving into an all-summer-long activity providing a variety of flowers to local hospitals. By 1958, after 43 consecutive years, the program no longer focused on just one day and just lilacs. In some communities, the event evolved into an all-summer-long activity providing a variety of flowers to local hospitals with volunteers, their station wagons laden with flowers, traveling to local area hospitals to deliver the bouquets.

## Our Storied Past

Western Springs resident, and current Archives volunteer, John Devona has written and published a 500+ page book of short stories on the history of our beloved Village. This collection of anecdotal moments is a must-read for any resident past or present, young or old. *Western Springs Short Stories* can be purchased for \$25 at the Water Tower Museum on Saturdays from 10 am – 12 pm or at the Archives (2nd floor of Grand Avenue Community Center) on Tuesdays from 9 am – 12 pm. WSHS Members can purchase the book at the special member's rate of \$20.



*This would make a great gift for Mother's Day, graduation or a new neighbor!*

## Keeping in Character

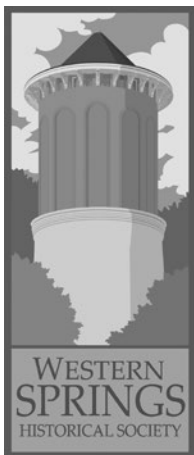
If you have a favorite home or building in town, it's not too early to start thinking about nominations for the 2020 Preservation Awards!

The awards, which were first granted in 1996, recognize owners for the thoughtful restoration or preservation of a structure in the Village (residential or commercial). Judges use criteria that have been established by the US Department of the Interior and are recommended by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Only the building's exterior is considered in determining the awards.

Awards are given in three categories: Preservation/Exterior Rehabilitation, Compatible Addition, and Good Neighbor. For the Preservation/Exterior Rehabilitation and Compatible Addition Awards the building must be at least 50 years old. The Good Neighbor Award is for a structure, either residential or commercial, that fits the scale and historic style of Western Springs and the building may be of any age.

Visit [westernspringshistory.org](http://westernspringshistory.org) for more information.





**WESTERN SPRINGS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

P.O. Box 139  
Western Springs  
708-246-9230  
[WesternSpringsHistory.org](http://WesternSpringsHistory.org)

**THE TOWER MUSEUM &  
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM**

are housed in the historic  
Water Tower

**MUSEUM HOURS**

Saturdays  
10 AM – Noon

**EKDAHL HOUSE MUSEUM**

43rd St. & Wolf Rd.  
Outdoor exhibit open 24/7

**VOLUNTEERS &  
DOCENTS WELCOME**

Call 708-246-9230

**ARCHIVES & WORKSHOP**

Grand Avenue  
Community Center  
Second Floor

**ARCHIVES HOURS**

Tuesdays 9 AM – Noon

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**GRAPHICS**

Mary Rintz

**WESTERN SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**SUNDAY, MAY 19**  
*12–5pm*

Houses are not wheelchair accessible.  
Guests must be at least 10 years old.

*Benefiting*  
**THE WESTERN SPRINGS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**JOIN US FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE DAY!**

**Tickets:** \$35 in advance; \$45 day of event

**Trolley Tickets:** \$55 in advance  
(see page 1 for more details)

**Tickets can be purchased at:**

Clever Girl  
Thomas Ford Library  
Tower Museum

**Tickets can be purchased online at:**  
[westernspringshistory.org](http://westernspringshistory.org)

