



WESTERN SPRINGS

# Historical Society

Winter 2023



## THE FATHER OF FOREIGN AID

# PAUL G. HOFFMAN

*Paul Gray Hoffman, one of Western Springs' most globally influential residents, was born on April 26th, 1891 in Chicago. He and his family soon moved to Western Springs and lived at 4142 Grove Avenue.*

BY CLARISSE BECKER

One of five children, Paul Hoffman spent the majority of his childhood in Western Springs, attending Grand Avenue School and later Lyons Township High School. After graduating from LT in 1907, he enrolled at the University of Chicago to study law, but dropped out after one year and moved to Los Angeles.

While in LA, Hoffman began a career as a car salesman for Studebaker and quickly rose through the ranks, becoming president of the company in 1935. Under Hoffman's leadership, Studebaker managed to stay afloat and even thrive through the Great Depression and became one of the country's leading car manufacturers by the end of the 1930s.

After learning of Hoffman's financial success with Studebaker and his work for the Committee for Economic Development, President Harry S. Truman wanted him to serve as the first Administrator of the Marshall Plan, an upcoming American initiative that would provide foreign aid to Western European countries struggling to recover from World War II. Hoffman politely declined Truman's offer, wishing to remain president of Studebaker after all the years he spent working to keep the company profitable. Little did he know that President Truman would announce that Hoffman had actually accepted the position as the Marshall Plan's Administrator. As Hoffman recalled years later in an interview for the Harry S. Truman Library: "So I found myself in a job that I had never accepted".

Officially, Hoffman's job was to "sustain and strengthen principles of individual liberty, free institutions and genuine independence in Europe". It required the cooperation of over 20 foreign countries and several different federal agencies. During his 2.5 years as Administrator of the Marshall Plan he frequently traveled abroad to promote productivity and continuous planning for improved production techniques. Hoffman oversaw the spending of over \$10 billion in foreign



aid to Western European countries. Despite initial apprehension from some European industrialists, Hoffman's efforts via the Marshall Plan successfully supported the economic recovery of countries such as France and West Germany.

Hoffman left the position in 1950 and worked with the not-for-profit Ford Foundation for three years before returning to Studebaker as a board chairman. He would eventually resign in 1956 following several years of financial difficulty for the company. Hoffman tried to enjoy retirement life but found it difficult to adjust and, in 1959, he became managing director of the United Nations Special Fund, which financially assists developing countries. When the agency announced that Hoffman was to retire in 1972, Fortune magazine wrote that "more than any single individual Paul G. Hoffman deserves to be regarded as the father of foreign aid". He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Richard Nixon on June 21st, 1974, citing Hoffman's efforts in "moving the world out of the devastation of World War II and through a difficult period of decolonization and emergent nationhood". Paul Hoffman passed away later that same year on October 8 at age 83, leaving behind a legacy of excellence and kindness.



## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Holiday Greetings!

On behalf of the Western Springs Historical Society, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to the many members and residents who joined us for the Paint the Tower Plein Air event in September. I'm also thrilled to announce the return of the House Walk, which is slated for next May 19. After a several-year hiatus, the House Walk will once again offer the opportunity to visit and enjoy a number of extraordinary homes in the Village.

Having just started as president of the Society, I want to thank Mark Tobin for his four years of service as our immediate past president. Mark continues to serve on the Board of Trustees and to contribute tirelessly to the Society.

Finally, I want to remind our readers that, as an all-volunteer non-profit organization, we depend entirely on the time and financial support of our members, volunteers and donors. Please take a moment to visit our website, [westernspringshistory.org](http://westernspringshistory.org), where you can join/renew your membership, volunteer or donate.

I look forward to seeing you at the Tower Museum (with three floors of exhibits, open Saturdays from 10am to noon), the historic Ekdahl House Museum (an outdoor exhibit), and the WSHS Archives (overflowing with artifacts, photos and documents, open Tuesdays from 9am to noon at the Grand Avenue Community Center).

Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season!

**Michael Scodro**  
President, WSHS



## PAINTING IN PLEIN AIR

Artists of all skills gathered on the Tower Green on September 16 for the third annual WSHS Paint the Tower Plein Air Event, to try their hand at painting our beloved Village icon. Even though there was a bit of rain, the event was a success and we thank everyone who bought an art kit or paid an art fee, as all proceeds go to the WSHS.

*We also thank local resident Greg Cone for providing musical entertainment and the LaGrange Art League for generously loaning us over 20 easels for the artists' use.*

## VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



The 2023 Volunteer of the Year Award is being presented to Jeff Wingert. He has become a familiar, constant "face" of the Tower Museum in his role as a docent. He takes initiative in identifying needs and addressing them. For example, he thought it would be nice to light up the handrail on the stairs to the second floor, and one day showed up with lights in hand, mounting them with ease. In

addition, he brought us into the "21st century" by setting up PayPal Here and is working with the Treasurer to facilitate transition to PayPal's new system. Jeff is our "go-to" guy for training new docents, always with a smile and positive attitude. Congratulations to our gem of a volunteer, Jeff!

## WSHS SCHOLARSHIPS

We are excited to announce that the WSHS will have two Lyons Township scholarships available in 2024. The RoseMarie Lipinski Scholarship is new this year and has graciously been funded by Bill Lipinski, in honor of his late wife RoseMarie. We will also be offering our annual Carol Young Scholarship. Each of these scholarships are available to Western Springs LTHS seniors.

Detailed application requirements for the two scholarships will be included in the LTHS Scholarship Package, provided by the school in February. These scholarships will be presented at the LTHS Senior Award night in May.



# OUR STORIED PAST

Did you know that Western Springs once had its own zoo and a “Baby of the Month” Club? Or that we’ve had not one, but three planes crash in our quaint town? You can learn all about these fun facts and more in Western Springs Historical Society’s book, “Western Springs Short Stories” by John Devona.

John, a resident of Western Springs since 1972, has been a volunteer for the WSHS since 2011. He’s served as a Trustee, the Archives Manager, Newsletter Editor and museum docent, among other roles. He also wrote a weekly story for the WSHS website called “Blast from the Past”. At the suggestion from some fellow residents, John decided to collect and update the stories and put them into one book for residents to enjoy.

The book’s 514 pages feature 220 short stories and many photos. While not chronological, this collection describes our Village’s early years, right up to the present. It is written in an entertaining, easy-to-read style, with each story

requiring only a few minutes to enjoy. If you appreciate history or just want to learn more about our wonderful Village, this is the book for you! It would also make a great holiday gift for any resident past or present, young or old.

Books can be purchased for \$30 at the Tower Museum on Saturdays, 10am to noon or at the following Western Springs stores: Clever Girl, The Uptown Shop and Village True Value. Out of town members can purchase the book by filling out and returning the form below to get it shipped to them. All book profits support the Western Springs Historical Society!



## BOOK ORDER FORM

*Western Springs Short Stories* by John Devona

Name

Address

CityStateZip

PhoneEmail

	Unit Price	Quantity	Total
Western Springs Short Stories Book	\$30.00		
Shipping/Handling (per book)	\$10.00		
		Amount Due	\$

Please make checks payable to “Western Springs Historical Society” and include “Short Stories” in the memo line. Order form and check may be mailed to: Western Springs Historical Society, PO Box 139, Western Springs, IL 60558. Prices include sales tax.

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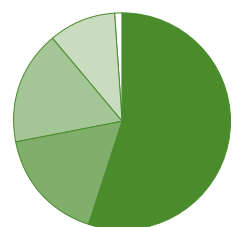
J. Benak Service, Inc.  
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### WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we rely 100% on the generosity of our members. Your financial support through memberships, donations, fundraising events and memorial bequests helps us to continue our mission of preserving and presenting Western Springs' history. Thank you for supporting the Western Springs Historical Society!

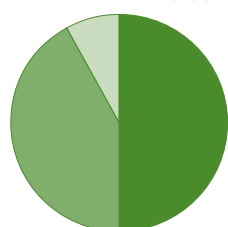
## Combined Financial Report

### REVENUES = \$37,666



■ Membership	55%
■ Sales	17%
■ Donations	17%
■ Fundraising (Net)	10%
■ Other	1%

### EXPENSES = \$63,358



■ Rent & Office Expense	50%
■ Archives & Museum Exhibits	42%
■ Community Outreach	8%

The Western Springs Historical Society is an independent all-volunteer, non-profit organization that does not receive any federal, state or local government funding.

As such, it relies on the generous support of concerned residents like you, combined with careful management of its financial resources, to ensure that the Society remains a viable organization, able to plan and implement programs and services for the community.

The pie charts shown at left summarize the revenue and expenses for the WSHS which includes data from Jan. 2021–Dec. 2022 (the most recent two year period for which complete data are available). Due to the cancellation of the 2021 House Walk, our revenues remained low; while repairs to Ek Dahl House and hiring an Archives Assistant contributed to our higher than normal expenses.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In 1967, the Western Springs Historical Society was founded as an all-volunteer organization for the purpose of preserving and displaying evidence of the lifestyles of families in the area. For over 55 years, we have served the community by exhibiting museum collections, presenting educational programs, providing archival services and hosting special events.

The donations we receive from our members help us continue our mission to instill an appreciation of the past while promoting the preservation of our Village's cultural, economic and aesthetic heritage.

As we approach the end of 2023, please consider supporting the WSHS. Become a member, renew your membership, gift a membership and/or make a tax-deductible donation to honor someone who loves, or loved, Western Springs. Payments can be made by sending a check in the enclosed envelope or via PayPal on our website. Visit [westernspringshistory.org](http://westernspringshistory.org) and click the "Donate" button.

*We would like to extend a special thank you to the Beatrice L. Feldt Estate, Bob and Ginny Greco, Kimberly Knake (past WSHS President), Katie McMillan of Clever Girl, Philip and Cynthia Rudolph and the Village Board of Trustees for their significant donations in 2023.*

### The Beatrice L. Feldt Estate Charitable bequest



Beatrice L. Feldt lived at 613 54th Place in Springdale until her passing in 2022 at the age of 102. In 2020, Beatrice was one of five voters over the age of 100

registered to vote in Western Springs, and records show she actively voted until her death.

Beatrice was born on January 29, 1920 in Des Plaines and attended Maine Township High School. She received her Bachelor of Science degree at Iowa State and began her teaching career in Evanston. During World War II she was a Corporal in the U.S. Marine Corp. After the war she returned to Iowa State for her Master's degree. Beatrice is best known for her long career as a Home Economics teacher at Reavis High School in Burbank, IL.

### In Memory of Former Village President David W. Lawrence

*Donations from Philip & Cynthia Rudolph and the Village Board of Trustees*

David W. Lawrence was born on February 3, 1932 in Danville, IL. He worked and attended the University of Illinois in Champaign before being drafted into the U.S. Army where he served from 1953–1954. After his service, he returned to school to complete his degree in business in 1957, which was also the year he married the love of his life, Ann.



Dave's job with the Gooding Rubber Company led him and his family to settle in Western Springs where he was very active in the community. He served as Village

Trustee from 1987–1991 then became Village President from 1993–1997. He was proud that the Recreation Center came to fruition during his term in office. Dave passed away July 1, 2023 but will be remembered as a wonderful leader and public servant.



## WESTERN SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 139  
Western Springs  
708-246-9230  
WesternSpringsHistory.org

## THE TOWER MUSEUM & CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

are housed in the historic  
Water Tower

## MUSEUM HOURS

Saturdays, 10am–Noon  
Closed on major holiday  
weekends

## 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 9am–Noon

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## NEWSLETTER GRAPHICS

Mary Rintz

## WESTERN SPRINGS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Just use the camera app on  
your smartphone to scan this  
QR code and pay online!*

## Tower Museum Holiday Shop

Looking for that perfect gift?  
Stop in and shop at the Tower  
Museum, open Saturdays  
10am to noon. We carry  
notecard sets, notepads,  
vintage records, historical  
maps and books, including  
*Western Springs Short Stories*  
by John Devona. And new  
this year, we have mugs and  
mouse pads!



## Discover the Children's Museum

Designed for enjoyment by  
preschoolers with a caregiver,  
the Children's Museum on the  
third floor is a place where  
little visitors can play with  
vintage toys, explore the big  
vintage dollhouse and set  
up housekeeping in a large  
kitchen built for cooks just  
their size. Lots of dress up and  
toy trains are there for their  
enjoyment too. Hours are  
10am to noon on Saturdays.

## Holiday Hours

The Tower Museum/Children's  
Museum will be closed on  
Saturday, December 23 and  
December 30. We will reopen  
on January 6, 2024.

