

GAZETTE



Fall/Winter 2022 Volume 29 No. 2

winnetkahistory.org

Shop Till You Drop

by Karen Vorwald

As I see kids at Starbucks, Hometown and Fizz & Pop, I remember growing up in Winnetka and hanging out “uptown” with my friends for snacks or shopping.

At the corner of Chestnut and Elm, Valentina is in a building with a long retail history in Winnetka. Recently home to realty companies, for years that location was a Carson Pirie Scott department store with clothes for everyone in the family, and a lingerie department where many of us got our first bras! I recall buying a modest bikini there in junior high – scandalous – that my mother said I could only wear to the beach, not the club.

Founded in 1854, Carson’s first appeared in Winnetka in 1959 when it bought 20 locations of the Peoria-based firm Block & Kuhl, which had a location on that corner. Carson’s had several Winnetka connections, including Samuel Carson Pirie Jr., grandson of co-founder John Pirie, who lived in Winnetka, and Robert Scott, son of co-founder John Scott and



continues on page 7 Carson Pirie Scott on the corner of Chestnut and Elm, c. 1970.



Children ice skating near Henry Demarest Lloyd's house at 830 Sheridan Road, c. 1905.

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 27
Palatine, Illinois

Winnetka on Ice

by Helen Weaver

“What is the matter with Winnetka?” a young girl asked in an 1894 letter to the *North Shore News*. “Why cannot Winnetka girls and boys have a place where they may satisfy their desire for skating?” Winnetka may not have had a rink in 1894 but since then, Winnetkans have found plenty of places to ice skate.

In the very early days, rinks were located by the station, near Hubbard Woods School, at the northeast corner of Elm and Lincoln, and across from the old Village Hall (now the Fire Station). The Village established a public rink on the Lake Front Park in the

continues on page 6

Announcing the Legacy Heritage Circle

Consider including the Winnetka Historical Society in your charitable plans through a will, trust, IRA, life insurance policy or other planned giving arrangements.

Contact Mary Trieschmann to discuss your options:
director@winnetkahistory.org

Save the Date

Making the Movie:
Home Alone & Trivia Too
December 22, 7 pm

Virtual event sponsored by
the Winnetka-Northfield
Public Library



Explore Winnetka Stories

Winnetka's Earliest Businesses

Visit our website at
winnetkahistory.org
to explore these stories
and more!

WHS welcomes Karen Vorwald to our Board of Directors

Karen brings her marketing and fundraising talents to WHS, and we are fortunate to have her on board.

Gala 2022 Highlights

“The Twenties Roar Again: Swanky Soirée” was held at 5 Indian Hill Road and generously hosted by Kelly and Patrick Heneghan. Over 130 guests joined in the festivities. Thank you to our hosts, sponsors, donors and guests for supporting our largest fundraiser of the year!



Top left:
Tom and Diana Flemma, homeowners Kelly and Patrick Heneghan, and Mark and Stephanie Madigan.

Top right:
Nancy and David O’Neill with gala co-chair Susan Sullivan.

Lower right:
Gala house at 5 Indian Hill Road lit up for the event.



WELCOME

incoming WHS President,
Holly Marihugh

“The Winnetka Historical Society is dedicated to safekeeping and sharing the stories of our Village, which helps connect us all as a community. As a 25-year resident, I’m happy to serve in my new role and look forward to sharing more of our history with you.”



THANK YOU

to **Peter Butler** for three years of service as president of the Winnetka Historical Society. We are so grateful for his leadership during these past few years. While Peter is no longer president, he will continue to share his expertise with the WHS board.





Director's Letter

by Mary Trieschmann,
WHS Executive Director

This year the Winnetka Historical Society (WHS) opened the Schmidt-Burnham Log House every Sunday between May and November, hosting over 660 visitors and delighting adults and children alike with exhibits, a scavenger hunt, outdoor pioneer games and challenging hands-on old-time chores. We are only able to accomplish this through our dedicated Log House volunteers: Joan Evanich, Carrie Hoza, Lillian Johnston, Andrea Katz, Holly Marihugh, Jude Offerle, and Jim Herrmann.

These history buffs, along with WHS staff, ensure every visitor experiences the Log House in their own way through inquiry, exploration and discussion. The new exhibits and interpretation methods have proven to

be especially engaging to children, many who returned two and even three times bringing along siblings and friends!

I am thrilled about our partnerships with the Public Library, Park District and the North Shore Senior Center that will bring the Village's history to the public in new ways through traveling exhibits, community events and fascinating presentations.

In addition, we are happy to announce our Legacy Heritage Circle to enable our supporters to include the Winnetka Historical Society in their charitable plans through wills, trusts, IRAs, life insurance policies and other planned giving arrangements.

Finally, this *Gazette* issue focuses on Winnetkans at work and play with articles crafted by some fabulous writers who not only love our history but volunteer their time and energy to share the stories of the Village's past. ■

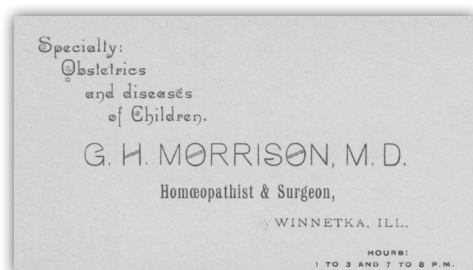
The Winnetka Historical Society is a non-profit 501c-3 organization and is primarily funded by individuals.

You can help preserve our history by making a donation today. THANK YOU!



The Village Doctor

by Meagan McChesney, PhD
WHS Curator



Dr. Morrison's business card, c. 1881.

While conducting research for the latest Explore Winnetka Stories feature on Winnetka's earliest businesses, I happened upon a c. 1885 business card for Winnetka-based "Homoeopathist and Surgeon," G. H. Morrison, M. D. Intrigued, I ran a search of Morrison's name and was amazed to find an unusually large number of artifacts and materials. I was surprised that I'd never come across his name before, and wondered why WHS would have so many of this homeopathic doctor's materials.

Determined to find out, I delved into the materials, finding that, though his life was short and his time in the Village even shorter, Winnetka's first (and perhaps only) homeopathic surgeon made a lasting impact on the community

and many of its most notable 19th century residents.

George Herbert Morrison was born in Elgin, IL on April 15, 1852. His father, Robert, was the son of Scottish immigrant parents and owner of a small carriage factory. His mother, Hannah Burritt Morrison, was well-known in Elgin as the daughter of Benjamin Burritt, one of the city's founders. In 1863, Robert Morrison died, leaving eleven-year-old George



Dr. Morrison, 1893.



Morrison family home at the corner of Ridge and Oak, c. 1880s.

and his mother behind. A few years later, George and his mother moved to Highwood, IL to be close to family. While in Highwood, George founded a hardware business with a cousin, though he sensed early on that life as a business owner may not be for him. He left the business after three years and enrolled in Hahnemann Medical College, a homeopathic medical school in Chicago that operated from 1860 to 1921.

George graduated from Hahnemann in March of 1881 and, just a few days later, married Della Baker in her hometown of Highland Park. That summer, the newlyweds briefly moved to Aurora before settling in Winnetka.

While we don't know why the Morrisons chose Winnetka,

it's clear that once here, they were active, respected members of the community. They built a home and medical practice at the corner of Ridge and Oak (where the Public Library is now), close to downtown so the practice was easily accessible to patients. Dr. Morrison's appointment books indicate that within a few years of opening his practice, his patients included notable families such as the Lloyds, Hubbards, Shackfords, and Gages.

According to his son, "next to his profession and his family, [George's] greatest interest in life was the welfare of Winnetka." During his 12 years in Winnetka, he was a member of the Village Council, served on the Library

continues on page 5

“We Can Take It!”: The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Creation of the Skokie Lagoons

by Duff Peterson

On March 15, 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt announced a plan for the federal government to hire unemployed young men to do conservation work on the nation’s public lands. Known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the program would employ 2.5 million men across the country, leaving a lasting impact on the American landscape. The transformation of the Skokie marsh into the Skokie Lagoons was the CCC’s biggest project, lasting nine years and requiring thousands of laborers to move four million cubic yards of earth and plant 120,000 trees. The CCC men working on the project lived in temporary barracks known as Camp Skokie Valley, 115 buildings in all, along the west side of Harms Road in Glenview, present-day Blue Star Memorial Woods. The camp housed 2,000 men at its peak.

FDR had won a landslide victory in 1932 but inherited a country in desperate straits. Unemployment stood at 25%, the highest in American history. For those who had jobs, the average wage had fallen by 42%. At least 9,000 banks had failed, wiping out the life savings of untold Americans. During the 1932 Democratic convention in Chicago, FDR had promised a “new deal for the American people,” and the phrase stuck. His array of measures aimed at ending the Depression, including payments to impoverished Americans, new government agencies providing jobs for millions, and tighter regulation of business and finance, would forever be known as the New Deal.



CCC enrollees at work on the Skokie Lagoons, 1933.



Skokie Lagoons construction, c. 1935.

The 1932 election had also given the Democrats large majorities in Congress. Breaking with tradition, FDR called a special session immediately after taking office, and oversaw a whirlwind of legislation over the next three months. The CCC bill was one of his first initiatives, and it passed quickly after minimal debate. The only black member of Congress, Oscar De Priest, a Republican from Chicago, proposed an amendment banning racial discrimination in CCC employment, and it too quickly passed. Initially, opposition came from organized labor, whose leaders feared that CCC workers would compete with union members, but FDR talked them out of it, deftly appointing an official of the machinists’ union, Robert Fechner, to head the program.

By the time the CCC arrived, taming the Skokie had been debated in Winnetka for more than 50 years. As the Village grew, the marsh became more and more of a nuisance. A perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes, it flooded after heavy rains, damaging nearby homes and sometimes making Willow and Hibbard Roads impassable. In dry seasons, its peaty soil erupted in slow-burning fires, causing acrid smoke to drift through town. For decades, various schemes to drain the swamp came and went.

The project finally gained traction with the coming of the New Deal. Winnetkan Harold Ickes, FDR’s crusty Secretary of the Interior, is credited with making it happen. He also spearheaded Winnetka’s other massive public works initiative, the railroad grade separation, which began while the Skokie project was still underway. Today, most Winnetkans would say that these two giant New Deal projects changed Winnetka for the better, yet at the time, a majority of Winnetkans opposed the New Deal. In each of the four elections in which FDR ran for president, New Trier Township voted for his Republican opponent by a margin of at least two to one. In the 1940 election, FDR got barely 20% of the vote here. Many Winnetkans saw the New Deal as wasteful and ineffectual, and CCC projects as little more than government make-work. The men on the Skokie project were said to spend all day “leaning on their shovels.”

continues on page 6

Ends of the Earth

by Holly Marihugh



Sister Peggy McDonnell.

Sister Peggy McDonnell worked for more than 25 years in Winnetka, guiding community members through their end-of-life decisions. As a nurse and medical ethicist, Sister Peggy developed a 10-step process to help Winnetkans navigate this final passage, and she's written a new book, The Golden Thread, about her life's work. Read more about her story in the following article which appeared in the 2015 book, Winnetka60093.

Sister Peggy would go to the ends of the earth for a sick person.

And she's spent decades at the bedside, patiently waiting for a person's life to unfold. "I have a deep respect for sick people," the Catholic nun says. "I'm almost in awe of the beauty of the human person. I've gotten up at night and during the weekend to be with someone who is dying."

M. Margaret McDonnell or Sister Peggy as she's known, has held the hands of the sick and bereaved and helped families make critical end-of-life decisions about their loved ones here in Winnetka since 1989. The 77-year-old also is a Registered Nurse and a Medical Ethicist trained at Harvard Divinity School.

When she first put down roots in her neighborhood on Cherry Street, word spread about her, the nun from New Jersey who helps navigate the high waves of illness and passing.

"Neighbors on my block shoveled their own walks and mowed their own lawns," Sister Peggy remembers. "When you're outside that way, people get to know each other. That's how you build community."

In 1995, Sister Peggy and her Order (Society of the Sacred Heart) established the not-for-profit

"Choices," The Center for Ethics and Advocacy in Healthcare. After seeing patients for years in hospitals and nursing homes, Sister Peggy did an about-face on the location for supporting sick people based on what she saw happening in the houses on her own block. She felt that many in the community needed at-home guidance and advice due to changing healthcare. For almost two decades now, Sister Peggy has been available to offer direction at a critical life juncture.

"I have great respect for the process that human beings go through when they are approaching death," Sister Peggy says. "I have never seen anyone not die in peace. I believe there's a higher power, and therefore, there's no reason to be afraid of death."

The choices that a person and family must make approaching death can be daunting. When patients have compromising, serious health conditions, they often discuss the options with everyone affected in their circle. To put a finger on what's really important, Sister Peggy has developed a tried-and-true decision-making model. Further, she uses moral principles along with the decision process.

"I'm comfortable with tough

life stories," she says. "And I'm totally at ease with a family. We can sit around the dining room table because my approach is very much human. In the end, though, the decisions have to be made by the family."

After decades of watching faces in pain finally come to peace, the Irish-American nun now finds clarity in an epiphany she had: "I think that death is the final healing from the wounds that we suffer in life." ■



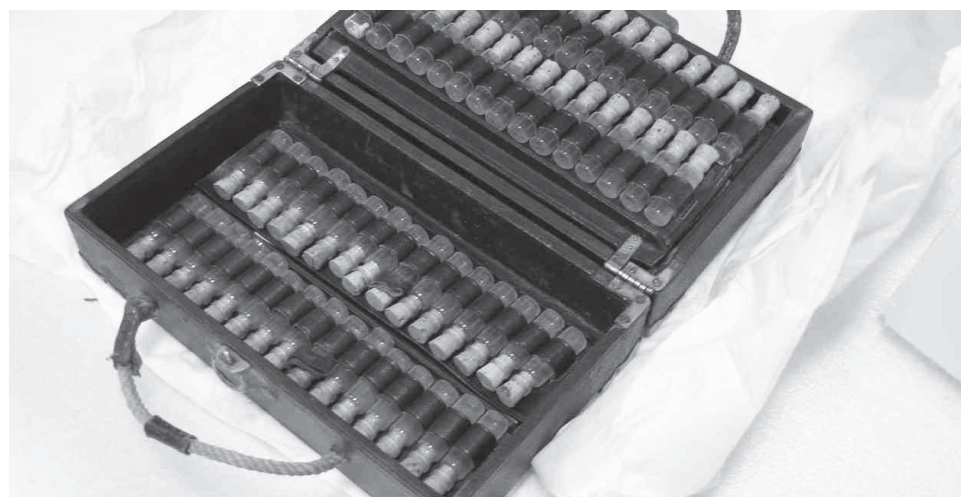
The Golden Thread book.

The Village Doctor

cont. from page 3

Board, and was the head of the School Board. His involvement in Village affairs led to many meaningful relationships as well – Judge Thomas Windes, as well as grocer and banker Max Meyer, became Dr. Morrison's best friends.

Sadly, in the winter of 1893, Winnetka suffered a terrible flu outbreak. While caring for sick patients, Dr. Morrison caught a particularly bad case. Despite his own worsening illness, he continued to help his patients "even after he became so weak that he could not get into his sleigh without assistance." He died on December



Dr. Morrison's medicine kit, c. 1881.

26, 1893 at just 41 years old.

Though his time in Winnetka was cut short, George Morrison was remembered well and fondly. His friends and family later recalled of his work as a physician, "no night was too cold or too wet, no road was too bad, and no patient was too poor for his most careful attention."

Dr. Morrison's legacy also lived on through his children. Of his three children, at least two – Roger and Donald – remained in Winnetka for several decades, and donated several of their father's materials that are now part of the WHS collection. ■

Have historic items you'd like to donate?

We are actively collecting items that directly relate to the history of Winnetka.

To donate, please email a description and a photo of each item to:

curator@winnetkahistory.org

The Winnetka Historical Society cannot accept dropped-off or mailed items without direct communication with museum staff.

Thank you!

Winnetka on Ice *cont. from page 1*

winter of 1907-08, followed by a rink in the newly acquired Skokie Playfield in 1914.

For twelve seasons, a group of Winnetkans sold subscriptions to pay for an attendant and upkeep of a “pond” on the northwest corner of Sheridan and North Avenue (now Tower Road). The property, owned by summer resident John G. Shorthall, was sold in 1907 to a full-time resident who didn’t want the Village skating in his backyard. Luckily, “the Winnetka Skating Rink (WSR)” found a new home in a vacant lot on Sheridan Road north of Henry Demarest Lloyd’s place. There it remained until the mid-1920s when the “WSR” built a rink in the new Station Park in Hubbard Woods.

A few years later, another group of private citizens raised subscriptions for a rink in Indian Hill. By the winter of 1928-29, the Park District had taken over maintenance of the Hubbard Woods and Indian Hill rinks in addition to the public rink at Skokie Playfield. That year, they sold 3,000 season “buttons” to

800 Winnetka families for \$1 per family.

The “WSR” formed a hockey team in the winter of 1905-06 as a member of the North Shore Hockey League and competed against teams from Evanston, Highland Park and Lake Forest at a rink at Ravinia Park. Indian Hill Club teams competed in the league through the 1920s, winning the title at least once in 1926. The Park District built a regulation-sized hockey rink at Indian Hill Park in 1939 and brought Blackhawks coach Paul Thompson and trainer Ed Fralich to the new rink “to give the boys of the Village pointers in ice hockey.” The regulation hockey rink was moved to the Skokie Playfield in 1950, creating a skating complex there with a smaller hockey rink for younger players and a general use rink on the tennis court.

By the late 1960s, a group of dedicated hockey parents convinced the Village to put up for a vote a referendum to build an artificial rink. The referendum



Figure skating group at an indoor ice rink, 1975.

didn’t pass but the members of the Winnetka Skating Association eventually convinced the Village to build the rink with over \$600,000 raised through private bonds. The new Winnetka Ice Arena finally opened its doors in 1972 and the members of the Winnetka Skating Association became the foundation of the Winnetka Hockey Club.

The public arena was not the first indoor ice facility in Winnetka. Many Winnetkans grew up skating at the Hubbard Woods Ice Skating Studio located at 915 Linden Avenue (now Green Bay Road). It was founded in 1954 by Canadian

figure skaters Bill Thomas and Steve Kormylo, and closed the year after the Winnetka Ice Arena opened.

Winnetkans of today still have many choices when it comes to ice skating fun. The Park District currently maintains three outdoor rinks: Indian Hill, Northfield and Gullen’s Pond (a refrigerated rink at Skokie Playfield) in addition to the Ice Arena, which just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary! ■

“We Can Take It!” *cont. from page 4*

For most of its existence, the CCC took only unmarried men aged 17 to 23 (men who served in the CCC were always called “enrollees”). Few CCC enrollees had finished high school, and many were illiterate. Most had never had any medical or dental care. A high percentage were found to be undernourished, and it became a matter of pride for CCC leaders to talk about how much weight their charges gained. Enrollees were required to serve a six-month term, but could re-up for additional terms. Each man was paid \$30 per month, of which \$25 went directly to his family.

CCC enrollees lived in camps that sprang up all over the country. The Department of Labor managed the intake of enrollees, officers of the U.S. Army Reserve ran the camps, and the National Park Service or U.S. Forest Service supervised the work projects. Although the De Priest Amendment forbade discrimination, the amendment was understood to mean only that the CCC could not exclude black men from joining. “Separate but equal” was still the law of the land, and African American enrollees were housed in segregated barracks. Two all-black companies, 400 men, lived at Camp Skokie Valley and worked on the Skokie Lagoons.

Daily life at Camp Skokie Valley began with reveille at 5:45 AM, calisthenics and breakfast, followed by an inspection of the barracks. The enrollees then traveled to the worksite north of Willow Road in a convoy of 40 open trucks. Picks, shovels and wheelbarrows were their only tools at first, but after the first year, bulldozers, backhoes and dump trucks were brought in. The work was hard, seven hours per day, five days per week, and continued through Winnetka’s sticky-hot summers and frigid winters, but the men lived up to the motto of the CCC nationwide: “We Can Take It!”

Camp Skokie Valley offered enrollees a range of recreational activities during their limited downtime. Organized sports were popular, including baseball, volleyball, basketball and, above all, boxing. Starting in September 1934, the camp began offering an educational program nicknamed “Skokie Valley University.” Many enrollees learned skills from the program that would later help them find a job, everything from bookkeeping to auto mechanics. North Shore residents donated books, magazines, sports equipment and musical instruments, and local clergy conducted religious services. Impressed with the enrollees’ enthusiasm, the Winnetka Talk reported that “a splendid spirit prevails among the men.”

Congress terminated the CCC effective July 1, 1942. By then, the United States had entered the Second World War, and CCC men went off to fight in and win it. The Army took over Camp Skokie Valley, turning it into a training facility for military police, and it later held German prisoners of war. In 1946, the Army transferred the camp to the Forest Preserve District, which sold off the buildings. All were eventually removed or demolished.

Even critics of big government acknowledge that the CCC did what it was supposed to do, ended when it outlived its mission, and did some good for America. Ruins of Camp Skokie Valley still can be seen, if you know where to look. Deep in a little-traveled part of the Forest Preserve, now overgrown with honeysuckle and buckthorn, foundation remnants and a long-disused fire hydrant stand silently, the only reminders of the vibrant community of 2,000 young men who lived here in the 1930s, and whose work had such a lasting impact on our Village. ■

Scan the QR code to see a photo gallery of images from the CCC camp and the Skokie Lagoons project.



Shop Till You Drop

cont. from page 1

namesake of Winnetka's Scott Avenue. Before Block & Kuhl, the building housed Rodgers department store for a few years and before that, GL Zick & Company. Two brothers, Walter and Gustav Zick, opened their store in 1914, operating it for 25 years, first on Elm near Green Bay before moving to the northwest corner building at Chestnut and Elm.

East of that corner along Elm stood Charles Variety. Where else could you get toys, candy, contact paper for your science project, ribbons for pigtails, and a live fish all in one location? There was Porters Electric for records with the WLS survey listing the top 40 songs each week, and of course, the Village Toy Shop. How many birthday parties did we go to with nearly all the gifts in the signature polka dotted wrapping paper!

A few steps north of that corner along Chestnut was the 1970s/80s version of Valentina - Betty's of Winnetka. Betty's was junior-high and high-school girl shopping nirvana. The sales were mob-scenes as the lines for the fitting rooms snaked through the store. For my first job, I worked as a stockgirl, unpacking boxes and boxes of sweaters in the Betty's basement and putting them on hangers. Not exactly glamorous work, but I was thrilled when I got that employee discount...and there went my paycheck!

Further down Chestnut was the Laundry. Today, the Laundry Mall is a welcoming mini-mall with a Starbucks. This was not always the case. Before the building was transformed in the 1970s, it was a working laundry. The windows on the big brick building were all painted a dark green so you couldn't see inside, with steam rising out of the occasional cracked window. My friends and I thought it was haunted and crossed the street when on our way up to the A&P (now The Grand.)

Eric and Gustaf Nelson opened their laundry business in 1896. Initially located nearby, the business settled into the building that is now the Laundry in 1925. After 80 years in business, the Nelson family closed up shop and sold the building, which was developed into the Laundry retail center. Some of the original shops included a restaurant called the Monastery (now Avli), Der Lipizzaner shoe store, Bresler's 33 Flavors Ice Cream, the Country Cookie Company, and Scissors Edge, the only remaining original tenant from when the Laundry opened in 1976. As kids, we weren't sorry to see the scary building go and welcomed the bubble gum ice cream and warm chocolate chip cookies with enthusiasm! It was great to be a kid in Winnetka, and as I see the happy faces of kids uptown with their friends, I'm glad that it still is! ■



Betty's of Winnetka, c. 1970s.



Betty's of Winnetka ad, Winnetka Talk, May 1980.

Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Holly Marihugh, *President*
Tom Flemma, *Vice President*
Joan Evanich, *Secretary*
Christine Murdoch, *Treasurer*
Susan Sullivan, *Officer At Large*

Board Members

Peter Butler
Paige Dooley
Jim Herrmann
Carrie Hoza
Tim Ring
Peter Tyor
Karen Vorwald
Helen Weaver
Mary Westerman

Sustainers

Beth Anaclerio
Barb Aquilino
Anne Bahan
Nancy Behles
Bean Carroll, IV
Maureen Mitchel Coblenz
Joan Conlisk
Susan Curry
Layla Danley
Nancy Davis
Cindy Fuller
Harry Grace
Nan Greenough
Betsy Hammond
Mary Happ
Louise Holland
Phil Hoza
Becky Hurley
Nancy Judge
Anne Kelly
Betsy Landes
Penny Lanphier
Betsy Meuer
Luvie Myers
Liz Nesler
Jude Offerle
Jan Pavlovic
Cynthia Peters
Laurie Petersen
Charlie Shabica
Sally Schneiders
Ann Smith
Dina Spoerl
Marcia Sutter
Mary Ward
Susan Whitcomb
Sally Wille
Nancy Yurek

Gazette Editorial Staff

Joan Evanich, *Editor*
Jennifer Miller, *Design Editor*
Duff Peterson
Meagan McChesney
Mary Trieschmann
Karen Vorwald
Helen Weaver

© Winnetka Historical Society

P.O. Box 365
Winnetka, IL 60093
847-446-0001
winnetkahistory.org



Explore Winnetka Stories

Visit our website at winnetkahistory.org to learn about Winnetka's long-term businesses and more.



BRATSCHI PLUMBING



Serving The North Shore Since 1937

Bratschi building, 1945.



Bratschi building, 2019.

Since its founding in 1937, Bratschi Plumbing has valued the past, present, and future of our community. As a 4th generation locally-owned business, we are proud to support the Winnetka Historical Society in its mission to honor and preserves the Village's heritage, gathers and share the artifacts and stories of its past, and foster meaningful connections among Winnetkans and the broader community.

801 Oak Street, Winnetka, IL 60093 • 847-446-1421 • bratschiinc.com