

HISTORY KEEPERS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends,

The 10th annual *Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies* was a resounding success! This event has become a staple in the Westby community and continues to draw significant participation from classic car collectors, resolute volunteers, and residents. The primary objective of this annual gathering is to raise awareness for the Westby Area Historical Society and the Thoreson House Museum & Genealogy

Center, while simultaneously promoting the unique businesses in Westby. This year, partnering with the City of Westby, we were an integral part of the festivities that officially opened our city's new Main Street.

The inception of *Sweet Rides* can be attributed to the vision of the late Madeline Anderson, a former board member of WAHS, and the leadership of members Garland McGarvey and Kathy Anderson. Their combined efforts have established this event as our most attended and financially successful fundraiser.

Dennis Gage, host of the popular television program *My Classic Car*, and first-time sponsor Dahl Automotive both had a huge presence at this year's special 10th anniversary event. These highlights, together with over 300 classic cars and more than 600 pieces of delicious homemade pie, made for a very positive day. The success of the event was due to the extraordinary efforts of more than 75 volunteers who contributed their time and skills in various capacities. Their professionalism, timely assistance, and exceptional organizational abilities were instrumental in the smooth execution of the event. Special recognition is given to Mega Parts of Coon Valley, Without their tremendous support and friendship from the beginning, this event would not be what it is today.

Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies continues to grow in popularity. I wish to express my gratitude to all participants, volunteers, sponsors, and attendees for their support, and I look forward to an even more successful event next year. Always the last Saturday in July, put July 25, 2026, on your calendar now! Blaine Hedberg, President, WAHS

Editor's Note: My apologies for this month's newsletter being so late. I was recovering from surgery in June, *Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies* happened in July, and I left for almost three weeks in Norway and Iceland just two days after Sweet Rides. Now things are back to normal, and all is good, so please send me any comments about what you would like to see in future newsletters. And, "Like," comment, and share our Facebook posts so WAHS continues to get even more followers! Thanks, Kathy



"I don't know why, but I have to come," is what Dennis Gage said to Chairperson Garland McGarvey when he was asked to attend *Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies*. Dennis could not imagine how the mix of a "homemade pies with ice cream" social, sharing history, and a car show would be successful, but after the event, he sent a message to Garland: "This was much more than a car show and you delivered on all aspects for all constituencies. . . . The pie was pretty awesome, too!"

We are very proud of this extremely high praise coming from someone of Dennis' stature – a genuine celebrity in the car world, host of 29 seasons of his national hit TV show, *My Classic Car*, and all-around great guy. Dennis had never heard of an event like *Sweet Rides*, but here we are! 2025 celebrated our 10th year! We sold out of more than 650 pieces of pie, many people learned about the history of automobiles in Westby and got a tour of our Thoreson House Museum & Genealogy Center, and more than 300 cars were at the event – that's a great mix of pie, history, and cars! For a one-day, 6-hour event, we brought more than 2,000 people to town, brought shoppers to Westby businesses, and had a very successful fundraiser for WAHS. It was a community win all the way around!

From the very beginning, we have had invaluable help from the City of Westby, and Roy and Joyce Stephan of Mega Parts. The support we have gotten from them has helped us grow bigger and better every year. This year, the "Opening of Main Street" was also a huge success. We were thankful to have it be part of our special 10th annual *Sweet Rides*.

We have to extend another special "Thank You" to Dahl Automotive and the Dahl Auto Museum for participating this year. Their sponsorship and the vehicles they brought for the "parade" and car show made the event extra special!

We also have so many sponsors, businesses, volunteers, members, attendees, and friends who make this event possible. From major financial donations to a few hours of extremely valuable time making pies, we could not do this without the help of so many. We always wanted *Sweet Rides* to be more than just a fundraiser for WAHS, and it has truly become a community event! Thank you, EVERYONE, for your time, your help, your support, and attendance! Now, turn to Page 3 to see just how remarkable 2025 *Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies* was because of you!



Shining a Light on the Past

Because we celebrated the completion of the Main Street Construction Project last month with the Opening Ceremony for *Sweet Rides*, this article from the August 26, 1925 "*Westby Times*," 100 years ago, is appropriate for today's column!

INTERSTATE HIGHWAY THROUGH WESTBY

2,000 Miles of Wisconsin Highways to Become Part of Big National System

Madison, Wis. — Wisconsin will have nine interstate federal roads marked by the United States government with a standard design. The routes were outlined in a report by W. O. Hotchkiss of the Wisconsin highway commission, made public by F. A. Cannon, executive secretary of the Good Roads association of Wisconsin.

3 — Route 11 from Superior through Eau Claire, La Crosse, Westby, Viroqua, thence on Route 27 to Prairie du Chien, then on Routes 19 and 11 through Lancaster to Dubuque and down the west side of the Mississippi river through St. Louis to Natchez, crossing there and going to New Orleans.



*Editor's note: A "finishing touch" for the Main Street Construction Project are these 4 adorable banners that alternately hang from all the new street light poles and give a fun personality to our downtown. The Norwegian blue, the nisse figures, and "Velkommen" are all a nod to our Norwegian heritage. Westby is known for being a welcoming city; ski jumping is associated with Westby on an international level; our area is known for agriculture; and we attract fishermen from all over the world — hence the themes of the 4 banners. I was honored to be a part of the committee that designed these banners!

Calendar of Events through 2025

September: No monthly meeting. Enjoy the Labor Day weekend!
 Fri., Sept. 26, 2:00 - 5:00: Museum Homecoming "Open House"
 Wed., Oct. 1, 11:30: Driftless Area Heritage Group meeting
 Tues., Oct. 7, 1:00: Monthly meeting at Thoreson Museum
 Sat., Oct. 11, 10:00: Cemetery Stone Cleaning Workshop at the Vang Church Cemetery
 Tues., Nov. 4, 1:00: Monthly meeting with presentation of Volunteer of the Year
 Tues., Nov. 11, 10:30: VFW Veterans Day Program at WHS
 Thurs., Nov. 13, 7:00: Westby High School Choir Concert
 Tues., Dec. 9, 11:00: WAHS Annual Meeting at Westby VFW

Watch our Facebook page for more and updated information!

Welcome,
 new member
 Carolyn
 Williams!



Norwegian Visitors at Thoreson



On Monday, July 21st, Rasmus Sunde of the Norwegian tour group Fotefar Temareiser brought visitors to the Midwest and, as always, made WAHS one of his annual stops. A couple of Norwegian-speaking residents in the Westby area joined us for lunch to entertain the group. The Norwegians toured the museum, then shopped a little in downtown Westby before leaving for Stoughton. We love hosting Rasmus' group and look forward to seeing him again with another tour next summer!

Terry Donation In Time For Homecoming



WAHS VP John Erlandson recently met with Larry Terry, son of Bill Terry, who came back to visit Westby and brought documentation of his father's career as a coach and the athletic director at Westby High School. Very detailed scrapbooks highlight not only Bill's career but also feature other coaches who worked with Bill, and share the stories of the star athletes during the 1962 — 1967 school years. Along with the Ski Annuals and Westby Times we have in our collection, these scrapbooks hold a wonderful opportunity for alumni and

coaches to reminisce. On Homecoming Friday, the 26th of September, we will have an Open House at the Thoreson Museum between 2 — 5 p.m. for anyone and everyone to visit. Please put this on your calendar and join us because it will be a great time to meet with classmates and some specially-invited guests!

Volunteer of the Year

Since 2007, WAHS has given an award to a special person who has helped our organization in an extraordinary way during that year. At our October meeting, we will be taking nominations and voting for our 2025 Volunteer of the Year.

Maybe you know someone who should be recognized. If

so, please contact us to make a nomination, or come to the October meeting!

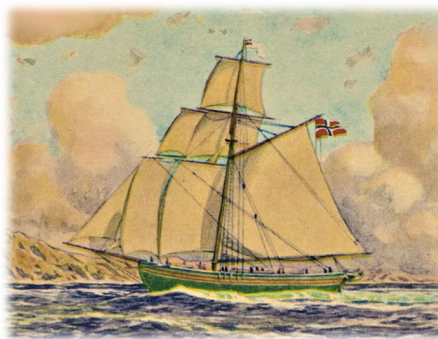
Our remarkable 10th annual Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies was just what we hoped for – a successful and fun community event! You can watch a video of the event if you search “YouTube.com” for Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies!

1. Thank you to Driftless Studios for making our cutting board trophies!
2. Thea, Pat, Christine, and Ellie prepared rhubarb and strawberries for our most-requested pie.
3. Mayor Danny presented Dennis Gage with a rosemaled key to the city.
4. Our local WI State Rep., Tara Johnson, and the Snowflake Royalty brought their smiles.
5. Attendees learned about the history of Andrew Dahl and his role in bringing automobiles to Westby.
6. Do you call this a “low rider?”
7. A “Godwink” moment when Madeline Anderson’s great-granddaughter won a kid’s raffle prize.
8. Kelvin Hanson (middle) won People’s Choice for his friend, Gary “Foot” Mickelson’s, truck.
9. Another “Godwink” when Madeline’s great-grandson won the other kid’s raffle prize.
10. Could Garland and Dennis be having too much fun?!
11. Now this is what you call “custom!”
12. We can see that Jansen Dahl and Dennis are already buddies!
13. WAHS Pres. Blaine is handing out cutting board trophies as Garland, in the background, calls out the winners.
14. Our littles trophy winner, Declan, for his 1970 AMF Fire Chief pedal car.
15. We don’t judge vehicles by their value, but it sure was fun seeing a +\$200,000 Lamborghini at the show!
16. The Dahl Auto Museum brought 6 vehicles. This one, a 1929 Ford Model A Roadster with a rumble seat, is a beauty!
17. A great aerial photo of the 2025 Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies. Put July 25, 2026, on your calendar to join us next year!



Our next event is July 25, 2026! Put it on your calendar now!

2025 marks the 200-year anniversary of the first purposeful immigration of Norwegians to the US. On July 4, 1825, 7 crew members and 45 passengers (including 19 children) left Stavanger on a sloop named the *Restoration*. On October 9, they arrived in New York with a new baby, making 53. That migration was the first of more than 900,000 people who left Norway, many of whom settled in the Westby area, with an idea of a better life. You can read more about the *Restoration*, the voyage, and the 200-year anniversary at www.crossings.norwegianamerican.com. Of note, in July, WAHS President Blaine Hedberg spoke at the Mitchell Historical Society in South Dakota and the Sons of Norway in Estherville, Iowa as part of the bicentennial celebration of Norwegian emigration.



The drawing on the left, of the *Restoration*, is from a Christmas card on the "200 Crossings" website.

"Ideas shape the course of history." – John Maynard Keynes

Only if it's time for you to renew your membership, will you find a separate invoice and envelope with your "History Keepers" newsletter. Dues are just \$20/person and help us to defray most of the cost of the newsletters! We appreciate your renewal!

Thank You! to our sponsors for their support! It helps our general operations budget, our members, our newsletter, and our events!

SUMMER SNAPSHOT STUMPER There is a 1906 cancelation stamp on the backside of the below right postcard. Do you know the name and location of the business?



Please leave a message at 608-634-4478, email us at westbywihistory@gmail.com, or find us on Facebook. Your ideas, opinions, and suggestions matter! We want to hear from you!

2025 Officers and Board of Directors

President and Curator – Blaine Hedberg (2027)
 Vice President – John Erlandson (2027)
 Sec'y/Treas & Newsletter – Kathy Anderson (2026)
 Board Member – Dorothy Skaaland La Due (2025)
 Board Member – Carol Erlandson Navrestad (2025)
 Board Member – Marlo Volden (2026)
 * Officers are elected at the Annual Meeting



Please share our newsletter with your friends, and encourage them to join WAHS by filling out and mailing this membership form!

Westby Area Historical Society

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\$20.00 for Annual Dues from each of our WAHS members supports our education efforts, our quarterly newsletter and the Thoreson House Museum building.

WAHS EIN #39-1645990

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