



HISTORY KEEPERS

2024
Issue 2
MAY

www.westbywihistory.com
westbywihistory@gmail.com

PO Box 42
Westby, WI 54667
608.634.4478

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members and Friends of WAHS,

Since the February newsletter, we have had an amazing couple of months and a fabulous start to our 35th anniversary! A special visitor from Norway came to the museum, new members have joined, we were potentially the largest presence of any organization during Westby's *Syttende Mai* celebration, summer museum *Open House* dates have been scheduled, *Party on the Porch* dates have been chosen, plans for *Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies* have started and we are already making plans for a special *Anniversary Party*.

I will let the photos and articles in this newsletter tell you so much more but want to remind you to volunteer and continue your membership because your participation helps us be successful! If you have questions, please email us at westbywihistory@gmail.com or contact us through our website at www.westbywihistory.com. We also encourage you to "Like" and "Follow" us on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/westbywihistory to bring more attention to our organization. As always, thank you for supporting us, your *Westby Area Historical Society*! — Blaine Hedberg

SWEET RIDES & SWEET PIES Is July 27th on your calendar because we are planning for our best and biggest event yet! Businesses and individuals have been contacted and are already sending in the forms necessary to become trophy sponsors! Two great people will be co-MC's this year because we will need two people to cover the event. We have secured food vendors and serving teams; we have activity sponsors for the Strongman competition; and Auto Value and George's Garage have already purchased the go-kart raffle prize for children 3 – 8 years old. Sounds like we are almost ready to go!

For just this year, we will be located at the Westby baseball field. We will also be using part of Market Street and Second Street to show motorcycles and some overflow vehicles. The logistics of how the Westby Main Street Construction Project will affect our arrival to and departure from *Sweet Rides* will be something we will closely monitor and navigate the day of the event. Stay tuned to our Facebook page for updates. Communication with the project manager, the City of Westby, and with all of you will be our priority!

We are excited to continue growing *Sweet Rides*. Early registration will begin online right after the 4th of July. We have already secured over half of our many trophy sponsors so if you want to support *Sweet Rides* and *WAHS* and be part of the fun awarding a trophy, contact us as at westbywihistory@gmail.com. Trophies are spoken for on a first come/first serve basis so if you want to be a sponsor, contact us ASAP!



2024 will be the 9th year we have been using this logo. Thank you to Paula for creating exactly what we needed! This little guy is becoming very recognizable as the SR&SP mascot! We use him on flyers, signs, tee shirts, and banners!

FREDRIK LARSEN VISITS WAHS

On Monday, May 6th, Fredrick Larsen and his brother, Lars, visited the Thoreson House Museum and Genealogy Center. Fredrick is the Chief Editor of the Norwegian monthly magazine, *Aftenposten Historie*, whose parent company, *Aftenposten*, is the largest daily newspaper in Norway.

WAHS President Blaine and Sect/Treas Kathy spent the afternoon with Fredrik and Lars. Both men were extremely impressed by our museum building, the quality of our artifacts, and the resources we have to offer to our members and the community. Fredrik said he could not wait to get back to Norway to write an article for his magazine about us that would encourage Norwegians to forgo New York and Florida and choose to come to Westby instead. He said he felt so at home and could feel the influence of Norwegian history and heritage in our community.

Blaine had arranged a full day for Fredrik and Lars with a tour of Norskedalen and the Country Coon Prairie Church, followed by a wonderful dinner, before they had to leave. They both vowed to be back with friends as soon as possible!



Welcome to Westby! L to R: Øyvind "Lars" Larsen, WAHS President Blaine Hedberg and Fredrik Larsen.



Shining a Light on the Past

Published May 10, 1990 - just in time for Syttende Mai!!

Stabbur House to hold Official Opening

Four organizations in Westby donated trees and shrubs for the Westby Stabbur House on Tuesday, May 1st. Members of the Sons of Norway, Westby Senior Citizens, City Council and the Garden Club contributed to planting and landscaping for the project. The official opening of the Westby Tourism Center will come this week during the Syttende Mai Festival.

The photo on the right shows kneeling L to R: Phil Strand, Elaine Lund, Caroline Larson, Daniel Jefson and Kermit Veum. Standing L to R: Tip Lund, Marvin Hagen, Florence Holte, Lyle Lund, Harlan Stoleson, Marie Hagen, John Nelson, Lillian Leum, Allen Liyum, Kris Erlandson and Otis Leum.



Grandparent of the Year Awards started in 1999; Kathy Volden is # 26 in 2024!

1999	Edith Solberg – nominated by her granddaughter Ashley Lewiston
2000	Donald Yanske – nominated by his grandson Nicholas Yanske
2001	Delia Stendalen – nominated by her granddaughter Katie Seibon
2002	Verdel Sharping – nominated by his granddaughter Traci Rudie
2003	Donna Fortun – nominated by her granddaughter Krista Fortun
2004	Ole Yttri – nominated by his granddaughter Taylor Fortney
2005	Shirley Monson – nominated by her granddaughter Caitlin Malin
2006	Mary Daines – nominated by her granddaughters Chelsea Daines, Rachel Maxwell and Becca Maxwell
2007	Curtis Moe – nominated by his grandchildren Elijah Moe, Melissa Daines, Katie Moe, Michaela Moe and Jake Daines
2008	Carol Cade – nominated by her granddaughter Brynn Cade
2009	Milan Dunnum – nominated by his granddaughter Laura Dunnum
2010	Shirley Aarness – nominated by her granddaughter Morgan Olson
2011	Bob Volden – nominated by his granddaughter Cheyenne La Mere
2012	Bonnie Peterson – nominated by her grandsons Evan and Cole Peterson
2013	John Blihovde – nominated by his grandchildren Noah and Natalie Banish
2014	Terrie Haugen – nominated by her granddaughter Siri Haugen
2015	Gary Anderson – nominated by his grandson Tanner Turben
2016	Sarah Lendowsky – nominated by her granddaughter Emma Klos
2017	Jed Nestingen – nominated by his granddaughter Hannah Fremstad
2018	Diane Langaard – nominated by her granddaughter Autumn Lunde
2019	Harlan Helseth – nominated by his granddaughter Adelyn Helseth
2020	Susan Salek – nominated by her grandson David Salek
2021	Ron Janzen – nominated by his granddaughter Haylee Janzen
2022	Holly Phillips – nominated by her nephew Dominic Tucker
2023	Dan Kotek – nominated by his granddaughter Lanie Fremstad
2024	Kathy Volden – nominated by her granddaughter Ryley Ray



Written by Ryley Ray for her grandmother, Kathy Volden, this nomination was a sure winner! The assignment given to 4th graders was to type a letter of 100 words or less. The students had to think of what to type as they tried to be accurate in spelling, use good grammar, and practice their hand/eye coordination skills. The judges appreciated that Ryley never mentioned things that her grandma bought for her but talked about the time they spent together and how Ryley wanted to make her grandma happy. It was a little bonus that she said *Thank you!* This is what Ryley submitted:

"I think my grandma should win this award because she always wants to spend time with me and my cousins. My second reason is that she has a very kind heart and she never gets mad at people!! My third reason is that she always takes her time with stuff. My fourth reason is that she loves me for who I am and that I really want her to feel special in every way. That's why I love my grandma so very much and I want her to feel special and win this award for me and her. Thank you for reading my story and have a great day!!"

Photo: our very first WAHS Grandparent, Edith Solberg, is now 94 years old, and her granddaughter who wrote the nomination letter, Ashley Lewison Dinger, is 34. Photo taken April 2024.



Historical Society to meet May 1

The Westby Historical Society will hold an organizational meeting on Monday, May 1, at 7:30, in the Westby Community Center (Library Basement).

At this meeting, officers will be elected, and bylaws will be established.

Celebrating 35 years!

In April 1989, the Westby Times let everyone know that they were welcome to attend the historical society organizational meeting, to become a member, to volunteer to be on the ballot of officers, and to help write the bylaws. Today, we follow those same principles to be open and welcoming to all!

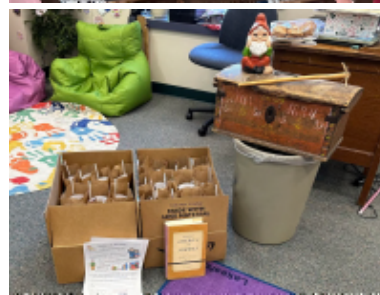
WAHS has a wonderful SYTTENDE MAI!



WAHS was busy this year bringing the most and best activities to Westby to celebrate Syttende Mai! We started with press releases and a bit of history in articles published in the local newspaper. We introduced Kathy Volden as the 2024 Grandmother of the Year at the All-City Band Concert on May 15. We presented three programs to Westby and Coon Valley 4th grade classes, explaining why we celebrate

Syttende Mai. We rotated through the entire Westby Elementary School student body during 4 sessions for a total of more than 250 students – with rave reviews from the teachers, we might add – when we presented our bunad program. Saturday from 9 to 2:30 and Sunday from 11 until 1:30, we sold our traditional lefse/pølse and sold out both days. On Saturday morning, we had board members conducting tours at the museum – for the largest number of guests ever! Saturday afternoon we co-hosted a cultural program with Country Coon Prairie Church Preservation to what we understand was the largest audience for any speaker this year. Sunday brought the *Grandmother* and the *Sweet Rides* entries in the Big Parade. All the while, we were posting on Facebook to be sure people were aware of what WAHS was offering! We certainly had a great turnout and excellent comments about the quality of our activities. We received sincere appreciation for what we do to collect, preserve, and share the history and heritage of the Westby area.

Photos top to bottom: David Engen waiting to start his *Alt for Norge* program. Grandmother Kathy with Ryley, Pres. Blaine and VP John after the All-City Band Concert. Bunad models David and Howard were welcomed to Westby Elementary School for our presentation by Principal Bruce Peterson. The Country Coon Prairie Church filling up for the Saturday program. Jim and Kathy volunteering at the lefse/pølse sale. Props ready for the 4th-grade programs. Our very busy Saturday morning Open House tour guides – Randy, Carol, John, Blaine, Dorothy, and Marlo! The new magnetic sign for the Grandparent float. 2002 photo of cute kids we published with one of the newspaper articles. Ryley did a fabulous job reading her nomination letter during the All-City Band intermission presentation. Posters used for our bunad presentation. Garland with his 1930 Ford Model A in the Big Parade pulling the *Sweet Rides & Sweet Pies* go-kart raffle prize to let people know about the event.



PARTY on the PORCH

Bring your own snacks and beverages at 5:00 until ??? on the second Tuesday of the month (June 11, July 9, and August 13) for an opportunity to socialize and enjoy summer with friends and people who will become friends. Please join us and invite others to come along! Our porch is big enough so the fun will go around for everyone!



OPEN HOUSE HOURS

Summer Saturdays are such busy days so this year in June, July, and August, we will open our museum on Sundays. Join us between 11 am and 2 pm for a tour, to do some genealogy research, to look through issues of the *Westby Times*, or walk down memory lane as you page through Westby High School yearbooks. Make it a relaxing day with WAHS!



WAHS AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP

For the first time, WAHS awarded a \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior on Wednesday, May 22. The applicants had to complete a certain number of volunteer hours. We hope that spending time at the museum will encourage an interest in history as well as provide extra volunteer help. Congratulations to our first recipient, Ava Schmidt!



Congratulations to Judy Mathison's husband, Frank, for identifying Marilyn Bland, Doc, and Naomi Schoville in our February Foto!

"History is a guide to navigation in perilous times. History is who we are and why we are the way we are." Author, historian and 2- time Pulitzer Prize winner David McCullough.



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!*

VERNON
Communications COOP

**World Class Technology.
Unrivaled Local Service.**

103 N. Main St.
Westby, WI
www.vernoncom.coop
(608) 634-3136

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



WELCOME
to new members: Tammy Rowe,
Jim & Kathy Frydenlund and David osfrem

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

2024 Officers and Board of Directors

President and Curator – Blaine Hedberg (2024)
Vice President – John Erlandson (2024)
Sec't/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



Helping you
build a better life.

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

P. O. Box 42; Westby, WI 54667

www.westbywihistory.com

608.634.4478

westbywihistory@gmail.com

\$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

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY, STATE _____
PHONE _____
EMAIL _____

PLEASE ACCEPT MY TAX - DEDUCTIBLE GIFT to WAHS: _____