

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society

Established 2013

Volume 5 Issue 3 Summer/Fall 2018

HISTORICAL SOCIETY INFORMATION

The Life and Times of Warner Sallman - THE MASTER PAINTER

September 22 at 1 pm
United Church of Christ
46 Stam Street
Williams Bay, WI

Friday, October 12th 5th Annual Dinner at Pier 290

1 Liechty Dr
Williams Bay, WI
Cocktail hour and tours 5 pm - 6 pm
Dinner 6 pm - 7 pm
Program 7 pm
Members and guests are welcome
\$40 per person

October 2018 The Schwans Fundraiser Campaign

October 2019 Williams Bay Centennial Celebration

Board of Directors

President - Pat Grove
Vice President - Henry Kenyon
Secretary - Susan Vavra
Treasurer - Diana Woss

Directors

Maggie Gage
Judy Bausch
Phyllis Janda
Ann Becker
Toby Case

A Word from the President



In October, we will celebrate the 5th year anniversary of the Williams Bay Historical Society. We invite all members and guests to the 5th Anniversary Annual Dinner to be held at Pier 290 on Friday, October 12th. Cocktail hour and tours of Pier 290 from 5 pm - 6 pm, dinner will be served 6 pm - 7 pm. Highlights of the past achievements and future goals of the historical society will be presented during the program following dinner. Mark your calendar to attend this very special anniversary dinner. Cost for the evening will be \$40.00 per person. Call 262-607-6025 for more information.

This anniversary is a milestone is one that is worthy of noting; it celebrates a story of people, places, photos, events, and now a recorded history in the book *a Pictorial History of Williams Bay on Beautiful Geneva Lake 1836-1939*, co-authored by Michelle Bie Love and Deborah Dumelle Kristmann.

In early spring of 2013, Deb Soplanda, John Grove and Greg Trush gathered a group Williams Bay residents who were interested in preserving and recording the history of Williams Bay and establishing a historical society. A plan quickly formed to host a speaker's series and a history exhibit. Showcases were borrowed and tables, poster boards, and historical artifacts quickly filled the Community Room of the Barrett Memorial Library. The history exhibit was opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony and the display room became a gathering place for 500 visitors during the one month that the historic artifacts were on display.

The process of becoming an official organization included writing a business plan,

mission statement and by-laws. Committees were formed, officers elected, a design contest was held for the Historical Society logo. The Williams Bay Historical Society became an affiliate of the Wisconsin State Historical Society and received 501(c)3 status by the end of 2015. Charter members of the board of directors were Deb Soplanda, Judy Bausch, Phyllis Janda, Ann Becker, Pat Grove, Greg Trush and Tom McReynolds.

General membership meetings were held quarterly under the leadership of our first Historical Society President Deb Soplanda. These meetings were met with overwhelming interest and attendance was incredible.

Our first meeting in January 2014 featured Bob Pagel and Sparky Lundberg, who shared their experiences and memories of Williams Bay as the "Ice Boating Capital of the World" and when ABC's *Wide World of Sports* came to the Bay to tape a segment on ice boating. Our second meeting was a member only behind the scene tour of Geneva Lake Museum. The third program of 2014 was presented by guest speakers Carolyn Smeltzer & Martha Cucco, who charmed members with an overview of their newly published book *Images of America Geneva Lake*.

Historical Society fund raisers have included a yearly calendar and note cards with historic pictures, matted prints that were sold at the *Art Fest* in Edgewater Park and the publication of the *Pictorial History of Williams Bay on Beautiful Geneva Lake* was an overwhelming success. Village residents and visitors enjoyed the *Wonders of Williams Bay Walking Tour* which explored fourteen landmark sites in Williams Bay and society members volunteered as site docents.

(Continued on page 3)

The Life and Times of Warner Sallman - THE MASTER PAINTER

By Michelle Bie Love

Warner Elias Sallman was the eldest of three children born to Elias Sallman and Christiane (Larson) Sallman who were immigrants from Finland and Sweden. He trained by apprenticing in local studios while attending the Chicago Art Institute at night. There he became a protégé of Walter Marshall Cluett, a newspaper illustrator noted for his work during the Spanish-American War. He initially was affiliated with local studios until he opened his own. In 1916, he married Ruth Anderson, whom he met while both were singing in the church choir.



Sallman was a lifelong member of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America (which was later renamed the Evangelical Covenant Church), an Evangelical Protestant denomination.

Sallman is best known for his Head of Christ, which was designed in 1940, and has sold over 500 million copies that are used in churches of several Christian denominations, as well as for private devotional use.

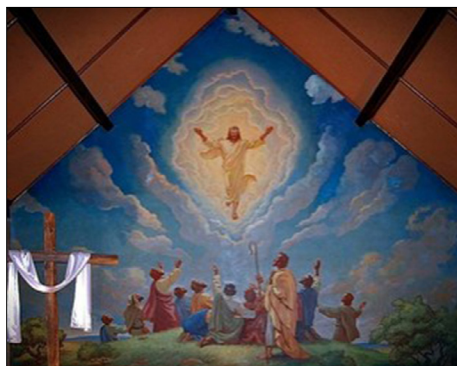
Sallman is also well known for his rendition of the popular image Christ at Heart's Door. Other popular images produced from 1942 to 1950 include Christ in Gethsemane, The Lord is My Shepherd, and Christ Our Pilot.

The vast collection of his original works, including Head of Christ, is owned by Anderson University. Warner Press, the publishing arm of the Church of God in An-

derson, Indiana, holds the copyright and distribution rights to all Warner Sallman images.

Sallman also created a lesser-known work called The Ascension of Christ. The painting is owned by and located in the First Covenant Church, Iron Mountain, Michigan. It measures 20 feet wide by 23 feet high. The painting was done in one of the large meeting rooms on the campus of North Park College (now University) in Chicago and shipped in two large rolls to Iron Mountain where it was installed by the men of the church on the wall above the choir loft. Sallman came to Iron Mountain to put finishing touches on the painting and attend the dedication at First Covenant Church in May, 1952. It is believed to be the largest painting done by the artist.

Sallman named the eleven apostles in the



Sallman's "The Ascension of Christ" mural in Iron Mountain, Michigan. Photo by Derrick Hautamaki.

painting (from left to right) James, the lesser; Philip; Matthew; Thaddeus; James, the elder, son of Zebedee; Thomas, the doubter; John, brother of James; Andrew, brother of Simon Peter; Simon Peter, now shepherd of the flock; Simon, the Zealot; Bartholomew. The full figure of Christ can be seen from any elevation when entering the

church.

A little known fact about Warner Sallman, famous artist, (1892-1968) started his career in 1913 and owned a summer cottage in Williams Bay. Artist Sallman travelled from Chicago and joined his family on weekends. Trish Gages, recently researched the Sallman history and contacted family members to learn more about the life and times of the family in the years 1930 to 1950 as she now resides in the house that was the original cottage.

In the summer of 2017, a niece of Mr. Sallman, Marion Drimalla, who now resides in Glenview, Illinois, drove up to Williams Bay and visited the residence located on Vernon Street. Ms. Drimalla connected Ms. Gages with Rev. LeRoy Carlson who is the founder and president of the Warner E. Sallman Art Collection, Inc. located in Chicago.

Ms. Gages contacted the Williams Bay Historical Society and requested a program be presented to the members and residents because of the historical background and connection to the Bay. A luncheon meeting was arranged for mid-July. Rev. Jean Wallenfang from the United Church of Christ, Rev. Carlson and his wife Colleen, Marion Drimalla, Gladys Johnson, Trish Gages and Pat Grove enjoyed a trip down memory lane.

The two sisters, Marion and Gladys (nieces of Mr. Sallman) commented that in the 1940's that they would hear the train whistle blow as it arrived in the Bay from Chicago and the cottage had a view of the lake from the window in the cottage. Water was hauled from a nearby spring in buckets to the cottage. They remembered how they would walk down to the beach everyday with inner tubes.

(Continued on page 4)

For comments or questions please contact:

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SHADES OF THE PAST

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MISSION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The purpose of the Williams Bay Historical Society is to assist in the preservation and exhibition of items of historical interest that are within the boundaries of Williams Bay, and the immediate surrounding area. It will seek to provide the public with educational opportunities to learn about our unique local history. It will also seek to organize and assist in the commemoration of significant dates and events in village history.

1922 Fire Destroys First Village School



On Friday, September 29, 1922 a fire destroyed the Hotel Williams Bay (formerly the Williams Bay School). A \$10,000 loss was sustained by owners when the Williams Bay Hotel burned to the ground Friday night. The loss is partially covered by

\$5,000 insurance. The fire started in the attic.”

Most of the men in town carried water to fight the fire. The fire occurred one year before the formation of the Williams Bay Volunteer Fire Department was formed in 1923.

Gus Hawkinson and Eric Werner opened the Hotel Williams Bay in the old frame school on the corner of Collie and Congress Streets.

George Blakslee photo. Photo credit: Williams Bay School Alumni Association. Reported in the Janesville Gazette on October 2, 1922

A Word *(Continued from page 1)*

Annual membership dinners were held in the historic Beasley Center of George Williams College.

We have developed many partnerships to make all these events successful as generations of memories unfold. Our dedicated board is sending thanks to our growing membership now 86 strong, donations of artworks, collections, and monetary contributions to keep the historical society sustainable. We continue to look for a museum site as the History Closet at the library and a small storage space at Yerkes Observatory is filled and we have to move out of the space at Yerkes very shortly.

For more information on the Historical Society visit our website: www.wmsbayhistory.org, Facebook: The History of Williams Bay or email the Historical Society at wmsbayhistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Williams Bay is a Wisconsin Bird City

About Bird City Wisconsin



Bird City Wisconsin provides highly-visible public recognition to municipalities that understand that healthy communities are the sum of many parts, including

birds. We support our communities in their efforts to protect and manage green space, educate their citizens, build and erect nesting structures, landscape with native plants, reduce threats to birds like collisions and outdoor cats, and generally make urban areas friendlier for both birds and places where people want to live and work.

For the 80% of Americans that live in urban areas enjoying nature often means watching birds. Urban dwellers may encounter Canada Geese, Ring-billed Gulls, and Mourning Doves, but careful observation can also reveal Common Nighthawks circling the skies or a Screech Owl perched in the backyard.

Bird City Wisconsin, which is modeled on The Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA, was created by a coalition of Wisconsin conservation and birding organizations

to ensure that Wisconsin's urban residents maintain healthy populations of birds and grow an appreciation for them.

The Bird City Wisconsin idea came into being during a 2003 meeting of the Urban Habitat Committee of the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative (WBCI). The Committee saw the potential for an intensive model for bird-focused urban conservation and education that followed the general framework of recommended actions and public recognition that made the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA so successful across the nation. What followed was several years of refinement and a search for the right home.

In 2009, WBCI members received a planning grant for Bird City Wisconsin through the Together Green program, an alliance between the National Audubon Society and Toyota. This grant was awarded to the Milwaukee Audubon Society, the current home of the Bird City Wisconsin program. Bird City's physical address is at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center.

What does it take to become a bird city?

Bird City Wisconsin offers two levels of recognition, Bird City and High Flyer, with the latter being for those communities that truly go above and beyond in their dedication to local conservation and education.

Every criterion submitted requires a narrative statement that explains your community's actions and, where appropriate, documentation and photographs that support the narrative. The application/renewal fee is \$125.

There is a single restriction in the application process: Communities that officially support cat colonies, encourage feeding or housing for outdoor cats, or explicitly permit free-roaming cats are not eligible for High Flyer status.

Bird City Wisconsin's recognition criteria are organized in six categories:

- Habitat Creation, Protection, and Monitoring
- Community Forest Management
- Limiting or Removing Threats to Birds
- Public Education
- Energy and Sustainability
- World Migratory Bird Day

Williams Bay joined Wisconsin Bird City in 2010. For more information about how Williams Bay participates in Wisconsin Bird City visit: <https://birdcitywisconsin.org/bird-city/williamsbay>

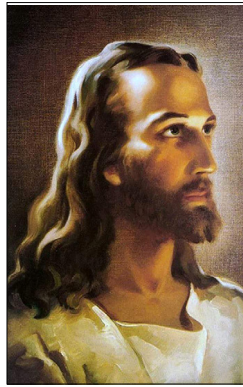
The Master Painter *(Continued from page 2)*

On the walk to the beach they passed by the bakery and the grocery store, owned by Mike Peterson.

They described "Uncle Warner" as quite a "character". It amazed them how he could play the harmonica while driving. Also, how he would dance to a song and children would stand on his feet while dancing.

He was a humble man, always interested in helping other people. Sallman would often give away pictures; no one knew he was a famous artist.

Rev. Carlson shared the history of his interest in Sallman Art as he was a minister at Covenant Harbor Camp in Lake Geneva for over a decade and paintings done by the artist were hanging in the chapel. Rev. Carlson started the foundation as a tribute to the artist as there are over 500 original paintings in the collection. During the Second World War, the servicemen were given an image as they went off to serve their country. The paintings have been seen all around the world in homes,



churches, schools, offices and shops. The most famous of the paintings is the "Head of Christ" painted in 1940 which was originally done in chalk, and illustrated many times before various churches and groups. The "Head of Christ" is found on church bulletin covers, bookmarks, calendars, prayer cards, bibles, lamps, stickers, and stationary.

A power point program "THE MASTER PAINTER" will be presented by Reverend Carlson at the United Church of Christ, 46 Stam Street, in Williams Bay on Saturday, September 22nd, at 1pm.

Please join us for this inspirational and informative program.

Message from the Editor

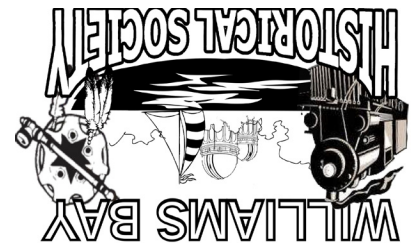
Dear Society Members and Friends,

It is with mixed emotions that I complete this last page of my final issue of **SHADES OF THE PAST**. I will miss sharing the history of Williams Bay with all of you. My commitment to the Williams Bay Historical Society will remain as strong as ever just in a different capacity. I hope each and every one of you has enjoyed the articles and pictures in each issue as much as I enjoyed researching and writing them.

I wish my replacement happy writing and editing and hope you have as much fun as I have had for the last five years.

I now look forward to new projects and adventures. A new book is in the works and a website collaboration with Deborah Dumelle Kristmann called *The Geneva Lake History Report* which will focus on the area around our beautiful lake and other areas of interest in Walworth County. Watch for news of its launch on The History of Williams Bay Facebook page in the near future.

Michelle Bie Lowe



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