Everett and Beyond:
A Celebration of West Lake Forest

The Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society is offering a free program for the premier of the book *West Lake Forest* by authors Susan Kelsey, (Historical Society Board Member) Arthur Miller and Shirley Paddock. The lecture and book signing will take place on Sunday, December 9, 2012 at 2:00 pm at Elawa Farm in Lake Forest. Books will be available for purchase for a special premier price of $20 (regular price is $24). The program is free. For reservations, please visit www.lflbhstory.org or call 847-234-5253.

The authors will share some of the stories uncovered during their research and will be on hand to sign books. As the book cover states:

“Everett, a place settled 25 years before the incorporation of Lake Forest, was home to early pioneers and homesteaders living the “American Dream.” As early as 1835, Everett was a stage-coach stop on the newly blazed military trail, present-day Telegraph and Waukegan Roads. Everett was annexed to the City of Lake Forest in 1926 and became known as West Lake Forest. During the 20th century, farms gave way to subdivisions as the area evolved into a suburban oasis.”

The authors have included images from several collections, including those of the Historical Society, to paint this fascinating look at the history of this part of town. Join us to hear about the history and purchase the book for this special premier price.

The Historical Society will continue this celebration of west Lake Forest with programs and an exhibit in 2013. Bring your ideas for lectures, tours and topics to include in an exhibit to the book signing. Museum staff will have a special “idea board” to gather your ideas and suggestions.

Two of the many photos in the book from the museum collection, these depict the Louis Swift Estate and the Everett Train Station.
From the Director’s Desk

The Historical Society is taking history on the road with several travelling exhibits. The exhibit Spark of Genius was shown for several months in Market Square at the location of the former toy store. The golf exhibit, Hole in One, had an encore showing at the Lake Bluff Library. A panel from the former exhibit, All Aboard, about the railroad is perhaps travelling the most. It is installed on the private railroad club car known as the Deerpath and tells this history of this long-time Lake Forest tradition. These exhibits can also be seen on our website. We are delighted that all the research and writing that goes into these exhibits can be cherished again.

Our third Local Legends Event was a tremendous success. It was my honor to work with John Bryan and Bill Kurtis and thank them for their generous gift of time and wonderful stories. I want to congratulate our co-chairs Katie Hale and Tom Hunter and thank them for all their hard work.

If you like these and other programs, I hope you will think of us when you are making your year-end gifts. Your investment helps us to cherish the past and celebrate the best of our community.

Sincerely,

Janine C. Hack

What do you know about the Historical Society?

The Historical Society is proud to announce we are a recipient of a prestigious grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Under the Museum Assessment Program (MAP) grant, we are assessing how the Historical Society engages with the community. This study will improve our ability to communicate with and serve the community, create collaborations to serve local needs and identify potential audiences.

The project involves a self-study, focus groups, surveys and a visit from a museum consultant. Most importantly, we would like to hear from you. What do you think about the programs and activities of the Historical Society? Please help us out by taking a brief survey on our website at www.lflbhhistory.org. Results of the study are expected in late spring.

Volunteer Spotlight

Local resident Elizabeth Novit has been volunteering as a coordinator for the community assessment grant. She graduated in 2012 from Tulane University with a degree in Art History and a minor in Spanish. Elizabeth brings her experience in museums, communications and computer skills to the project, including development of the web-based survey. We are very grateful for her contribution to the study.

New Board Member

Mark Westcott is a long time Lake Forest resident having moved here in 1989. Mark, along with his wife Carla, have four children (all grown) and are relishing being empty nesters. The couple recently opened Market House on the Square, a contemporary American restaurant in downtown Lake Forest, and are working on a second project in the adjacent building.
Mark Your Calendar

DECEMBER

West Lake Forest
Lecture and book signing with
Susan Kelsey, Arthur Miller and
Shirley Paddock
Sunday, December 9
2:00 pm
Elawa Farm, Lake Forest
Cost: FREE, books available for $20

The program is free. The book West Lake Forest
will be offered at a special premier price.

JANUARY

North Shore Interurban
Lecture with Norman Carlson
Sunday, January 27
3:00 pm
Lily Reid Holt Memorial Chapel
Lake Forest College
Cost: Free for members, $15 nonmembers

To register for all programs, visit www.lflbhistory.org or
call 847-234-5253.

Take our membership survey at www.lflbhistory.org.

Welcome New Members

Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Dixon  Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hoaglund  Dr. Lisa Rejali-Mienville
Ms. Janice Engle  Mr. and Mrs. James K. Kennedy  Ms. Peggie Roberts
Ms. Kerry Friedman  Mr. and Mrs. Mark Kowlzan  Ms. Susan Rolander
Mr. Edward Gray  Ms. Leslie Malcolm  Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sherman
Mrs. Blanche Hall  Mr. Michael O’Connell  Mr. and Mrs. John Travers
Mr. and Mrs. Skip Heizer  Mr. James Pierce

Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society
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The 2012 Local Legends event honoring John H. Bryan was a tremendous success and raised $85,000 for Historical Society programs. Several hundred gathered to hear acclaimed journalist Bill Kurtis interview Mr. Bryan about his roots in Mississippi, his time at Sara Lee and about the cultural treasures he has nurtured. Two sold out tours of Mr. Bryan’s Crab Tree Farm and a LEGO building activity with 75 kids were also part of the October celebration.

Co-chairs Katie Hale and Tom Hunter (along with their committee of Julie Carter, Lisa Frey and Maxwell Gregory) made sure every detail was first class. A photo gallery of the event can be found on the Historical Society’s website.
Help Us Solve the “Mysteries” of Our Photo Collection

As our museum inventory gets underway, we’ve discovered a number of “mystery” images in our photograph collection. These photos were donated to us without any identification, and thus we might not know who, or what, or when, or where is pictured. Beyond the research that our own staff and volunteers are conducting about these photographs, we’re hoping to draw upon the wisdom of the crowd – local residents who may recognize their neighbors, neighborhood or even themselves.

Having better descriptions and fuller identification of people and places in our photograph collection will improve our organization’s ability to serve historical researchers, and will also give us a wealth of images to use in future exhibits.

How You Can Help

To jump start this project, we’ve premiered “Mystery Photo Monday” on our museum Facebook page. We post a new puzzling photograph each Monday for our Facebook fans to solve – and so far have gotten many very helpful responses! To join in, just visit www.facebook.com/lflbhstory and “Like” our page.

If you’re not on Facebook, or if you have an extra hour or two on your hands, you could also help out by visiting us at the museum. We’re setting up a table in our exhibit gallery that will have binders full of unknown women – and men – and places – that visitors can browse through and help to identify. Contact Curator Laurie Stein at lstein@lflbhstory.org or 847.234.5253 for more information.

To whet your appetite for these “history mysteries,” here’s a photograph from our schools collection that features a class of unknown students from Halsey School, c. 1940s. Be sure to let us know if you recognize anyone.

Looking For Collections Volunteers

If you’ve got a free morning or afternoon each week and have always wanted to get “hands-on” experience with the “old stuff” in museums, we’re looking for you! The volunteer projects we have available include photograph scanning, filing news clippings in our research files, and working on our genealogy database of old Lake Forest phone books. Museum staff will train all new volunteers – basic computer skills is all you need. Let Curator Laurie Stein know if you’re interested at lstein@lflbhstory.org or 847.234.5253.
A letter from the Commandant of Naval Station Great Lakes to Lake Forest Mayor Keene H. Addington in July 1918 resulted in the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee moving houses and constructing McKinley Road on a new alignment. The Commandant, Captain W. A. Moffett, was concerned with the lack of sufficient road capacity to move trucks and automobiles in support of the war effort between Chicago, Fort Sheridan and Great Lakes. Green Bay Road was the only route.

Depot Avenue was on the site of the present day bike path next to the Union Pacific North Line. North Shore Line trains operated on Depot Avenue between Illinois and Woodland Roads. A new roadway was desired between Woodland Road and the north limits of the city. What we now know as Sheridan Road between Westleigh and Old Elm Roads did not exist.

Then, as now, the question was, who would fund the building and maintaining of the desired roadways? The answer, the North Shore Line. Four years of City Council deliberations, negotiations, and a mountain of paperwork followed.

There was always a contentious relationship between the northern lakeshore suburbs and the North Shore Line and its predecessors. When the railroad first proposed coming through Lake Forest in 1898, Lake Forest extracted $10,000 and used the money to build, among other things, City Hall.

The devices that provided suburban communities the ability to exercise leverage against the North Shore Line were the franchise agreements that stipulated the terms under which the railroad could operate within city boundaries. These agreements were constantly being renegotiated. The Commandant’s request gave the City of Lake Forest yet another opportunity to bring the railroad to the bargaining table.

John Griffith was the real estate agent for the railroad in Lake Forest for years. Beginning in 1918, the city forced the railroad to purchase the homes on what was then the east side of Depot Avenue, the land to the east of the homes and then pay to move the homes east to the property behind them. At the same time the City vacated what was originally Depot Avenue, now renamed McKinley Road, allowing the railroad to remain on what then became a private right-of-way for the trains, now the bike path.

As agent for the railroad, Griffith appraised the vacant land and the homes, made offers to the owners based on advice from the railroad as to what they would pay, and handled the closings. During the forthcoming construction period many of the homes were leased, some to railroad employees and construction workers.

Griffith found the tenants, established the lease rates, collected the rents, was the collection agent when the rents were not paid, and remitted the proceeds, net of his fees to the railroad. The stream of correspondence was prolific and punctuated with a few tidbits of Griffith finding properties surrounding Lake Forest that he thought the corporate officers would have a personal interest in.

Finally roadway construction was undertaken. The railroad was required to pay all of the construction costs. Initially, the railroad was going to be required to maintain the new roadway in Lake Forest, while the city was going to be required to maintain Sheridan Road south from Westleigh to Fort Sheridan, a roadway that was not within the city limits. Ultimately, the city was required to maintain only the roadway within the city limits. Construction took place in 1923 and 1924.

Train service along the original route from Waukegan to Highland Park through downtown Lake Bluff and Lake Forest, later known as the Shore Line Route, began on June 23, 1898 and was completed to Evanston on August 13, 1899. Ravinia Park was built by the railroad to generate more passenger traffic.
The railroad was extended from Lake Bluff to Mundelein in 1905, from North Chicago to Milwaukee in 1908 and via the Chicago elevated from Evanston to the Loop in 1919. To provide faster service between Chicago and Milwaukee, the Skokie Valley Route opened on June 5, 1926. It was built west of the suburban communities in what later became the U. S. Highway 41 corridor.

Falling victim to the automobile, the Shore Line Route ceased operations on July 24, 1955 and the Skokie Valley Route ceased operations on January 20, 1963. Fifty years later, memories of and affection for the North Shore Line remain strong.

North Shore Interurban Glass-Plate Negative Collection

The images here of McKinley Road are part of a collection of glass plate negatives donated to the Historical Society in 1982 by Harold G. Mason. Mr. Mason, who passed away in 1985, was a former president of the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad.

There are 29 glass plate negatives in the collection, each about 8 by 10 inches in size, most of them showcasing the construction of McKinley Road. Thanks to the support of Norman Carlson, Historical Society volunteer David Mattoon, and the Shoreline Interurban Historical Society, these negatives were scanned, and we now have beautiful, accessible digital images. Next, we hope to purchase archival boxes with special dividers designed to support the weight of glass negatives, thus continuing to ensure that they are preserved for future generations.

You can help us preserve this one-of-a-kind glass plate negative collection by purchasing a $50 Sponsor Ticket for our North Shore Interurban lecture on Sunday, January 27, 2013.

ALPHABET STORIES…cont. from page 6

Looking north from 215 McKinley Road in 1923, the homes have been moved east as evidenced by the rubble of the original foundations.

Looking south from Scott Street on November 22, 1923. Straw was placed on top of the concrete to keep it moist as it cured.
Celebrate West Lake Forest

361 East Westminster
Lake Forest, Illinois 60045
Phone: (847)234-5253
Fax: (847)234-5236
www.lflbhistory.org

Museum Hours
Tuesday–Wednesday–Thursday–Sunday
1:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

The Open Steel Highway
Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Closing of the North Shore Interurban

Sunday, January 27, 2013  3:00 pm
Lily Reid Holt Memorial Chapel, Lake Forest College

Where today there are bike paths, there once stood the tracks of the North Shore Interurban. Norman Carlson, railroad consultant and historian, will present a fascinating look at the electric railway that ran between Chicago and Milwaukee.

Beginning as a streetcar company in Waukegan, the North Shore line reached Evanston over 100 years ago. Lake Forest was particularly demanding in its requirements to grant a franchise. Dining cars and parlor cars graced the trains and Ravinia Park was opened by the North Shore Line in 1904 to bring passengers to the railway. In 1916, Samuel Insull assumed control and transformed the company into a legendary electric interurban railway. This program takes place almost 50 years to the day that the last train ran on this “open steel highway”.

The program is free to members of the Historical Society and $15 for non-members. Tickets can be purchased by visiting www.lflbhistory.org or calling 847-234-5253. A special ticket price of $50 helps to fund the conservation of a one-of-a-kind collection of glass negative images in the collection of the Historical Society. Read more inside about the North Shore Interurban and our special effort to preserve this collection.