

ASTOR

OUTLOOK



Spring 2012 • Volume 18 • Issue 1 • Published Quarterly

526 S. Monroe Avenue
Green Bay, WI 54301

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

As I was getting ready to write the president's letter, my son asked me what I was going to write. I said, "I don't know, I haven't written it yet. What would you like me to write?" He responded, "Say, '2012 will be the awesomist!'"

When we moved here, we were much younger. Like many people who move into a new neighborhood we wondered which way the neighborhood was moving. Was it getting "better" or "worse"? I think, like many younger couples who move into an old neighborhood, we thought of this issue as it were something that could be measured like the outside air temperature; that we would be able to see the movement of "better" or "worse" like the change in seasons. Of course it turns out that it's not so easy to measure or see. What is it that you would measure that would indicate the neighborhood was getting "better" or "worse"? Could it be measured in the change of the average resale value of homes in the neighborhood? I think I might have agreed with that as a gauge when I moved here, but that seems to miss the mark now.

Although we are both transplants with family far away, we have lived in Green Bay now for most of our marriage and both our children have been born here. Now when we consider what it would be like to move back "home" to Texas, we have a different question, "How would it change our quality of life?" The Astor neighborhood has taught us that the quality of a neighborhood is a function of how it impacts our quality of life not the potential market value of our home.

A healthy neighborhood has a positive impact on the quality of life of its residents. If my neighbors spend money on building gourmet kitchens it will likely raise my property value but unless they invite me over for dinner, it won't raise my quality of life. However, if they give me a call and want to get the kids together for a bike ride, it has a real impact on my quality of life. A neighborhood will get "better" if its residents are actively engaged in the community of that neighborhood. It will get "worse" when its residents withdraw.

Help 2012 be the "awesomist" year for the Astor neighborhood. Get involved with your community. The Astor Board can always use fresh ideas and faces to help our community have a positive impact on its residents. When you invest in our community it raises the quality of life for the whole community. Come make your neighborhood "better". Check inside for a list of upcoming events and get involved!

Finally, a big thanks goes out to long list of folks who helped put together another wonderful Astor wine tasting. Without our neighbors getting together and working to help out community programs, our neighborhood wouldn't be as wonderful as it is. Thanks!

Jesse Sharp
President
Astor Neighborhood Association

HOUSE KUDOS

By Skip Heverly

This edition's House Kudos go out to Mark and Ann Lagerkvist of 1009 S. Quincy. Built in 1912, the house has had perhaps five owners overall; but for more than 60 years one family, the Muesels, lived there. Their daughter Lucille was a world-class opera singer. Ann showed a copy of a New York Times review of one of her concerts from 1917. Their next door neighbor recalls magical summer days when Lucille would open her windows and her piano/voice practice could be heard. She was also one of the world's best female trap shooters of that era! She ultimately gave up her career to come back home to take care of her ailing parents. In the 70's the house became home to the nuns who ran St. Joseph's Girls Academy (now Aldo Leopold School).



Original display case with half-round shelf adjusters.



Reproduced display case with similar shelf adjustment mechanism.

Mark and Ann bought the house in 2003 from the Schwiesow's who still live in the neighborhood. It was the first house in Astor Park they looked at, and from the time they drove up, there was something special about the house that grabbed them.

When they moved in they were a family of four in a house with one bathroom. They have since grown into a family of six with a variety of interests and activities. They began thinking about adding a bathroom or two. The plans morphed into adding on a new kitchen, master bedroom, finished basement with exercise room and new garage. They essentially doubled the size of the house. While the exterior provides a suggestion of Arts and Crafts, the interior powerfully embraces the style which they love - straight and clean lines, abundant built-ins and simplicity of design. At all stages of the renovations, which took nine months to complete and required them to live in a condominium for six months, they took effort to borrow from the stylistic motifs pre-existing in the home for the design of all aspects of the additions. This is seen in the door head jamb casing, diamond-shaped windows and the narrow plank wood flooring. A built-in hallway hutch has a shelf height adjusting design based on half-circles taken directly from an original cabinet.

As I spoke with Mark and Ann they frequently thought back to early times, such as Ann's fond memories of her grandparent's bungalow in north Milwaukee, or Mark driving around town with his father looking at homes. They enjoy the convenience of being close to school, work, shopping and the Fox River Trail, all while living in a neighborhood of mature, beautiful trees with remarkable diversity. They expressed their appreciation of being in a neighborhood where people enjoy and take care of their homes and respect the history that comes with them. They have seamlessly made extensive additions onto an already beautiful house, making it functional and comfortable for their family's current lifestyle.



Door leading to a private play space in the basement with full/height chalkboard. A child's dream!



First floor added bathroom with original door leading to plumbing/cubbie space. Note identical style/dimensions in the door jamb casings (right side of photo).

GOING GREEN PUBLIC PARKS IN EARLY GREEN BAY

By Christine Dunbar

Determining the features of historic landscapes is like working a puzzle. Various settlement styles have made their impact on Green Bay beginning with the Indigenous tribes who lived along the Fox River when it was claimed for France by Jean Nicolet about 1634. Canadian fur traders followed, dividing the land into a system of narrow ribbon shaped river frontage lots about $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles long with common pasture and fields. At Green Bay only two square miles had been set aside as a common field. By 1816 approximately 40 families lived in cabins abutting the Fox River, engaging in a relaxed system of fur trade. The War of 1812 left the pro-British community in the hands of the Americans and the establishment of the Fort Howard Military post in 1816, drastically changed settlement patterns.

Yankee entrepreneur Daniel Whitney bought the entire swampy area on the northeast mouth of the Fox and platted Navarino in 1829. Whitney followed the Eastern practice of leaving a block in the center of town open for use as a public square. Whitney noted "the square is never to be built upon ... As soon as buildings are put on it, it is to revert to my heirs".¹ Originally called Washington Square, it was renamed Whitney Park in his honor after his death in 1862. It is the oldest of the Green Bay parks.

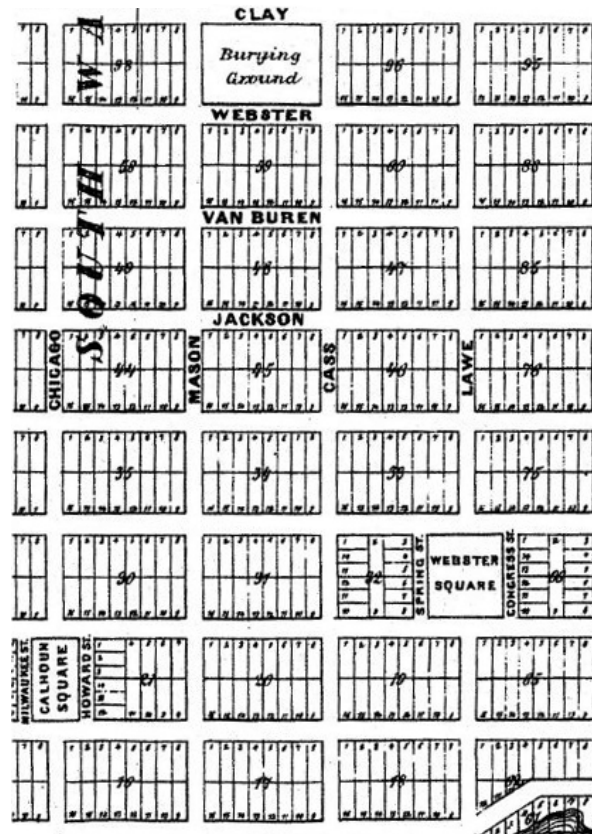
James Doty with Robert Stuart and Ramsey Crooks, all local agents for the American Fur Company persuaded John Jacob Astor to develop a competing town south of Navarino. This land was acquired through for-closure of land owned by resident fur traders.

When platting Astor, Doty set aside three public squares within a ten block radius. Astor was striving to be the county seat and the squares were left open to attract government offices.²

The squares were named for Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun and Daniel Webster. Jackson Square retained its original name while the others were later renamed to reflect churches located on their perimeter. Calhoun Square became St. John's Park and Webster Square was renamed St. James Park.³

Astor family descendents gave Astor Place, the site for the Manual Labor School, and the Burying Ground to Green Bay in December 1869 in a quit-claim deed for one dollar. The Manual Labor School was never built and the square became Astor Park, the Burying Ground was a public cemetery until Woodlawn Cemetery opened in 1856 and the land became Baird Place. Astor Place was originally platted as individual lots but remained open. It became the site for the No. One Fire Station.⁴

A description of the city parks in 1899 illustrates appreciation. "Being dedicated perpetually to public use, they are steadily and rapidly being surrounded by structures, architecturally beautiful and are destined to become centers of the city's most attractive homes."⁵



¹ Whitney Park file. Local History Dept. Brown Co. Library

² Jack Rudolph "Astor gives Navarino a Fight" *The Green Bay Area in History and Legend*. Betsy Foley ed. Press Gazette Articles by Jack Rudolph, Illustrations by Harold Elder. Brown Co Historical Society. 2004. 44

³ Lee Sommerville "The Public Squares of Navarino and Astor". *Voyageur Magazine* Summer/Fall 2008 38

⁴ Jack Rudolph "Astor gives Navarino a Fight" 44

⁵ Gazette Publishing Co. *Men Who are Making Green Bay*. Green Bay 18976



The 13th Annual Astor Neighborhood Association Wine Tasting Event was held on Saturday, January 28, 2012. We are happy to report that the event was a great success!

We had over 90 people attend the event, held at the homes of John and Mickey Seccombe and Brian and Shawn Johnson. Fellow neighbors Steve Johnson and Maria Milano from Parallel 44 partnered with us again, providing the wine and tasting insights. Some of Green Bay's best restaurants donated the outstanding hors d'oeuvres. Once again a raffle was held on the evening of the event to benefit Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center and Clarity Care. We were able to raise over \$2,500 from the evening's registration and raffle to benefit both of these great organizations!

A sincere thanks to our hosts, the Seccombes and Johnsons, and to everyone who helped organize the event, made donations, and attended the event. This annual gathering continues to be one of our neighborhood's finest and most popular events of the year!



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ANNUAL NEIGHBORHOOD GARAGE SALE

It is back again!

The Astor Neighborhood will again have a neighborhood wide garage sale on **Saturday, May 19th**. We enjoy a huge turnout and many neighbors wandering through the streets shopping through the goods.

Please join us in hosting a garage sale at your house and invite your friends to roam the streets of Astor looking for a gem!

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ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

The Easter Bunny is coming!

On Saturday, April 7th the Easter Bunny will be making an appearance at the annual Astor Neighborhood Easter Egg Hunt in St. James Park. The festivities will begin at 9:30 and the egg hunt will begin at 10:00. Bring your family to St. James for pictures with the Easter Bunny, visiting with neighbors and hunting for eggs. We will again have a spot for our youngest neighbors to hunt without older brothers and sisters getting in the way!

Please come out and enjoy the weather.



WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR RECREATION DEPARTMENT?

The City of Green Bay Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department offers a wide variety of programs and leisure opportunities for people of all ages. With summer right around the corner, we are happy to inform you of our exciting programs and activities happening in your city.

- Adult Softball League Registration is currently underway
- Summer kickoff pool party – Friday, June 8, 5:00 – 8:00 pm, Resch Aquatic Center
- Outdoor Pools open for the season Saturday, June 9 at 12:00 p.m.
- Summer Playground Program begins June 12 at 1:00 p.m.
- Kids' Day-Monday, June 25
- Various seasonal job opportunities are available! Get your application in today!

If you would like additional information regarding these programs or any other program our department offers, visit us at www.green-bay.org or call our office at (920)448-3365.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Your neighborhood association meets ever third Monday at 6:00 at the First Lutheran Church at 743 S. Monroe. Please join us. We discuss and plan upcoming events, discuss neighborhood happenings and have a great time!



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