

# ASTOR OUTLOOK

NEWSLETTER

Greetings fellow Astor Neighbors;

By the time this letter is published and delivered, I am hoping that most or all the snow will be gone, and we are experiencing a little spring weather. I hope you all enjoyed your winter and holiday season, and welcome back to those of you who manage to escape Wisconsin's winter.

This year's annual meeting will be held on Monday April 15th, yes Tax Day! We will have sign-up sheets for many events. This year's guest speakers will be Stephanie Hummel and Jason Flatt who will be discussing the new Landmarks Commission which replaces the HPC, or Historical Preservation Committee. They will also discuss which Home Improvement Loans are available as well as the Historical Tax Credits! If you are planning changes to your Astor home, you will not want to miss this.

To begin with, we need board members to help plan and carry out all the events that make Astor a very special place to live. We are short members! Our very first order of business will be to re-elect current members and ask for new members, so please do not be late to the meeting. We also need volunteers for this year's events which include refreshment sales at the city band concert, the annual Easter egg hunt, and other events throughout the year. Please sign up for these events at the annual meeting and or talk to a board member to become one of us!

We need a strong showing of support from neighbors this year as this should be a very insightful meeting. There will be new leadership in our city this year and we are sure some changes will follow. Once again, I look forward to seeing you at this meeting and discussing the future of our neighborhood and the events we hold or aspire to hold.

Regards,

**Ron Dehn**  
*ANA President*

*email: dehno4@yahoo.com*  
*phone: 920.737.6502*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Contact information can be  
found on our website at  
[www.astorneighborhood.org](http://www.astorneighborhood.org)



**The mission of the Astor Neighborhood Association is to maintain the integrity, vitality, and diversity of the Astor community through the protection and preservation of its history, neighborhoods, and architecture.**

# Come Gather 'Round the Hearth *by Jason Flatt - Historic Preservation Specialist*

If you live in Astor, there is a high likelihood that your house was built between 1870 and 1930, and there is nearly as high a likelihood that your house was built with at least one fireplace. This is not surprising, but what does often surprise people is that many of the houses, including the really big ones, were built with only one fireplace. Central heating systems were becoming increasingly common after the Civil War, particularly by the 1880s, and houses built without central furnaces or boilers could still rely on heat coming from relatively efficient kitchen and parlor stoves.

For most houses in Astor, the primary purpose of your living room or parlor fireplace was not to heat your home, but rather to serve as the central gathering place and, by the mid-1800s, was widely described in literature and periodicals as the emotional center of home and the family. Central heating allowed the fireplace to evolve from a soot-producing heat source to an emblem of a family's unique culture, with items related to family history and taste displayed on increasingly elaborate mantels. The idea of sitting in a cozy chair next to the warm fire with family gathered around captured the romantic and familial sentiments of Victorian and later home buyers.

Many of us are accustomed to nothing in our historic homes being of standard size. Victorian and early 20th century fireplaces can be a surprising exception to this. Wood, metal, and stone mantles were often made to accommodate standardized opening sizes. A very good antique mantle can be purchased at auction or through an architectural salvage company (prices vary, but some real gems can be found for well under \$700). Metal inserts and tiles for fireplace surrounds were made to standardized dimensions and can be replaced with both new and salvaged materials. A complete fireplace can be built (or re-built) using a mix-&-match of old and new items.

Replacing missing or broken fireplace surround tiles is a common problem, as is recreating a period-appropriate look from scratch. Tiles for the surround may cost more than the mantle, particularly if you are looking for a complete set of antique tiles. New tiles are available, but here you should pay particular attention to the dimensions of the new tile. In the Victorian era, fireplace tile was typically installed with each tile tight against the neighboring tile and no grout lines. This installation requires tight tolerances on tile dimensions. Later Arts & Crafts fireplaces tended to have tiles installed with noticeable grout lines, and precise tile dimensions were not as critical. If you are creating the look of a Victorian fireplace surround or need to replace a broken tile, Derby Pottery & Tile ([derbypottery.com](http://derbypottery.com)) is relatively unique in that they will trim and true each tile to the precise dimensions needed and they can accommodate most custom color requests. They also make half-width field tiles, so a well-planned project need not involve any tile cutting.

Please be sure to have your chimneys cleaned and inspected regularly. The frequency of inspection depends on how often you use your fireplace, but if it has been a number of years since your last inspection then 2019 might be a good year to revisit this.



## ELEMENTS OF A NEW ANTIQUE FIREPLACE

This "new" fireplace replaces a 1890's-era fireplace in a historic Queen Anne house

Cherry Mantle, with beveled mirror, original label, and standard 36" x 36" opening, c. 1885  
(\$450 hammer price, online auction)

Embossed 6" x 6" surround tiles (cattail, lily, and frogs), c. 1890  
(\$900, ebay)

Iron "summer cover" and surround, c. 1890  
(\$250, online salvage shop)

Field tile, 1.5" x 6" and 1.5" x 3" in dark color, new  
(\$6.60 per 6" tile)

Field tile, 1.5" x 3" in light color, c. 1890  
(\$100 lot, ebay)

Embossed border tile, new  
(\$15 per straight tile, \$10 per corner tile)

Family mementos & good taste, new  
(\$N/A)

# CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Band Concerts will be starting up again this summer. We are lucky to have the Green Bay City Band concerts in our very own St. James Park! This event adds value to our neighborhood even if you never attend. Part of the attraction to this event is the popcorn and refreshments our neighborhood association provides to the attendees. It's a big fundraiser for our association as well. If we can't find enough volunteers to work this event, another association or non-profit would take our place in a minute. It's a couple of hours commitment, it's busy at times but easy work, you get to meet a lot of your neighbors and get to listen to the band during the concert! So please consider signing up for a night or two. It's a great opportunity to spend time with your family volunteering for a great cause, your neighborhood association!

The concert dates are from mid-June through mid-August on Wednesday nights. Watch the summer newsletter, our Facebook page, and our website for the exact dates. Please contact **Ron Dehn** at [dehno4@yahoo.com](mailto:dehno4@yahoo.com) if you are interested in volunteering for the concession stand. We will need three or four volunteers per concert.

*Thank you!*



The annual **Easter Egg Hunt** happens on **Saturday, April 20th** at **St. James Park**. Arrive at 9:30 a.m. to sign up and visit with neighbors. The egg hunt begins at 10:00 a.m. Please remember this is an outside venue and to dress for the weather.



If you are interested in helping with the event or if you are a business that would like to help sponsor a game, please contact **Kathy** at [payitforwardandsmile@hotmail.com](mailto:payitforwardandsmile@hotmail.com)

Need that certain something but don't know what it is?

Or need to sell off some items to make room for more treasures?

**Astor Neighborhood's Annual Neighborhood Rummage Sale** will take place on **Saturday, May 18**. We will have signs out in the surrounding area to help publicize the upcoming event.







Time to show off our neighborhood.  
The **Bellin Run** is **June 8th!**

## Connect With Astor

Check out our beautiful website! [www.astorneighborhood.org](http://www.astorneighborhood.org).

Sign up to receive the Astor Neighborhood Update, which goes right to your email inbox!

Stay informed with events in our neighborhood by visiting the Astor Neighborhood Association's Facebook page! Just go to [www.facebook.com/AstorNeighborhood](https://www.facebook.com/AstorNeighborhood) and click the "like" button.

Another way to stay connected: Create an account on our neighborhood's Nextdoor page!

Nextdoor is a private social network for you, your neighbors and your community.

Visit [https://astor.nextdoor.com/choose\\_address/](https://astor.nextdoor.com/choose_address/) to sign up.



## Brown County Historical Society and Hazelwood Historic House Events

### Downtown Walking Tour – Saturday, May 11 • 9:30 a.m. - 12 Noon • \$10/Person

Discover Green Bay's intriguing history by participating in the Brown County Historical Society's Downtown Walking Tour. Travel through time and explore Historic Astor Neighborhood and Downtown Green Bay. Journey along the Fox River and learn about Green Bay's rich culture. Link street names and monuments to famous individuals, all while hearing compelling stories about Green Bay's founders. The tour begins at Hazelwood Historic House. This is a guided tour that takes place outdoors, please dress accordingly.

### History Treasure Tour – Wednesday, May 15 • 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Sixteen Brown County historical organizations will open their doors **FREE TO THE PUBLIC** for the Fifth Annual History Treasure Tour! Sponsored by the Brown County Federation of History Organizations. Revealing many of the community's "hidden" treasures, this relaxed event encourages the public - including students and families - to explore Brown County's rich historical past, while enjoying fun, hands-on activities, special behind-the-scenes tours, and exclusive access to expert staff in unique historical environments.



Union Congregational United Church of Christ would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our neighbors who helped make our Christmas Tree and Wreath sale a resounding success.

2018 was the first year we conducted this fundraiser, and many of us were skeptical that we would be able to pull it off. A team of us organized the work and we teamed up with Whispering Pines Tree Farm to procure the trees and wreaths. Another team got together to decorate the wreaths the Saturday before we started selling the trees. The only question remaining was whether we would be able to sell the 69 trees and 50 wreaths. Shortly after our tree lot opened several families showed up with excited children eager to choose their Christmas tree. It was fun to see them running around with a big smile on their faces as they found their perfect tree. I remember seeing several families head home with their tree balanced on top of their children's wagons.

It was a great feeling to sell all the trees and wreaths and meet our financial goal for the fundraiser. But more importantly it was a great way to connect with you, our neighbors and make new friends. Thank you very much for your support and we hope to see you again at Christmas time this year.

May God Bless You,  
Jeff Carels, chair



# HOUSE KUDOS



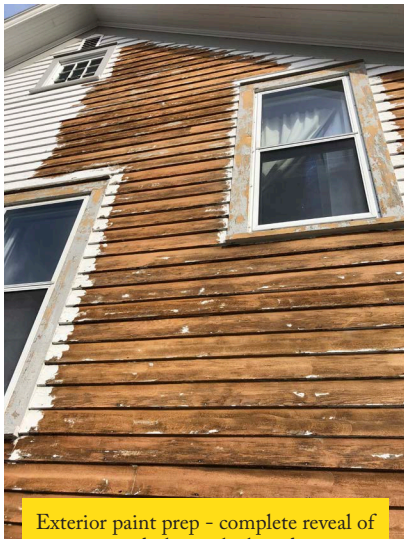
*by Skip Heverly*

House kudos go out to Jeremy Deglopper and Nicole Vartanian of 714 Lawe Street. Built by Henry Robert Armstrong in 1910, the balloon-frame side gable house was one of several homes he built in the neighborhood as rental units. Occupied from 1910-30 by a WWI veteran then a second tenant until 1947 when the Francois family, in the wallpaper and flooring business, took ownership.

Choosing Astor neighborhood for its park, walkability and proximity to downtown, three years ago they moved into a house in which every inch of wall and floor was covered in layers of wallpaper and linoleum.

Underneath, however, was a treasure trove of sound lathe and plaster walls and solid wood flooring, many pieces in a size that would be cost-prohibitive or simply unavailable in new construction.

A native of northeast Wisconsin, Nicole spent her early childhood working with her family renovating two log homes from the 1800s which they disassembled and reassembled at a different location, one numbered log at a time. This laid a foundation of memories, hands on experience and family connections that still drive her passion for historic renovation shown in her work on her home and her job as Front Office Manager at the soon-to-be opened Hotel Northland. A native of southern California, Jeremy has embraced Wisconsin culture and rehab work with sure-handed gusto.



They began by upgrading the electrical service to 100 amp, replacing or grounding all knob and tube wiring so they could safely use their power tools. Next, they removed the layers of wallpaper and repaired damaged plaster with the low-tech/expense but highly effective Big Wallys Plaster Magic. Nicole's parents mentored and provided hands-on help throughout the project which proved valuable for avoiding mistakes.

As they set about stripping the old paper and linoleum, entire rooms were filled with the tear outs, true to the rule of thumb that 80% of renovation work is in the preparation. When finished they had in front of them a tabula rasa which could go in many directions style-wise. The structure of the home provides ample visual interest in the form of abundant windows of various sizes and configurations and the changing light patterns that these produce throughout the day, woodwork, and the careful use of space and angles in the layout. They chose to go with a simple paint

scheme utilizing only two colors in the whole house. The effect is stunning and creates a feeling of spaciousness, warmth and cohesion.

Jeremy stripped and repainted the alligatorated exterior cedar lap siding in the course of one month in his after work hours. Utilizing a Paint Shaver Pro and a rented lift, he was able to safely access all surfaces and attach a shop vac to the planer for minimal dust exposure. He also found the planer method caused less tearout than an angle grinder, another commonly used paint removal method. In this way he was able to expose bare wood from underneath decades of failed overpainting and lay down a clean, smooth and long-lasting stain.

Decorations include salvaged and refinished furniture along with modern pieces resulting in a comfortable aesthetic.

They researched their project extensively, first going to Hazelwood, then the Downtown Branch of the Brown County Library Genealogy Center then ultimately Cofrin Library at UW-Green Bay. The house can be viewed by address at [wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org).



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# **Annual Board Meeting**

**Monday, April 15, 2019**  
**6:30 PM - 8:00 PM**

**First Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**743 S. Monroe Avenue, Green Bay**

Landmarks Commission Staff will be giving a presentation on available funding for rehab projects and are also available to answer any questions about your house or the permitting process.

Chili and Root Beer provided by Titledown Brewing Company

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The Astor Neighborhood Association values  
your mind, your ideas, your input.  
You bring so much to the table, so bring it to ours;  
we hope to see you at the meeting.