

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER


Apr 2024



Board member Julie Mann shares her knowledge of Eagle Spring Lake at our recent Gems of Eagle program.

Photo by Elaine Ledrowski.

ELECTION DAY BAKE SALE

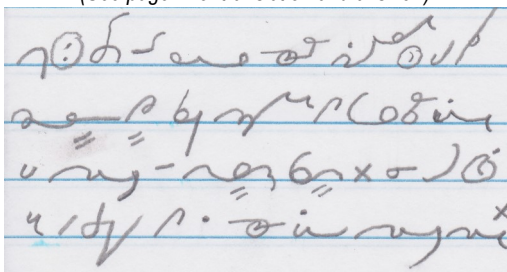
Once again, we happily report a very successful bake sale. **Hats off** to all who helped make this happen, especially Ellie & Diana Hall & Pat Hawes (our Bake Sale Committee members). 

30th EBA COMMUNITY RUMMAGE SALE

EHS will be selling bratwurst & hot dogs starting at 10 am on May 9, 10, & 11, and some EHS members will be holding sales. Thank you to members Steve & Mimi Feye for donating the Klement's brats!

SHORTHAND TRIVIA

(See page 7 for translation and answer.)



IN THIS ISSUE

EHS Program/Event News	1, 2, 8
The Gems of Eagle.....	2
Mealy Funeral Home	3-5
Newell and Ann Meyer	6
Accordion Band	7

WELCOME NEW MEMBER:

Family \$15

Allen Howard

MEMBERSHIP DONATIONS

Senior (\$8)

Amy Kinosian

Individual (\$10)

Alli Chase
Robert Chapman
Lore Kettner
Richard Spurrell

Family (\$15)

Brian & Lucy Breber
Maria & David Hinners
Claire Josten & Dale Howard
Wendy Konichek,
Norm & Linda Konichek
Stephan Muth

Sustaining (\$25-49)

John Hyland
Mike & Ann Sadler

Sponsor (\$50-99)

Eagle Business Association
Don Enright
Richard & Sally Harthun
Dean Herriges & Riene Wells,
Eagle Centre House
Todd Kruse

Please check your address label for the year "2024" to determine your renewal status. If you have any questions, please contact Gina Neist at 262-594-8961 or curator@eaglehistoricalsociety.org. Thank you.

EHS Board

President

Jeff Nowicki, 2026

Vice-President

Eloise Hall, 2025

Secretary

Art Peavy, 2026

Treasurer

Pat Hawes, 2025

Financial Officer

Jim Neist

Board Members

2025

Scott Bovee
Janet Evans
Jim Neist
Jeff Nowicki
Art Peavy

2026

Diana Hall
Eloise Hall
Julie Mann
Gina Neist
Mike Rice

2027

Steve Gulgowski
Pat Hawes
Richard Moeller
Carrie Peavy
Carolyn Rosprim

Curator

Elaine Ledrowski
262-594-3301

Newsletter Editors

Art & Carrie Peavy

Webmaster

Mike Rice

Facebook

Elaine Ledrowski

EHS MUSEUM

262-594-8961

OPEN HOURS:

Wednesdays: 9 am-Noon
Fridays: 9 am-Noon
Saturdays: 9 am-Noon

WEBSITE:

www.eaglehistoricalsociety.org

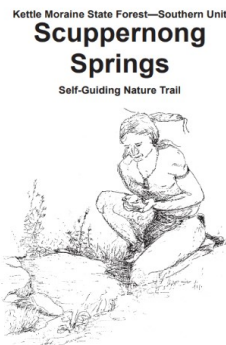
FACEBOOK: Like us at Eagle Historical Society

The Gems of Eagle

By Gina Neist

1 Brady's Rock	2 Canoe to Lulu	3 Carlin Weld Park	4 Eagle Historical Museum	5 Eagle Nature Trail
6 Eagle Public Market	7 Eagle Spring Lake	8 Eagle Springs Golf Resort	9 Eagle Town Park	10 Eagle Village Park
11 Emma Carlin Trail	12 Forest Head-Quarters Museum	13 Ice Age Trail	14 Inside Designs Upcycled	15 Kettle Moraine Ranch
16 Levy Hiking Trail	17 Lulu Lake Preserve	18 Meyer Nature Preserve	19 Old World Arts Colony	20 Old World Wisconsin
21 Ottawa Lake	22 Paradise Springs	23 Red Roof Station	24 Scuppernong Springs Nature Trail	25 State Springs Nature Trail

Most of us have heard of the infamous Eagle Diamond, but there are many other “Gems of Eagle.” Attendees at our program on Tuesday, March 12, were introduced to some local attractions to enrich their summer plans. Hosted by emcee, Scott Bovee, EHS President Jeff Nowicki kicked off the evening highlighting the work of the Museum volunteers in 2023. Janet Evans detailed the geology of Brady’s Rocks, and Jean Weedman presented the story of the development of the Eagle Nature Trail. Julie Mann, a long-time homeowner on Eagle Spring Lake, shared an insider’s perspective on the lake. Curator Elaine Ledrowski and her daughter, Annie Jung, teamed up to present the museums at the State Forest Headquarters, Old World Wisconsin, and our own Historical Society. Sharon Bashaw wrapped up the night with pictures and stories about Paradise Springs. At the end of the presentation, each family received a *Plan Your Eagle Stay-cation* booklet highlighting 25 local attractions. Other EHS publications, including *Eagle Walking Tour* brochures, were also available. Stop into the museum if you are interested in learning more about The Gems of Eagle!



Photos from EHS archives and by Gina Neist.

EHS Garden Restoration



Join us on Saturday, May 18 when the Friends of the North Prairie Native Gardens visit EHS to restore our circular garden. Last year, they did a beautiful job with the front and east side gardens which will soon be ablaze with pollinator-friendly plants.

Weather permitting, we will work from 11 am—2 pm weeding, digging, and planting. This year, volunteers from Generac will also help us. If you enjoy gardening, and wish to learn more about native plants, pop in for a visit. The Friends will be able to answer your questions or make suggestions about which native plants would be appropriate for your own garden.



Sunday, July 14
EHS Ice Cream Social
& Palmyra Eagle
Community Band
Concert
in the Village Park
1:30-3:00 pm

Artifact Donations

This is a partial list of items donated. Thanks to the following donors:
Delafield Historical Society—Eagle Spring Lake photo
Janet Evans—newspaper articles

Mealy Funeral Home

by Karen Matters

The Eagle Historical Society asked me to write an article about what it was like growing up in the Eagle funeral home in the 1950s and '60s. I had to tell them that I didn't. I grew up in Jericho Corners from the time I was 18 months to 21 years. We lived in what is now a brown house on the north side of Hwy. NN right next to the creek. But my father's occupation permeated every part of our lives all the time.



Helen Mealy in 1947

My earliest memories are of the funeral home being my grandparents' house. They bought it in 1940 and moved in after living above the furniture store on Main Street. My dad married my mom in 1946 after returning from World War II. I came along in 1947, and at that time my dad did odd jobs because there wasn't enough work for my grandfather and my dad to make a living. He did have his Funeral Directors license though. I visited the funeral home a lot, and I remember it being just a regular home.

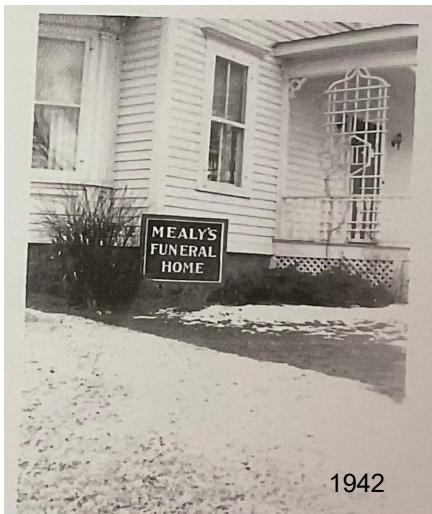
There was a kitchen downstairs where the chapel is now on the east side of the building. I played with marbles on that kitchen floor many a day. There was a

back stairway up to the bedrooms from that kitchen. It was eventually hidden by curtains when the chapel was changed. There was also a dining room and living room downstairs adjacent to the kitchen. The funeral chapel was only on the west side of the building. The second floor was just the bedrooms. My grandfather, Jerome Mealy, died at age 72 in 1952 and my dad took over. Things did change after that. The first thing he did was a huge remodel. The kitchen was moved upstairs to an old sun porch, and the dining room and living room disappeared. My grandmother Cecelia moved totally upstairs with one of the bedrooms becoming a living room for her and the whole downstairs became the chapel. More remodeling was done later when the front porch was enclosed to use as an entrance, and an addition was added to the back of the building.



Cecelia and Jerome Mealy in 1943

In the '50s, my dad, in addition to being the funeral director, was also the local ambulance service. The funeral coach was a combination hearse and ambulance. It had panels to insert in the back windows that were red and white, and it had a red light to put above the windshield. It was always kept like this unless there was a funeral planned. This was before the Waukesha County Sheriff Department transported or the fire department had the EMT program in Eagle. So, my dad was called if someone needed transport from home to the hospital or called to a car accident. I can imagine how the victims must have felt coming back to consciousness and seeing the undertaker there giving them a ride. Must have been unsettling. This meant my dad was on call 24/7, so we got used to plans changing on a dime or being canceled altogether. That was just normal for me. Many times he didn't get to go with us to planned activities or school programs. We could be



heading out the door, the phone rang, and oops we weren't going anywhere. If my dad wasn't around, there had to be someone next to the telephone at all times. Many times it was my grandma or mom or me. I learned to take a name and phone number and find my dad in a hurry. I will say my dad had an answering service before it was the norm.

I remember him calling our local telephone operators and telling them if he got a call he would be at one of his friend's houses for a few hours on a Saturday night and to direct the call there.

I went to school in Eagle at St. Theresa, even though the Jericho School was right down the road from our house and I had friends who went there. I would visit Jericho School when my vacation days were different from theirs. I was so amazed at the difference and relaxed atmosphere from the discipline of the nuns and having all eight grades in one room was crazy to me. Mrs. Fem Schultz was the teacher, and she always gave me a poem to memorize for their Christmas program. Dad was never there to hear me recite it as he stayed with the phone. My dad was able to give me a ride to school as he was in Eagle all day every day. I remember bringing pickles from our garden to the pickle factory on my way to 1st grade. Some days after school if my dad had time, he would run me back to Jericho right after school. If he was busy, I got to stay in town 'til he went home at 5 o'clock and hang with my Eagle friends. Many times I went to Grandma's house after school, especially if there had been a funeral that day. I would help put the folding chairs away while my mom and grandma cleaned the funeral home. I remember my grandma would be on her hands and knees with a damp cloth running it across all the carpeting. I guess that was before there were carpet cleaning machines. Never ever were the shades pulled up and the curtains opened in the funeral home. It was always dark in there. I figured that was how it was supposed to be.

As soon as my father got a death call, everyone sprang into action. Of course, my father most of all, but we all got involved. My mom's job was to go to the *Dousman Index* newspaper with the prayer cards to be printed and return the next day to pick them up. From there she was off to locate the attending physician to get the death certificate signed. Many times I rode with her on those excursions. My mom would be in the funeral home, and many times me too, to greet the hairdresser who came to fix ladies' hair so they looked nice in their caskets. The hairdresser that I remember the most was Mary Lou Nelson. She had a salon in her house on the corner of Hwy. 67 and Betts Road in the '60s. It took a special person to come and do hair for deceased women, and Mary Lou didn't ever mind that. My job, when the call came in, was to wash the car and clean the inside. There weren't many car washes in those days—at least none near Eagle. It would have to be used to drive the pastor to the cemetery or sometimes to carry the pallbearers. It didn't matter if the car was needed two days in a row; it was always washed for each individual time.

I never thought of the funeral home as a scary or haunted place. It was just a normal place where my grandma lived and the home where final goodbyes were said to people that passed. Seeing people in caskets was just a normal part of my life. I never thought it was strange or unusual. I was reminded by Sharon Weimer Bashaw that I gave her the tour of the place one day after school while my grandma must have been gone. The door was never locked in those days. Who would break into a funeral home? I had forgotten all about it, but she remembers it vividly to this day. I probably showed her the casket room where you could pick out the one you liked out of many different casket colors and designs. I maybe gave her a peek at the prep room. I was never allowed to go in there. My dad said only authorized people could be in there, and I wasn't authorized.

In the late '50s, my dad bought an organ to use for funerals which was upstairs in my grandma's hallway. They decided I should learn to play, so every Saturday Jim Hyland would come to the funeral home to give me a lesson. I was supposed to practice after school from 3 to 5. Occasionally, Aurel Pardee would be there at 3 when I got to the funeral home to practice, especially if she had just played for an afternoon funeral. I remember her chitchatting with me about what I was learning. Little did she know that after a short practice I would sneak into my grandma's living room to watch American Bandstand, which I found much more interesting. So much for the organ lessons.



Karen Mealy High School Graduation in 1965

In 1968, my Grandma Mealy passed away and my dad and mom decided to sell their home in Jericho and move into Grandma's living quarters, even if it was a bit smaller than they were used to—it was more convenient. I was 21 at that time and only around during the summers as I was in school. My brother was 14, so he got a bigger taste of actually living there. It was a bit of a sobering experience to come in from a date to the back door after having had a wonderful evening and walk past any person lying in state on my way upstairs. It was always a reminder at that age of the fleeting time of life on this earth, especially if it was a young person.

On our wedding day in 1970 was the only time I saw the funeral home shades up and curtains opened as my parents entertained out of town guests between the wedding and reception. For that day, it was a fun place of laughter and talking. My



Ken and Helen Mealy 50th Anniversary in 1996 at Jackson Point

parents' occupation still continued to affect us even after Tom and I married as we had an extension phone from the funeral home in our house. We all took turns babysitting the phone so my folks could have some time off. My dad always felt it was better to have a family member to talk to when he was called than to have an answering service that just took your phone number and said someone would call them back. I can understand that. Sure could have used cell phones back in the day or computers and internet. Might have made life a little easier.

All photos in this article were taken from Karen Matters' personal collection.

Newell and Ann Meyer

By Mike Rice



Once upon a time, in the heart of southeast WI, nestled amidst rolling hills and whispering woodlands, there existed a place of quiet beauty—a sanctuary created by two souls who understood the language of nature. Their names were Newell and Ann Meyer.

Their sanctuary was a canvas where oak savannas met wetlands, where former agricultural fields surrendered to the wild embrace of prairies. Here, Sandhill cranes trumpeted their arrival in spring, their calls echoing across the landscape. And beneath the snow,

a red fox moved with grace, its amber eyes fixed on unsuspecting prey.



All photo credits: EHS.

Newell and Ann were artists, attuned to the subtle hues of dawn and the whispered secrets of twilight. They had purchased the first eighty acres in 1976 in Eagle, WI, envisioning a summer retreat—a place where their creativity could flourish alongside the wild inhabitants of the land. Newell, a sculptor, shaped wood and stone into forms that seemed to breathe. Ann, a painter, captured the play of light on canvas, her strokes echoing the rustle of leaves.

Lifelong Milwaukee residents, they sought refuge here, away from the city's hustle and bustle. Their dream was simple: to create an oasis of quiet beauty. Under the open sky, Newell's sculptures stood like guardians, and Ann's paintings adorned the walls of memory. And they lived on, not as mere names, but as whispers in the wind, as brushstrokes on the canvas of eternity.

Ann Meyer passed away in 2004 followed by Newell in 2006, leaving their entire estate of 374 acres to the Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin, their legacy forever etched into the very soil they loved. Many of Ann's paintings and several of Newell's sculptures were subsequently donated to the Eagle Historical Society where they are on display in our museum, and Ann Meyer's art collection is shown in beautiful detail on our website at [Ann M Meyer Artwork \(eaglehistoricalsociety.org\)](http://eaglehistoricalsociety.org). Please enjoy a sampling of her work which is currently on display in the Eagle Municipal Building.

Accordion Band

By Eloise 'Ellie' Hall



Photo by Elaine Ledrowski.

When the Music Man visited Eagle, it wasn't like the big show from Professor Harold Hill in "The Music Man" with lots of trombones. Instead, it was just this guy named Bob selling accordions door to door. He must've been really good at convincing people because at least eight families bought accordions and signed up for lessons. I can't remember exactly how much everything cost, but it definitely wasn't cheap.

My music skills got tested by tapping out rhythms on a table. I come from a musical family. My dad, John Hall, played guitar and sang. He loved country western music and performed in WLS Home Talent Shows. His stage name was Arky the Arkansas Woodchopper. He also played at different places in Eagle and the surrounding area, so I guess that's where I got my talent from.

The first time I saw my Special Gigante accordion, I fell in love with it. It was red and had my name on it. What else would a 10-year-old girl want? My Special Gigante was made in Italy and came from Joel Gigante Music Center in West Bend.

I had private lessons every week. I think my dad would drive me to my lessons because I don't ever remember carrying my accordion all the way to Sassos. I must have enjoyed practicing because I remember my mom getting tired of hearing "Under the Double Eagle."

Eagle had its own piano accordion band. Elsbeth Mueller, Donnie Wilton, Ethel Babcock, Pat Jolliffe, plus a few others I can't remember, got together once a month for lessons. We met upstairs at Sassos. The highlight of the year for our band was playing on the radio. We traveled to Beaver Dam and played a few songs. It was exciting to be in a studio with a large glass window inside of a radio station.

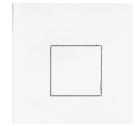
I took lessons until I started high school. It was a great experience.

(Continued from page 1.)

Shorthand Trivia Translation: Question: Back in the early 1900s, what did William Tuohy charge customers to play 18 holes of golf in Clark's Park? When and why was it changed to a 9-hole golf course?

Shorthand Trivia Answer: Twenty-five cents. Eagle Springs Golf Resort is the oldest in the State of Wisconsin and was established in 1893 by the Tuohy family, Irish immigrants who traveled from Boston and settled on Eagle Spring Lake in 1866. It was reduced to 9 holes as a result of the Great Depression after 1929. Just one of many fun facts learned from presentations given at our Gems of Eagle program.

Eagle Historical Society, Inc.
217 Main Street
P.O. Box 454
Eagle, WI 53119-0454



Mailing Label



Annual Veterans' Recognition



Please join us on Sat., June 1 at 1 pm on the EHS patio for our Annual Veterans' Recognition. This year we are celebrating the service of Non-Combat Soldiers. Hosted by member Phil Hall, our presentation includes a talk by John Hall, Professor of U.S. Military History at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Also sharing memories will be EHS President Jeff Nowicki, a veteran who served in Germany and Todd Kienatz, an Army Signals Intelligence Analyst and a member of the Marine Corps Band.

The Kettle Moraine Blues will entertain us with patriotic music, refreshments will be served, and you will be able to tour the traveling exhibit, Working Warriors. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the afternoon! We are pleased to display the exhibit in the museum on Fri., May 31, from 9 am to noon and Sat. and Sun., June 1 and 2, from noon to 4 pm.

EHS 2024 Events

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| Sat., May 18 | EHS Garden Restoration 11:00 am—2:00 pm |
| Sat., June 1 | Celebrating Veterans Serving in Non-Combat Roles.
1:00 pm on the EHS Patio |
| Sun., July 14 | Ice Cream Social & Palmyra/Eagle Community Band Concert
1:30—3:00 pm in Eagle Village Park |
| Sun., Aug. 18 | EHS Members Open House 1:00—3:00 pm at the museum |
| Sat., Oct. 26 | Pumpkin Party 1:00—3:30 pm at the museum |