

Cedarburg...NOW AND FOREVER

A Newsletter for the Friends of the Cedarburg Foundation

Seventh Edition – Spring 2006

Foundation Grant to Help Buy Rivoli Theater

The Cedarburg Foundation Board in March approved a \$25,000 grant to the Cedarburg Landmark Preservation Society to buy and renovate the Rivoli Theater at W62 N567 Washington Ave. Other than the special fund-raiser to pay off the mortgage of the Cedarburg Cultural Center, the grant was the largest in the foundation's six-year history.

The preservation society plans to restore the façade to its movie magic grandeur of the 1930s, 40s and 50s. The Foundation's grant is part of a campaign launched last December that has already raised more than \$300,000 of the more than \$700,000 project.

The Rivoli is the last single screen movie theater in Ozaukee *Continued on page 2*



This is the art deco look of the Rivoli Theater in the 1930s. The photograph was taken shortly after the Rivoli opened in January 1936. The Cedarburg Landmarks Preservation Society wants to buy the theater and restore a 1930s appearance.

Photo Courtesy Edward Rappold Collection

Bob Armbruster Receives 4th Annual Cedarburg Foundation Civic Award

Bob Armbruster, whose family has operated Armbruster Jewelers on Cedarburg's Washington Avenue since 1884, received The Cedarburg Foundation's fourth annual Civic Award at the foundation's annual civic celebration Feb. 19.

Armbruster was recognized for his lifelong contributions to Cedarburg's quality of life. He is widely sought as a local historian. He and his wife Mary Aileen have overseen the restoration of the 1904 white terra cotta jewelry store to its early 20th century décor. His cheerful demeanor has been a presence on Washington Avenue for decades.

The celebration was to have been held on Thursday, Feb. 16, but the first serious winter storm of the season came through that day and the event was rescheduled for Sunday, Feb. 19. About 150 people gathered at the Cedarburg Cultural Center, including several members of Bob's family, to wish him well.

Bob is the third generation of Armbrusters to operate the jewelry store. His grandfather John Armbruster came to Cedarburg from the Black Forest region of



Photo Courtesy Paul Hayes

Bob Armbruster was given the Cedarburg Foundation's annual civic award this year. Here he and his wife, Mary Aileen are shown at the Cultural Center during the Foundation's annual civic event.

southwest Germany in 1882 to play clarinet in the Weber Brewery Band of Cedarburg. He opened his jewelry and music store in 1884.

Grandfather John was mayor of Cedarburg for 16 years. He also served as county board chairman, secretary of the fire department, secretary of the Turnverein and he was an avid booster of local businesses. One of his sons, also named John, Bob's father, ran the store until 1946.

Bob was born in 1920 and lived until adulthood in a large apartment above the jewelry store along with his grandparents, his parents, two sisters and his brother John. That was typical for Washington Avenue in that day, when many families who ran downtown businesses lived above

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Rivoli Theater (from pg. 1)

County. The late Mark Morgan of Cedarburg converted the old Boerner Department Store into the theater. The storefront was covered with black and white structural glass, topped by a brightly-lit marquee. A ticket booth was set between two doors. The geometry was classic Art Deco.

The doors opened on Saturday, Jan. 11, 1936. Adult admission was 25 cents a ticket and 15 cents on "bargain night" each Tuesday. Kids paid a dime. The first fans in the door were treated to Charles Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities," billed as "humanity's most thrilling love story" and starring Ronald Colman. Admission included a newsreel and a cartoon.

"One of the ingredients that makes Cedarburg is the Rivoli," said Donald Levy of the Preservation Society. "It's part of being a small town and small towns

have movie theaters. It keeps downtown Cedarburg viable."

The Rivoli's purchase will be part of an ongoing effort to preserve the historic charm of our small community. Levy and the other members of the Preservation Society actively sought to buy the building after they heard that investors were interested in buying it and converting it into retail shops.

The Marcus Corp. currently leases the theater and shows second-run movies. The Cedar Creek Repertory Company also uses the theater as a venue for its plays. In March and April, the company presented the comedy "Harvey" to great reviews. Levy said that both arrangements would continue.

"In Ozaukee County and in most of Wisconsin, Cedarburg has one of the rare

Main streets intact. It's a preserved original downtown which hasn't been destroyed by a Wal Mart or anything else," Levy said. "Our goal is to preserve that atmosphere."

Once the building is purchased, Kubala Washatko Architects Inc. of Cedarburg will help design the façade of the theater to reflect the art-deco ornamentation of the 1930s.

With the completion of this sale, the Preservation Society will have added its fourth project since its inception in 1975. The Society bought and renovated the 1855 Schroeder-Hilgen Grist Mill at N58 W6181 Columbia Road, the 1867 Turn Halle in historic Hamilton and the General Store at Washington Avenue and Spring Street. ■

Civic Award (from pg. 1)

their stores.

The language upstairs was German, although German was being heard less and less on the street. Bob and his siblings attended elementary grades in the Lincoln Building, now the Cedarburg Senior Center, and high school in the present City Hall, both buildings across the street from the jewelry store.

Standing 6 foot 3 inches tall, Bob played center on the 1938 Cedarburg High School team. He and teammates Tony Fischer, Palmer Krueger, Ed Boesch and Andrew Voland still meet for breakfast once a month at Cedarburg's Coffee Pot.

Second Lieutenant Bob Armbruster served as navigator aboard a B-24 Liberator bomber in World War II, and flew five missions over southern France and Germany, returning from one on three engines, after having been hit by German anti-aircraft fire.

He and his brother John returned from the service in late 1945 and ran the store

together for 25 years, when John left to become City Clerk under Mayor Stephen Fischer. Bob and the former Mary Aileen Behnke, a Marquette University-trained medical technician, were married in 1949.

In 1952, they built their present home on St. John Street where they raised their four children, Joan, John, Wendy and Peter. All are married and Bob and Mary Aileen have 11 grandchildren.

Bob has been an active member and leader in the Lions Club, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, Wisconsin Jewelers Association, and the Peter Wollner Post of the American Legion. In some cases his membership dates back more than 50 years.

He and Mary Aileen share responsibilities at the jewelry store, where John and his wife, Pat, also work. The store's basement and second floor harbor Bob's collection of important Cedarburg and jewelry store archives and artifacts, and Bob often is called upon by authors, reporters, students

and others as a rich source of local history.

Foundation President Duey Stroebel, in giving the state of the foundation report at the celebration, said, "It's been an exciting year for me as head of the Cedarburg Foundation, but the high point is right here today. I say that because Bob Armbruster is one of those Cedarburgers who has a lifelong dedication to his community in so many ways."

Bob was presented with a check of \$1,000, which he immediately donated to the Cedarburg Cultural Center.

Entertainment at the Civic Celebration was provided by Vic DiCristo on bass and Tony Gorenc on accordion, followed by the Cedarburg High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Brian O'Keefe. Foundation Board Members Vicki Capadona and Peg Edquist organized a silent auction.

Sponsors of the evening were the Ozaukee Bank, Carlson Tool Co., Levy and Levy law firm and Terrace Realty. ■

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Don Rintelman, New President, Plans for Foundation Growth

Donald B. Rintelman was elected fourth president of the Cedarburg Foundation at its March board meeting. Rintelman, a descendant of a pioneer Cedarburg family, will be installed in office in June and serve for two years.

He takes over from Duey Stroebel, president of Terrace Realty Co., who led the foundation for two years. Under Stroebel's tenure, the Foundation's Legacy Society was established and has grown to 14 members.

Rintelman and his wife Ann live at N110W5500 Highland Rd. They have two children, Katie, a senior at Washington University, St. Louis, and Brian, a junior at Cedarburg High School.

He led a slate of new officers that included former Cedarburg Mayor Jim Coutts as president-elect and Bob Chmielewski, vice president-secretary. Dick Dieffenbach will continue as treasurer.

"I would like to see our Legacy Society grow to 100 members, have the Foundation's endowment double and have the Foundation be recognized as the 'go to' resource to help other community



Photo Courtesy Paul Hayes

Donald B. Rintelman will serve as president of the Cedarburg Foundation for two years starting in June.

organizations accomplish their major projects," Rintelman said.

Rintelman is an attorney in the Milwaukee firm of White Hirschboeck Dudek, where for 20 years, he has specialized in helping clients buy, sell and finance their businesses.

With globalization of the economy, his practice expanded into the international arena and he has visited China and written about China-US trade relations for the Milwaukee Business Journal.

Stroebel will remain on the board, and as immediate past president, he will continue to serve on the executive committee. ■

Marilyn Vollrath Steps Down; Board Elects Susan Lange

Marilyn Vollrath, an original member of the Cedarburg Foundation and one of its key organizers in 2000, announced in March that she would retire from the board.

Vollrath, who runs Vollrath Associates, Inc., a public relations firm in Mequon, formerly was chairman of the foundation's publicity committee and wrote and coordinated many of the news releases for the organization

"Marilyn Vollrath lives life in the fast lane," remarked former President Mal

Hepburn. "Some day when it slows down, we hope she can join us again."

The board elected Susan Lange, professor of mathematics at Cardinal Stritch University, as a new member. Lange and her husband Gary moved to Cedarburg in 1990 and live at N88W5488 Regency Lane. Their daughter Karin was graduated from Cedarburg High School in 1999 and their son Steve in 2002.

Lange has been a long time volunteer at Riveredge Nature Center, where she is a teacher-naturalist. ■

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The Greater Cedarburg Community Foundation is a community trust that establishes endowments and administers the income thereon for the betterment of the greater Cedarburg area. The Cedarburg foundation works closely with the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, where it maintains an affiliation. Gifts to the Greater Cedarburg Community Foundation are tax deductible to the extent applicable under relevant tax law.



www.cedarburgfoundation.org