

25th Anniversary of Oglebay's Festival of Lights Underway

Four new displays, including a nostalgic village that changes from daytime to a night scene with LED-decorated rooflines, windows, and trees, are joining old favorites at the 25th anniversary version of Oglebay's Winter Festival of Lights (FOL). The show opened November 13 and continues nightly through January 3. Returning for the third season is the popular Gardens of Light which encourages a stroll along the brick path that leads from Carriage House Glass to the Mansion Museum. "The stroll allows visitors to take in the enchanting sights and sounds of the holiday including 150 hanging baskets of light plus thousands of lighted flowers, trees and shrubs, combined with distinctive holiday music," says Oglebay's marketing director Caren Knoyer.

Last year, FOL entered a new "green" era with the commitment to use energy-efficient LED lights in all new displays and to begin converting all existing displays to LED. "These lights use 85% less energy than traditional bulbs and last five times longer, ensuring that the FOL will

continue to glow for another 25 years," adds Knoyer. The LED bulbs are especially effective at the Par 3/Ski lodge area which is decked out in eye-catching blue and green lights.

When you visit the lights show plan to come early in order to visit Wilson Lodge, which is beautifully decorated, the various retail shops, the Good Zoo or the Mansion Museum. The zoo features a lights and music extravaganza on the patio. There is a separate admission for the zoo/planetarium and museum. The Christmas Shop at the Speidel Golf Clubhouse is open only during FOL and will be bigger than ever this year.

Park officials are grateful to everyone who has helped to make Oglebay's Winter Festival of Lights such a success for the past 25 years, and to all the visitors who continue to return year after year. A thank you also goes to The Health Plan for helping to sponsor the 2009-2010 show. This event is not only important economically to the parks, but has a spill-over effect for the

whole area as thousands of winter visitors fill hotels, dine and buy gasoline and gifts locally. The impact on the economy is in the millions of dollars each year. A per car donation is requested and is valid for the entire season.

Upcoming Events

- November 2009**
 13-30 Festival of Lights
 14-21 Festival of Trees - Pine Room
- December 2009**
 1-31 Festival of Lights
- January 2010**
 1-3 Festival of Lights
- April 2010**
 2-3 Treasure Hunt at the Good Zoo
 4 Easter Sunrise Service at the Anne Kuchinka Amphitheater
 9-11 Antique Show at Wilson Lodge
- May 2010**
 29-31 Memorial Day Celebration

The Oglebay Foundation • 304-243-4166 • 800-624-6988, ext. 4166 • www.oglebayfoundation.org

AMONG friends



Fall 2009 Volume 13 Number 2

Information and Updates for Friends of Oglebay

Oglebay Picnic Shelter Rebuilt Through Driehorst Family Foundation

A new picnic shelter, for groups that number 50 to 75, has been constructed in Oglebay's main picnic area through the generosity of the Driehorst Family Foundation. Our thanks go to Nancy Driehorst and her daughters, Judy

Vance and Joyce Jones, for making this gift possible. The shelter was dedicated in July in memory of husband and father, Fritz Driehorst. "This gift is significant because it replaces the deteriorating Oglebay Park Children's Association (OPCA) shelter that stood on the same site for more than half a century," says Randy Worls, president of The Oglebay Foundation. "It's an



The mantle over the fireplace was constructed using a wood column from the old shelter, symbolically connecting the old to the new.

ideal size for so many families and organizations."

Fritz Driehorst, a prominent Wheeling businessman, was a charter member of the OPCA board, helping to raise money for many years to bring Wheeling children from their neighborhood playgrounds to the parks during the summer months. This program has been ongoing since 1950 although it was placed under the umbrella of The Oglebay Foundation in 2008. Since its inception, over 200,000 visits to the parks have taken place through the OPCA program. *Cont'd page 2*

Susan Wheeler Estate House Dedicated in September

A generous gift from the family of the late Susan Wheeler has provided funds to build Oglebay's third deluxe cottage/ conference facility, the Susan Wheeler Estate House, as well as an extension of the walking trails system between the Wilson Lodge area and the Pine Room. In addition, fifty per cent of the rental income from the estate house will go toward maintenance and upkeep of these trails and the original walking trails, the latter constructed in the 1970s in the arboretum area. The facility is funded by a donation from Susan's sons Bruce, Doug, Brett, Wesley, and their father, Lew. A dedication ceremony was held on September 26.

Susan Wahl Wheeler lived her entire adult life in Wheeling, where she



The Wheeler Family with a map of the Susan Wheeler trail system.

joyfully raised four sons. She spent countless hours in volunteer work while enjoying activities and social events with her many friends. Susan's favorite pastime was walking at Oglebay which she did almost every day. "It is appropriate that income from this beautiful cottage will go toward future upkeep and maintenance of the Susan Wheeler Trails System," says her son Bruce. *Cont'd page 3*

Dear Friends,

Fall and winter bring an air of anticipation and excitement to the parks as activities change gradually and visitors, from near and far, look forward to a change of seasons and the 25th Anniversary of Oglebay's Winter Festival of Lights.

It has been a good year for the youth of our community through Access to the Parks and several other youth programs that afford participants the opportunity to enjoy their favorite recreational and sports activities. "Please be sure to thank all who have made it possible..." wrote one appreciative mother.

Park officials were pleased to dedicate two new facilities recently: the Driehorst Shelter and the Wheeler Estate House. The Oglebay Foundation thanks the families of Fritz Driehorst and Susan Wheeler for their gracious gifts in memory of their loved ones.

On a sad note, the parks lost a good friend recently - Kay Schenk of Wheeling. The Schenks, Kay and her late husband Albert, gifted the three-acre lake at Oglebay in 1953. In the late 1990s, Kay and her family provided funds for major upgrades to the lake and boathouse. This area remains one of the resort-park's most popular spots.

We hope you will visit soon to enjoy the beauty of the fall and winter seasons.. Once again, we appreciate your generous support of our youth programs and other activities and facilities. Wheeling's parks would not be what they are today without this support.

Sincerely,

Randy Worls, President
The Oglebay Foundation

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Some Access Donations Eligible for WV State Tax Credit

Your donation of \$500 or more to The Oglebay Foundation for the Access to the Parks program may be eligible for a 50% tax credit through West Virginia's Neighborhood Investment Program (NIP). Contributors in this amount will receive a tax credit voucher that attaches, with a program worksheet, to the appropriate WV tax form.

If you have further questions please go to www.wvdo.org/community/nip.html or call 800-982-8297 or contact The Oglebay Foundation at 304-243-4166.

Access to the Parks Successfully Completes Ten Years of Service

Long a dream of park officials, the Access to the Parks program got off the ground in 1999. While other youth programs at the parks focus on organized groups and lifetime

sports instruction, the Access program is geared to serve youth on an individual basis who could not otherwise afford facility fees at Oglebay and Wheeling Park. "The Oglebay Foundation was able to get Access started through undesignated contributions to our 1998 Friends of Oglebay campaign," says Randy Worls, president of The Oglebay Foundation. Prospective youngsters are identified for the program by the WV Department of Health and Human

Services and a letter is sent to their parents/ guardians. The boys and girls can then get a photo ID card that allows them to obtain an activity wristband at either park any day they wish.

The Oglebay Foundation pays the Wheeling Park Commission (WPC) for all facility fees incurred by the participants. At Wheeling Park, youngsters can swim, go boating, or play tennis, par-3 and miniature golf. At Oglebay, participants can swim, go boating, play tennis, par-3 and miniature golf, and visit the Good Zoo. Early on, the Access program operated only in the summer, but skating and skiing have been added to the mix in recent years.

"Access to the Parks is certainly unique in the country and is part of the WPC's goal to provide more free activities than any other municipal parks system of its size," says John Hargleroad, Oglebay's Director of Operations. "Most importantly, it allows more youngsters to come to the parks with their friends." Hargleroad recently received a letter from one appreciative mother who wrote: "Thanks again! Our family truly appreciates this program. Please be sure to thank all who have made it possible – donors, workers, etc. I can't say enough about how much we use this program."

While it is too early to tally attendance figures for this year, in 2008 almost \$100,000 in user fees was paid by The Oglebay Foundation to the WPC,

representing about 17,000 visits by youngsters in the program. In past years Access to the Parks has been funded through annual contributions to the Foundation and an early endowment gift from Frank and Amy O'Brien of Wheeling in memory of their daughter, Brigid. This year, and in future years, support will also come from the J.B. Chambers Memorial Foundation and the Hess Family Foundation through income from the Chambers and Hess endowment cottages which opened at Oglebay last year. The Robinson Parlin Trust, which supports several local youth programs, has also come aboard as a sponsor. "We thank these organizations for their support because it means the Access program will continue to operate in those years when annual gifts may vary," adds Worls.

Long-Time Parks Supporter Kathleen Hogan Schenk Passes Away

Kay Schenk, community volunteer extraordinaire, and dear friend of the parks, died in Wheeling on June 27. Widow of Albert Schenk III, it was through the generosity of this couple that Schenk Lake was constructed at Oglebay in 1953 to honor Albert's parents, Albert F. and Frances Schenk. Officials of The Oglebay Foundation and Wheeling Park Commission extended their condolences to the family on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of park visitors who have enjoyed this lively area over the years.

Kay continued the family's philanthropic involvement at the lake during her lifetime. The following excerpts are taken from the Fall, 1997, issue of Among Friends.

In a desire to honor the memory of their late husband and father, Kay Hogan Schenk and her family have made funds available that will add significant improvements to the lake area; paving and walkway projects, renovating the rest rooms, remodeling the boathouse interior, improving the lighting, and dredging and building up the shoreline to prevent future erosion. "Albert could see the joy that Schenk Lake brought to so many people," recalls Kay Schenk. "As a businessman (Schenk, Jepson & Co. Insurance), a member of the Wheeling Landscape Commission, and an avid golfer, he was in a position to observe the operation of the parks system and he felt it was very well run," Kay adds. She credits the late Sam Good (park commissioner for forty years) as instrumental in convincing Albert to provide funds for the lake. Albert Schenk died in 1995.

Since then, Albert, a veteran, has been publicly remembered each summer at the patriotic Cascading Waters and fireworks show at Schenk Lake during the July 4 holiday. The annual events also say "thank you" to the Schenk family for its lasting interest.

Driehorst Shelter continued from page 1

Slightly larger than the original shelter, the new facility features electricity, handicap-accessible rest rooms, and an improved parking area. One of the old wood columns was refinished and installed as the mantle above the fireplace, symbolically connecting the old to the new. In addition, the renovation of a number of family picnic sites directly across from the new shelter will occur as part of this project.

The extended Driehorst family has a long history of philanthropy with the first major gift coming in 1982 with the building of the entrance to the Arboretum. "This spot offers one of the most beautiful views at Oglebay," offers Landscape Architect Andy Barger. Ironically, this contribution led to an anonymous gift that allowed park officials to finish the walks system throughout the arboretum. A few years later a bequest from the Edward Driehorst Trust was established and is currently being used as a revolving loan fund for capital projects.

Other projects at Oglebay that have been made possible by the Driehorst Family Foundation include replacement of the historic Mansion columns in 2004, removal of the original Waddington Farm iron gates from a former entrance to the park on G.C. & P. Road and moving them to the entrance driveway of the museum, significant gifts to Phase I and Phase II of the Oglebay ski complex, and a major gift to the Good Zoo in 2007 for improvements, including the addition of the Red Panda display. The Driehorst family has also been generous to Oglebay Institute in support of the Mansion Museum.

Yates Foundation and Vaden Trust Important to Local Youth

The Yates Family Youth Lifetime Sports Foundation and the Vaden Children's Farm Trust are geared to meet more specialized needs for local youth. Established in 1997 by Wheeling native Ray Yates, and his wife Willie, the Yates Foundation provides funds for youngsters who wish to take lessons, practice, or participate in golf, tennis, soccer, hockey or baseball as a special interest, but cannot because of financial constraints. The generous couple believes that a child's dream to concentrate on one of these lifetime sports should come true.

The Vaden Children's Farm Trust is a private foundation but it works closely with the Wheeling Park Commission (WPC) in an important area - instilling a positive work ethic in young people. Since 1979 the Trust has helped fund work-training programs for the WPC in the areas of teen employment and docent (volunteer) opportunities. Originally established by the late Wheeling businessman Claude Vaden to provide opportunities for local youth to learn good work habits, funds from the foundation help employ about 200 youth between the ages of 14-18 every year.

"The WPC is the biggest employer of young people in the area," says CEO Doug Dalby. "We use the youngsters in more than thirty areas of the parks and they have the opportunity to gain experience under many different supervisors." "Not only is the extra income important to many of these teens and their families, but they are able to participate in park activities of their choice at no cost during their free time."

The Good Zoo also benefits from the Vaden Trust as it funds a docent (volunteer) program for young people ages 13-18. This program starts with a vigorous interview and 10-week training program in the winter. By spring and summer docents are able to assist with general animal care, and assist zoo educators at day camps, sleepovers, birthday parties, and other special events. In addition, the Sands Trust of Wheeling provides funds each year to transport Ohio County school children on field trips to the parks.

Wheeling Park Ice Rink Turns Fifty

Long lines of adults and youngsters alike greeted the opening of the Wheeling Park Ice Rink on December 26, 1959. Soon after, the Wheeling Figure Skating Club was formed and learn-to-skate classes became popular. Four years later, the Wheeling Amateur Hockey Association (WAHA) was formed and this organization has become one of the largest special interest groups in the parks. Construction of the ice rink helped turn Wheeling Park into a comprehensive year-round recreation area for the first time.



Susan Wheeler Estate House continued from page 1

Overlooking the Palmer golf course, the new facility sits in a commanding position on the hillside above the entrance to the Speidel Golf Club. Its rugged wood exterior belies the modern, comfortable décor on the inside of the six-bedroom cottage. There is a great room, with fireplace, that opens to a spacious dining area and kitchen. The latter features granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. Each bedroom has its own bathroom, with spacious shower stall, and a wall-mounted TV.

The Wheeler House will be available for rental to the public at the annual cottage lottery held November 1 at Wilson Lodge. Because of the executive retreat nature of the estate house accommodations, some dates are held for conference use. If you or your family is interested in discussing details of ways to create an endowment fund for Oglebay or Wheeling Park, contact Randy Worls at (local) 243-4001 or 800-624-6988, Ext. 4001.