

Looking Back

75 Years Ago Due to a federal snafu the Wheeling Park Commission (WPC) received grants to build two pools with Depression funds in the late 1930s. A Public Works Administration grant of \$42,545 was allocated for a pool at Wheeling Park to replace the obsolete facility that dated to the early 1900s. The grant was matched locally by a gift of \$52,000 from businessman W.E. Stone. When the pool opened in 1937, a couple of months before the Oglebay pool, it was hailed by the local press as "...the largest and most modern in this section" (this pool was replaced in 1968).

50 Years Ago Arnold Palmer, playing the Crispin Center course in 1962 for the first time, drew a huge crowd of spectators. He equaled the course record of nine-under-par during an exhibition match with West Virginia amateur champion Ed Tutwiler and A.J. Gray, Sr., who both earned the right to participate by winning a play-off. Sponsored by the Junior League of Wheeling, Palmer's appearance came shortly after the popular golfer had won three Master's Tournaments (he won an unprecedented fourth time in 1964).

15 Years Ago In 1997 the first Among Friends newsletter was published by The Oglebay Foundation to bring information and updates about Oglebay and Wheeling Park to our many friends and benefactors. Since then, thousands of copies have been sent to people who use and love our parks. Foundation staff appreciates your favorable response to our efforts and your generous gifts that will keep the parks viable for future generations.

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

Calendar of Events

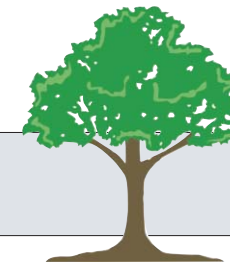
- May**
26-28 Memorial Day Celebration
- June**
9 USPTA Tennis Across America USTA Block Party
9-10 Kalkreuth Roofing Amateur Golf Classic
Crispin Golf Course
13-17 Senior Tennis Tournament
22-24 Oglebay Tennis Junior Classic
30 OVConnect Zoo Brew at the Good Zoo
- July**
3-4 Independence Celebration
3 Fireworks at Schenk Lake & Summer Entertainment Series
Performance
14-15 Stoney Hollow Men's Golf Amateur
Speidel Golf Club
26-29 West Virginia Open Tennis Tournament
- August**
24-26 Classic Car Show at Levenson Shelter & Site One

And don't forget about the Sunday Outdoor Entertainment series! For a complete schedule of musical performances, visit www.oglebay-resort.com/summer_ent.htm.

Among Friends

Spring 2012 Vol. 16 No. 1

Information and Updates for Friends of Oglebay



Dear Friends,

We hope you enjoy reading about the Oglebay outdoor pool which is 75 years old this year. Although the pool will need to be restored or replaced in the foreseeable future, it is a testament to the quality of post-Depression construction projects.

Staffers at both parks are planning a variety of summer camps for youngsters; there will be zoo, nature, and sports camps, and a traditional day camp at Wheeling Park. The Access to the Parks program, which provides facility access on an individual basis, will once again serve those who most benefit from it. Your generosity in supporting the Access program is greatly appreciated in the community.

It was good to welcome our friend Ron Kirby back to Oglebay recently to assist in the bunker restoration project at the Jones course. Ron led most of the design of the course when he worked for Robert Trent Jones, Sr. Although he divides his time between Florida and other courses around the world, now that he is semi-retired, he has maintained a connection with park staff.

As we start our 16th year of publishing Among Friends, we hope that you have been inspired by the stories that we have told in this newsletter. From the early pioneers who built a parks system in the midst of a great Depression to those of you who now share so future generations can build the memories that you have, the staff of The Oglebay Foundation and the Wheeling Park Commission say thank you.

Sincerely,

Randy Worls
The Oglebay Foundation



Oglebay's Swimming Pool – a Depression Project – is Seventy-Five Years Young

Oglebay's outdoor swimming pool - "the grand old lady" of the resort-park - turns 75 years of age this year. Numerous generations of park visitors, both local and out-of-towners, have enjoyed this summer oasis nestled in the valley at Crispin Center. Over the years, the pool has hosted aquaganzas, swim meets, swimming exhibitions (one in the 1940s featured Hollywood legend Buster Crabbe), and has survived the onslaught of thousands of day campers. The pool, as well as the adjoining building, called simply the Pine Room, is an example of the high quality of construction that went into post-Depression-era projects.

Several dozen Works Progress Administration (WPA) workmen began construction on the Oglebay pool in late 1936, using a federal grant of \$68,000, supplemented by a loan from the Sarita Oglebay Russel trust (with the loan to be paid back with pool revenue). John Hargleroad, operations director for the Wheeling Park Commission, shares information about the unique original plumbing. "All the rain water that fell in the area, plus the drains in the locker rooms, flowed into the pool," he says. "Flush and fill pools were very common at that time."

Although the pool opened quietly to the public in late August, 1937, "...as a test for the mechanism, to ascertain how many people can be accommodated, and if any changes would be necessary in the design," the "grand opening" was delayed until 1938. The pool and Pine Room, much of it constructed of natural sandstone quarried off nearby Peter's Run Road, and designed by local architect Fred Faris, are little changed on the outside. Both have required maintenance and refurbishing over the years and park officials are not certain how many years the pool has left. It may not be feasible to rehabilitate the present pool in the future; new green construction and energy efficiency will be needed for safety and practical reasons.

Of the approximately 1,000 Depression-era pools built in the U.S. in the 1930s there are only a few still open; most have been torn down, replaced, or the facility has been closed and designated as a "historic structure." Although the Oglebay pool is of a simple design to blend with its natural surroundings, many of the pools were of Art-Deco design and some were built above ground. The largest cluster still standing is in New York City.

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A Timeline of Golf at Oglebay and Wheeling Park - The Early Years

1926 After construction using mule skinnners and three-mule teams rented from a Pittsburgh company, the sporty nine-hole Wheeling Park course opened as Wheeling's first public course. Nine holes and a caddy cost golfers fifty cents.

1930 Oglebay's new nine hole course (the front nine of Crispin), with temporary sand greens, not cottonseed as rumored, was dedicated July 4. The first foursome to tee off included Wheeling's leading lady golfer, Fritz Stifel; her mother, Mrs. A.W. Stifel; and Bob Biery and J.R. McConaghie of the park staff. (Because of the Depression the long-awaited back nine did not open until 1938/39.)

1939 Caddy Camp's dining hall and rustic bunkhouses, with enough room to accommodate forty-two campers, was constructed on the site of the old Civilian Conservation Corps barracks at Oglebay. It was a vast improvement from the days when eight boys, at most, lived in tents on the present site of Haller Shelter and "scrounged" to earn twenty-five cents a day.

1939 The 1st annual trophy banquet of the combined memberships of the Oglebay Park Golf Club and the Women's Golf Club of Wheeling Park was a "distinctive event" in October.

1952 Pro golfer Betsy Rawls presented a clinic and exhibition at the Crispin course in July; arranged by park staffer Bob Biery, it drew the largest course crowd up to that date.

1953 A golf driving range was constructed on the northwest corner of Oglebay after 34 acres were gifted to the park by Joe Speidel. Designed by Brooks Wigginton, the 32-tee range featured privet hedge dividers and was the first recreation facility lighted for night play.

1962 The front nine of the picturesque Par-3 course and clubhouse/ski lodge opened to the public. When the second nine opened the next year, the area was lighted for night play. With the addition of skiing equipment, the facility became Oglebay's first season-spanning sports venue.

1964-65 The Crispin course received a renovation of all tees, and an old wooden bridge that spanned the ravine on No. 5 hole was replaced by an earthen walkway, allowing the use of golf carts for the first time.

To be continued in Fall newsletter



Zoo Camps Important Part of Education Mission

Conservation education has always been important to the mission of Oglebay's Good Zoo. For more than three decades zoo staff has welcomed youth groups, school students and teachers, and have sponsored camps, workshops and sleepovers in order to interest youngsters and adults in zoology, wildlife, and science. There is even a program for Scouts working on special projects or patches.

This year's summer zoo camps are special as they have been redesigned to focus on the natural sciences. This came about after staff worked with focus groups in which children and parents were separated for the purposes of discussion. "We learned that youngsters do not have the opportunities to play outdoors like they once



did," says zoo director Penny Miller. "Many of our camps will be geared to getting kids comfortable in the woods," she adds. More nature crafts will be included, as well as an emphasis on zoo and animal careers.

What kid can resist camp names like "Maximum Muddy Grubby" and "Wildthings, Warts and Wizards?" Zoo camps are available for ages 4 (pre-school) to 16 and, according to director of

education Vickie Markey, they fill up fast so registering early is desirable. "With the addition of the Gem Sluice, we are able to increase the physical sciences aspect to some of the camps. There will be opportunities to learn about geology, paleontology, and astronomy," says Markey.

To learn more about the range of Camps for Kids offered at Oglebay, visit the website at oglebgay-resort.com or call (304) 243-4000. For information about Wheeling Park's Day Camp call (304) 243-4085.

Bunker Restoration at Jones Golf Course Underway in 2012

After more than forty years of operation, the Jones Course at Speidel Golf Club is undergoing a complete bunker restoration program. Ron Kirby was a young designer with Robert Trent Jones, Sr., when construction occurred in the late 1960s, and now Kirby has returned to direct the restoration of the sand bunkers scattered throughout the course. "Over the years many of the original bunkers have been lost or altered due to wear and weather," says Kirby. "My goal is to make the bunkers easier and less costly to maintain while restoring the character that Mr. Jones had envisioned."

Nick Janovitch, superintendent of the Jones Course, says the new bunkers will be smaller, but deeper, and filled with better quality sand. "We plan to use the same type as the Palmer Course," he says. "This sand not only looks good, but drains better." Janovitch said the bunker project, as well as several other improvements, will be ongoing through 2012.

Ron Kirby, who lives in Florida, was with Jones Sr. for seven years, and then ran his own company for the next fifteen years, several with Gary Player. In 1986 Kirby joined the Jack Nicklaus Golf Design company, overseeing Nicklaus' European projects. He has designed more than 135 courses in the U.S., Caribbean, Japan, and Europe.

Access to the Parks to Begin Summer Season

After a dozen successful years, Access to the Parks is going strong, thanks to the support of so many of you. Your annual gifts to The Oglebay Foundation to fund this unique program have kept it operating for deserving youth in the Wheeling/Ohio County community. Access is a win-win situation; it allows youngsters who otherwise would seldom get to participate in park activities, because of the cost, to do so and it adds revenue income to the Wheeling Park Commission (WPC) budget. In 2011 the total value of services provided by Access to lower-income youth was in excess of \$200,000.

In 2011 more than 1,700 passes were issued. During the summer months participants visited the parks a total of 12,872 times and received in excess of \$160,000 in services. During the winter, 218 youth participated in skiing and 3,900 visits to the Wheeling Park ice rink were recorded, adding up to almost \$40,000 in services provided at no cost to the participant. "In the summer the youngsters especially enjoy the swimming pool at Wheeling Park and Oglebay's Good Zoo," says operations director John Hargleroad, "and the participation in winter activities has grown each year."

While the population in Wheeling and Ohio County has declined gradually, unemployment and under-employment has risen, making the Access program more important than ever. Your annual gift or endowment gift to Access to the Park, % The Oglebay Foundation, will help make it possible for even more young people to build treasured memories at Oglebay and Wheeling Park, assuring that our parks system is here for everyone.



Wheeling Park Trivia

What is the real name of the "White Palace?"

The beloved White Palace, a gathering place for many generations, was officially named the Otto Schenk Memorial Pavilion when the building opened to the public in June, 1926. It replaced the old "casino" that was destroyed by fire on the closing day of the park's first season. Schenk, a renowned Wheeling businessman, chaired the committee to secure the park for public use and served as the first chairman of the Wheeling Park Commission (WPC).

What is the story behind the three "distortion mirrors" on the first floor of the White Palace?

When Wheeling Park was being readied for its opening, numerous gifts were donated by the public to add to the ambience of the new recreation area. The three distortion mirrors were given to the WPC by the Civitan Club for use in the old "casino." Other gifts included two white swans, an American flag, five Canadian geese, 25 park benches, and 500 rose bushes, the latter a gift from Dieckmann's, a landscape and floral business located close to the park.

How did the Doughboy statue come to be at Wheeling Park?

"The Spirit of the American Doughboy" statue was designed by sculptor E.M. Viquesney, produced by McCurdy's Monument Works of Wheeling, and presented by the Service Star Legion (Wheeling Chapter No. 1) on Armistice Day, 1931. Inscription: In Honor Of All Who Served In World War 1917-1918. It stands near the Bertschy Gates at the park exit. Speaker at the dedication was William Gompers, father of retired-attorney Joseph A. Gompers of Wheeling (who was in attendance as a 7-year old child). Producers of the recently-filmed Doughboy movie, much of it shot locally, hope to see it released nationally in 2012. Park officials hope to be able to restore the statue in the near future as significant damage has occurred to it over the years.



Nick Janovitch, left, Superintendent of the Jones Course at Oglebay, and Ron Kirby, Golf Course Architect, review plans for restoring the bunkers on the course.