

THE OUILMETTE HERITAGE

Newsletter of the Wilmette Historical Society

Stolp School, Class of '37

George Randall, who still lives in the Village, long ago gave the Museum a document that is one of our favorites: the Stolp School yearbook for the class of 1937. George had worked on the yearbook's committee himself, taking a lot of the photos. As far as we know, this is the only surviving copy.

Byron C. Stolp School, named after the Village's first and much-loved doctor, was built in 1914-15 as a junior high for 7th and 8th grades, adjoining Central School. By the time it closed in 1962, the two-story, eight-classroom school had become familiar territory to thousands of Wilmette schoolchildren over the years.

This 1937 yearbook, entitled "Shadows," was the school's very first, starting a long tradition. Typewritten and stapled together into a stiff paper cover, it is a modest volume, but a fascinating one. The best parts are the photos of the students. Each name and photo suggests a life-story. Some of these we know, most of them we don't. But three of the kids, all of them members of popular art teacher Everett Saunders's new Art Club, went on to earn distinguished international reputations in different branches of the arts.



Ted Gorey drawing for the 1937 "Shadows"

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual Meeting & Lecture "Benjamin Marshall, Architect"

Sunday, January 29
2:00-3:30 p.m.

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Children's Program "Clara Barton"

Presidents' Day
Monday, February 20
1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

See page 5

Tour "Wilmette Water Plant"

Saturday, March 10
10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

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Lecture "Lost on the Lady Elgin"

Sunday, April 15
2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

See page 5

Housewalk "Cooler by the Lake"

Sunday, May 20
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.

See page 4

History Book Club

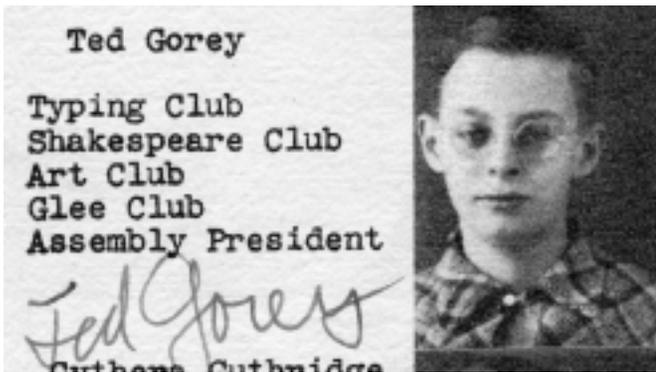
Free and open to the public
3rd Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.
See our website for current reading selections

For more news, visit our website:

www.wilmettehistory.org

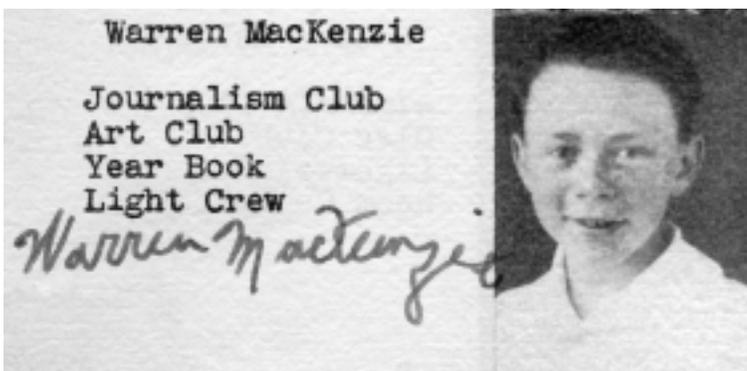
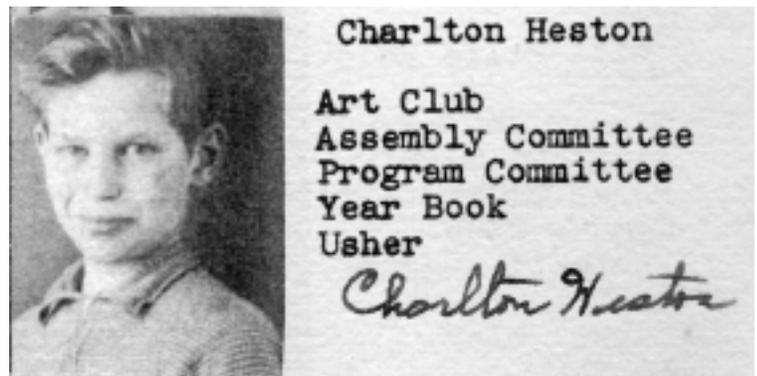
Stolp School, Class of '37

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Edward Gorey moved to Wilmette with his parents in 1934; by 1936 they were living in what are now the Linden Crest Apartments at 5th and Linden, and he had started at Stolp. In his later life as an illustrator, Gorey developed a cult following through books like *The Gashlycrumb Tinies* and collections like *Amphigorey*, featuring quirky pen-and-ink sketches of mysterious gothic figures. For years, animated versions of his drawings ran during the opening credits of the “Mystery” episodes of Masterpiece Theatre on PBS. The funny drawings he did for the Stolp yearbook may well count as his first “published” artwork.

Charlton Heston, by far the most famous of the three, also had the closest ties to Wilmette. With his mother and stepfather, he moved to the village in the mid-1930s, living at 325 Maple Avenue; his parents and sister remained in Wilmette for the rest of their lives. After Stolp, Heston attended New Trier and Northwestern, in both of whose drama programs he blossomed as an actor. In 1952, Cecil B. DeMille’s *Greatest Show on Earth* made him a star, the first of many memorable starring roles in film.



Warren MacKenzie, one of the two 8th-graders in charge of editing the yearbook, attended New Trier and then the School of the Art Institute, where his classmate Gorey also spent a semester. MacKenzie went on to become a modern master of the ceramic arts, a potter of genius whose simple yet functional creations can be found in museums the world over. From his studio in Stillwater, Minnesota, he continues to fire pots that are sold to eager collectors through the Northern Clay Center in Minneapolis.

One of the delights of this lone copy of the yearbook is that the donor, George Randall, managed to get almost all of his teachers and fellow students to scrawl their signatures next to their photos. All three of these kids, like many of their classmates, left Wilmette to make their careers in the wider world, and never came back to stay. But thanks to this tattered keepsake, a glimpse of their lives as children has been preserved forever.

~Patrick Leary