Pride in the Past, Faith in the Future
by Janet Dahl, Legacy Committee

These words, one of the mottos of the Village of Western Springs, were the inspiration for the Quasquicentennial Celebration of 2011.

There is much to be proud of in our Village: local businesses, excellent schools, active churches, a dedicated municipal staff, beautiful homes and streets and an engaged citizenry. There is respect for tradition, values and the roots that sustain the quality of our lives.

These strengths, and the countless volunteer hours of many individuals, were reflected last year as we celebrated our milestone of 125 years.

To mark the 125th year of incorporation, we kicked off the year with a family style celebration: a birthday party on January 30th at McClure Middle School. The talents of our choirs, dancers, preschoolers, crafters and library staff melded into a multi-generational event. Ice skating, ice carving demonstrations, s’mores from our scouting organizations and a bonfire on the sports field were a once in a lifetime experience. The Tower cake, executed to scale by Kirschbaum’s, and donated with enough slices for a thousand residents made the afternoon extra sweet.

In June, the Gathering on the Green was super sized (Qupersized?) to include a movie night and a stirring musical celebration of faith by an all-community chorus. The Reverend Rich Kircherr organized an ice cream social after this concert on the Tower Green that was enjoyed by all.

December marked the end of our “Q” year, and more memories were created at the Christmas Walk, sponsored by the Western Springs Business Association. The Quasquicentennial Committee added a laser light show to dazzle the crowd. From Lyons Township High School, a flash mob danced in the streets. Cookies were decorated, the Christmas tree was lit, and Santa arrived to share the season of giving. Cold weather did not prevent several thousand from crowding the downtown to celebrate. The Legacy Committee presented a gift of almost $50,000, collected from both our generous business community and individual residents, to preserve and improve the historical Water Tower on the Village Green.

This special edition of Tower Topics seeks both to bid a fond farewell to a special celebration, and to thank all who made it possible. Inside, those who financially supported this endeavor are recognized.

There are too many citizens and Village staff who donated time and special skills to mention individually, but a select few worked endlessly to bring us together for this Quasquicentennial.

Jim Tilden, Heather Molinaro, Mic Cagney and Joe Lane must be particularly thanked. Jim was the “go-to” man for each event, as well as a remarkable Master of Ceremonies and facilitator. He was made super-human by Heather’s unending organization. Mic dreamed dreams and made them happen and then enjoyed every moment with the enthusiasm of a kid.

(Pride in the Past—Continued on Page 2)
THE LEGACY GIFT

The Quasquicentennial Committee had two goals: to celebrate the enduring character of our hometown, and to leave a celebratory gift that would be enjoyed by future generations. The Legacy Committee was formed and divided its duties into separate missions. The first was to solicit funds, and the second was to select a meaningful and appropriate gift. Both were challenges that the committee embraced.

The names within this Tower Topics represent generous contributions from our citizens and business. They also represent trust that the funds would be conscientiously and appropriately spent. We appreciate the confidence the community placed in us. We sought broad input and deliberate cost analyses.

The committee did not take lightly the task of winnowing down many excellent suggestions. Budget, maintenance, utility, Village architecture and values were all part of the process. All conversations seemed to lead back to the Tower Green. After numerous meetings and community presentations, there was almost universal consensus that our triangular park with its iconic Water Tower should be the location for the gift. This was simply a starting point as many alternatives were considered and investigated.

The triangular nature of the park, its personality as a passive green space, the historical status of the Tower, and engineering considerations all required accommodation. Numerous field trips to the site in consideration of water features, signage, benches and statuary informed the committee of how fragile and beautiful the balance of the park is. It also brought to the committee’s attention that the Water Tower itself was showing its age.

The Tower is the visual heart of the Village, and the icon we think of when we think of our “home”. It has symbolic and emotional importance to the residents. As we surveyed the Tower Green, the Legacy Committee noticed that the stairs were in disrepair, separating from the Tower and crumbling. We enlisted Randy Machelski of JRJ Landscape Architects to help us develop a vision. We began to re-imagine the entrance. Thus a partnership with the Village evolved.

(Pride in the Past—Continued from Page One)

Joe Lane, of Casey’s, was a wonderful liaison with the Western Springs Business Association (WSBA), and gave more hours than he was asked.

All of the Village departments took on extra duties for the year. In particular, the Quasquicentennial committee received enormous personal assistance from Martin Scott and Kathy Ritchey from the Community Development Department and Matt Supert, Department of Municipal Services. Working tirelessly to plan and effectuate the Committee’s vision was Ingrid Velkme, Director of Administrative Services. Village Manager Patrick Higgins, our in-house historian, was the impetus for the Quasquicentennial festivities. With his passion for the past and future of Western Springs, he commandeered an “all-in” spirit at Village Hall. This enthusiasm was appreciated and shared by countless residents who took the time to volunteer, organize and enjoy the year-long party.

Western Springs is a Village that we are proud to call home. Thank you to all who shared the 125th birthday.

Next up: the Western Springs Sesquicentennial, in 2036. Don’t worry, we will get new volunteers! But put it on your calendar. That is Faith in the Future.

The Tower was built in 1892 on Block A of the Village, donated by Charles and Ruth Collins. The design emanated from a resident engineer, Benezette Williams. This building was the cornerstone of the water system for the Village, as well as the site of police, court and Village offices for 60 years. In 1981, the Tower was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Today it is the Village’s most distinctive landmark and houses our Historical Society Museum.
THE CONCEPT PLANS

For your review, we have included two concept plans for the Water Tower Entry Enhancement. The “Proposed Concept” drawing is the plan we have acquired funding for. The Village will replace and revitalize the stairs, adding some beautiful curves to echo the curves of the tower, and widen the walkway. The Legacy donations will add seat walls, decorative brick edging and a bronze medallion honoring the Quasquicentennial year. This project perfectly reflects the motto *Pride in the Past, Faith in the Future*. For those of us living in the present, this will be a more beautiful symbol of the Village in the heart of the Tower Green.

The “Potential Enhancements” drawing shows the bigger dreams that we allowed to percolate as we drafted this project. These dreams include concrete planters, additional seat walls and wider sidewalks linking to the walkways. If there is broad support and financial commitment in years to come, other improvements (not shown) could include lighting, sound systems, statuary and signage.

A Village with our talented and dedicated citizens should be able to make some of these dreams come to fruition. A group of citizens will commence to explore additional endowment opportunities for this project. When the Tower has its 125th birthday, in 2017, we hope to have the most beautiful green space to surround it and a party to celebrate it.

In the meantime, we wish to thank all of the generous individuals and businesses that have helped us by donating. You honor the past and the present, and will touch the future.

If you forgot to contribute, or were waiting to see the project selected, do not hesitate to send a donation to the Quasquicentennial Legacy Fund at Village Hall, 740 Hillgrove Avenue, Western Springs, IL 60558. It is never too late.

To every resident who traveled this journey with the Legacy Committee to select our gift, thank you for your wisdom and your time. You make Western Springs the great Village it is. To those who share the dream of a truly magnificent Tower Green, stay tuned.... THE LEGACY COMMITTEE/Contact Janet Dahl @ Jdahl921@gmail.com

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Address ____________________________________________________________

Email __________________________ Phone __________________________

Please discuss the deductibility of gifts to a government body with your tax preparer.

*Thank You!*
125TH ANNIVERSARY LEGACY GIFT CAMPAIGN

Our residents, businesses and companies serving Western Springs have donated over $44,000 towards a legacy gift to honor the Village’s 125th Anniversary. Thank you to the following donors who have made contributions to date.

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TOWER ($1000)
The Scott Hudson Family
Lester and Cecilia Kirschbaum
David and Ann Lawrence
Terri and Don Liebentritt
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