

# Historic Preservation Commission

## Property of the Season – Fall 2011

### 4025 West Route 34

The Fall 2011 Property of the Season honors go to the two log cabins at 4025 West Route 34. These cabins, owned by inventor and businessman Dr. Gregory Arzoumanidis and his wife Anastasia, currently house the ReJoyce Design and Consignment shop and Kindred Spirits Intuitive Arts Center.



Although the two cabins at the intersection of Route 34 and Route 71 have been a distinctive sight in the Village for many years, no official date exists on file for their construction. However, local residents remember them in this location as early as the 1930s. The cabins were constructed of de-barked logs that are saddle notched together with the ends of the logs extending roughly two feet out from the edge of each cabin. The interior walls are plaster and the stacked limestone fireplace, located in the larger of the two cabins, starts in the basement and continues up through the floor to the roofline. A stone fireplace also graces the main room of the smaller cabin. Vaulted ceilings with exposed beams are visible inside each cabin. Subtle changes have been made to the cabins over the years. The larger cabin's back porch, which overlooks Waubensee Creek, was enclosed with large windows to give an open and inviting view of the creek below. The garage was repurposed into a workroom with additional storage space and the area near the front door was expanded to allow for handicapped accessibility.

The property was originally part of 400 acres purchased by John Pearce in 1843 from the Federal Government under President James Tyler. The land remained in the Pearce family for several generations. John Pearce's younger brother Colvin and wife Lucy lived here with their daughters Bernice and Dora. Dora Pearce Cooney



eventually sold their 1.5 acres to Ernst and Marguerite Scheuermann in 1936. The Scheuermanns remained owners of the property until 1952 when it was sold to John and Ruth E. Curtis. The property was sold in 1975 to William and Irene Booras who



opened and operated the Old Oak Creek Shoppe until 1985, when they sold the business and property to Mr. and Mrs. Arzoumanidis.

The smaller of the two cabins was the home of Frank and Alice Weiss for more than a decade from the late 1940s till about 1959. Jack Weiss Jr. remembers the cabin well. As a young child, he lived on Grant Street in Oswego and would walk to his grandparents' home. They rented the smaller cabin from John and Ruth Curtis, who lived in the larger cabin next door. The Curtis's owned a large grocery store in Aurora off of New York Street and Hill Avenue. His grandparent's cabin contained two bedrooms and a small bathroom down the hall on the right off of the kitchen which had its own small eat-in area. The living room had a large fireplace and was a very comfortable, rustic space. There was a flight of stairs off of the small kitchen along a side porch that would take them down to the carport and another flight of stairs down to the basement. The basement had an old octopus coal furnace that he and his father would stoke at night. The furnace was very efficient and did a lovely job keeping them nice and warm during the cooler months. In the summers, the windows would be left open at night, and Jack has fond memories of the trucks along the 'old two-lane cow path' (Route 34) coming from the Chicago Stock Yards that would have to stop at the (then) stop sign at Routes 34 and 71. The noise of the trucks stopping and then winding through their gears to get back up to speed again would reverberate through the air on those quiet nights. There was also a very nice built-in swimming pool between the two cabins, and as a child, Jack enjoyed fishing in Waubensee Creek off of the embankment behind the larger cabin.

The cabins eventually became commercial properties after the unexpected death of Mrs. Ruth Curtis and housed such businesses as All-Readi Printing, which Jack remembered visiting years later, remarking how small the cabin felt as an adult! Other businesses over the years have included Trisha's Country Kitchen, Pathfinders Place Ministries, and the Old Oak Creek Shoppe.

Old Oak Creek Shoppe was a well-known tearoom in the western suburbs which provided a limited menu of delicious fresh sandwiches and was famous for its scrumptious Baklava and other Greek desserts. A well-appointed gift shop full of antiques and custom made jewelry accompanied the tearoom. Old Oak Creek Shoppe generously hosted community groups such as the Oswegoland Women's Civic Club and others. It closed in the early 2000s and was replaced by the Fox River Music Academy, which moved to its new location in 2010. ❖