



CEDARBURG CHRONICLES

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
CEDARBURG HISTORY MUSEUM

JULY 2023

VOL. 2 No. 3

Cedarburg
History
Museum

N58 W6194
Columbia Rd

Cedarburg,
WI 53012

262-377-5856

cedarburghm.org

Joel Willems,
Director

joel@
cedarburghm.org



SCAN ME



KIEKHAEFER MERCURY, MARKETING SPEED

When you name your company Mercury, after the Roman god known for fleetness of foot, it stands to reason that you will focus on the speed of your product.

After World War II, Americans were eager for sports viewing. Thousands and sometimes more than ten thousand race fans watched professional boat races on local lakes and rivers. Minor Glick and Fred Gandt of Cedarburg often raced to victory with single outboards sporting far less horsepower than today's boats. Mercury motors have raced in regional, national and international events ever since.



From August 11-13 of this year, Sheboygan will host the Mercury Racing Midwest Challenge,



Photo of Pappy Glick racing his boat that he constructed in the basement of his Cedarburg home- courtesy of Glick Family.

Index

Kiekhaefer Exhibit	1
Kiekhaefer NASCAR	2
Thor Outboard Motor	3
Changed Exhibits	4&5
Poetry Corner	5
Loan Request.	5
Events Calendar	6

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT

*A series on what made
Cedarburg including the
families, companies & buildings*

KIEKHAEFER ENTERS NASCAR

by Joel Willems

In the 1950s, Carl took Mercury racing from the water to land. First beginning with road races in Mexico, in 1954 Kiekhaefer took NASCAR by storm. Teams of drivers with multi-cars hauled to race tracks in enclosed trailers had never been seen before.



Professional top mechanics working on a large number of new motors was a far call from the days of drivers supping up their own bootleg carrying cars. Yet most racers were still driving their personal vehicles to the dirt tracks. The dedication to professionalism paid off as Mercury Marine Chryslers won 22 of the 45 Grand National races in 1955. 1955 was also the final year of AAA sanctioned races with Kiekhaefer cars sweeping that series too.

During the 1955 season, the Mercury Outboards research laboratory in Oshkosh served as the operations headquarters. Carl's racing cars never ran on tires that had less than 500 miles on them, another first standard for auto racing. In order to get the required mileage, his personal cars and other company autos all had racing tires on them. When office personnel drove around the city, they would be putting on the required miles on the tires. The tires were then examined by Carl and stockpiled for race days.

Carl hired a team of the top drivers of those days. The 1955 season was won by Tim Flock with Buck Baker in second. Both these drivers were part of the Mercury Outboards team. In third place was Lee Petty.

Talking to the troops, Carl explains how he wants it done to drivers Charlie Scott, Tim Flock, Fonty Flock, Frank Mundy, Buck Baker and Speedy Thompson at the 1956 Daytona Speedweeks



There was a shakeup of the team before the 1956 season. Some of the drivers cited favoritism while others bucked at the constant oversight. But the Kiekhaefer cars still roared to the finish line as they won 30 of the 56 races. Buck Baker won the title that year.

The vast majority of the races were still on dirt tracks. The powerful Mercury Chryslers sucked up a lot of air, and with that came the dirt as well. Carl took samples of dirt from all the tracks. He then got Purolator to produce paper air filters, another first that has now become an industry standard.

Kiekhaefer's personal touch was everywhere, even if it drove the drivers to ulcers. No where was this more visible then when he supervised the pit crews at the races. His well-drilled crew of mechanics had a 48-second pit standard, far faster than any other crew out there. No one else had put that much thought into all the minutiae. It just wasn't done before Kiekhaefer entered the racing scene. However, as quickly as he entered NASCAR he was gone just as fast. 1956 was his last season.

Stories continued

The NASCAR expenses were huge. Before the 1956 season the headquarters of the operation was shifted from Oshkosh to Charlotte. Former employee Don Ertl remembers arriving at the new location with Carl. A police officer was there to open the lock on the mostly empty warehouse. The next day a series of salesman met with the Mercury boss and left with orders to fill the building with everything expected for a top-of-the-line automotive lab.

All these costs were footed by the marketing department of the outboard motor company. However, the prestige of winning car racing championships didn't translate into the same percentage of increased sales. In fact, during the 1956 season many of the racing fans would boo when the now-familiar Mercury Outboard trucks would show up. Kiekhaefer called it quits for good before the 1957 season. The focus was back on boat racing.

CEDARBURG HISTORY MUSEUM CEDARBURG REMEMBERS:

Kiekhaefer Mercury Marine



**JULY 22, 2023
6:00PM – 8:00PM**

STORIES & DISCUSSION

**FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
REFRESHMENTS SERVED**

**AT THE CEDARBURG HISTORY MUSEUM
N58W6194 COLUMBIA RD
RSVP TO JOEL@CEDARBURGHM.ORG**

CEDARBURG HISTORY MUSEUM HOSTS:

Talk on Milwaukee's 1917 Tragic Bombing



BY JAMES HEINZ,
FORMER POLICEMAN & MILWAUKEE HISTORIAN

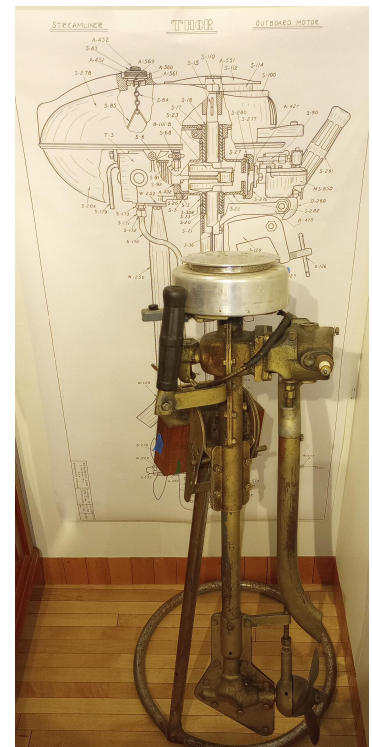
FREE EVENT, LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

**AT THE CEDARBURG HISTORY MUSEUM
N58W6194 COLUMBIA RD
7:00 PM, TUE. AUG 15, 2023
RSVP TO JOEL@CEDARBURGHM.ORG**

ARTIFACT SPOTLIGHT

*History of Kiekhaefer
Mercury Marine exhibit*

This Thor outboard motor was made by the Cedarburg Manufacturing Co. The company went out of business in 1938 and Karl Kiekhaefer became head of the new business to acquire the warehouse. Nearly 400 of these motors were left behind in need of repairs. This motor is part of the Judy Jepson Collection.





TIME CAPSULE

Important dates, events and people in Cedarburg's History

On **May 16, 1897** Hilgen Spring Park re-opened for the season. Built that spring were new benches/tables and a new band stand. James Hilgen was again the owner and operator and remained so until 1921. In 1985, Cedarburg built an exact replica of this band stand / gazebo on the corner of Evergreen and Pine Street.



VINTAGE RECIPE

From "Recipes and Rhymes of Late Victorian Times" by Hildreth V. McCutcheon

APPLESAUCE BREAD

½ cup white sugar
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup butter
2 eggs
1 ½ cups thick applesauce
1 tsp. Vanilla
2 cups flour
1 tsp. Baking soda

Cream sugar and butter. Add eggs and beat well. Mix in applesauce and vanilla. Add flour sifted with soda. Beat thoroughly. Grease and flour 2 loaf pans. Bake 550F, 1 hour.

FOURTH OF JULY PARADE

The Cedarburg Chamber of Commerce organized another great July 4th Parade. It was so much fun riding and waving in the 1922 Model T. along with Brian Bradley. Huge thank-you to the drivers, Pete and DeWayne. Also to the high-wheel bicycle men who excited the crowd, young and old, Steve and Wayne. What a wonderful crowd for the Fourth, Cedarburg!



Afterwards, we were all invited to a 150th birthday party for a historic Cedarburg house. Cookies, lemonade and a cookout were all courtesy of Mark and Laura Bruederle. They are the 4th Generation of direct Hilgen descendants to live in the historic house. It still has original shutters, rolled wavy windows, fabric wallpaper and a round medallion on the front parlor ceiling, a Hilgen House trademark.



MUSEUM NICHES

Three windows on the street changing one display about once a month

We welcome on loan from the Cedarburg Art Museum this wooden pulley wheel from the now gone Columbia Mill constructed by Dr. Luening. It was Luening who gave rise to the Cedarburg name when he called his wooden house *Cedarburg* or Cedar Castle.

Two of our windows also changed at the end of June. One of them showcases some of our summer



merchandise for sale in the gift shop. Thank you for supporting the museum!

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS

From welcoming visitors, researching & writing, or planning & staffing events

Upcoming local events that we could use some temporary assistance.

SEPTEMBER 16-17: WINE & HARVEST
OCT. 7-8: CEDARBURG COLLECTORS
NOVEMBER: WINTER EXHIBIT INSTALL

Contact joel@cedarburghm.org

ARTIFACT LOAN REQUEST

Community contributions to our history

Cedarburg History Museum has upcoming exhibits that you may be able to help us. Our Magic of a Cedarburg Snowfall display from November 2023 through January 2024. We are seeking your recent or historic photos for winter sports in Cedarburg. In 2024 our Civil War exhibit could use photos or stories of your families' local involvement or in one of the regiments.



I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

~by Walt Whitman

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear;
Those of mechanics—each one singing his, as it should be, blithe and strong;
The carpenter singing his, as he measures his plank or beam,
The mason singing his, as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work;
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat—the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck;
The delicious singing of the mother—or of the young wife at work—or of the girl sewing or washing—
Each singing what belongs to her, and to none else;
The day what belongs to the day—
At night, the party of young fellows, robust, friendly,
Singing, with open mouths, their strong melodious songs.

POETRY CORNER

Cedarburg History Museum
N57 W6192 Columbia Road
Cedarburg, WI 53012



Our Friends of the Museum

EVENT CALENDAR

July 22nd: Further Mercury Marine Exhibit event

August 3: *Cedarburg After 5*, visitor center & museum open until 8pm

August 15: Free Talk by James Heinz about Milwaukee history

September 2: Mercury Marine event, Don Ertle stories of Carl

September 9: Beer History talk with Dr. Patrick Steele of Concordia U

Septembe 16-17: Wine & Harvest Festival Weekend

October 7-8: Collectors Weekend at the Cedarburg History Museum

BITS & PIECES

Cedarburg had perhaps the busiest Strawberry Festival yet towards the end of June. We welcomed over 540 visitors. Special thanks to all our volunteers who made it possible for us to staff the museum, rent the parking lot and have an outdoor information/sales booth. We are always looking for others to volunteer a shift.

The museum is asking for any local photographs of Cedarburg winter sports for our winter exhibit, The Magic of a Cedarburg Snowfall. Scans can be taken and returned to you.

If you would like to contribute to our quarterly newsletter, please contact our director, Joel Willems, at joel@cedarburghm.org