

Freeman celebrates 160 YEARS



Freeman file photo

Freeman carriers assembled for a photo on April 13, 1937, outside the Freeman plant.

By Brian Huber
bhuber@conley.net.com
262-513-2674

WAUKESHA — Fred Keller knows full well the value of a newspaper in providing information, chronicling the news of the day and civic affairs.

The Sussex historian who, along with his personal effects, was instrumental in starting the Sussex-Lannon-Lisbon Historical Society, has been reading *The Freeman* since 1946, as a teen in the Sussex Mills office run by his father and which he later owned.

Apart from the news of the area, state, nation and world, Keller illustrates the personal connections people make with their newspaper. He recently wrote *The Freeman*, dropping names of friends like Freeman correspondents Chuck Delsman and Kelly Smith and area historian John Schoenknecht. He also has included Freeman stories in the scrapbooks he said he's made for his 11 grandchildren highlighting their exploits in area schools.

"It tells you what things have happened, it tells you how they are resolved and that's important to have that information. I want to know what's happening and react to it or visit it or talk about it or discuss it," Keller said.

That reliance on local news of our area goes well past the county lines — Keller said he regularly sends clippings to friends in Florida who want to stay abreast of developments here.



Freeman file photo

The first 3-D newspaper ad appeared in the pages of the *Freeman* June 12, 1953, prompting congratulations from newspapers around the country. Gib Koenig, *Freeman* general manager, said requests for copies of the paper came from as far away as Toronto and Puerto Rico.

Freeman

From Page 1A

Those kinds of connections based on local affairs are part of why we are still here today, 180 years after Vol. 1, No. 1 of the Waukesha Freeman rolled off the presses, with its editors stating, "While we have charge of its columns, it will speak our own sentiments on all questions, and on every occasion. ... We are under nobody's control, and shall submit to nobody's direction."

From its beginning, The Freeman was devoted to the advancement of human rights — founded as an organ to advocate for abolition, it later was a booster of the women's suffrage movement as noted suffragist Theodora Winton married Freeman owner H.M. Youmans. But its bread and butter always has been local news. In 1874, the paper's slogan became, "Devoted to the interests of Waukesha County."

And that's where its focus and strength remain. Miriam Wellford and Hans Hamm, daughter and son-in-law of Henry A. Youmans, said the paper's mission is to keep the public informed of what's going on in the community — and again, the doings of government. Hamm said recent coverage of the local school board race helped him decide for — and against — whom to cast his vote. "That story was very good. It's the type of thing you have to be doing," he said.

Wellford recalled growing up in the family business, helping on election nights as she and her siblings took calls from reporters reporting vote totals from around the county and answering phones other times. She also worked in circulation and really enjoyed proofreading, where she was given a nickname of "Miss Dottie Jones."

She recalled people expressing their anger over editorials in the paper, which always retained a fiercely independent voice.

"It sure caused a lot of arguments, I'll tell you that," she said.

But even when The Freeman pulled no punches in covering local officials, the paper, which always was friends with the children of some of those officials, like former District Attorney Herman Salen, caught up in gambling intrigue, and Harold Owens, the Waukesha mayor the paper sued to get a report on the conduct of police officers in a landmark open records case.

The Freeman did it with aplomb, too. The Freeman designed the first 3-D newspaper ad in 1953, sending 3-D glasses out to readers with the paper, an innovation that caught the attention of papers around the nation.

And, yes, today's news is, as they say the first rough draft of history. Schoenkecht knows this well, often using historical Freeman information for his long-running history columns in the paper.

"As one of the longest operating businesses in Waukesha, the Freeman has been the pulse of the community. Agree with the editors or not, the words 'Did you see what was in the Freeman today?' have been uttered for many years by Waukesha County readers. As a valuable resource in the past, the Freeman archives contain the history of our city for generations to come," he said.

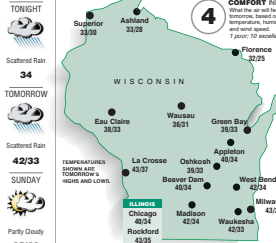
As it rounds the corner toward the big 161, the Freeman just like in its earliest years face a new era, one of technological innovations and unimaginable progress ahead. And we are not content to rest on our laurels.

"We are extremely proud of The Freeman's long and extraordinary history. It is truly an honor to be a part of this newspaper. The Freeman's rich heritage continues to inspire us today as we carry on the paper's important legacy by serving our community with essential news and information," said Freeman Publisher & Editor-in-Chief Bill Yorth.

From Mukwonago to Menomonee Falls, from Butler to Dousman, The Freeman remains "devoted to the interests of Waukesha County."



Leadership lives here.



High/Low Waukesha	57/43			
Normal High/Low	61/49			
Last year's high for date	47/31			
Last year's low for date	49			
Precipitation	0.00"			
Prchpc. month to date	1.57"			
Prchpc. year to date	7.57"			
Snowfall Yesterday	0.0"			
Snow season to date	48.6"			
Overcast hours, last 24 hours	10			
Apr 1	Apr 12	Apr 14	Apr 16	Apr 24
New	First	Full	Last	Peak
Sunrise today	7:15 a.m.	Moonrise tomorrow	4:08 a.m.	
Sunrise tomorrow	6:38 a.m.	Moonset tomorrow	1:48 p.m.	

Inspired. Motivated. Ready to Lead.

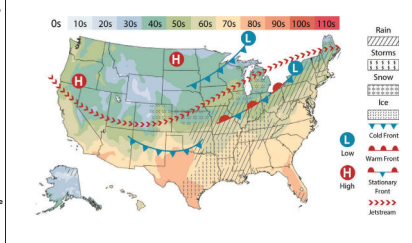
At St. John's Northwestern, we inspire and motivate young people to achieve their full potential, and prepare them for leadership roles the future demands.

Delafield, Wisconsin
Boarding or day school options available

1-800-752-2338
www.sjnma.org

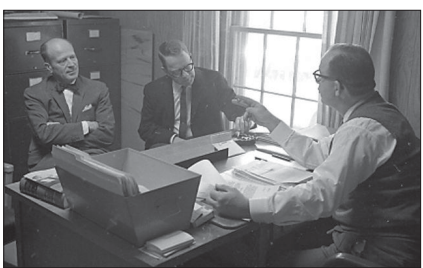
Space available for academic year 2018-2019. Young men and women in grades 7 through 12 are invited to apply for admission.

NATIONAL FORECAST



Tonight:	Mostly cloudy. Chance of light rain until early morning, then clearing.
Friday:	Mostly cloudy. Chance of rain and snow early in the morning. Lows in the mid 30s. North winds 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation 50 percent.
Saturday:	Partly sunny.

City	High	Low
ATLANTA	77	64
CHICAGO	64	54
DALLAS	64	53
DENVER	62	42
LOS ANGELES	78	58
MIAMI	78	78
MINNEAPOLIS	62	52
NEW YORK	68	53
PHOENIX	63	53
SEATTLE	61	47
ST. LOUIS	62	48
WASHINGTON	64	54



Freeman file photo
Freeman Publisher Henry Youmans Jr., center, asked City Attorney John Buckley, right, to see a copy of a police personnel report Dec. 17, 1963, and was refused, prompting The Freeman to sue the city in a landmark open records case. Also pictured is Freeman editor G.H. Koernig, left.



Waukesha County Museum photo
Built in 1879, this building on Grand Avenue was the first permanent home of the Freeman, built by H.M. Youmans, who is shown standing in the doorway at the left. At the far left is T.W. Haight, an early editor.



Freeman file photo
H.A. Youmans is seen in his office.



Freeman employees in 1895: Walter Hill, Fred Merten, John Berkenhart, Frank Haight, Ed Mellen, Frank Wheeler, George Orvis. All were employees of the mechanical department except Haight, who was a reporter.



Freeman file photo
The Freeman moved into its new home on Barstow Street, now part of Avalon Square, in 1937.

FREEMAN TIMELINE

- March 29, 1859** — The Freeman first published as a weekly newspaper. It was the successor of the Watertown Transcript and moved from that community to Waukesha by Martin Cullation. The paper was printed on the second floor of a building at the Five Points. A year's subscription to the weekly Waukesha Freeman was \$1.50 a year or \$1 in advance.
- Sept. 27, 1859** — Cullation sold out to L.B. Wright.
- 1866** — The Freeman motto changed to "Free schools, Free homesteads, and universal Liberty."
- 1871** — The first letters to the editor were printed.
- 1874** — A column on temperance with alcohol began and ran until 1900.
- 1872** — The first sports story appeared in the paper, when the Waukesha Clippers lost to the Delafield White Stockings in a local baseball game "and have not had much to say about the game since returning."
- 1873** — The Freeman began to run political and humor cartoons.
- 1873** — Henry Mott Youmans purchased the paper and became the editor.
- 1875** — The Freeman began to run an advertising supplement with every issue.
- 1879** — The Freeman moved its operations to a building at 801 N. Grand Ave.
- 1881** — The paper began to carry telephone reports, as recorded in front of Eiteljberg's store.
- 1882** — Telegraph reports began to appear in the Freeman but the front page was devoted only to local news.
- Dec. 2, 1882** — Less than six years after Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, the Freeman became the first business in Waukesha to have a central phone office.
- 1886** — The first front-page editorial on a local matter was printed, asking local residents to keep their sidewalks free from snow and ice.
- 1889** — Freeman staffer Theodora Winton, a local girl from Prospect Hill and future nationally known suffragist, married Youmans. Columns of interest to women began to appear in the paper, including beauty tips.
- 1919** — The Freeman moves into a new home at 259 South St.
- Nov. 1, 1920** — The Freeman merges with the Waukesha Herald to become the Waukesha Daily Freeman. Youmans' nephew, Henry A. Youmans, joins the paper as a reporter and succeeds his uncle when he retires in 1930.
- Jan. 21, 1931** — Henry M. Youmans dies, after 60 years with the paper.
- Feb. 17, 1932** — The Freeman constructs a new home on Barstow Street.
- February 1942** — Henry A. Youmans dies at age 47 and was succeeded as publisher by his wife, Josephine.
- 1952** — The newspaper was recommended for a Pulitzer Prize for its fight against secrecy in government.
- June 12, 1953** — The newspaper published the first three-dimensional picture in newspaper history, an ad for interior decorators Hale-Frame associates. The paper handed out 10,000 pairs of special glasses to view the ad. The ad was run in other publications around the world.
- May 7, 1955** — A report on the newspaper's fast growing post-World War II circulation announced the number of net paid circulation had grown by 1,000 in the past year, to 9,356. It remained the only daily newspaper in the county.
- Sept. 12, 1960** — Henry A. Youmans Jr. was named publisher of the Freeman by the board of directors, succeeding Mrs. Josephine Youmans-Thuracher, who was made chairman of the board of the corporation.
- 1962** — An addition to the Freeman building was constructed.
- July 17, 1972** — The production process of the paper switched from cold type to photocomposition machines. Photo-printers, cameras, computers and light-sensitive papers and plastics replaced the traditional Linotypes using molten metal.
- 1978** — The Des Moines Register and Tribune Co. purchased the Freeman for \$8 million from the Youmans family, who ran it for about 110 years.
- Jan. 8, 1980** — Henry A. Youmans was replaced as publisher, marking the first time in 110 years without a Youmans in the publisher's office. Youmans became board chairman of the Waukesha Freeman Inc.
- Feb. 1, 1983** — Thomson Newspapers Inc. of Des Plaines, Ill., purchased the Freeman from the Des Moines Register and Tribune Co.
- Nov. 4, 1991** — The Freeman moved into its new facility at 801 N. Barstow St.
- 1993 and 1994** — The Freeman won the general excellence award from the Wisconsin Newspaper Association as the best in the state in its circulation size.
- May 12, 1997** — The Conley Publishing Group announced it had purchased the newspaper from Thomson and continues today as owner.
- 2008** — The Freeman won the first-place general excellence award in the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Better Newspaper Contest.
- 2016** — The Freeman won the first-place general excellence award in the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Better Newspaper Contest.
- 2018** — The Freeman won the first-place general excellence award in the Wisconsin Newspaper Association Better Newspaper Contest.