

BILLY BUD RESTORED

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY MUSEUM – PLANK ROAD RENDEZVOUS EVENT

AUGUST 20, 2024 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

NEWS RELEASE

Sheboygan Press.

LOCAL

See historic Billy Bud chimney sweep at Sheboygan County Museum over Labor Day weekend

'As long as we own the property, we're going to take good care of Billy,' Dan Fosdick, vice president of Heartland Properties, said.



Alex Garner
Sheboygan Press

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SHEBOYGAN – The beloved Billy Bud statue will be on display at the Sheboygan County Museum, 3110 Erie Ave., before returning atop the Henry Jung Apartments.

The chimney sweep was taken down last fall from a smokestack at the former Jung Shoe Company building, 620 N. Eighth St., because it was in poor condition and at risk of collapsing.

Billy Bud underwent restoration from local artist and designer Craig Grabhorn, South High art teacher Brian Sommersberger and students.

“The Sheboygan County Museum is excited to host the Billy Bud sculpture,” said Brett Lobello, executive director of the Sheboygan County Museum. “It’s an honor to showcase this unique facet of Sheboygan history that is so often seen from afar.”

Free museum admission to see Billy Bud up close

Billy Bud will be showcased during the “Plank Road Rendezvous,” which explores the period of exchange among Native Americans, fur traders and pioneers during the fur trade. Scavenger hunts, reenactments and demonstrations will be included.

Dan Fosdick, vice president of Heartland Properties, Inc., which owns the apartments, said an exhibit of the restoration process, history and more will accompany the statue.

Bud will be on display 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Aug. 30-31 and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sept. 1. Admission is free to visit the museum and see the statue.

Chimney sweep commissioned for apartment redevelopment in 1990s

Billy Bud is a 6-foot, 5-inch statue made from stainless steel, fiber glass and plaster. He sat atop the smokestack since 1992 when the Alexander Company redeveloped the Jung Shoe Co. building to apartments. The company occupied the space for more than 70 years.

Former University of Wisconsin-Platteville art professor Bud Wall was commissioned to create the statue.

Statue will be monitored for future restoration

Fosdick said the smokestack was shortened from 90 feet to 50 feet, although initial plans called for complete demolition. Mortar deteriorated above 50 feet, but construction crews found it was stable below that.

“It’s not going to be quite as prominent as 90 feet, but still at 50 feet, if you’re on Eighth Street and beyond, you can see Billy,” Fosdick said.

Fosdick is confident Billy Bud’s longevity will be supported by more structural integrity from the shortened smokestack. Still, he said conditions will be monitored.

The artists estimate the statue wouldn’t need restoration for the next 20 to 30 years, he added.

~~Apartments on historic store land: J.J. Koepsell was a plumbing wholesaler for years on Sheboygan's riverfront. Today, its former site is home to a future apartment complex.~~

“As long as we own the property, we’re going to take good care of Billy Bud,” Fosdick said.

Heartland paid around \$20,000 for Billy Bud’s restoration, transportation and removal and reinstallation on the smokestack, according to Fosdick.

Fosdick said the company didn’t set out to restore the statue but determined it was worth trying to get Billy Bud “back to his former glory” after artists assessed his conditions.

Return to Henry Jung Apartments expected after Labor Day

Billy Bud’s expected return to the smokestack will be Labor Day week. A letter from Heartland shared at a Historic Preservation Commission last year projected he could’ve returned to the smokestack by that winter.

Property owner isn’t seeking historical status for statue, smokestack

The Jung Shoe Co. building was added to the state and national registers of historic places in the early 1990s. Billy Bud was added after, excluding him from the historical preservation status.

Last fall, the Historical Preservation Commission and Heartland Properties disagreed on who had jurisdiction over the building, including the smokestack. The commission believed the smokestack was integral to the building’s historical integrity and needed further consideration before demolition.

Heartland disagreed, seeking teardown to prevent a safety hazard and avoid up to \$1 million in restoration costs.

“It was always our contention that the smokestack was not within their (the Commission’s) jurisdiction and that we needed to do what we needed to do,” Fosdick said.

He said Heartland is not seeking preservation status for Billy Bud or the smokestack.

Fosdick said, “We’re going to abide by whatever state or local statutes as it relates to the apartment building, but if something’s in disrepair or is going to impact the safety of the public, as was such the case with the smokestack, then we’re going to do what we need to protect the general public and our residents.”

Have a story tip? Contact Alex Garner at 224-374-2332 or agarner@gannett.com. Follow her on X (formerly Twitter) at [@alex_garner](https://twitter.com/alex_garner).



Restoration in Action.
The Journey to
Restore "Billy Bud"



Architects

The design of the building was a key factor in its restoration. The architects worked closely with the restoration team to ensure that the building's original character was preserved while incorporating modern amenities.

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Artist



Billy Bud Restoration Project Financed by
HEARTLAND PROPERTIES

Restoration in Action

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Restoration in Action

RESTORATION ARTIST TEAM

Brian Sommersberg (left)

Craig Grabhorn (right)



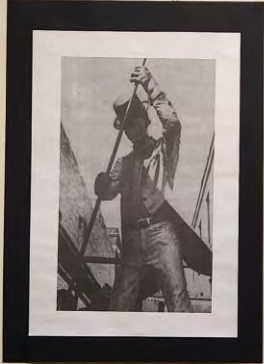




UPNOSE



**Restoration in Action,
The Journey to
Restore "Billy Bud"**



Sheboygan Press Archives

"He should be on a chimney"

Sheboygan Press Archives

Restoration in Action: Protecting Sheboygan's Iconic Billy Bud



Artist Bud Wall

About the Artist

Weldon Texas "Bud" Wall II was born in Monroe, NC. After graduating from Monroe High School, he had an important career decision to make: either follow in his father's footsteps as a funeral director or pursue his dreams in the artistic world. It was the latter that stood to him with passionate, creative projects.

Bud attended the English School of Art & Design in Sarasota, FL, and graduated from East Carolina University in Greenville, NC. Bud received his MFA, taught sculpture and built the first bronze foundry at the Instituto Alameda in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Mexico. He later taught ceramics at the Palm Beach College in Palm Beach, FL, and then moved to Plattsville, NY, where he was a Professor of Art from 1987 until his death in 2020. He taught thousands of students color and design, drawing, painting, jewelry making, ceramics, sculpture and foundry techniques.

In May 2020, the honored members of the UNH Plattsville Performing & Visual Arts Department unanimously voted posthumous emeritus status to Bud. The recommendation was in sincere appreciation for Bud's numerous contributions and valued service to the students, his discipline and the University during his distinguished career as a Professor of Art.

Bud received numerous drawing and sculpture awards and exhibited his fine art in various shows throughout his career. His works are displayed in galleries, businesses and museums across the United States, including the Harry and Lucie Heller Gallery and the University of Wisconsin - Plattsville campus. Bud was instrumental in starting the Heller Gallery with a generous donation from his longtime friends, Harry and Lucie.

Bud was involved with casting the 2-ton bronze Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Nashville, TN, which was a 15-year project in the mid 1980s. At the same time, Bud began designing characters and writing scripts for animated movies. He was an outstanding storyteller. Wherever he was with his models, a group would soon form and be transported into a whole new world.

Bud was also musically inclined; he played the saxophone for several years in a folk group while attending East Carolina University.

Bud was an avid Green Bay Packers fan and had a parrot on the Chesapeake Chesapeake from owner's collection. He also loved history, old western movies, fishing, beaches, spicy hot Mexican food, Southern chopped B-B-Q and sour cherry pie.

Bud was not only a tremendously gifted artist, but also a gentleman with a great sense of humor and a very kind heart and spirit. He is dearly missed. Bud wanted his artwork shared with the world to his website in honor of him and the beauty he brought to this world.



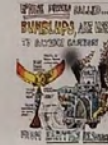
Bud's Fantastic Models and Stories

In the late 1980s, Bud began designing characters and writing scripts for animated movies. He was an outstanding storyteller. Wherever he was with his models, a group would soon form and be transported into a whole new world. Bud worked tirelessly over many years trying to connect with the right people, to get his stories animated and onto the big screen. Maybe it will still happen one day. Read a summary of how hard he worked towards fulfilling that goal.

Upnose



This is a main character from one of Bud's most amazing stories. The Upnoses are cartoon breathing aliens from the galaxy's border. The story is funny from the heart and one of the characters is based on his dear brother, Harold. One of Bud's most developed and complex stories, it is a tribute to his amazing creativity and imagination. This is an awesome subject! A character in the "Upnose" story.





Willy Post Renovation Project Financed By
HEARTLAND PROPERTIES
With their professional construction skills, the contractors
will have provided a contribution to the community.
Herndon, VA
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