

# Now & Then in Ripon ... Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society

## Kesiches opened Ripon's first large nursing home in 1964

Ripon opened a municipally run and funded hospital in 1936. By the 1960s, it was evident that some type of facility was needed for those senior citizens that no longer could live alone in their homes.

In late 1962, the City Council started studying the need for a nursing home in Ripon.

An October 1962 *Ripon Commonwealth Press* stated, "There are some persons in the local hospital who are able to get around but can't live alone, who should be in a nursing home. The Ripon hospital is crowded most of the time and is needed for patients who require medical care. Markesan has had its home in operation for about a year and it is filled at all times."

In February 1963, the *Ripon Commonwealth Press* reported that subcommittees had been formed to look into opening a "home for the aged and chronically ill."

The committees toured area nursing home facilities, conducted studies and gathered local thoughts and data.

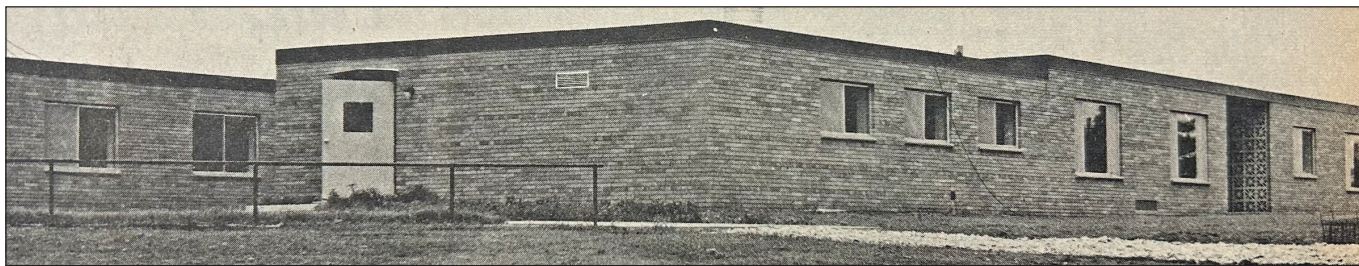
The facilities committee studied three possibilities. The first was to add a nursing home onto the present Ripon Memorial Hospital.

At that time, the hospital was located at 935 Newbury St., where Newbury Place Apartment thes are today. The second option the committee looked into was the possibility of converting the hospital into a nursing home and constructing a new hospital. The third choice studied was building a nursing home in a different area than the hospital.

The only nursing facility in Ripon at that time was owned by Dorothy Jantz (1920-2009), who operated the facility at 604 South Grove Ave. Jantz opened her nursing home in 1956, was licensed by the state, had two part-time employees and took care of up to nine elderly female residents.

In July 1964, Emil Kesich Sr. (1922-1995) and Irene Martyka Kesich (1921-2019) from Milwaukee opened a 58-bed nursing home at 50 Wolverton Ave. just west of Eureka Street. It was named the "Parkview Nursing Home" as the facility had a view to the west of Murray Park.

The Kesiches were the owners and administrator; Frieda Keso (1907-2003), a retired Air Force nurse, was



**THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF** the new Parkview Nursing Home at 50 Wolverton Avenue was featured in the July 23, 1964 *Ripon Commonwealth Press*. The building has changed over the years and now houses Whispering Pines Nursing & Rehab.

the supervisor of nurses; and Emil Kesich Jr. (1943-1996) was an administrative assistant.

In addition, a staff of five included one licensed practical nurse, two nurses aids, one cook and a housekeeper.

An August 1964 *Commonwealth Press* described the building by saying, "The décor is light and modern and the little touches than can mean so much to older, infirm people are present, including central air conditioning, hand rails on all corridors, an elevator, devices for assistance in taking baths, etc."

Emil Kesich Sr. noted in the *Commonwealth Press*

that "A recreation program will be provided and expanded as we develop. For instance, we are in the process of making plans for gardens for residents in the rear of the building for next spring or summer." A recreation area was planned for the basement "for developing hobbies and interests of residents and providing therapy for their physical well-being."

Daily visiting hours were 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., however no children under 16 were allowed in the residential

wings of the building. Residents were only able to visit with their grandchildren in the lobby.

The Kesiches owned Parkview Nursing Home for 25 years before retiring in 1989.

Irene Kesich's obituary read, "Built from the ground up, Emil's expertise in construction and Irene's creative designs guided the formation of Parkview beginning with the fan-shaped structure that allowed expansion to 177 beds at the time of their retirement. Receiving many accolades over the years, Parkview's contribution to education in the areas of healthcare and ever-present kindness, compassionate and respectful 'care with love' techniques performed by their treasured staff were

**PARKVIEW** Nursing home, which will start admitting residents Monday, is now completed and will be host to visits of professional people, by invitation only, Saturday afternoon. Photos show attractive interior of typical room with pleasant view and entrance to building on Wolverton avenue, just west of Eureka street. Mr. and Mrs. Emil Kesich, owners, will announce open house for public in near future.— *Commonwealth-Press photos.*



**THE RIPON COMMONWEALTH Press** from July 23, 1964 ran this photograph of a room at the new Parkview Nursing Home, which was opening at 50 Wolverton Ave.

recognized and adopted throughout the state of Wisconsin and nationally."

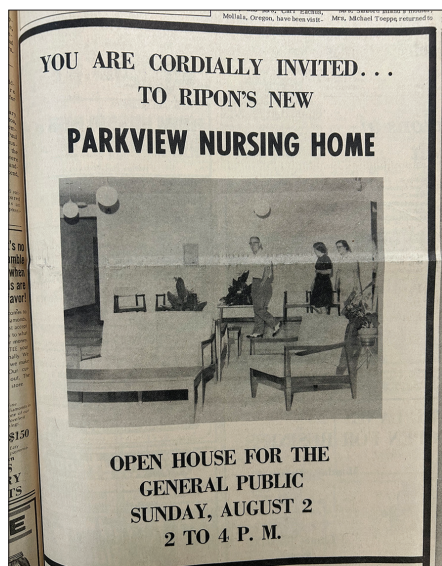
Today, Parkview Nursing Home is known as "Whispering Pines Nursing & Rehab," which is part of Eden Senior Care. It offers skilled nursing and assisted-living facilities along with post-acute rehabilitation and long-term care.

The community of Ripon also has more options available for senior citizens needing housing, community-

based residential facilities and nursing home care.

*The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

*For more information, visit [www.riponhistory.org](http://www.riponhistory.org), [facebook.com/riponhistoricalsociety](https://facebook.com/riponhistoricalsociety) or [instagram.com/riponhistoricalsociety/](https://instagram.com/riponhistoricalsociety/).*



**THIS ADVERTISEMENT IN** the July 30, 1964 *Ripon Commonwealth Press* invited the public to an open house for the new Parkview Nursing home at 50 Wolverton Ave. Ripon did not have a hospital until 1936 and this was the first large nursing home in Ripon.

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