

*Press Release*

KOHLER FOUNDATION, INC.  
KOHLER, WISCONSIN 53044

Paul and Matilda Wegner Grotto  
Circa 1929-1936  
Cataract, Wisconsin

Kohler Foundation, Inc. will be gifting the restored Paul and Matilda Wegner Grotto near the community of Cataract, Wisconsin to Monroe County for use as a historic grassroots art site on September 2, 1987.

The Monroe County public celebration dedicating the site is planned to begin at 2:00 p.m. at the site - just two miles southwest of Cataract on Highway 71.

The Paul and Matilda Wegner Grotto is a fantastic environment of concrete sculpture decorated with thousands of colorful glass shards. The Wegners began building their Grotto around their farm home after their retirement in 1929. Developed over several years, the sculpture environment slowly grew to include a fanciful American flag, a giant reproduction of the Wegners' fiftieth anniversary cake, and a concrete facsimile of the Bremen, a celebrated ocean liner of the 1930s. Other constructions were religious in nature. The magnificent Prayer Garden, Glass Church, and Peace Monument once served as places for quiet reflection, public preaching, and community gatherings.

Neither Paul nor Matilda Wegner received any formal training in art. Their imaginative Grotto arose from a powerful personal vision outside the academic traditions of fine art and beyond the ethnic or community traditions of folk art. The Wegner Grotto and other creations by self-taught artists from throughout the state are part of Wisconsin's cultural heritage. The Wegners' extraordinary vision promises to inspire the imagination of many generations to come.

The Wegner Grotto, known locally as The Glass Church, was owned by the Wegner family until purchased by Kohler Foundation, Inc.

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Paul and Matilda Wegner Grotto  
Circa 1929-1936

in 1986 as part of its commitment to the documentation and preservation of significant outsider art environments and folk architecture. Restoration, funded by the Foundation, included extensive structural stabilization and surface repair of the sculptures as well as landscape clearing to re-establish the environment.

The restoration project was completed under the direction of Kohler Foundation, Inc. Preservation Committee. Project contractor was Spin City Restoration of Neshkoro, Wisconsin and Chicago, Illinois.

The Monroe County Board of Supervisors and the Monroe County Local History Room will begin the public celebration at the site with a 2:00 p.m. program dedicating the newly restored Wegner Grotto as a historic grassroots art site. The presentation of the Deed by Kohler Foundation, Inc. to Monroe County will take place during the program.

Refreshments will be served from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. and a reception will follow the program.

For additional information please contact:

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or,

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Reference list for publicity

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