BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May 2024

P.O. Box 336
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

info@baileysharbor historical society.org

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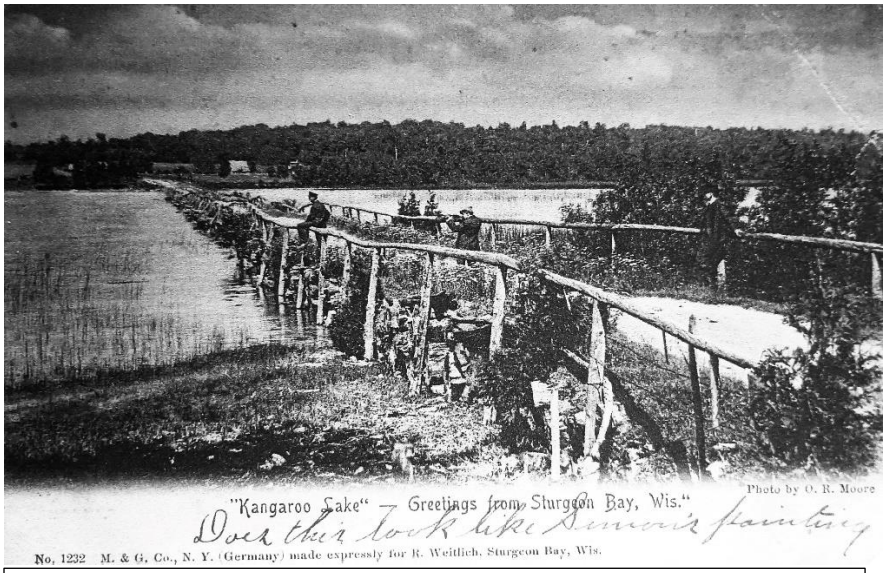
-

Town Board Liaison
-Roberta Thelen
Newsletter Editors
-Leann Despotes
-Ann Marie Ott

Enjoy our displays at
The Toft House
8061 Highway 57
May - October

Enjoy Our
Historic Display Cases
Baileys Harbor
Town Hall
2392 Cty Road F
*
www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org
*
Find us on
Baileys Harbor
Historical Society



Tis the Season

Do you recognize the Kangaroo Lake causeway in the postcard photograph above? It is one of those images that reminds us that the summer season is fast approaching. We welcome the return of summer residents and members of the Historical Society along with the newcomers who may come to love the quiet, lake side as much as many of us do.

The Historical Society's theme for the Toft House & Town Hall displays is "Birds in Baileys Harbor." The Toft House will open for the season with an Open House on Thursday, May 23 from 4 – 6 pm.

We have scheduled several summer programs that will take place on a monthly basis at 7 pm at the Town Hall Auditorium.

Weds, June 19 – Commercial Fishing - Dennis Hickey

Weds, July 17 – Celebration Zahn Bird Public Library Display & presentation

Weds, August 21 – Coyote Roadhouse – Carrie Greybill

Weds, September 18 – Annual Meeting – Location/time to be determined

We hope you will join us! Feel free to tell your friends and neighbors. Membership in the Historical Society is not required to attend.

Membership Update

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society membership has declined since our last report. This decline is the result of the reconciliation of our mailing list to "returned, not deliverable" notices from the post office. The new membership total represents 108 households. Sixty of those memberships paid the lifetime fee, along with 3 businesses, 24 families and 21 individual payments. Renewals will generate a little over $1000 in the next 12 months.

Membership payment amounts remain at the following dollar amounts: Business $50, Family $25, Individuals $15, and Lifetime $150. Members' dues help support our continuing research, events and presentations, displays at the Baileys Harbor Library and the Toft House, maintaining our website, and publishing our newsletters.

As we realign our processes post-COVID pandemic, we will return to sending renewal reminders to members on a schedule that aligns with your original membership payment. This approach reflects language in the bylaws of the organization by-laws and will balance the workload and cost of the process across 12 months of the year.

If you have questions about the status of your membership payment, please send an email to: info@baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org or via postal mail to P.O. Box 336, Baileys Harbor, WI 54202.

Thank you for your support!

Preservation Fund

We are working with Roberta Thelen, Baileys Harbor Town Supervisor, the Baileys Harbor Community Association and our Board to determine the best use of the funds for maintaining the Toft House. Many thanks to the following individuals for contributing to the recent fund drive: Linda Jarman, Beth Ferris, Linda Silvasi Kelly, Richard Terzian, Terry and Ally McCardle, Eleanor Williams, Tom and Andrea Esau, Neil Ryan, Jan Goren, Sue Jarosh, Tim and Susan Tishler, Dennis and Lynnea Hickey, Ed and Sandra Miller, Maureen McGrath, Bonita Koven, Terry Goode, Howard Williamson, and Cynthia McGuire.

Historical Society Storyboards

We are happy to report our first two Historical Story boards are completed. The first board was installed last fall at the Toft House. If you missed it over the winter, it will be reinstalled this spring by our great Baileys Harbor Town maintenance crew. The second board will be placed at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall this spring. This board will feature information about the first town hall to our current location. The Town crew will be installing it when they are drilling holes for another project so keep looking for it to arrive. ----*Kriss Schorer*

Board Retirement

We are sad to announce Leann Despotes stepped down from the Board this spring due to challenges with her health. However, in her resignation announcement she said: "If there's anything I can do to help, look up, answer, etc., please call me (920-421-4380). Most of the time, I'm talking, laughing and wisecracking as usual, so don't hesitate to drop in. Just don't ask me to take a walk. I'm hoping to be returning to my BH house around June 1, otherwise I'm at Scandia Village, Meadows apartments, #109."

Leann was instrumental in founding the Historical Society after the Town of Baileys Harbor formed a committee in 2009 to explore the purchase of a local structure and evaluate other opportunities in the future. A wealth of knowledge, Leann researched and wrote numerous articles for the newsletter, answered questions for locals and visitors to Baileys Harbor, organized the archives, managed membership records, facilitated recordings of our public presentations which are available on the website she developed and implemented. She also presided over meetings with a focus on positivity. All of her efforts ensured that the Historical Society represented our motto: *Explore the Past. . .Inspire the Future.*

In accordance with the by-laws, the Board has appointed Katherine Jones to the Board as a result of the vacancy created by Leann's resignation. Ann Marie Ott has been elected as the President of the Historical Society by members of the Board. Both women will serve through the end of 2024 until the next regular election.

2023 Financial Report

The Historical Society, as a registered non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization, files an annual report with the WI Department of Financial Institutions and the WI Historical Society as well as submits the Federal IRS 990-N form. As a result of those filings, the organization continues to retain its non-profit status and good standing. Total revenue for 2023 totaled $4102 with $1775 of the total restricted for use for the Toft House preservation fund. Expenses for the year were $3561. General operating expenses exceeded the unrestricted revenue by $1234. The Historical Society account balance at the end of 2023 was: $30,207.

Baileys Harbor Additions to the State and National Historic Register

Two additions to the State and National Registers of Historic Places were made since July of 2023. The first is the *Emeline* Shipwreck. The *Emeline* is located .5 miles southeast of the entrance of the Baileys Harbor Marina. According to the WI Historical Society, "The *Emeline* shipwreck was a wooden double-centerboard schooner, and the remains lie in 18 feet of water on a bottom of sand. The vessel spent most of its career carrying lumber throughout the Great Lakes region. In 1896, the *Emeline* was caught in a northwest squall, blown over to its starboard side, and unable to gain stability. The crew were able to reach Baileys Harbor. After several attempts to right the vessel, it sank in 18 feet of water near the Anclam Pier. The wreck was broken up by wind and wave action, declared a hazard to navigation, and later dynamited to flatten the hazard."

The second addition to the Registers, the *Peoria* Shipwreck was made in April of 2024 and it lies in the water .15 miles northeast of the Baileys Harbor Marina. This wreck is described by the WI Historical Society as follows on the next page:

" The *Peoria* is a schooner constructed in 1854 by master carpenter Alanson Gilmore in Black River, Ohio, and operated in the Great Lakes through the grain, lumber and other bulk cargo trades for almost 50 years. On November 10, 1901, the *Peoria* was bound from Charlevoix, Michigan, with a cargo of hardwood lumber when it waited out a storm in Baileys Harbor. During the night, the anchors slipped. The storm pushed the schooner into shallow water in front of the Baileys Harbor Range Lights, settling into the sand quickly. Men from the Baileys Harbor Life-Saving Station rescued the crew of six, but the vessel remained stuck. No insurance was carried on the ship, and it was valued at only $2,000. The cargo was salvaged, the vessel was stripped, and rendered a total loss.

The vessel sits upright and largely intact on the sandy lake bottom, seven feet below the surface in Lake Michigan. With most of its hull components still there, *Peoria* provides historians and archaeologists the rare chance to study wooden schooner construction and the grain, lumber and other bulk cargo trades."

In both instances, the WI Historical Society reminds individuals that State and Federal laws protect the shipwrecks. Divers may not remove artifacts or structure when visiting this site. Removing, defacing, displacing, or destroying artifacts or sites is a crime.

Baileys Harbor is the home to nine other properties on the Historical Registers. Properties on the Historic Register represent significant elements of American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The Baileys Harbor properties, along with the designation of significance and year they were placed on the Registers are listed below:

1976 – Cana Island Lighthouse – Maritime History and Transportation

1982 – Globe Hotel downtown Baileys Harbor – Architecture and Commerce

1989 – Baileys Harbor Range Light at the Ridges Sanctuary – Maritime History, Transportation

1994 – Frank O'Connor shipwreck at North Bay – Engineering and Transportation

1997 – Willam Zachow Farmstead – rural Baileys Harbor -Architecture and Agriculture

2000 – Baileys Harbor Town Hall – Architecture, Politics, Government and Education

2000 – Albert Zahn House "The Bird House" – Architecture and Historic Person

2000 – August Zahn Blacksmith Shop/ House – downtown Baileys Harbor – Architecture and Industry

2003 – Christina Nillsson – offshore Baileys Harbor -Maritime History and Transportation

What is the process for placing a property on the National Historic Register? The first step in the process is to complete the pre-screening questionnaire and submit it to the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Board. The questionnaire asks for a description and photographs of the property including identification of any known changes to the inside or outside of the property. The questionnaire also requires documentation of the importance of the property in the community and a statement of the reasons the property should be recognized. Once the State Historic Preservation Board makes an initial, positive determination, then the applicant can consider the pros and cons of Historic Register status and file a formal application to the National Park Service for review. To learn more about the benefits of National Historic Register designation visit the NPS website here: https://www.nps.gov

One Ringy Dingy – Telephone Memories

In 1877, the Sturgeon Bay newspaper called The Expositor Independent published a *New York Times* article called *The Telephone Unmasked,* just a few years before the first telephone call was made in Door County. That call took place between two telegraph operators in Sturgeon Bay and Algoma. They had borrowed equipment and tested the phones for just one day, when the telegraph lines were not very busy. However, the article focused on warning readers about the loss of privacy using this new technology. Telephone wires strung above buildings might capture other sounds, in addition to the transmission of a conversation between two parties. How many times are we reminded, now in the days of cell phones, to take steps to protect our privacy and keep our phones secure? But in the early days of telephone technology sharing telephone lines was a means to remain connected, much like the social media options that are offered to us today.

How many of the telephones pictured below do you recognize or have you used during your lifetime?

It was 1958 when dial service came to Sturgeon Bay. School children received telephone dialing lessons and adults were offered skills tests to ensure everyone knew what to do in case of an emergency. And when area residents lost power during a recent spring storm, and in some instances their phone service, they may have felt frustrated and worried about what to do in case of emergency, too. Frustrations over telephone service have inspired comedy routines and perhaps one of the most entertaining comedic characters was Lily Tomlin's Ernestine. Google search the You Tube video *Ernestine Calls General Motors* for a few laughs to brighten your day. Several other Ernestine are available that may entertain you as well.

Historical Society member, Susie Bauldry shared these youthful telephone memories:

The Simple Life

As I look back at my childhood in Baileys Harbor where I was born an still live, I am reminded of the wonderful years when we were allowed to be innocent children. We were blessed to be in a time of no social media, cell phones, or tweets. Our interaction with others was out mother yelling out the door, "Have you seen Diane, Susie, or Loren?"

Growing up in Baileys Harbor, everybody knew everybody. If you were lucky enough to have a phone, it was a party line shared by at least 6 others. I still remember our number, 5-2 R-1-4. That meant line 52 and the ring was 1 long and 4 short. The phone hung on the wall. You had to listen for your ring to see if you were the party being called. Of course, you could also pick up the phone and listen in on other conversations.

That was our social medica, neighborhood watch, and 911. It was a simpler time in history and often I can't help but yearn for those days. But then I remember, it is really only a place in our hearts and memories. The simple life is and always will be timeless. – Susie Bauldry

In 2015, Leann Despotes wrote an article for the Historical Society newsletter about the history of telephone service in Baileys Harbor. It is a wonderful chronicle of the role of Baileys Harbor residents in bringing telephone service to northern Door County and the customer experience over the years.

You'll find it in the Spring 2015 edition of the Historical Society newsletter which can be accessed on the Historical Society website at: www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org. Click the Newsletters & Events link.

FISH LO -K-TOR

The Baileys Harbor Community Association held its 36th annual Brown Trout Tournament in April with the #1 prize winning fish weighing in at 20.95 lbs. and measuring 35 inches long. What technology do you think the fisherman used to haul in that lunker?

Back in the 1960s, fishermen may have been using the "Fish Lo-K-Tor" or as it was often called "The Little Green Box." The transistorized device was made by the Lowrance Company. According to the company website, this was the first sonar product that allowed individual fish to be displayed along with the depth at which they could be found.

Lowrance's marketing page reports that they made a million of these devices between 1959 and 1984. The early models retailed for about $125, which in today's dollars tops out at about $1320.

This "Little Green Box" was donated to the Historical Society by Brynn Swanson in 2023.