BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 2024
Baileys Harbor Historical Society
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Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

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www.baileysharborhistory.org

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Newsletter Editors
Tom Esau
Ann Marie Ott

Membership Manager
Cynde Krowas

Enjoy our displays at:
The Toft House
8061 Highway 57
May - October
and
Historic Display Cases at:
Baileys Harbor
Town Hall
2392 Cty Road F

Historic Register Properties

The mission of the Baileys Harbor Historical Society is to collect, research, preserve and disseminate knowledge related to the history of Baileys Harbor. We support and encourage the preservation of historic materials, as well as educating residents and visitors about Baileys Harbor history.

To address that mission, the Historical Society took steps to upgrade its website to ensure its collection of newsletters and public program recordings are preserved and accessible to the greatest degree possible. You will find the new website at: www.baileysharborhistory.org.

As we move forward in 2025, one project to further our mission will be to update and republish the Historic Baileys Harbor brochure. This brochure, currently available electronically on our website, features information about the National Historic Register properties and other significant properties of interest in our community. The brochure was first published in 2015.

The Zahn blacksmith shop, pictured above, and located at 8152 Hwy 57, is just one of the 11 properties in Baileys Harbor that has been placed on the National Historic Register. The Zahn shop, built in 1905, was added to the Register in the year 2000 due to its architectural design and function contributing to and supporting local industry. The Zahn residence, now the Blacksmith Inn on the Shore is pictured to the north of the shop.

Donations

We apologize for the misspelling of a donor's name, Jan Groen, in the May 2024 edition of the newsletter. We thank Jan for making a donation to the Preservation Fund earlier this year.

We thank Helen Cordon & the Cordon Family Foundation for making a donation to cover the purchase of the locked display cabinet for the Zahn bird collection. The cabinet is located in the Reading Room at the Baileys Harbor Public Library.

Bruce and Pam Smith made a donation for general operations.

In addition, we thank the following individuals for their donations in memory of Mary Jo Cole:
Gil Carlson, Cynthia and Lawrence Crock, Tom & Andrea Esau, Terry Goode, Andy & Cynde Krowas, Judy, Amy and Ingrid Peterson and Gary and Deborah Wallendal.

In memory of LeAnn Despotes: Jill Benson, Benjamin Black, Linda Brown, Ann Duffy, Tom & Andrea Esau, Terri Rooth and Avram Feldman, Mary Fuding, Sigrunn Hulburt, Cheryl Iverson, Gayle Laird, JA and LF Lijewski, Neil and Kathleen Ryan, Ann Williams and Ellie Williams.

Membership Update

We welcome the following new members: Kathleen Harris and Cynde and Andy Krowas. Cynde, the former director of the Baileys Harbor Community Association, has volunteered to help the Historical Society with mailing member renewal notices and keeping our database up to date in the coming year.

To support the Historical Society, consider giving the gift of membership for any special occasion. Could we add 25 new memberships by the end of 2025?
We hope you will help us meet this goal.

Board of Directors update

The Board of Directors held election of officers at its October meeting. All current Board members agreed to continue for an additional term and were unanimously voted to do so by the members attending the annual meeting on September 18th. Howard Williamson stepped down from his role as Vice-President. Director Tom Esau was elected to serve in this position for 2025. Ann Marie Ott accepted the nomination and vote to continue as President, after serving the remaining term of Leann Despotes in 2024. Marianne Newton will continue as Secretary, a position she has held since the founding of the Society. Mary Moran is planning to transition out of her role as Treasurer in the coming year by sharing processes for financial management with other members of the Board.

2024 Displays and Summer Programs

The Historical Society manages displays at the Toft House and in display cases at the Town Hall each season. Volunteers who are members of the Historical Society and/or the Baileys Harbor Community Association (BHCA) staff the visitor center over as many days of the week as possible each season. In total, ten volunteers donated 495.25 hours of their time to staff the Toft House. This year's volunteers included: Cheryl Aukeman, Karen Berndt, Ann Marie Ott, Sally Smith, Evan Webster, Lurana Webster, Howard Williamson, Mary Moran, Bruce Smith, Ron Holden and Nathan Arch.

This year's display theme celebrated Baileys Harbor designation as a "Bird City" with antique duck decoys, bird houses and feeders, bird books and both modern and historical prints and other artwork.

Nearly 1500 visitors stopped by the Toft House this season, which is about 700 less than in 2023. However, the Toft House closed three weeks earlier than usual due to the loss of the Community Association Director, and in part due to the lack of availability of volunteers to keep the Toft House open seven days a week.

The Historical Society has a guest book at the Toft House and this year individuals who signed the book represented twenty-one states and 3 foreign countries including: Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, and many communities throughout Wisconsin. Residents of Canada, Italy and Germany enjoyed a visit to the Toft House.

June program Celebrates Zahn Birds

In June, the Historical Society's new collection of six vintage hand-carved birds (crafted by Baileys Harbor artists Albert and Louise Zahn) was placed on permanent display in the public library's reading room. The vintage carvings were donated by David Goslee of Tennessee and Anne Goslee Jovovic of Connecticut. In their youth David and Anne had purchased the birds as souvenirs when visiting Baileys Harbor. Over 50 guests gathered in June to view our new exhibit and listen to a presentation by Randy Zahn (great-grandson of Albert and Louise). Randy described each of the donated birds, and highlighted several other examples and enlarged photographs of Albert and Louise's art. In the tradition of his great grandparents, Randy has produced several colorful bird carvings of his own. One is featured in our display of the vintage carvings. Others can be seen in the permanent exhibit of Zahn works at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Sheboygan.

Randy also shared this photo of his great-grandfather Albert (to the right) and asked the audience "What's wrong with this picture?" Can you guess?

The answer to the question is: the schooner Albert is holding was not painted. Virtually all of Albert's other creations were painted by his wife Louise. Unfortunately, Louise is seldom mentioned for her contributions to the finished works.

July Program - Hickey Commercial Fishing

Dennis Hickey has shared his family history with the Baileys Harbor Historical Society in the past, but added more information focused on commercial fishing at our July program. On this evening, approximately 60 individuals were present for the program. In addition to the focus on commercial fishing techniques, Dennis described the Hickey's long-standing efforts to address the problems of lamprey eels found in Lake Michigan. Dennis' photograph collection and a miniature model of a pound net system provided insights into the importance of the fishing industry over the years here in Baileys Harbor.

August Program - Coyote Roadhouse

The most well-attended program of the summer was the Coyote Roadhouse history presentation by owner Carrie Graybill. Seventy-five attendees enjoyed Carrie's narration of the past 25 years that she and her husband have owned this beloved local watering hole. Carrie's program, assisted by her husband, Scott, included lots of photos of loyal customers, special events and their tradition of decorating for the holidays. The audience enjoyed hearing about the origins of the nightly specials and the amazing numbers of meals served despite the tiny kitchen that has served as the hub of the restaurant and bar for many years. Carrie hopes to do additional research and return with an update about the years preceding her family's ownership of this special place on Kangaroo Lake.

September annual meeting

The annual meeting was held at the Immanuel Lutheran Church Hall on Wednesday, September 18. The breakfast meeting offered a buffet featuring quiche, fruit and bakery goods that was organized and beautifully decorated by Board member Katherine Jones. Former Board member Susie Bauldry helped to secure the church hall for this year's Annual Meeting of the Society. The group offered a moment of silence in memory of our good friend and recently retired Board President, Leann Despotes, who passed away on August 22. Leann had served as President of the Board since the Society's incorporation in 2010. Also at this meeting, Board members whose terms expire in 2024 all expressed interest in continuing on the Board for another term. The meeting attendees unanimously approved this proposal.

Historical Society Winter event

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society will continue its tradition of sharing crafts and decorations from the past as the Baileys Harbor Community Association leads the community in a celebration of the winter holidays. Susie Bauldry is representing the Historical Society in planning the 2024 celebration. The BHCA hopes to expand the tradition of decorating lighted trees throughout the community. Annie Miller, owner of Gustave's Getaway and a regular vendor at the Baileys Harbor Markets, is donating large evergreen trees to the effort. Susie recently shared the holiday memory featured below, which was fitting for our October newsletter since this memory actually began for her on October 31.

~ My First Ice Skates ~

Looking out the window, it's snowing and it's only October 31, but I am reminded of when I was 13 years old and I was already thinking about Christmas. Mom and Dad told my brother and me that they could only afford to spend $20 on each of us for our gifts. Mom would buy our gifts as a surprise or if there was something we really wanted we could tell her and she will buy it. "But remember, Mom said, it has to stay within the $20 limit." My sister was only six years old to Mom & Santa would take care of her. I was like the little boy who lusted after the BB gun. I knew EXACTLY what I wanted. I knew the cost, the size and where to buy them. It was a pair of white figure skates, size 8 at Nelson's Hardware. $8.99 with no sales tax was the price and I would have $11.01 for Mom to buy surprise gifts! AND I GOT THEM! The skates are now 69 years old and they still fit. The last time I wore them, I went skating with Granddaughter Kiki. The socks that came with them have a few holes in them after many years of love and use.

Where's the Apostrophe?

The Toft Point sign, made of forged iron, sat on the locked gate along the road to Toft Point and was donated recently to the Historical Society by Marsha Wilson, a Toft family descendant. The Friends of Toft Point declined the donation as there was not a suitable place to install it on the property and the University of WI-Green Bay, stewards of Toft Point wanted the sign to be retained locally. Do you notice the rather large gap between the 't" and the "P" on the sign? When the Point property was sold in late 1967, Emma decided that the sign needed to be corrected. It originally read: "Toft's Point." Since the property would no longer be owned by the Toft family, the possessive case in the name had to be removed because, Emma, a former teacher wanted the sign to be grammatically correct. So Walter Zahn, the blacksmith who originally made the sign, made the correction.

Another apostrophe was removed in our community by government action. As you may know, Baileys Harbor received its name as the result of ship captain Justice Bailey seeking shelter from a storm in the harbor. When the first post office opened here in 1860, the town name was spelled Bailey's Harbor. However, in 1892, the U.S. Office began implementing numerous strategies to standardize spellings for official post offices. Uniformity required the omission of the apostrophe. So, after 30 plus years, what was known as Bailey's Harbor, officially became known as Baileys Harbor. Do you have a letter or postcard with the *apostrophe* version of our community's name in your collection?

~ Resort Memories ~

By Tom Esau

Autumn's chill always brings bittersweet memories for this ol' guy. Back in 1969 my folks purchased the quaint *Vista Villas* resort (formerly Lynden and Gertrude Valentine's *Birchwood Cottages*) on the east shore of Kangaroo Lake. I was just thirteen at the time. I soon learned that buttoning up the cottages at the end of the season was quite an undertaking, with many of the chores falling to my older brother David and me.

Every Saturday morning between Labor Day and early December, brother David, Dad and I would be up before the sun, hitting the roads north from suburban Milwaukee. In those days before I-43, the trip usually took around four hours, mostly on inland state highway 57, and on 42 along the Lake Michigan shores. We'd often stop at Wautlet's Bakery in Algoma for some Danish or Long Johns, and for a warm, fresh-from-the-oven loaf of bread. We'd really savor the sweet treats, knowing that in less than an hour we'd be shivering at the lake - hard at work in the elements, rain or shine.

At our resort there were ten 14 foot rowboats to be hauled up the hill and stacked in the garage. There was a long pier with three 'T' sections; it had to be jacked from the lakebed pole by pole, then stacked onshore and eventually hauled up to the garage for storage. The central boiler had to be drained. Hundreds of feet of shallow-buried hot and cold water pipes had to be drained. Toilet and sink traps also had to be drained and filled with anti-freeze. Dozens of shutters had to hauled out from under-cabin storage, and be affixed to every window and door on all of the buildings – the nine cottages, plus the garage and the powerhouse.

And in the midst of all of that work, my brother and I had to try to keep up with the falling leaves. With eight acres of maples and birch on our property, our fall colors were absolutely glorious. Tourists often stopped along Hwy-57 (and often even came down our driveway) to capture snapshots and compliment us on the spectacle of our brilliant trees. But with each passing week those colors would slowly fade, and the leaves would drop in overwhelming, discouraging volumes. We were fortunate to have a 5 horsepower blower on wheels, but most often we were battling strong winds so we'd have to resort to raking by hand – several acres worth! Many was the time we raked in the rain – soaked to our gills by the time it grew dark. It was usually so cold inside that we could see our breath; the oil-burning space heater was no match for autumn's chill, and it certainly wasn't strong enough to dry our clothing. So come Sunday morning we'd put the 'soggies' back on and go out for more hours of raking.

Four o'clock Sunday afternoon never seemed to come soon enough. But when it finally arrived and Dad would pack his toolbox into the trunk and hop in for the long drive back to the big city, what utter relief my brother and I felt! No doubt when Dad turned the key to start the engine, he heard our heavy sighs. That ride home each autumn Sunday evening offered welcome respite for aching joints and sore palms. Painful as it was, we always felt good about what we'd accomplished; each and every weekend brought an eerily satisfying feeling. Come December we looked forward to months of rest, knowing that come March we'd be making those weekend trips back north – to *'un-button'* our resort for the next summer season on Kangaroo Lake!