BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

May 2025
Baileys Harbor Historical Society
P.O. Box 336
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

info@baileysharborhistory.org

www.baileysharborhistory.org

Board of Directors
Ann Marie Ott
President

Tom Esau
Vice-president

Marianne Newton
Secretary

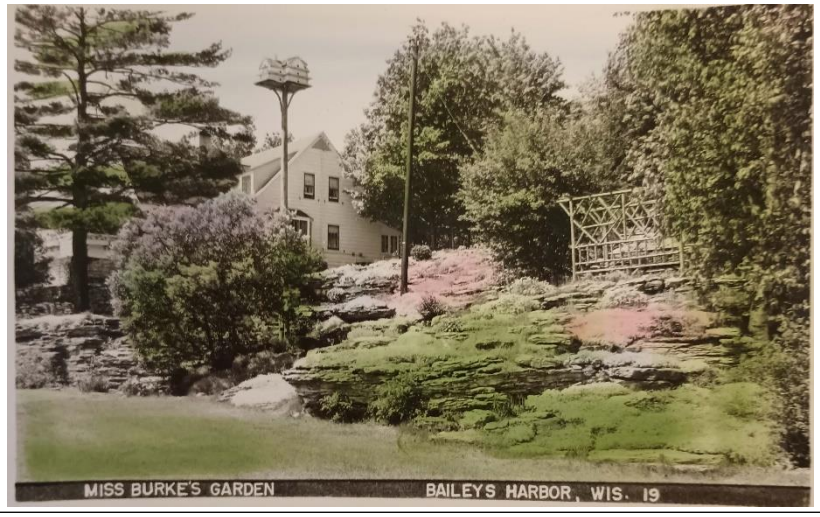
Cynde Krowas
Treasurer

Directors
Katherine Jones
Nancy Rafal
Carol Schmidt
Kriss Schorer
Howard Williamson

Town Board Liaison
Roberta Thelen

Newsletter Editors
Tom Esau
Ann Marie Ott

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



History Week in Door County
"Preservation"

The Heritage Alliance of Door County (HADC), which is a collaboration of Door County entities that focus their efforts on historical and cultural preservation, kicks off *History Days* in Door County on Monday, June 16. An open house will take place at the Belgian Heritage Center in Brussels from 9 am to noon. The HADC steering committee chose "Preservation" for its 2025 season theme. Representatives of the Baileys Harbor Historical Society will join their HADC colleagues and display photographs of our Albert and Louise Zahn carved birds, as well as some elements from this season's Toft House displays focused on "Cherries."

As part of Destination Door County's Stewardship Plan, the DDC hopes to launch its Heritage Trail Pass in time for History Days. This new online application designed for use on mobile phones, and powered by Bandwango, will highlight the rich arts, culture, and history of Door County. The pass will promote local historical attractions through creation of a curated experience showcasing the best of Door County's rich heritage.

For more information about *History Days*, watch for a special insert to the Pulse newspaper scheduled for delivery on June 12-13. The insert will provide a schedule of all the special events taking place throughout Door County the week of June 15.

See the list and descriptions of the 2025 BHHS summer programs on page 6 of this newsletter.

Donations

Since we published our newsletter in October 2024, the following individuals have extended their generosity to the Baileys Harbor Historical Society: Gil Carlson and Gil Gerdman. In addition, we received donations in memory of former President, LeAnn Despotes from: Erica Gunther, Yvonne Wiltse, Susan Norcross, Richard Terzian, the Podolsky Family Foundation, Sue Jarosh, the Scandia Village Association, Ed & Sandra Miller, and Lynn & Erv Mattke.

We also want to acknowledge a recent gift of time and talent: The Ridges Sanctuary requested assistance from BHHS to fill gaps in a written timeline on its website. We thank Mark Smith, resident of the Oaks Condominiums, for reviewing BHHS files and doing other research to meet the Ridges need. In addition, Board member Carol Schmidt took time over the winter months to review two large scrapbooks of assorted newspaper clippings in our collection. She identified all of the items that related to Baileys Harbor history so that we can file them with other materials that are organized by local history topics.

A warm welcome goes out to a new volunteer, Kathleen Pizza. A Baileys Harbor resident and teacher at Gibraltar school, Kathleen will be reviewing and documenting some of our historical records so that these items may become more accessible to our members and the public.

Membership Update

The "25 new memberships in 2025" challenge is off to a slow start. As of the end of April no new members had joined our group. Please consider giving the gift of membership to a newcomer to our community, a friend or relative who loves Baileys Harbor or to mark a special occasion for someone who enjoys history. Thanks to all of you who renewed their membership during the past six months. A renewal reminder will be delivered to you via U.S. Postal mail the month before your membership is due to expire. Upon receipt of your payment, a letter of acknowledgement will be mailed back to you. For those of you who are lifetime members, consider making a small donation to offset the supplies and postage costs associated with production of our newsletter. Thanks in advance, for your help.

Board of Directors update

At the April meeting of the Board of Directors, the group elected BHHS member Cynde Krowas to fill the remaining term of Mary Moran, who has stepped down from role as Treasurer. Mary, a retired law firm accountant, managed our finances for the past 15 years, since the inception of the organization. Mary took her responsibilities very seriously, regularly confirming account balances and reminding those of us responsible for purchases to document each expenditure carefully and accurately.

Cynde Krowas, the former Director of the Baileys Harbor Community Association, gained her financial management experience tracking and documenting a large volume of payments and expenses for the BHCA's membership files and its many special events. Cynde currently works full-time as a 911 call dispatcher for the Door County Communications Center. She also serves as a member of the Baileys

Harbor Emergency Response team. When Cynde isn't ensuring our safety, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Andy Krowas and their dog, Rueger. Cynde and Andy both work regularly with Andy's parents at the Krowas Orchard just outside Baileys Harbor on Logerquist Road.

Since Cynde's election as Treasurer, she has reviewed the 2024 financial records that Mary provided to her, and with Ann Marie, Board President. For your information, in 2024, the BHHS received $6242 income, expended $8317 with a resulting loss for the year of $2075. The BHHS cash accounts were more than sufficient to cover the loss with $28, 995 on hand at the end of 2024. Looking ahead, the Board approved a budget for 2025 that may also result in a shortfall. However, the plan includes an outlay of nearly $1600 to reprint the local history brochure. The timeline for the brochure project as well as other project plans may impact the 2025 estimates. If you have questions about BHHS financial matters, please send an email to us and we'll be happy to respond: info@baileysharborhistory.com

Preservation – It's about Memories

Preservation efforts are not limited to properties or buildings, but perhaps more importantly, to preserving memories. Susie Bauldry shared a spring, childhood memory at a recent Board meeting and took a few minutes to write it down for you to enjoy, too. We would love to add your memories to our collection. Please contact us to share your stories: info@baileysharborhistory.org

Smelt Fishing

By Susie Bauldry

Springtime in Baileys Harbor was a special time. One of my favorite memories was catching smelt, a small fish that spawned in the early spring in the local creeks. They were caught with nets, and you didn't need a license so it was a free for all, as to how many you could catch.

For me, it wasn't how many I could catch, but the fun of trying! As soon as the school day was over, my grade school girlfriend and I would grab our bicycles, a couple of bottles of Orange Crush, that we kept cold in the water while we fished, and then off to Ridges Road, or as we called it then, the Coast Guard Road. There are two small creeks and we would check both for smelt.

Having no nets, we improvised and borrowed our mothers' kitchen strainers. Not very high tech, but the method was fun and it worked! The water ran swiftly and was very cold. It wasn't deep, so we took off our shoes and walked the creek to catch what we could. I don't remember ever catching a lot of fish, but I do remember the joy and excitement of lifting our strainers and seeing the smelt flop around. You had to be young and foolish to stand in water that was just above freezing.

The combination of the bike ride, the cold water, the fish and the Orange Crush are the details that make smelt fishing such a great memory. Things seemed so innocent and simple in those days. No cell phones or TV, just two girls with their strainers, freezing to death from walking in the cold water to catch a few fish and then pedaling their bikes home.

To read about the history of smelting in Wisconsin, see the Wisconsin Department of Resources article: *Smelt Runs Were Cause to Celebrate* at: https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/wnrmag/2019/Spring/back

Preservation – Holiday Traditions

The Historical Society continued its collaboration with the Baileys Harbor Community Association to celebrate the holidays in 2024. With a Christmas tree and display cases at the Town Hall, the Society honored the early settlers of Baileys Harbor by researching traditional customs brought with them from their homelands. For the 2024 holiday season, the Historical Society focused on Polish traditions.

The Polish Settlement, was about 2 miles west of Baileys Harbor along Hwy EE, in about the 1870s. Some of the names associated with the Baileys Harbor Polish settlement include: Martin Schram, Theodore Zak, John Raza, Christ Grey, Casimir Schmidt. Many others followed including – Polzin, Charnetzki, Reh, Wisa, Brunetzki, Rosenaw, Kita, Krause, Klingbeil, Zdryewski.

(References: Hjalmar R Holand's (1917) writings History of Door County, Wisconsin, the County Beautiful, Chapter XLI Baileys Harbor, transcribed for Genealogy Trails by Mary Saggio, published in Wisconsin Genealogy Trails) Hall.

The traditions represented on the tree were:
Candles & Lights – Jesus is the Light of the World --- ***Painted eggshells*** – also used at Easter ---**Glass Ornaments & Baubles** – Poland produces some of Europe's finest hand-blown glass Christmas tree ornaments --------***Polish paper star – "cacka"*** – a star of Bethlehem--- ***Garlands & Paper Chains*** – symbolize togetherness and the road to heaven ----***Fruits*** to symbolize harvest & fertility – shiny red apples hung with thread, straw stars, walnuts, wrapped chocolate shapes-----
Pierniczki – gingerbreads hung on branches in shapes of hearts, animals & St Nicholas figures-----***Pajak*** (spider) chandeliers – legend is that a spider wove a blanket for Baby Jesus, thus spider webs symbolize goodness & prosperity.

Wigilia is the Christmas Eve celebration and begins with the appearance of the 1st star, which corresponds to the Star of Bethlehem. The Christmas tree candles & lights are lit and the festivities begin. A meal of 12 meatless dishes is served to honor the animals that kept Jesus warm when he was born. Some of those dishes include perogies, borscht, mushroom soup, sauerkraut, herring in cream sauce, herring fillets in oil, and herrings covered in cream. Poppy seed cake is served symbolizing prosperity. Before sitting down to eat, the family breaks an unleavened wafer called ***Oplatek*** (the bread of love) which is stamped with religious images. The family exchanges good wishes for the new year. An extra chair is left at the table for unexpected guests or strangers.

Thanks to Katherine Jones and Susie Bauldry for developing this project and gathering and making many of the ornaments for the displays.

Preservation – Baileys Harbor Authors

Winter months in northeast Wisconsin may not be some people's favorite place to be, especially for the snowbirds we know. But for those who enjoy a good read on a cold winter day in a cozy corner, maybe in front of a fire, the Baileys Harbor Historical Society offered some local, literary recommendations to pass the time. A collection of books from the Society's collection, many of which are available for check-out through the Door County Public Library, were displayed over the winter months in the lobby of the Town Hall. The book represented a variety of eras and topics, but the one thing they had in common was that they reflected local history and many were written by area authors. Here's some examples, in case you're looking for a book as you wait for summer weather to arrive! In addition, the Baileys Harbor Branch of the Door County Library System has a section dedicated to Door County History where you will find many other offerings that preserve local history.

Thanks to Susie Bauldry and Katherine Jones for setting up this display.

The Loving the Spice of Life
Adeline (Peil) Edmund 1980

Animals of Small Pond
Phoebe Erickson 1953

Sojourn to Italy
Mildred Armato 1982

America's Greatest Unknown Poet
Lorine Niedecker 2003

A History of Kangaroo Lake
Patty Williamson 2005 - updated 2024

Memories – The Ridges Sanctuary
Wisconsin War Records 1919

The Ridges Sanctuary
Roy Lukes

Faith Builds a Chapel
Winifred Boynton 1953

DOOR COUNTY LIBRARY
Inform. Instruct. Inspire!

May Open House – *It's Time for Cherries*
Saturday, May 24, 1-3 pm Toft House

The Baileys Harbor Visitor Center and Historical Society located at the Toft House will open for the season on Friday, May 23. Regular hours at the Toft House will be Wednesday – Saturday, 10 am to 4 pm and Sunday from 10 am – 2 pm. Days of operation will expand to Mondays, beginning in July or when the BHCA is able to secure a sufficient number of volunteers to staff the center.

We will celebrate the Toft House opening with a Historical Society Open House on Saturday, May 24 from 1 – 3 pm. Our 2025 seasonal display "It's Cherry Time" will remind visitors of Baileys Harbor's cherry growing past and re-count some of the memories of residents who were regulars among the cherry-pickers throughout the county through related artifacts, artworks and other memorabilia. If the weather cooperates, Scott Riedasch will play his own arrangements of familiar, American standard tunes outside in the gazebo. The BHCA will make available its wide selection of brochures, maps and other materials that promote our local and area businesses, events and activities. Refreshments will be served.

The Historical Society has scheduled a number of programs this summer that will focus on a variety of preservation topics including environmental history, and memories associated with Baileys Harbor local and family history. All programs will take place at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall beginning at 7 pm on the dates listed below. These presentations are free and open to the public.

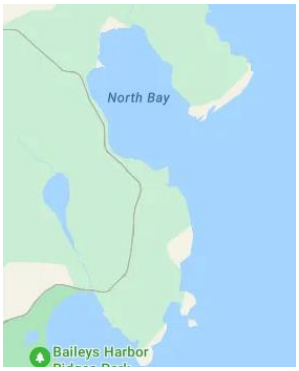
June program – Wednesday, June 18
The Heins Creek Story

Through photos, Marilyn Hein will take you on a walk along the trail – through the drifting sand dunes, the cool shade of the forest, and to the winding creek – while sharing the unfolding story of Heins Creek. The story reveals how everything that happened in the past affects how we live in the present. It also reveals how everything is connected and flows together in the ever-changing story being told by Heins Creek, the Door County peninsula, and the Great Lakes.

Marilyn lives in Appleton, but she grew up in Sturgeon Bay and still considers Door County her home. Both sets of Marilyn's great-grandparents were among the first Door County settlers in the late 1800s when the lumbering industry was booming. Her father's grandparents, William and Wilhelmina Hein, bought the property known as Heins Creek.

July Program – Wednesday, July 16
North Bay Stories

Join us for an evening of reminiscing facilitated by Kathleen Harris along with North Bay resident Linda Silvasi-Kelly. We'll share essential information about North Bay's early days then drill down deeper by telling stories of fisherman, artists, farmers, and others. Participants will have a chance to chime in at this interactive program featuring the memories of author and illustrator Phoebe Erickson, the North Bay Schoolhouse, and more!
You are encouraged to bring North Bay memorabilia for a display table, for example, a photo, tool, postcard, or authentic fishing gear. Contact Kathleen at 920-421-2941, if you would like to share an item.



August Program – Wednesday, August 13
The Collins Family

The Collins Family were early settlers in Baileys Harbor. This evening, Laurie Collins will offer you a glimpse into Collins' life in the early days, the family's heritage and generational memories.