BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 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
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

Fall Transitions

While it may seem that visitors and second home owners were just arriving in Baileys Harbor, it's already time to take a drive to enjoy the fall colors, and for some, close up cottages before returning home for the winter. For those of us who remain here year round, the changing seasons continue to entertain us with the beauty of living on the quiet side.

Historical Society volunteers supported operation of the Community Association's Information Center at the Toft House, which also offers visitors the opportunity to explore Baileys Harbor history. Between opening day on May 23 and closing on October 19, they welcomed 2217 individuals to the Center. The dedicated volunteers clocked over 525 hours of service. Our thanks go out to the following individuals for their time: Karen Berndt, Evan and Lurana Webster, Joni Ecke, Cheryl Aukeman, Pat Neudecker, Ann Marie Ott, Katherine Jones, Kathleen Pizza, Nathan Arch, Patti Woods and Karen Wicker.

Board member Tom Esau has led the way as we transition to new technology for 2026. The Historical Society's electronic equipment was purchased at the time of the Society's inception and could no longer be updated to meet current standards. With money donated in memory of former President, LeAnn Despotes, the Society will continue her work documenting our collection with a new laptop, scanner and photo editing software. Thanks Tom, for your research and efforts to acquire the items.

Donations

We thank Neil and Kathleen Ryan who made a large financial donation to the Historical Society in memory of LeAnn Despotes. In addition, visitors to the Toft House placed $162 in the Historical Society collection box at the Toft House. Attendees at the August program contributed another $50. Board member Katherine Jones provided a program in September to a college reunion group, who was interested in learning more about Toft Point. Katherine, a docent at Toft Point, received a $100 donation in appreciation for the personalized program. These contributions will be used to offset the costs of video recording and editing the summer public presentations so that they may be viewed online for those who are unable to attend.

The Historical Society is also not able host programs and events without the generosity of those who support us by providing delicious refreshments. Donors this season included: Katherine Jones, (Board member and chairperson for the BHHS hospitality committee); Jan Groen, Andrea Esau, Kriss Schorer, and Howard Williamson.

Matt Hollingswood shared a copy of his Grandmother's (Virginia Wilson Johnson) memories which included references to times spent at Toft Point as well as other experiences from her times in Door County.

A metal detectorist dropped off some items found on the Toft property late this summer. The metal fragments included: the possible remnants of a shotgun shell, a top likely from a salt shaker and two buckles.

New members Tom and Joy Schram donated a collection of photos, newspaper clippings and memorabilia of the Schram and Wasserbach families. As a result, you'll find an article about Tom's great uncle, Lloyd Wasserbach, in this edition of the newsletter beginning on page 5. We hope you'll also check out the display featuring Lloyd in the display cases in the lobby of the Town Hall.

Last, but not least, we thank Terry and Ally McArdle for adding another Albert and Louise Zahn bird to our flock. Terry inherited the little black and orange bird from Anna DesJardins McArdle, who received the carved bird from Aunts Jeanette and Catherine McArdle, fondly referred to as "the girls.' The bird has been added to the display case in the reading room at the Baileys Harbor Public Library.

As a regional affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society according to their guidance, the Baileys Harbor Historical Society has a written Collections Policy in place. The policy outlines the Society's approach to acquiring objects, photos, and written materials that preserve the history of Baileys Harbor. An overview of donation options and the policy can be found on our website here:
https://baileysharborhistory.org/donations/
Feel free to contact us if you have any questions: info@baileysharborhistory.org

Board of Director Updates

Kriss Schorer is making 2025 her last year on the Historical Society Board of Directors. Kriss is a local history expert and you'll find her presentations in the video collection on our website including: Golf in Baileys Harbor (August 2017) and the Baileys Harbor Women's Club (Fall 2019). Kriss was instrumental in developing the history boards displayed at the Toft House and Town Hall. A third board for St. Mary's Catholic Church is in progress with plans to complete it in the Spring. We thank Kriss for her contributions and for her service on the Board of Directors since 2018.

Members attending the annual meeting in September elected the following individuals to the Board of Directors to fill vacancies and expiring terms of existing Board members: Ann Marie Ott, Tom Esau, Cynde Krowas, Katherine Jones, Julie Sausen, Andrea Esau, and Howard Williamson. Marianne Newton and Carol Schmidt, whose terms expire at the end of 2026 and 2027 remain on the Board.

New to the Board are Historical Society members Julie Sausen and Andrea (Andi) Esau.

Julie is a northeastern WI native who lived in Chicago and New York before she moved to a rural property outside Baileys Harbor in 2024. With a background in education and history, she earned a B.A. at St. Norbert College and MEd at National Louis University in Chicago. Julie brings her love of history to the Board, along with a host of leadership and technical skills acquired from an executive career in financial operations.

Andi was born and raised in Milwaukee and worked at the home office of Northwestern Mutual Life there for 38 years, including as the Executive Assistant to the Vice President of Life Product Marketing. After raising a family in Greendale, WI, Andi and her husband Tom moved to Door County in 2018, where Tom's family operated a resort on Kangaroo Lake. Andi volunteered at Woodwalk Gallery upon her arrival and more recently has been an active volunteer, not only with the Historical Society, but at The Clearing and Open Door Bird Sanctuary, too.

In accordance with the By-Laws, the Board elected new officers for 2026 at its October meeting. The 2026 officers are: Katherine Jones, President; Tom Esau, Vice-President; Marianne Newton, Secretary; and Cynde Krowas, Treasurer. Katherine has been a member of the Historical Society for several years and joined the Board in May 2024. An active member of the Baileys Harbor Women's Club and the Baileys Harbor Community Association, Katherine serves as a Toft Point docent and as a Toft House volunteer.

Ann Marie Ott stepped down from her role as President and will now serve as the Society's collections manager. The Board voted to acquire updated collections software, an application called *CatalogIt,* as part of its transition to current technology. Ann Marie, in collaboration with Julie Sausen, will implement a plan to resume efforts to document all of the details associated with the Society's collection, a task initiated and performed primarily by former board president, LeAnn Despotes.

The Board took action at its October meeting to increase the Society's membership dues for the first time since the inception of the organization in 2010. Costs for supplies and postage have increased greatly in 15 years and the increased revenue will help support acquisition of shelving and archival storage boxes for collection items. The new rates become effective January 1, 2026.

The new rates are: Individual - $25; Household (formerly Family) - $40; Business - $75; and Lifetime - $200. Renewal reminders will be sent mid-month, prior to the month in which the renewal is due. If you are considering converting your membership to lifetime status or choose a membership as a holiday gift for a special someone this season, make those requests soon. The current rates will be honored for all applications received or postmarked by December 31, 2025. You'll find a membership form available on our website here: https://baileysharborhistory.org/join/

Membership Update

We are happy to report additional progress in meeting our "25 new memberships in 2025" goal. Since our last report in the August newsletter, please join us in welcoming 8 new individuals and households to the Historical Society: Tom & Joy Schram, Cheryl Aukeman, Joni & Gary Ecke, Julie Sausen, Nathan Arch, Evan & Lurana Webster, Patti Wood, and Karen Wicker. A number of these individuals served as volunteers at the Toft House this season and we thank them for supporting the Historical Society.

We also thank the many members who have renewed their memberships in the last quarter. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. The Historical Society has 108 households on its roster. Twenty-nine of those memberships represent out-of-state residents, 79 are Wisconsinites and of the Wisconsin residents, 50 have Baileys Harbor mailing addresses.

In Memory of Mary Irene Moran

Mary Moran stepped down as long-time Board Treasurer earlier this year and we have mourned her death on August 29. Always proud of her Irish heritage, Mary's commitment to her Catholic faith, family, and friends, as well as her community, contributed to her long, independent, and rich life of 90 years. Since we were unable to honor Mary publicly prior to her passing, Mary's life-time membership has been transferred to her daughter, Teresa Moran. We extend our sincerest condolences to Mary's entire family.

Irish Immigrants in Baileys Harbor

Guest speaker Laurie Collins, of Kensington, MD, educated the Historical Society audience at our August 13 program where she, along with her husband, John Harney, shared the fascinating stories of her ancestors and other Collins families who made their homes in Baileys Harbor, some since 1857. A number of Collins families immigrated to Door County from another beautiful peninsula, the Cooley Peninsula in County Louth, Ireland.

Laurie described her love of digging into data which came in part from her 30 years working as an analyst at the U.S. Department of Education until her retirement. Her extensive Collins family data collection is housed on Ancestry.com. The genealogy details and local stories prompted plenty of audience discussion and identified several Collins relatives in the audience, as well as neighbors and friends.

In honor of the Irish of Baileys Harbor, this year's Harbor Holiday theme tree and Town Hall lobby display cases will feature decorations and information reflecting Irish traditions.

Lloyd Wasserbach, Triumph to Tragedy

By Ann Marie Ott

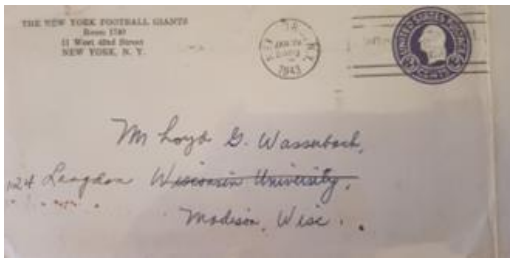
Lloyd wearing number 99 in the front row above.

Football seems to be a popular topic of conversation in Baileys Harbor recently, with the NFL draft taking place in Green Bay earlier this year, Packers retiring CEO Mark Murphy making improvements to the Maxwelton Braes golf course, and the Wisconsin Badgers lack luster season this fall. But local and collegiate football along with NFL draft picks were already prominent discussions for locals as early as 1936, and those talks centered around one young man from Baileys Harbor, Lloyd Wasserbach. The talk would last for more than ten years!

Lloyd displayed a talent for athletics as a young boy and the opportunity to play competitive sports led him to commute to Sturgeon Bay from Baileys Harbor for his high school education. Lloyd was a letterwinner who excelled in not one, but three sports. Lloyd was on the Sturgeon Bay championship basketball team in 1938 and played baseball, too. His letter jacket hardware (pictured below) offers the evidence of those high school days, thanks to the recent donation by Tom and Joy Schram. But football was Lloyd's main claim to fame. Sturgeon Bay won its very first football championship in 1936 and followed with a second in 1937; two seasons where the team was unbeaten. Wasserbach played guard and was captain of the team. The Door County Advocate reported that the team "led by a legendary coach Cliff Fagan, outscored their opponents 153-6." The news article described Lloyd as the player "who could always be found at the bottom of the pile," and that "nobody moved Wasserbach."

For most high school athletes the glory days end with a framed diploma. Not so for Wasserbach, whose skills were recognized by University of WI football coach, Harry Stuldreher. Lloyd became a member of the Badgers during a period when Wisconsin had one of its greatest teams. In 1942, Wasserbach, along with teammate Elroy "Crazylegs" Hirsch, were members of the first WI team to defeat number one ranked Ohio State. By the end of the season, that Badger team had its own number 3 rank in the AP poll. Lloyd was a three year letter winner at WI (1940-1942) and his contributions were recognized when he was selected to play in the college all-star game following the 1942 season. Wasserbach's football triumphs didn't end that year.

Chapter three of this football careeer finds our Baileys Harbor local being recruited by the "New York Football Giants." It's January 1943 and Lloyd receives a letter asking him to fill out a questionnaire to explore the possibilities of playing football with the team. But Curly Lambeau and the Green Bay Packers had noticed the Badger, too. The Pack had 30 draft selections to use in the 1943 draft.



News reports vary, but Lloyd Wasserbach became the 19th or 21st draft pick for the green and gold. Unfortunately, Uncle Sam had an alternate draft plan in mind for Lloyd. He received the call to join the Army and become one of the 3 million men who were inducted into WWII military service that year.

Lloyd on the right with his half-brother Leon Schram

Lloyd served in the 145th Infantry Regiment, 37th Infantry Division. He rose to the rank of First Sergeant, and was deployed to the South Pacific based in Guadalcanal, Bougainville and Luzon. At one point during his service, Lloyd's parents (Martha (Schram) and John "Jack" Wasserbach) received a letter stating Lloyd was hospitalized and suffering from "yellow jaundice." Subsequent reports said that he suffered from the continuing effects of malaria in later years. Those health challenges did not limit his performance. The copy of his military certificate notes his entitlement to wear a long list of service ribbons and decorations: Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon with 2 Bronze Battle Stars, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with 1 Bronze Battle Star, a Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal, 3 Overseas Service Bars Dec 12 1945, Bronze Star Medal, and the American Theater Ribbon. The local paper reported Lloyd's discharge and return home in its January 4, 1946 edition, noting Lloyd's 33 month service.

The summer of 1946 arrives and football talk returns. The Packers have not forgotten their 1943 draft pick and offer Lloyd a contract! If you are a sports history buff, you know that 1946 is the year that the All-America Football Conference (AAFC) was getting its start, challenging the NFL in post-war player recruitment. An article, in memory of Wasserbach published by the Door County Advocate in 2003, gave the Packers credit for offering Lloyd a $4000 contract (equivalent to about $66, 500 today). But the newly formed Chicago Rockets acquired Lloyd for $5000 and gave him the opportunity to play with former Badger teammates, Elroy Hirsch, Bill Schroeder, Tommy Ferris and Red Vogts. The Rockets enjoyed early success, winning 5 games the first season, but then won only a single game the next year. Lloyd left the Rockets, the team became the Chicago Hornets and by 1949 the AAFC had dissolved.

With the end of his football career, Lloyd moved on and married Barbara Havey in the fall of 1948. The two had met during his time at the University of Wisconsin. His father-in-law, who led the O.T. Havey Electric Corporation in Madison, offered him a job as part of an electric line construction crew.

Photo: Ripon Historical Society video program

The crew was installing an electric line from Ripon to Omro, and during that project Lloyd checked into the Grand View Hotel in Ripon, WI. Tragedy struck and Lloyd lost his life along with six others when the historic hotel burned on February 1, 1949. No other members of the construction crew were among the deceased. Lloyd was just 28 years old. Additional research for this article found double tragedy. Lloyd's wife of four months was expecting at the time of his death. Their daughter, Dawn was born July 25, 1949 and also died at the young age of 28 years, from an unreported cause.