

# BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2013

P.O. Box 336  
BAILEYS HARBOR, WI  
54202

[baileyshhs@hotmail.com](mailto:baileyshhs@hotmail.com)

[www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org)

## OFFICERS

**-Leann Despotos**  
President  
**-Kristen Peil**  
Vice-President  
**-Mary Moran**  
Treasurer

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Suzanne Bauldry  
Roy Cole  
Leann Despotos  
Steve Hey  
Mary Moran  
Kristen Peil

*Town Board Liaison*  
Roberta Thelen

## 2013 MEETINGS TOWN HALL

June 6<sup>th</sup>, 7PM  
July 17<sup>th</sup>, 7PM  
August 15<sup>st</sup>, 7PM  
September 12<sup>th</sup>, 7PM



**Lost Baileys Harbor:**  
In 2001 we lost our  
Quonset hut theatre.  
Do you see any other  
lost “landmarks” from  
the 40s & 50s?  
(See page 2.)

## FALL & WINTER ACTIVITIES

Our activities continued through the fall and winter as always. The display cases, changed monthly by Kristen Peil, outside the library in the Town Hall are the most visible evidence of what we’ve been up to. Thanks to her efforts and the generous contributions of interested individuals, the cases have served as a mini-museum of Baileys Harbor history. The BHHS joined the Baileys Harbor Community Association again at the Christmas Tree Lighting Party and provided opportunities for children to create old-fashioned tree ornaments. An oral history workshop was given by Steve Hey in September. We plan to continue this project in 2013. All are welcome to participate. Suzanne Bauldry is updating the Baileys Harbor Cemetery history, which will allow us to locate gravesites by name and on a cemetery map. We continue to support the Community Mural Project, and the Baileys Harbor Barns Project will continue as well.

Our 2013 summer programs are listed below for your convenience. If you have suggestions for future programs, or would like to present a historic program, please let us know. DVDs of past programs are available at the Baileys Harbor Library, and they are also available for purchase from the Historical Society.

## 2013 EVENTS SCHEDULE

**June 6, 2013 7PM: General Meeting**-Commercial Fishing in Baileys Harbor by Trygvie Jensen

**July 17, 2013 7PM:** Moonlight Bay History by Nancy Rafal

**August 15, 2013 7PM: (Annual Nominating Meeting)**-Baseball in Baileys Harbor by Bill Becker & Bob Schultz

**September 12, 2013 7PM: (Annual Election Meeting)**-Zahn Family History by Randy Zahn

## **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society currently has 71 memberships representing over 100 members. Renewal reminders are sent each month as yearly memberships expire. Our membership levels are: Business \$50, Family \$25, Individual \$15, and Lifetime \$150. Members' dues help to support our continuing displays outside the Baileys Harbor Library, our events and presentations, and our newsletters. Please encourage your friends, neighbors, and family members to join the BHHS so they can enjoy supporting the dissemination of our local history, sharing information, and exploring the history of the community. A printable membership form can be found on our website <[baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org](http://baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org)>; just fill it out and mail it in.

## **LOST BAILEYS HARBOR**

A walk down the main street of Baileys Harbor no longer features the Lake Theatre (8115 Highway 57) pictured on page 1. When Orville and Elton Voeks built the Quonset hut theatre in 1947, it was the only movie theatre in northern Door County and ran two shows each day, three different movies each week. It had a full snack bar with fresh popcorn; drinks were from the drinking fountain. Seating was surprisingly hierarchical. Young children sat in the very front in the middle seating section. As one entered the auditorium, the seats in the left rear were exclusively for teenagers, not to be breached. The middle seats (other than the front) were filled with families and the general audience. There were also two seats next to the door for the snack bar girl and these were for her and her friend or boyfriend. These seating practices evolved naturally, and everyone followed them.

Later, the building changed hands a few times, and when it was demolished in 2001, it was known as the Lake Cinema. An interesting history of the theatre by Patty Williamson can be read online in the Peninsula Pulse (7/15/2011) <<http://www.ppulse.com/pdalpeditorial.lasso?-token.story=98157.114136>>. Other items in this photo that have been "lost" to Baileys Harbor include the hanging pendant streetlight in the intersection and the Shell Oil and Standard Oil tall service station signs that have been gone for years.

## **THE OTHER JENS JENSEN AND RURAL FREE DELIVERY**

We are probably all familiar with Jens Jensen, the renowned landscape architect, founder of The Clearing, and ardent supporter of the Ridges Sanctuary. It was while searching for information on him that I found another Jens Jensen. This other Jens was a resident of

Baileys Harbor, a respected civil servant, a husband, and a good friend.

The Door County Library has made historic Door County newspapers available at its website, <<http://doorcountynewspapers.org/>>. They are searchable spanning the years 1862-1923, and this is where I got to

know a bit about the other Jens Jensen. Reading the Baileys Harbor news reports on Jens drew me in other directions, too.

Jens Jensen was a rural carrier for the Post Office at least from June 3, 1910, until April 1924. His success in delivering the mail seemed to be a topic of great interest. In April 1924, the Advocate reports that Jensen has found it “tough going.” In March 1913, roads were in such poor condition that Jens had to make his deliveries on foot, and stage driver Panter didn’t go at all. On February 13, 1920, he had a difficult time making his route because of the roads being in a drifted condition. In March 1921 a blizzard had snow in heaps everywhere, but Jens Jensen made his routes. Perhaps my favorite report is from the November 25, 1921, issue of the Advocate, “Rural Carrier Jens Jensen now is making his rounds with a horse and rig having laid his little flivver up for the winter.”

I went on to find that other town news columns also reported on their rural carriers. In 1905, A. Soderberg of Sister Bay is reported to be the first rural carrier in the county to use an automobile. In February 1903, Theo Hanson, Door County’s first ever rural carrier, was so appreciated by the farmers on his route that they each pledged to contribute a bag of oats to help keep his horse, this just 3 months after the service was instituted. The Advocate, in April 1903, extols the virtues of the rural delivery system, and particularly credits its success to the rural carriers, who are described as intelligent, energetic men of good judgment.

That spurred me to search for articles having to do with the Post Office, and I received quite an education. Rural Free Delivery (RFD) was a controversial idea in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Those opposed complained of the cost, and claimed that this expense would show favoritism to a particular class of people. There was also concern that small town businesses would suffer if the farmers didn’t come into town to get their mail once or twice a week. Those in favor cited increased postal receipts, decreased isolation, the enhanced value of farmlands, the improvement of roads, better prices for farm products, and the educational benefits of access to literature and knowledge of current events. They also pointed out that cities that met certain standards had free home mail delivery, but rural areas did not.

On October 1, 1896, RFD began in 3 West Virginia communities. Within a year, 44 routes were established in 29 states. At the end of 1899, it was decided to try countywide delivery. Rural Free Delivery was established in Carroll County, Maryland. It was successful, and RFD became a permanent service on July 1, 1902. Door County’s first rural carrier was appointed November 15, 1902.

To be eligible, patrons had to provide mailboxes, and keep their roads in reasonable condition for mail delivery. Hundreds of petitions for rural delivery were turned down because of un-



suitable or unplowed roads; this caused local entities to improve country roads, and contributed to a better network of roads throughout the United States.

Now we see why it was important to report on the ability of the rural carrier to complete his route. Mail delivery depended upon it, and it seemed that the

rural carriers were revered for their fortitude in carrying out their deliveries. In the beginning, farmers put out mailboxes of all types, from syrup tins to kerosene containers. Complaints from the rural carriers promoted standard specifications from the Post Office Department:

- The box must be made of metal 6x8x18 inches and weatherproof.
- Boxes must be able to be fastened to a post at a convenient height so the carrier wouldn't have to alight.
- Keys to a customer's box should be easy to use by a carrier with

one gloved hand in the severest weather.

Boxes had to be approved by the Post Office. This is when the familiar tunnel-shaped mailbox came into being.

Intrepid rural carriers like Baileys Harbor's Jens Jensen were the standard bearers of a transformative time in U.S. history. Rural Free Delivery improved the lives of farmers and all people living in remote areas of the United States. It gave reason to improve roads everywhere, and had a tremendous impact as a cultural and social agent for rural, industrial, and urban Americans.

Leann Despotos

## **BHHS HOSTS THE DOOR COUNTY HISTORICAL RESOURCE ASSOCIATION**

On October 17, 2012, our historical society hosted the fall meeting of the Door County Historical Resource Association (DCHRA) at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall. The DCHRA is an organization of historical societies and entities such as the Door County Library and Door County museums seeking to promote the historic heritage of Door County and its historic resources. Kristen Peil chaired the meeting and arranged for a sampling of Baileys Harbor food and drink, donated by local businesses, as part of the program.

The organizations' representatives were introduced and summaries of recent activities and accomplishments were shared. Groups unable to attend sent statements that were read by Kristen. Attendees enjoyed this opportunity to share, brainstorm, and collaborate, and agreed that they would encourage other history-related groups to get involved.

Several ideas were proffered for future activities, including a heritage crawl, an event for children, and an archiving event. It was also suggested that a map or guide to historic locations in the county might be valuable.

One member volunteered to investigate mounting a Facebook page for DCHRA. Another suggestion involved formulating a way to link all websites, sort of like one-stop history shopping. It was also suggested that we encourage the Door County Visitors Bureau to put together a "Quick Reference Guide" brochure similar to others they have done for the performing arts or silent sports. The point was also made that local history resources can be economic assets as are other recreational and cultural pursuits.

Roy Cole and Kristen Peil of BHHS joined a number of other members who volunteered to work as a steering committee to look into the above-mentioned ideas and to formulate a strategic plan for the group. The committee planned to meet in November 2012.

**Women's History Factoid:** The first U. S. postage stamp to honor an America woman was the 8-cent Martha Washington (1732-1802), part of the Series 1902 stamps. This 8-cent stamp represents a change in attitude and a growing awareness of the importance of women's contributions to American society. It is said, though, that Martha was the least controversial of the women suggested at the time.



## THANKS SO MUCH!

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society would like to publicly thank the following persons and companies who provided additional support during 2012.

**Literature & Photo Images provided for BHHS use:**

**Leann Despotes** – Books for the BHHS library

**Scott Gardner** – Pictures

**Don & Rozanna Gerdman** – Boy Scout memorabilia

**Lynn Mattke** – Victorian hair wreath, various historic ephemera, book for BHHS library

**The Ridges Sanctuary** – Virginia Booth guest books and memorabilia

**Kriss Schorer** – Historic Baileys Harbor photos

**Sherry Zahn** – Pictures

**Donations of Time, Help, & Money:**

**Inga Bacon** – Tax reporting and advice

**Baileys Harbor Community Association** – Mutual assistance projects

**Baileys Harbor Town Board** – Continued financial support and office space

**Suzanne Bauldry** – 4<sup>th</sup> of July Uncle Sam & Emma Toft scarecrow, Cemetery Records

**Laddie Chapman** – Continued technical audio/visual assistance

**Roy and Jo Cole** – Financial contribution

**Cornerstone Pub** – Food for DCHRA meeting

**Leann Despotes** – Publicity, membership, newsletters

**Florian II** – Food for DCHRA meeting

**Harbor Ridges Assn.** – Cash donation

**Harbor Fishmarket & Grille** – Web page hosting and development

**Steve Hey** – Oral History Workshop

**Hickey Bros. Fishery** – Food for DCRHA meeting

**Leon & Sue Hoffmann** – The Baileys Harbor Barns Project

**Russel Leitz** – Shipwrecks event

**Steve Leonard** – Ridges Sanctuary History event

**Cynthia McGuire** – 4<sup>th</sup> of July Uncle Sam

**Mary Moran** – Keeping the accounts in perfect harmony

**Kristen Peil** – Display cases at Town Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> of July event

**Carol Schmidt** – Managing sales at all events

**Kriss Schorer** – History of the Town Hall event

**Doug Smith** – Scheduling, copying, general support

**Roberta Thelen** – Town Board liaison

**Caleb Whitney** – Help with display cases, technology help and advice

**Ida Whitney** – Animoto for 4<sup>th</sup> of July event

**Patty Williamson** – Kangaroo Lake event and contributions to the newsletter

**Randy Zahn** – Inspiration & artifacts for display cases



## PARTY TIME!



On December 1, 2012, the BHHS proudly joined with the Baileys Harbor Community Association (BHCA) to provide an evening of holiday fun at the annual Tree Lighting Party at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall. What a great community event! How can you miss when you combine holiday décor, treats, music, take-home projects, and a room full of congenial people?

Santa himself attended, and gathered confidential Christmas requests from the children in attendance. These

young Baileys Harborites joined in singing carols, adding to the general festive atmosphere.

Last year the Historical Society provided opportunities and supplies for making old-time ornaments, and the crafts were so successful that we were eager to participate again. So out came the colored paper, pipe cleaners, pine cones, tree branches, glue, and perhaps -- most important -- glitter! Our thanks go to Kristen Peil for organizing the activities, to Suzanne Bauldry for assisting her at the party, and to all the budding designers who took ornaments home for the holiday.

Leann Despotes



## 2013 ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOPS

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society will be sponsoring two workshops on oral history interviewing for persons who are interested in learning how to go about collecting family stories from older family members. The workshop will explore the basic techniques of family interviewing and how to develop an interview guide employing questions provide by StoryCorp, one of the largest and best known oral history projects in the country. Instruction will also be given on the use of family photographs as a device to encourage the recollection and telling of family stories and how to use digital audio recording equipment to record your family interviews.

Steve Hey, Emeritus Professor of Sociology from Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, will teach the workshops. Professor Hey has undertaken a wide variety of qualitative interview studies during the course of his professional life including studies of older persons living in sheltered housing, the process of socialization to severe visual impairment in later life, and an oral history study of the Save Our Jobs Movement, a group of former steel workers who formed to fight for benefits that were lost when Wisconsin

Steel closed in 1980.

The precise dates and times of the workshops have not been arranged as of yet, but will be scheduled during the month of September. One of the workshops is being planned for mid-morning and the other early evening. Each workshop will be limited to a maximum of ten people and will last approximately two hours. More complete information will be available during the summer.

Steve Hey

## **MALIN EKMAN –BAILEYS HARBOR ARTIST**



Our Women's History Month honoree, artist Malin Ekman, is the daughter of Henny (Hellstrom) and Titus Ekman, immigrants from Kalix, Norbotten, in northern Sweden. She is the first generation of her family to be born in the United States. Malin became known as Marlene when her name was changed by school officials upon entering kindergarten.

The Ekman family moved from Evanston, Illinois, to Baileys Harbor in 1943. They purchased the "Old Heidelberg," a former roadhouse on Highway 57 at the Baileys Harbor-Jacksonport town border.

Malin was introduced to art at school in Evanston, and realized even as a young child that she was destined to become an artist. In the late 1940s art was not yet a part of the curriculum at Gibraltar High School, so Malin attended The Clearing Folk School's first winter classes receiving art instruction under the mentoring of Gerhard Miller and Jens Jensen. Among notable classmates there were Olivia Traven, Emma Toft, John Brann Sr. and Frank Oldenberg from Baileys Harbor. In the summer she traveled by bus and train to Chicago where she studied in the Junior Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Ms. Ekman was eager begin her professional art studies. She enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago after graduating from Gibraltar High School in 1950. Many of her instructors were professionals who had fled Europe in the aftermath of World War II. Malin studied advertising design, drawing, and painting. This field of study was historically difficult for women to succeed in. Malin paid her own way through school, relying also on scholarships and grants, finally graduating with honors and a degree. She went on to receive the national honor of being invited to join Delta Phi Delta, the oldest national honorary art fraternity in the United States.

She worked successfully, but eventually settled in the Chicago suburbs and raised a family. She returned to the world of art after a 20-year hiatus. She has been recognized nationally and internationally for her book illustrations and favorably reviewed by publishers and award-winning writers as well as critics. Since 1982 she has resided in a restored log home in Baileys Harbor that once belonged to her family.

While living in Baileys Harbor, Malin has also been an instructor at the Peninsula Art School, started her own publishing business, Ekman Publishing, and in 2000 was featured in a one-woman show at the Miller Art Museum. Ekman's work has been in numerous invitational, juried and one-person shows and private collections, and has been

represented in many Door County galleries. She serves on the Miller Art Museum's Acquisitions Committee, and was formerly on the Board of Directors. She now engages in fine art painting full time. Malin still actively creates art and shares it with her community by displaying her pieces at the Baileys Harbor McArdle Library. Further information can be found outside the library in our display cases, along with examples of her amazing work.

Leann Desportes

## **THE CEMETERY PROJECT – WRITTEN IN STONE**



The Baileys Harbor Cemetery is located on County Highway EE just outside of town bounded on the west by Red Cherry Road. Although it is not obvious to the casual observer, the cemetery is really two cemeteries. The area next to Red Cherry Road belongs to the Catholic Church, and the area east of (approximately) the flagpole is the public cemetery owned by the Town of Baileys Harbor. Suzanne Bauldry compiled the public cemetery records when she was on the Town Board several years ago, and she is working on updating that information so it will be available to all on a database listing names, birth and death dates, and gravesite locations. Our goal is to add this database to our website.

The oldest headstone Suzanne has found dates from 1852 for Lydia Darius Griffen. Land was sold to the town at various times; one acre was purchased from Mrs. A.M. Fry in 1863 for \$5.00. Town records show that the cemetery was plotted and lots were sold in 1889. This project should reveal many interesting details of Baileys Harbor history and of its early residents.

Anyone wishing to share information on the history of the Baileys Harbor cemetery can contact Suzanne at 920-839-2674.

## **FOURTH OF JULY FLOAT**

**We want you – Again!!**

**The BHHS hopes to enter a float in the 2013 Fourth of July parade. If you have ideas, skills, or an interest, please contact Suzanne Bauldry at 920-839-2674.**