

The Baileys Harbor Community Mural Dedicated



In May of 2012, the Baileys Harbor Historical Society agreed to be the non-profit partner in the Baileys Harbor Community Mural Project. Nancy Rafal, Baileys Harbor poet, conceived the idea for the mural that celebrates the past, present, the future, and the natural beauty of Baileys Harbor. It also features words from Wisconsin poet Lorine Niedecker, who visited the Ridges in the late 1960s and was inspired to write a poem entitled "Wintergreen Ridge." Ram Rojas, a noted local muralist and studio artist created the stunning artwork on special panels that are affixed to the north wall of Nelson's Shopping Center, 8120 Highway 57. The Ridges Sanctuary was also on board, and assisted with grant applications.

The project was awarded a starter grant by the Woodrow Hall Jumpstart Award, another grant from the Raibrook Foundation, and a donation from the Cordon Family Foundation. Many individuals have donated to the mural project as well. Historic features include the Brann Bros. general store that once existed on the present site of the Nelson Shopping Center, the lower range light, the Prueter saw mill, and Cana Island Lighthouse. You will also recognize some of the people included in the painting. Be sure to go and take a look! The marina viewing deck provides a great vantage point for examining the details of the mural.

The Baileys Harbor Community Mural is now complete; the dedication took place during Autumn Fest on Saturday, September 28, 2013, at Kendall Park. Nancy Rafal spoke about the origin of the project and read from "Wintergreen Ridge," the Lorine Niedecker poem that inspired the mural. Steve Leonard spoke on behalf of the Ridges Sanctuary, and Gary Nelson spoke as the owner of Nelson's Shopping Center where the mural is located. Leann Despotos, Historical Society president, spoke about the role that BHHS played in this project. Artist Ram Rojas told of how he first envisioned the mural and recounted the ups and downs of the past two seasons. The Dedication concluded with a walk to the mural wall and a ribbon cutting at the painted door of the Brann Bros. store. The mural was dedicated to "All the good people of Baileys Harbor---past, present, and future."

To date, \$17,000 has been raised of the \$30,000 cost. An anonymous lender got the project off the ground. This person made a no-interest loan for materials, equipment rental, and labor. Donations are being accepted by BHHS. Please indicate that your donation is for the Mural Project.

Donations may be sent to the Baileys Harbor Historical Society, P.O. Box 336, Baileys Harbor, WI 54202.