

BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

FALL, 2012

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2013 MEETINGS

TOWN HALL
7:00 PM

JUNE 13TH

JULY 17TH

AUGUST 15TH

SEPT. 12TH



Lost Baileys Harbor:
Where and when was
The Baileys Harbor
Yacht Club??
See p. 2

SUMMER, 2012

The Historical Society has been very active since our last newsletter. We mounted five public events this summer beginning with celebrating the 75th anniversary of our Town Hall and collecting memories of some of the older residents. From there we visited shipwrecks in the harbor, reminisced about past Independence Day celebrations, learned about the history and families of Kangaroo Lake, and finally heard the history of the Ridges Sanctuary.

In addition to these events, two of our members, Leon & Sue Hoffmann, are gathering pictures and information about the historic barns throughout our township. We are also taking steps to gather information for a driving/walking tour of Baileys Harbor, and are sponsoring the community mural project that you can see developing on the side of Nelson's Shopping Center. The Community Mural Project is being spearheaded by Nancy Rafal. Steve Hey has also held a workshop on interviewing and collecting oral histories, and Suzanne Bauldry has created a giant Uncle Sam for the 4th of July as well as a scarecrow portraying Emma Toft in the Town Hall garden.

We are currently in the process of planning for another exciting and interesting year in 2013. Our tentative schedule appears below. Leann Despotes

2013 EVENTS SCHEDULE

June 13, 2013- 7:00 PM- General Meeting- TBA

July 17, 2013- 7:00 PM- General Meeting-TBA

August 21, 2013- 7:00 PM-(Annual Nominating Meeting)-TBA

September 12, 2013- 7:00PM- (Annual Election Meeting)- TBA

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society has 68 memberships that represent over 100 individuals. Renewal reminders are sent month by month as yearly memberships expire. Our membership levels are: Business \$50, Family \$25, Individual \$15, and Lifetime \$150. Membership dues help to support our continuing displays outside the McArdle Library, events and presentations, and our newsletters. Please encourage your friends, neighbors and family members to join the BHHS so they can enjoy sharing information and exploring the history of the community. A printable membership form can be found on our website <www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org>; just fill it out and mail it in.

LOST BAILEYS HARBOR

Our “Lost Baileys Harbor” artifact is an old charter membership card for the Baileys Harbor Yacht Club. The club was short lived; we think it started in 1945 and dissolved in the early

1950’s. We may be able to write an article about it in the future, but this card was an important clue in solving another mystery about the Anclam Dock. That article follows.

THE YACHT CLUB DOCK

As children in the 1950’s there were two places to swim in Baileys Harbor: the “Bathing Beach” (on Ridges Road) and the “Yacht Club Dock” (the dock at Anclam’s Park.) Those were the beach names, and although they didn’t make much sense, that’s what we called them. Perhaps the “Bathing Beach” name arose from the fact that there was a tumbledown bathhouse where you could change if you were willing to risk entering the dilapidated structure. But why was the beach in town called the Yacht Club Dock? We had certainly never seen or heard of a Yacht Club on the site. Some of us wondered about this, but the question was far in the back of our minds.

Some clues appeared. Last year I came across my father, Otto John’s, charter membership card in the Baileys Harbor Yacht Club. It was dated June 11, 1945, and

signed by Ben C. Schraml, secretary/president. We have seen postcards in our collection labeled Baileys Harbor Yacht Club, picturing the Anclam dock. Russel Leitz mentioned that the Anclam Dock property was purchased from the Baileys Harbor Yacht Club in the early 1950’s.

Charles “Jumbo” Tishler, also a child of the 50’s, joined me in the quest to find out why we referred to this beach as the Yacht Club Dock. At our July 18th presentation, Jumbo thought to ask Al Armato, very longtime summer resident of Baileys Harbor, if he knew anything about this, and he struck gold. Al explained that Bill Norton, a grocer at the present Yum Yum Tree was determined to have a Yacht Club in Baileys Harbor. He convinced a number of people to incorporate as the Baileys Harbor Yacht Club, and they proceeded apace. Walter Fisher brought trucks full of gravel and fill

to the dock. Everything was going well until there was a strange occurrence on the east side of the harbor.

The luxury yacht, Airbanas, ran aground July 1, 1948, and several men from town took up axes and crowbars and decided to loot the boat, erroneously claiming that it was derelict, and according to the law of the sea, it was free salvage. This event was recorded in papers as far away as Chicago. Eventually, Sheriff Hallie Rowe showed up and demanded that all loot be returned. It was reported in the Door County Advocate

that this was especially upsetting to the new Baileys Harbor Yacht Club since it was planning on extensive promotion of yachting facilities in the Baileys Harbor area, as well as building a new yacht club. Their fears were realized, and the club sold the land to the town, As far as I know, the incident was not spoken of again, at least not in the John or Tishler households.

We finally know why the Anclam Dock and beach area used to be known as the Yacht Club Dock. Case closed.

Leann Desportes

THE BAILEYS HARBOR TOWN HALL, A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING



The original Baileys Harbor town hall was a wooden structure that stood on Bluff Road. The hall was sold to Mrs. Hedwig Peil and used for several different purposes. Its final owner was Rollie Peil, who owned it until it was torn down to build the new post office.

On May 16, 1935, Michael W. McArdle passed away in Chicago and the town learned his will included a bequest to the town to build a new town hall. McArdle was a Baileys Harbor native son who went on to be a very successful businessman. Michael was born on October 6, 1874, to Irish immigrant parents James and Anne (Nancy) McArdle. McArdle graduated from the town school and went on to receive his teacher certification from the Wisconsin Teachers Institute. He later graduated from Oshkosh State Normal College receiving a Masters Teaching Certificate in 1893, and in 1901 graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin Law School. He worked for the U. S. government for several years before moving to Chicago with the Flexible Shaft Company. Flexible Shaft eventually became the Sunbeam Corporation and Michael was the President.

In 1927 Michael initiated plans to build Maxwellton Braes Resort on the former family farm at the South end of Baileys Harbor. Construction of the country club began in 1928 and was completed in 1931.

In 1935 McArdle provided funds to St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Parish for a new church building. The church was dedicated on May 30, 1936, a year after McArdle's death.

Michael had been diagnosed with cancer in the mid 1920's and underwent surgery at that time. In 1932 the cancer returned and he passed away in 1935. McArdle's will continued his philanthropy. The University of Wisconsin received funds that were used for a new four-story McArdle Memorial Cancer Research laboratory dedicated in 1940 to cancer treatment and research, and it continues today.

McArdle's death did not end his generosity to the Town of Baileys Harbor. He left \$500 to both the Baileys Harbor Women's Improvement Society and the Men's Club to be used for the general welfare and improvement of the town of Baileys Harbor.

Next, his will bequeathed the sum of \$25,000 to be used for the construction of a town hall and library in Baileys Harbor. He was very specific as to its construction. It was to be capable of seating at least 300 people, have a basement, a heating plant, a limestone exterior, and a library. Local businesses and craftsman were to be used for the construction. The only stipulation was that the building be completed within five years of his death. Construction began in early 1937 and the dedication was held Sunday, August 21st, well within the five-year restriction of the will. In today's dollars this bequest would be worth over \$11.5 million.

In 1982 the library was moved to the old school to make room for an office and town board meeting space. In 1994 the building was expanded and renovated to again house the library, bathrooms, an elevator and handicap entrance, town offices and meeting rooms. The building continues to be used for town, local club and organization meetings and events. The original library houses the local information center. Michael McArdle would surely be pleased to know his gift has provided a longtime treasure and anchor for our town.

Kriss Schorer



BASEBALL IN BAILEYS HARBOR

The Baileys Harbor Athletic Club is planning to make a presentation on the history of baseball in the Town of Baileys Harbor. We have some pictures dating back to 1906, but baseball was played in town for many years prior to that date, and continuously since then. We would be interested in receiving any and all pictures and/or newspaper accounts of days gone by. We are also

looking for people with stories to tell; either in person when we do the presentation, or by interview before then. Anyone with information may contact the Historical Society or Bill Becker at (920) 421-1571. Information can be mailed to Bill Becker, 2476 County Road F, Baileys Harbor, WI 54202, or e-mail: billbecker@yahoo.com.

Bill Becker

THE HISTORY OF KANGAROO LAKE

Patty Williamson presented the program for our July 18th meeting, based on her book, A History of Kangaroo Lake. She told the audience that it was an especially appropriate time for the presentation, as she and her husband, Howard, purchased their home on the lake 20 years ago on this date. Patty credited Wil Anschutz with urging her to write about the lake and the people who have made it their home since Allen G. Powers made the first clearing in 1857 and lived the rest of his life there as a hermit.

The presentation also included information about early immigrants to the Baileys Harbor area, the construction of the dam at the south end of the lake, the original causeway built in the 1880s, cutting ice on the lake, Kangaroo Lake School and the early days of St. Joseph Novitiate. The first interviews for the book were done in 1994 with Wil's 90-year-old father-in-law, Jim Finley, and his twin sisters, Mary and Catherine Collins. Pat Tishler was also an invaluable asset, and Vesta Stromberg collected information from many lake residents.

There were stories about the first residents of Eggers Point, the days when Charlie Panter met the trains in Sturgeon Bay to bring passengers north in his 1914 Ford touring car and drivers who kept a bucket of rocks beside them to throw at annoying dogs. Travel to Door County from Chicago took 14 hours in those days at the 35 mph speed limit. Jim Finley had tales about Mag Wilson's Evergreen Camp, the first business establishment on the lake, especially the night male guests "borrowed" a stuffed bear from a tavern in town and set it up by the women's outhouse. His father bought 500 feet on the east side of the lake for \$2.50 a foot and built their first cabin in 1920.

The late Hope Butler Pearson's parents bought Evergreen Lodge in 1919 and re-named it Kangaroo Lake Hotel. She recalled fires that burned for a long time in the peat bog under their property. Other owners of the lodge have been the McArdle family and the Horvaths, who bought it in 1977.

There were stories about the Coyote Roadhouse, which has undergone several name changes, including Krueger's on Kangaroo, since it was moved from Peninsula Park in the early 1940's. Several audience members remembered it as Michelsen's, a beer bar, where they had to walk through the owner's living room to reach the bathroom.

The presentation included stories about the three Stromberg brothers from Sweden, who were the first to live on Echo Island. Ralph Stromberg, the son of one of the brothers, and his wife, Vesta, operated the Kangaroo Queen, a 40 passenger pontoon boat that cruised around the lake as guests dined on fried chicken, cooked by Ralph.

A book compiled for a reunion of the Faust-Candioto family provided a treasure trove of stories, such as the time the toilet was blown up by lightning and the narrow escape family members had when their horse ran for dear life, carrying them off the railroad bridge ahead of a train. There was also a story about celebrants in Panter's bar the night WWII ended. The sheriff suggested it was time to lock up, and the owner cheerfully complied, locking everyone inside to party the rest of the night.

The book includes stories of 116 families with homes on Kangaroo Lake and more than 100 pictures. Roy Cole contributed to the evening by turning the pictures into a Power Point presentation, and Leann Despotes showed them as Patty spoke. Special thanks to them.

Patty Williamson

THE BARN PROJECT

Last summer, my husband Leon and I volunteered to photograph the barns in Baileys Harbor township for the historical society. We had spent the last several years taking pictures of barns in Door County for our personal album and thought the project would be a good match with our interests. Early on we determined the project was going to require a fair amount of planning and we would not begin taking the photographs until the summer of 2012.



We needed a few things: a letter of introduction, an information sheet, and an accurate map of the township. We also had to decide how we would divide responsibilities the day of a photo shoot: Leon would drive, I would read the map; Leon would talk to the owners, I would talk to the dogs (what??); Leon would explain the paperwork, I would take the

photos. We also determined the order in which the barns would be photographed (yes, there is a method to our madness). We organized **everything**, but we knew there would be one factor we could not control - Mother Nature! It got hot!

When we finally set out - camera and dog biscuits in hand - we were welcomed warmly everywhere we stopped. As people shared their stories we could see the pride in their eyes of a life well lived as stewards of the land. When we left each farm we felt as if we were leaving behind new friends. Mother Nature didn't always treat us well, but the dogs were always friendly!

So, the next time you see a strange vehicle coming down your driveway, it just might be us! We look forward to making your acquaintance, hearing your stories, and taking a few photos of your barn.

by Susan Hoffmann

4TH OF JULY RETROSPECTIVE



Lovers of the tradition of Baileys Harbor's 4th of July celebrations gathered at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall on June 23rd to view and reminisce about past Independence Day parades. Many of the attendees enjoyed recognizing themselves and old friends as our extensive collection of photos and film rolled across the screen.

We began in the very early 1900's and learned that the 4th of July in those days included a parade, sulky racing down the main street, and always a baseball game at Brann's Field located just south of what is now The Cornerstone Restaurant. In the depression years of the 1930's we saw floats that were decorated with evergreen boughs and hand-made signs, a far cry from the varied and colorful materials available today. Female viewers along the parade route wore dresses and

hats, and the men wore suits. What would they have thought of the tank tops and shorts of 2012?

Several pictures of the Gibraltar band showed an interesting progression. The earliest photos from the 1930's showed the musicians in a sort of uniform outfit of light slacks, shirts and sweaters. Later, in the 50's and 60's we saw the band in heavy woolen uniforms complete with braid and caps with the majorette sporting the traditional tall, fur hat. These were worn in the blazing sun as well as the driving rain. Nowadays, the school bands march in shorts and tee shirts. A much more practical solution, and they play as well as ever.

We were reminded of the lovely girls (Pre-Women's Movement) who vied for the title of Miss Independence. They lined up on the Town Hall lawn, and graced the hoods and convertibles of parade entries. As years passed, women began to be seen driving floats and vehicles rather than just riding on them.

During the Viet Nam War years we saw war protest entries as well as "love it or leave it" responses, both sides expressing the patriotism they so strongly felt. Throughout the years, expressions of patriotism and love of country appeared frequently. Sometimes supporting the status quo, sometimes resisting. Political entries from both parties are common, and we even saw a car/float from the 30's promoting Otto Voeks for Town Chairman.

That group known as "The Bluffers" brought their zany entries down from the bluff for years. The California Raisins presentation who "heard it on the grape vine" was one of the most memorable.

This was a nostalgic afternoon for many of us as we again watched the ingenious contraptions of the Hickey boys (sons of Bill & Ruth Hickey) motor down the street, laughed at the antics of Zero the Clown, watched little boys race for Amvets' spent shell casings instead of candy, and the frothy floats of Roland Peil Construction (thanks to his daughter Susie's love of craft.) Of course, let's not forget the old reliables; the Women's Club, the Lion's Club, the churches, Anderson Laundry, Annie Peil, the Barnowskys, and Nelson's Shopping Center. Yes, yes, I know I've forgotten some, but the point is that the 4th of July parade has been a community commitment in Baileys Harbor for over 100 years, and a reason for family members to return to and connect with their little home town.

Leann Desportes

AN APPEAL: Walking /Driving Tour of Historic Baileys Harbor

The BHHS is planning to compile information for an expanded historic walking/driving tour of Baileys Harbor. We will include the buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, but we also want to include businesses and homes of historic interest in the town. If you live in or have knowledge of the history of structures in town, please visit our website www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org , print the questionnaire about your building, and forward it to the Historical Society.

BAILEYS HARBOR SHIPWRECKS

Russel Leitz attracted a large crowd to the Baileys Harbor Town Hall on June 7th for a presentation on shipwrecks in the harbor. Leitz is a member of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeology Association, a volunteer group that is part of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, and was the leader of the 12-person team that conducted three dives in the harbor on June 9-10. This is a unique area in the state because so many shipwrecks occurred near one another.

He is also a researcher and writer and will present the BHHS a book with legal documents and other materials he is collecting on the wrecks when it is completed. His program included details about the 14 documented shipwrecks in the Baileys Harbor area. There are rumors of an additional ship that went down one-half mile west of the old lifeguard station, but nothing has been found. It's likely that it has sunk deeply into the

sand, in which case only professional divers authorized by the state would be allowed to excavate the site.



Leitz impressed the audience with the importance of discovering and preserving the remains of the vessels that were such a vital part of our early history. Before railroads were built, everything (including people) that came to the peninsula arrived by boat, and everything grown or built here was carried away from the local piers owned by An-

clam, Kilgore, Higgins and others. Remains of the piers are also part of the divers' search.

Leitz used slides to educate the audience about the parts of the vessels that have been identified: side ribs, floor and ceiling (not where you would expect to find them), knees, rail caps, bulwark stanchions and ribs. Because the harbor water is shallow, wave action has caused the wrecks to be badly broken apart. In many cases, he said, it's like assembling pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to figure out which pieces came from a particular wreck.

There are ten project sites near Baileys Harbor. The dozen divers were responsible for sketching on their two-sided slates with Mylar pages what they found in their individual 10'x10' sections. Later, their work was traced on a master chart. Nelson's served as home base for the underwater expedition.

Leitz noted that in the heyday of shipping, Baileys Harbor was the only harbor of refuge north of Milwaukee. Of the 14 shipwrecks in the area, seven were seeking shelter, two missed the entrance to the harbor and five were docked here on business. Forty-seven other vessels also wrecked nearby, but were recovered. Most of the wrecks occurred between October and December, but at least one was as early as April. Amazingly, few lives are known to have been lost.

Leitz and his diving team have made three trips to do research near Baileys Harbor since 2003. He noted that, while it is now illegal to take anything away from a shipwreck site, this was not always the case. Many items were stolen from the yacht Airbanas that was stranded in July, 1949, the last vessel to go aground in the harbor.

Patty Williamson

75 YEARS OF RIDGES' HISTORY

The 75-year history of the Ridges Sanctuary was presented by Steve Leonard, its executive director, at the August 21st meeting of the Baileys Harbor Historical Society. Established in 1937 to block the use of the land as a trailer park, the Ridges' mission is to protect the sanctuary and inspire stewardship of natural areas through programs of education, outreach and research. Leonard noted that Baileys Harbor has always been unique because of its immersion in and its ability to co-exist with its natural environment.



The first development of the area that would become the Ridges was the construction of the range lights in 1869 on an original plot of 40 acres. They soon became a gathering point for the community, with special events planned by the lighthouse keeper. In 1930, the upper range light was leased to Immanuel Lutheran Church for use as a parsonage, and four years later the U.S. government turned the 40 acres over to Door County.

Albert Fuller, curator of botany at the Milwaukee Public Museum, did the first plant survey of the site in 1935. Because of poor eyesight, he could not drive, and he hired a young man, Chester Cook, as his chauffeur and co-worker, a relationship that lasted for years. Inspired by the floral treasures Fuller identified there – including his favorite, the showy lady's slipper called Queen of the Forest – the Baileys Harbor Women's Club began a grass roots movement to preserve the area.

Articles of incorporation for the Ridges were signed on October 4, 1937, at the Kangaroo Lake cabin of Mr. and Mrs. William Seiker. Frank Oldenburg, was its first president. Other founding members were Jans Jensen, John Matter, Emma Toft, Jane McCorkle, Mertha Fulkerson, Olivia Traven and A. B. Gochenour.

In 1938 the Ridges acquired an additional 120 acres. Trails were mapped out by the WPA, and a summer speaker series and school programs were begun. By 1946, the acreage had increased to 520, with the last 120 purchased for \$742. Through the years it has expanded to the present 1,600 acres.

Leonard explained that the ridges of land represent old levels of Lake Michigan, with the most ancient dating back 1,400 to 1,500 years. There are 15 distinct plant communities with 475 identified plants, making it the most diverse landscape of any township in Wisconsin. It has been named a National Natural Landmark.

The Ridges is currently actively involved with the eradication of invasive species. There is an educational student exchange program between Milwaukee and Door County, as well as partnerships with the Sevastopol and Gibraltar school districts. A bike Ride for Nature, sponsored by the Ridges, drew more than 700 participants over the Memorial Day weekend.

Crowning the Ridges' 75th Anniversary Year is the purchase of the Sandpiper Restaurant, long a fixture on the north edge of Baileys Harbor. The building has been demolished, and the site will become the Cook/Albert Fuller Center, honoring the two men who contributed so much to the development of what would become the oldest private nature preserve in the state. The glass-walled design will bring the outside in. A handicapped-accessible boardwalk leading back to the Ridges' trails will feature stories of those whose vision helped to preserve this unique spot.

Patty Williamson

THE BAILEYS HARBOR COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT



In May of this year, the BHHS 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 will celebrate the past, present, the future, and the natural beauty of the town. It will also feature words from Wisconsin poet Lorine Niedecker, who visited the Ridges in the late 60's and wrote a poem entitled "Wintergreen Ridge." Ram Rojas, a noted local muralist has been engaged to create the artwork on special panels that are affixed to the north wall of Nelson's Shopping Center. The Ridges Sanctuary is also a co-sponsor of the project, offering help with grant applications.

Thus far, the project has been awarded a starter grant by the Woodrow Hall Jumpstart Award and another sum from the Raibrook Foundation. Many individuals have donated to the mural project, as well, and we can already see it taking shape. Some features that have emerged include the Brann Bros. store that once existed on the present site of the Nelson Shopping Center, the lower range light, the Preuter sawmill, and Cana Island Lighthouse. You will also recognize some of the people included in the painting. Be sure to take a look! The marina viewing deck provides a great vantage point for examining the details of the mural.

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

HAVE YOU ENJOYED READING THIS NEWSLETTER?

If you have, and do not belong to the Historical Society, consider joining us. If you have a friend who would enjoy our exploration of the history of Baileys Harbor, please share the newsletter and encourage their membership. We appreciate your support! How about a membership as a holiday gift?