



# *Gibraltar Historical Association Fish Creek, Wisconsin*

*Fall / Winter 2010*

## President's Report

Dear Members and Friends:

As I write this message, the cool days of fall are upon us and the busy season has come to a close. The Gibraltar Historical Association has had another rewarding year.

A "Gibraltar Talks" program was held one evening each month, May through November. The Board continues to meet on the second Tuesday of each month throughout the year. Board meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend. We appreciate everyone's input.

Every organization is dependent upon its members if it is to flourish and grow. The Gibraltar Historical Association is no exception. Please continue to give generously of time and funds as you have so willingly done in the past. Every dollar and every hour contributed helps to maintain the historic character of our very special place we call home – Gibraltar Town.

*~ Eunice Rutherford*

### **GIBRALTAR HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION**

#### **Board of Directors**

President	Eunice Rutherford
Vice President	Gary Schulze
Treasurer	David Lea
Member at Large	Laurie Buske
Member at Large	Candy Dammon
Member at Large	Kärin Kopischke
Member at Large	Barb McKesson

#### **Standing Committees**

Hospitality	Candy Dammon
Education Liaison	Kärin Kopischke
Computer Security	David Lea
Brick Campaign	Nancy Fisher
PR & Marketing	Doug Blahnik
Historian	Barb McKesson
Grants	Pam Jardine
Landscaping	Laurie Buske
Administrative Asst.	Sara Sohns

#### **OUR MISSION**

The Gibraltar Historical Association has been established to collect, research, and preserve objects and archival materials which directly reflect or illustrate Gibraltar Township history; to pass on from person to person, to advance history, and to educate residents and visitors about this history; and to plan the preservation of historical buildings and green space in the community of Fish Creek.

**Noble House Museum  
868 . 2091**

## “THAT OLD TIME APRON ”



The principle use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath. Because she only had a few, it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and they used less material, but along with that, it serviced as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven. It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears. From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven. When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids. And when the weather was cold, grandma wrapped it around her arms. Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron. From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls. In

the fall the apron was used to bring the apples that had fallen from the trees. When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds. When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men knew it was time for dinner. It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that "old time apron" that served so many purposes.



*A Special Thanks to . .*

*~ Author Unknown*

*Tom Young*

*Bud Barta*

*Our docents*

*Jim Thorp*

*Barb McKesson &*

*Ron Dammon*

*Karin Kopischke*

*Andy and Jan Coulson*

*The Beautiful Models*

*Cookie Bakers*

*Program Presenters*

*Kathy Sears*

*The "Wild Tomato"*

*Jerry's Flowers*

for hosting a special benefit dinner with all proceeds going to GHA.

Our Master Gardener Extraordinaire! My, how our gardens grow.

Doug, Peg, Jim, and Charles—thanks for sharing the history.

for Keeping the History Center open and sharing his stories.

for again sharing their love of Fish Creek with visitors young and old.

for staging the beautiful style show, "Fabric and Tea".

for the use of the White Gull Inn for the style show.\

for making undergarments look good . . . as well as the dresses

"Gibraltar Talks" programs would not be complete without a cookie or two.

who give so much time to make history come alive.

who put together our newsletters twice a year for the past nine years.

for contributing a portion of their "Pizza of the Month" to GHA.

for the generous contribution of flowers for Noble Square

## NOBLE HOUSE GARDEN VIEW

What a great year we had at the Noble House! With such a beautiful summer all of our shrubs and flowers did wonderfully well. Hopefully you noticed our new “Lilac hedge”. We cleared away all the clutter and unwanted stragglers and planted a moderate height hedge that will give us beautiful and fragrant blossoms. We wanted to keep our new plantings within an historic feel of the lilacs we grew up with. However we also wanted a low maintenance variety that did not give way to mildew and aggressive growth. Miss Kim was our choice. It tends to cluster in a more compact size and produces very fragrant blossoms including a possible fall repeat as well. We also decided to soften and level our little tree cluster in the center of the square so that people can walk in the shade of our trees. We are always focusing on ways to keep our gardens fresh and beautiful. If you are interested in helping us with our “Bud Club”, please call 920-868-2091 or email us [noblehousefc@dc.wis](mailto:noblehousefc@dc.wis) and let us know about your gardening skills.



*~ Laurie Buske*

## OVER 370 LEGACY BRICKS ALREADY MARK HISTORY!

The Gibraltar Historical Association continues its Legacy Brick Campaign with proceeds going toward 2011 projects and activities. The Legacy Brick Campaign is designed to place personalized brick “pavers” along the Walkways surrounding historic Noble House, circa 1875, and its beautiful gardens. Bricks are sold for \$75.00 each and a personal legacy message of 3 lines will be engraved on them.

By purchasing a brick you will be accomplishing two objectives. You will be helping with the continued restoration of the Noble Square property and you will be setting a lasting tribute in stone. Donors bring the past to the present while remembering a loved one, an important event, or placing a name and date on a legacy brick to enhance the Noble House surroundings. Use your creative imagination to create this lasting memento.



Order forms may be obtained at Noble House Museum, the Fish Creek Library or can be mailed to you by calling GHA president, Eunice Rutherford at (920) 868-3373. Help keep Noble House and Noble Square the historic centerpiece of the historic village of Fish Creek.

*~ Douglas Blahnik*

## Fish Creek Park: Reflections on the Past



In 1998, Wallis Parker, niece of Fred Welcker, helped to facilitate the purchase of the tract of land now known as Fish Creek Park. Aptly named, the creek from which it took its name meanders northerly through the park, emptying into the waters of Green Bay. The Township of Gibraltar, along with a grant from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, purchased the 27.9 acres from the Welcker estate for the sum of \$100, 000. Fifteen of the original 27.9 acres are designated wetlands.

Of geological interest is the rocky ridge on the north edge of the property bordering state Hwy 42. In 2003, Al Schneider, a Racine geologist, inspected the creek bank at an elevation of 605 feet and confirmed that it was a beach ridge formed from strong wave action of Lake Michigan during the Nipissing phase about 5,000 years ago. At that time the glacier had melted and the lake level was much higher. Constant wave action and winter ice shoves made the rocks and cobbles rounded and well sorted. The ridge has little or no soil as a result. What you see now are the remnants of the ridge, as it was originally larger and more contiguous than what is observed today.

Old records show a history of many owners of this property. In 1865 it was claimed by Asa and Eliza Thorp. Asa was one of the first to settle Fish Creek. He claimed large land holdings surrounding the harbor and it was he who plotted Fish Creek. This tract on the east side of the creek was sold by Asa to the Metcalf family. Over the years it passed on to the Loveless, Cook and Graham families.

Eventually Lottie and Edward Schreiber purchased the property in 1911. The Schreibers were long standing citizens of the village operating a general store for generations. Fourteen years later, Lottie and Edward sold the property to Hedwig Enger Welcker, wife of Dr. Kurt Welcker. The deed reads that the grantor had the right to pasture two or three cows, on this tract known as the creek bottom for a period of 10 years and had the sole use of the barn. It was also agreed that the Schreibers were allowed to harvest the crop of potatoes and corn now growing on said tract and make use of any loose timbers.

On the west side of the creek, Ezra Graham owned the land. In 1903, their daughter, Bessie Mae, who married Jean Baptiste Napoleon Poirier, purchased the land. What came to be the Poirier home was moved over the frozen waters of Green Bay, with a team of horses from Sister Bay to Fish Creek around 1913. This building is believed to have been in payment of a debt owed Mr. Poirier. The new setting for the home was located at the crest of the rise west of the creek. Bessie Mae, Scottish by descent, named their home "Bonnie Brook" because of the picturesque setting on the bank of a rambling creek.





**In partnership with her father, Bessie Mae owned what is now the Fish Creek Market on Main Street, from 1913-1915. The Poiriers sold the market to the Schreiber family and moved the remainder of the merchandise to a building located just to the east of Bonnie Brook. Later, they moved the small store a little further west and faced it with stone.**

**When Hedwig Welcker purchased the property, the east and west sides of the creek properties were made one. How and when is not exactly clear. When Hedwig became proprietress, she created an extensive garden behind the Bonnie Brook. She was also an avid supporter of the arts. Her garden became the original site of The Theater in the Garden, now known as the Peninsula Players. On the west side of the creek, a monument marks where the first plays were presented in the naturally created amphitheatre.**



*Kurt & Hedwig*

**Hedwig continued to summer at "Bonnie Brook" with her husband until his death in 1925. In 1955, she remolded the Bonnie Brook into a motel, which she later sold to her son, Fred.**

**Hedwig spent the summers of her later years in the home she named "Chateau," a stone house that had been constructed on the east side of the creek. She died in 1965.**

**Fred ran the Bonnie Brook Motel until his death in 1996. In 1998, the property was sold to the Township of Gibraltar as a nature center. The "Chateau" was sold and moved to a site on Spring Road. The Bonnie Brook Motel, declared unable to be restored, was demolished.**

**Presently, walking the trails one can enjoy the open fields, canopied glens and paths along and over the creek. Wildflowers, birds and fauna flourish with the rhythm of the seasons. Wetlands within this park, also known as swamps, or marshes – are critically important to sustaining water quality.**

**They act as natural pollution filters, making bay and stream waters cleaner and drinking water safer. The Fish Creek Park also acts as a ground water discharge area. It retains flood waters and provides valuable and irreplaceable habitat for many plants and animals. For these reasons, and the pure enlightenment of the human spirit, the residents of Fish Creek invite you to enjoy this lovely little park.**

*~Andrea Kinsey Jauquet*



*Fish Creek Park*



## Style Show a Hit

Because of the popularity of Gibraltar Historical Association's historic fashion show, "Tea and Fabric," GHA will present a Spring event at the historic Gibraltar Town Hall featuring more period clothing from our collection.

Our summer show featuring antique summer clothing from Door County's past sold out within the first week of ticket sales. The Spring event will feature Fall and Winter clothing and will unveil an original "Worth" gown from Paris circa 1910 that was once owned by a Door County resident.

The historic fashion show was inspired by Karin Kopischke's historic rendering show, "Garments of Our Foundation: Pioneering Door County Women and their Clothing." Having spent nine months researching the clothes worn by women in the 1800s and early 1900s, Kopischke became excited about presenting actual clothing from Gibraltar's past.

Local high school students modeled the antique clothing, including period undergarments (corsets, petticoats, bloomers and chemises) and period accessories (hats, shoes and purses).

Wonderful desserts and tea sandwiches were provided by GHA members, and the White Gull Inn provided tea and beverages. The event was a very successful fundraiser for GHA. We will be offering two tea party presentations of the Spring event to accommodate the expected high demand.

~ *Karin Kopischke*





## Keep the Date

Remember to keep the date. . . . Tuesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 P.M. so that you can join in and celebrate the Tree Lighting at Noble Square. Join your friends and neighbors in heralding in the Christmas season. Sing songs by candlelight, enjoy touring The Noble House dressed in its Christmas fare, and share refreshments and conversation with family and friends.

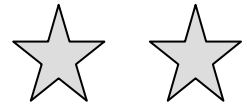


*Remember:*

*TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21<sup>st</sup>, 6:00 P.M.*



“STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT  
I WISH I MAY, I WISH I MIGHT . . .”



Sometimes a wish is all you need. As GHA forges ahead in 2011, we have a very ambitious board taking on many exciting initiatives. All of these things need funding and countless hours of work. If you are interested in advancing our efforts, here are a few areas of need:

- purchasing much needed technology . . . digital video, digital voice recorder, a sound system for presentations
- funding for the preservation of photos
- a rug fund to replace a badly worn rug in Noble House

**Help in any of these areas would be great !!!**