

Bois Blanc Island Historical Society

NEWSLETTER 2021

Season 2021 at the Museum

By Lynn Turner

Oh yes, it was quite a year! Starting with the possibility of the organization being closed for 2021 and the future – to it having yet another vibrant and active year was remarkable.

The need to have the organization remain open was obviously in the hearts and minds of many islanders. The number of volunteers, volunteer hours, as well as the generous financial donations can attest to this fact.

It took a whole community to make this year a success.

This newsletter is primarily dedicated to thanking and acknowledging those who made it all possible and to share the Historical Society's future directions and plans for 2022.

Where to start? There were so many people who stepped up and contributed this year. For example, there were grounds keepers, speakers, museum volunteers, volunteer ambassadors, self-guided tour postings, financial supporters, a grant writer, new members to the board of directors, library expansion, and live flowers donated and maintained for the flower boxes in front of the museum.

The members of the previous board of directors were gracious enough to meet the new directors on July 1st to help instruct and assist all that is involved with opening up the museum after being closed all winter. Many hands made the uncovering and cleaning work move very rapidly.

After the museum was cleaned on July 1st, the museum's Grand Opening was on Saturday, July 3, 2021. The ice cream social took place just two weeks later. The museum's hours were kept the same as previous years in order to retain continuity: Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The last day was Saturday, September 4, 2021.

Volunteer appreciation banquet

It was decided at the board of director's meeting that a volunteer appreciation banquet will be held at the beginning of next summer—tentatively scheduled for early July 2022. All who volunteered in 2021 are invited. Thank you for all of your work and support! We look forward to seeing you next year.

VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM

The museum opened its doors on Saturday, July 3rd for the 2021 season.

If you open it, they will come. And come they did. Based on the entries from the guest book, 179 people signed in the month of July. Another 171 people signed the guest book in August. We know that at least 350 entered the museum this year. Since a number of people chose not to sign, or forgot to sign the guest book, the total number from the book is an underestimation.



Obviously, most of the Islanders don't live on the Island all year, so many of the visitors were island property owners but listed their home addresses elsewhere. Only four entries listed Bois Blanc Island as their home address.

As would be expected, twice as many people came from places in Michigan than from out of state. Of the 102 Michigan cities listed in the guest book, 70 were distinct ones. The most frequent was Grand Rapids (9). This was followed by Ann Arbor (3), Battle Creek (3), Middleville (3), Milford (3), and Okemos (3). But the range was far and wide from around the state. Just to mention a few, for example: Brighton, Caledonia, Canton, Coldwater, Dearborn Heights, Flint, Hillsdale, Hubbard Lake, Huntington Woods, Kalamazoo, Manistee, Northville, Novi, Plymouth, and Union City.

The cities listed that were closest to the Island were Alanson, Pellston, Petoskey, Traverse City, and St. Ignace. Ironically being in Mackinac County, there was no listing present for Cheboygan, Mackinaw City or Mackinac Island. Again, that may have happened but this information is strictly taken from the guest book. But we did have a visitor from another Michigan Island – Beaver Island.

Visitors came from all over the country, from coast to coast (California to New York) and from north and south (Minnesota to Florida) and included 22 states in the union. A total of 59 entries were recorded from out-of-state. Looks like the Buckeyes had the top entry. Ohio (9), followed by Illinois (6), and Wisconsin (5). Tied with four entries each: Indiana, Minnesota, and Texas.

THE BELOVED ICE CREAM SOCIAL & BOOK SALE

July 17, 2021



We were once again able to offer this event that has become a tradition for the Historical Society. It is the organization's biggest fundraiser to date. It was held on July 17, 2021. We can thank the following people for its success.

1) **Book Sale:** Chris and Bruce McAfee for their outstanding work organizing and running the book sale. Books were well organized at the sale. Thanks to the helping hands of Brandi Dunn and family: Megan, Sylvia, and Mitchell Dunn. Chris was on hand to help people select fiction or nonfiction and/or make reading suggestions. There was even a special area of books on display that have been, or will be, used by the Island Book Club. There are many avid readers here. What better place to curl up with a book than on the island? Another long tradition.

2) **Ice Cream:** Shawn Nelson, General Manager of the Island Diner, donated all of the luscious ice cream for the event. Ownership has changed hands from Hawks Landing to the Island Diner since the last event. We appreciate Shawn's willingness to help continue our ice cream social tradition.

3) **Outdoor activity preparation.** There were many people who set up the tents, chairs, obtained ice, coolers, and utensils as well as making the grounds of the museum and the museum a welcoming and operational place for the big event. And those that stayed and scooped the ice cream for everyone. If I

missed your name, please forgive me! Thanks to: Phil Radala, Mike Radala, Scott Kruszynski, Caleb Kruszynski, Doug and Grace Miller and daughter Ava, Steve and Susie Nystrom, Mike White, and Chris and Bruce McAfee.

4) **Music:** Keyboard background jazz standards by Carol VanRandwyk. Strolling along eating ice cream on a beautiful summer day while leisurely looking at books and socializing on the museum grounds was wonderful. Such a unique island experience was enhanced by Carol's skillful music.

MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

July and August 2021

Specials thanks to all of our museum volunteers. You made the place come to life for over 350 visitors this summer. That was a lot of people to greet especially when the museum was only open for two months (July & August) and only three days each week.

The volunteers greeted museum goers with interest and grace. Thank you for your generosity of time and good-natured hospitality. The museum could not function without you.

The following list includes all who volunteered to be at the museum this year. We were more than pleasantly surprised by this response. Not everyone took a shift but were willing to do so. Two of the historical society's board members (Phil Radala and Lynn Turner) also jumped in a couple shifts when someone couldn't make it at the last minute.

Volunteering at the museum is very rewarding. So many people come in and shared their own amazing history on the Island. Between conversing with the visitors, and having access to all of the items in the museum, it is an all-around pleasant learning experience. If you haven't volunteered at the museum before and would like to, please let us know by June next year. Training is available prior to taking on a two-hour or four-hour shift. We would like to have more people experience this opportunity. It really is a great island history learning experience. Here is our list of stars from 2021. Thank you!



Phyllis Brown
Marianne Miller
Nancy and Kathy
Miller
Kevin & Mary Deery
Penny Kimmey
Carol Church
Bruce and Chris
McAfee

Suzette Sanborn
Doug & Melissa Freye
Steve and Susan
Nystrom
Tom Wybranowski
Peggy Gillstad
Kathy Brown
Joyce Peccon
Linda Gekle
Carol VanRandwyk
Jane Weber

Patti Babler
Judy Munro
Lani White
Brandi Dunn
Jerre and Vicky Lewis
Joyce Harmon
Ava Miller



HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY

The Very Beginning

What about the library? The museum building, albeit small, has had a mighty capacity for its museum holdings as well as a library. According to the historical society's minutes, and documents from the township and the St. Ignace library, the library is the 'township's library'. Regardless of ownership, the library is a beloved feature of the community. We recently were given a picture of the historic moment when it all began. It was August 14, 1992. Believe it or not, it started with Mackinac Island's library donating 500 books to Bois Blanc Island. On a fine August day in 1992 Glenn and Judy Munro used their boat to go to Mackinac Island to retrieve the books. Anne Dake, a librarian friend of the Munros, helped organize the books. Once the books made the boat trip back to Bois Blanc Island, Phyllis and Gayle Brown transported them in their van, and Virginia Davis received them for our library.



Pictured above (from left to right) are Glenn Munro, Judy Munro, Gayle Brown, Anne Dake, Phyllis Brown, and Virginia Davis.

SPEAKER SERIES

Kudos to Kathy Brown for coordinating an outstanding line of speakers of historic or natural Island history interests.

All of the speakers listed below in our speaker series for 2021 donated their time and talent to share their expertise with the Island community.

Name	Topic	Date
Mike White	History of BBI Historical Society	July 5, 2021
Shirley Gahn, Mike Gahn, Char McLaren, Brandon and Blake Schlund, Lani White	Bois Blanc Island Pines School Memory Night	July 12, 2021
Mitch Begle & Cayla Begle	Island Rocks and Minerals	July 26, 2021
Curt Plaunt, Char McLaren, Jason, Ryan, Kristen, Olivia	History of Plaunt Transportation	August 2, 2021
Tom Pfeiffelmann	The Bible Farm	August 9, 2021
Lt. Patrick Brule	USCG Mackinaw	August 20, 2021
Henry Wright, Ph.D. & Nick Trudeau	The Juntunen Site	August 21, 2021
Thank you also to Joyce Peccon who provided access to the Hoover Building for our gatherings.		

VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS

All of our volunteers are really 'volunteer ambassadors' for the historical society, museum and library. The following individuals took on special tasks for the organization for which we are very grateful.

Tom Bach – website development and management.

Kathy Brown – speaker series coordinator.

Dan Reynolds – social media manager.

SPECIAL THANKS

Lawn Maintenance and Beautification:

Jack Lees – for mowing the museum lawn on a regular basis throughout the summer! He lives next door to the museum and when he gets on his riding lawn mower, he offered to continue on mowing next door at the museum. What a great neighbor! Thank you! Also,

Phil Radala provided the trim by weed whacking the museum grounds on a regular basis. Jack and Phil kept the museum lawn well-maintained for the entire season. To add to the beautification of the grounds,

Deanna Miller and her two children, Simon and Nat, donated and maintained the flowers for the flower boxes at the museum building. What a wonderful (and beautiful) surprise.

Sally Sperry – for a special island historical donation. From her collection of island railroad spikes (circa 1910-1920), she cleaned and waxed them and gave the donations for the items to the Historical Society.

The new board of directors: Polly Keller, Interim director; Lynn Turner, President; Phil Radala, Vice President; Doug Miller, Treasurer; Grace Miller, Secretary; Mike White, director; Michelle Satchell, director; and Leo Foster, director.

Jim and Betty Hutchison – for the many years of involvement, leadership and outstanding dedication to the Historical Society, Museum, and Library.

Mike White – for the outstanding contributions over many years to the Historical Society and museum. Everyone has benefitted greatly from your research, archiving, and exceptional island historical knowledge. You are our “beloved island historian”.

GRANT PROPOSAL AWARDED TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Bois Blanc Community Island Foundation granted the Historical Society \$2,118.98 this year. The grant proposal was specifically for upgraded technology: computer, large TV monitor, and security cameras. Thank you BBIC Foundation!

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

1) Partnering with the Bois Blanc Island Association and the Bois Blanc Island Community Foundation to coordinate activities, resources, and outreach

- 2) Partnering with Tribal representatives involving Island indigenous history
- 3) Creation of a Historical Society website for a wider audience of archived Island material. The website is currently under construction with a launch in spring 2022.
- 4) Installation of a big screen wall monitor in the museum for expansion of archived photo viewing.
- 5) Resurfacing the floor.
- 6) Creation of an Island rock and mineral exhibit.
- 7) Partnering with the Mackinac County Library in St. Ignace to expand the Library Program for all islanders. Note: You do not have to reside here to obtain a library card and library privileges from St. Ignace. You just need to be an island property owner.
- 8) Archiving and uploading historical material during the winter.
- 9) Video recording individual oral histories.
- 10) Story time to return in 2022.
- 11) Memory night to return in 2022.

TREASURERS REPORT

We were fortunate to have Doug Miller step forward to be the Historical Society's treasurer. He reported a truly successful financial year in 2021. On June 25, 2021 we began with \$16,448.26. Part of that money (\$4,126.49) is earmarked to be strictly used for library use only – as part of an education grant. At the close of the year, on October 25, 2021, we ended with \$19,415.24. This is thanks to so many for their memberships and cash donations. The biggest event was donations from the Ice Cream Social and Book Sale. The generous crowd donated \$936.72 that one day.

A full financial report will be made available in 2022 – when the treasurer and all of the documents (bills, bank statements, etc.) are all in one place – on the Island.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY HONORS THREE

During the summer of 2021 the Historical Society Board of Directors felt it fitting to honor the outgoing leadership who handed the baton over to the new team. In addition, the board felt it also fitting to honor Mike White, the island historian who graciously stayed on formally as a director for the new board. The board realizes that this is just the tip of the iceberg as far as deserving honorees go since there have been so many people that have given abundantly to this organization over the years. But, during this first season, we started with honoring these three.

Two sets of plaques were made to honor them. One was a wooden plaque that will be placed inside the museum, and the other was an acrylic/glass type plaque that the recipients could have at their home. Unfortunately, by the time the plaques were engraved and ready for pick-up and delivery, most of the seasonal islanders had left. We are sure there would have been a huge crowd to help Jim, Betty, and Mike receive their awards had this event happened earlier in the season. But the award event took place at 5:00 pm at the Island Tavern on October 7, 2021. It was a small but heartfelt crowd to cheer them on. In attendance that evening were Mike and Lani White, Jim and Betty Hutchinson (of course), Lynn Turner, Lee and Kevin Keller, Michelle Satchell, Dan Reynolds, Bob and Martha Stowe, Brain and Luanne White, Phil Radala, Anne Kennedy, and Tom Bach.



NEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS

There were 29 new members in 2021! Also, so many donated cash to the museum either through the donation box at the museum, at our events, mailing in checks, or by becoming members of the Historical Society. We appreciate your support!

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If you would like to become a member you can do so throughout the year. Just fill out the form on the last page and mail it in with your membership type and a check made out to the BBI Historical Society. The mailing address is: P.O. Box 933, Pointe aux Pins, MI 49775.

We are grateful to all for your wonderful support!

Bois Blanc Island Historical Society

P.O. Box 933

Pointe Aux Pins, MI 49775

Membership Form

Make checks payable to: Bois Blanc Island Historical Society

Membership Type:

Individual \$10 ____

Family \$15 ____

Friend \$25 ____

Patron \$50 ____

Benefactor \$100 ____

Other ____ Amount _____

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

Would you like to volunteer as a museum/library attendant?

Yes ____