



# Historical Perspectives

Port Washington Historical Society

Volume 21, Issue 2

Summer 2010

## 1929 Fire Engine House Topic of Quarterly Meeting

by Jackie Oleson

Since the announcement in February that the City of Port Washington was going to sell the historic 1929 Fire Engine House, a committee comprised of Port Washington Society members, firefighters, and residents have joined together to explore options to retain the building for public use. The 1929 building is located adjacent to the site of the early 1868 original fire house and across the street from the present Fire House. Recently the building has been used as a community center for the seniors.



In order to better understand the nature of the building, Pat Wilborn donated his services for an appraisal of the building and Roger Kison donated a building inspection. From those reports, a list of building issues are being addressed, and communication has been initiated with the city about the acquisition of the building for the Historical Society. It is becoming apparent that the Historical Society will need to purchase the building.

A vision for the building includes the utilization of both floors for museum spaces. Areas would be created to display firefighter, police, and business artifacts and collections. A large area on the

Quarterly Meeting, July 21st, 7:00pm at the Senior Center. Presentation of the National Register Plaque and presentation on the history of the Fire Engine House by Marc Eernisse.

main floor would be dedicated to maritime history. There would also be room for the archival storage with public use access.

As part of the July quarterly meeting, discussion will be conducted about the acquisition and vision of the Fire Engine House.

The Quarterly Meeting activities will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Senior Center/Fire Engine House, 102 East Pier Street.

On behalf of the city, Fire Chief Mark Mitchell will accept the

*(Continued on page 7)*

### *Inside this issue:*

<i>Quarterly Meeting Announcement</i>	1
<i>President's Message</i>	2
<i>Membership News</i>	3
<i>Judy Cook Performance</i>	4
<i>GLLKA Light Station Tour</i>	4
<i>Board of Directors Update</i>	5
<i>Maritime Heritage Festival</i>	6
<i>Maritime Museum Preview</i>	7
<i>150th Anniversary of the Light Station</i>	8
<i>Tea Houses and Taverns</i>	10
<i>Bylaw Changes</i>	11

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*Light Station Museum*

Rick Smith, Co-Director  
 Linda Nenn, Co-Director  
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*Membership*

\$20 Individual  
 \$30 Family  
 \$10 Student  
 \$150 Business  
 \$150 Lifetime

## President's Message

As I step from Vice President into the role of President, I am hoping that observing Geri Zehren up close will have prepared me for the year ahead. Geri served as President of the Port Washington Historical Society for three years and was a large part of our successful settling into our location on Grand Avenue. It was a monumental task of setting up an office and organizing Society records. The Society and I thank her for her time and energy over these past years. Thanks need to be extended to Mrs. Shirli Flack for her ongoing support over these past two and a half years. Mrs. Flack was there to extend help when we needed a location.

Having developed the Franklin Street Historic Walking Tour in 2008, we recently did our second printing of over 3,000 tour guides. Assistance from the Port Washington Tourism Council covered the cost of the most recent printing, and numerous volunteers did hours of folding. These brochures are now being distributed in downtown businesses and the Visitor Center. If you have not walked our tour give it a try, we are quite proud of it. Our thanks again go to Melissa Suddendorf who assisted us with the project in 2008 and the Tourism Council for printing.

This looks to be a busy summer in Port. I would remind you that we have the best ever Maritime Heritage Festival with five tall ships coming August 20 – 22. Rick Smith has created an even better than ever *Maritime Museum* in the Lueptow building. If enough volunteers can be enlisted, the museum will be open prior to the festival. Please consider helping monitor the museum during open hours. Thanks go to Merton Lueptow and the Lueptow family for allowing us to utilize their building this summer.

With the celebration of 150 years, the Light Station has numerous activities planned throughout the summer. September will bring folk singer Judy Cook and a night time tour including a climb up the tower on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Looking ahead into October, we will have a membership dinner that we hope will become an annual event.

Our biggest challenge this year may be exploring the opportunity of acquiring the Fire Engine House. This historic landmark gives us the opportunity to create a location that shares other aspects of our local history. As daunting as the task may appear at times, we have an obligation to have a vision of what can be. This fine old building represents what has been lost in the past but what can be preserved for the future. Please make time in July to come to the Quarterly meeting to be a part of our discussion.

As any with any volunteer organization, we exist through the efforts of members. With that, I would ask you to consider responding yes when help is requested. There are many small as well as larger ways one can assist. We are only limited by ourselves.

...*Jackie Oleson*

# Membership News

## Donations

### Light Station Restoration Donations

Linda Nenn

Rick Smith

### Light Station Donations

Linda Nenn

### Historical Society Donations

General Donations

Patricia and William Moren

Kathleen Gordon

Linda Nenn

Jacquelyn Oleson

Gerri Zehren

James Fowler

Ann Flierl

### Historical Society Donations

Photos, books, newspapers and artifacts:

Bichler Family

George Gilson

Muriel Altendorf

Jim Fowler

Kellie Barber

JoAnn Stade

Kolinski Family

### Additions to the Port Washington High School archive files from :

Muriel Altendorf

Kellie Barber

LeRoy Bley

Vern Bieber

Parlor Stove and artifacts from the Leason Family

## *In Memoriam*

Gertrude Hurst, a Charter Member

James Koenen, a Charter Member

## Welcome New Members

Patricia and William Moren

Mark Dybdahl

Kathleen O'Conner

## Genealogy Research

*Members interested in doing genealogy can find information at the Society's Resource Center on Grand Avenue. In addition, don't forget that your membership grants you access and no admission charge for doing genealogy research at the Luxembourg American Cultural Society Research Center in Belgium.*

# Membership

# Emails

Would you like to receive occasional announcements and calls for volunteers via email? Send an email to:

portwashhistsoc@att.net

and we'll add you to the list.

Or, you may call the office to sign up:  
262-268-9150

## Sea Ballads Performance September 4th on the Light Station Lawn

Celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1860 Light Station with a performance by folk singer Judy Cook on Saturday, September 4 at 2:00 pm on the Light Station lawn.

Judy joins in our celebration by performing a program: "Sea Ballads." Judy, a resident of Maryland, has been on the road since the early 1990's, performing folk songs and ballads of traditional Americana and the British Isles. She has



Judy Cook,

family roots in Virginia and was lucky enough to be born into a family who loved music. Respected on both sides of the Atlantic as a singer and interpreter of traditional songs, Judy's vast and varied repertoire has resulted in programs enthusiastically received wherever she goes. Bring your chairs or blanket and join us for a free concert on the lawn of the Light Station.

## Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association Tour Visit Port Washington

Early on Tuesday morning, June 29th, a group of lighthouse enthusiasts from Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association (GLLKA) visited the 1860 Port Washington Lighthouse. 82 participants arrived Monday aboard the *Keweenaw Star* and departed Tuesday following their tour.



*The Keweenaw Star in Port Washington's harbor.*  
Photo by John Enright.

**"I've been on a lot of lighthouse tours, and this is the finest. There is so much to see everywhere in every room. The harbor view is just exceptional."**

*Fran Jehrio, GLLKA Lake Erie Coordinator*



*Light Station Docent, John Enright welcomes GLLKA visitors. Photos by Fran Jehrio, GLLKA Lake Erie Coordinator*

## Board of Directors

At the Annual Membership Meeting in April, the members unanimously elected incumbents Kathie Gordon and Mike Keller to a second 3 year term on the Board of Directors. Pat Moren was newly elected to her first term on the Board. Welcome Pat and thank you all for your commitment to the Historical Society.

The Board of Directors approved the appointment of Mark Dybdahl to complete the term of Linda Nenn who resigned in June. Mark will

complete Linda's term through 2011.

Dybdahl welcomes the opportunity to be involved in the Historical Society. Mark brings an active background as a retired educator, Port Washington Alderman for 10 years, Mayor for 3 years and member of the Plan commission. Be sure to welcome and thank Mark for his willingness to serve on the Historical Society Board.

## 4th of July Parade

Thanks to Mike Sauer for the use of his 1930 Model T Ford to promote the Port Washington Historical Society and the Maritime Museum during the city's 4th of July parade. Maggie and Brandon Cope rode in the rumble seat gently throwing candy to spectators who were tickled to see Mike's beautiful automobile.

Photos by Jackie Oleson

*Thank you Mike!*



# Maritime Heritage Festival 2010

Mark your calendar, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> for the 2010 Maritime Heritage Festival. Five tall ships will sail into our harbor and the festivities will be better than ever. This family friendly festival shows our lakefront at its best. Admission to the grounds is free, and purchase of a *Passport* for \$6.00 to \$10.00 allows touring of all five tall ships. Water taxi rides from the marina to the coal docks and harbor tours are other new features. Information on tall ship "sail-aways," can be found at the festival web site : [www.portmaritimefestival.com](http://www.portmaritimefestival.com). or call (262) 993-7245.

Once again, the Historical Society will provide the heritage portion of the festival. This year's museum is bigger and better than ever. Rick Smith has curated over 1,600 square feet of maritime history displays using a large portion of the first floor of the Lueptow Building on Franklin Street. Admission is free: (donation boxes tastefully displayed). Local residents and weekend visitors can preview the museum on Saturdays beginning July 31<sup>st</sup> from 11:00am to 2:00pm up until the Festival. We invite you to preview, enjoy, and spread the word and consider how great a permanent maritime museum would be for Port Washington. Be sure to thank Rick for all of his hard work putting together this history for all of us to enjoy.

A special membership preview with a toast to Rick's hard work will be on July 29<sup>th</sup>. See page 7 of this newsletter for you invitation!



## CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

Help is needed to do our work during this wonderful festival. I'm sure all docents at the Light Station will be busy with extended hours during the Festival. What is also needed is people to help out at Rotary Park and in the museum.

Our focus this year will be the museum so that is where we will have our gift shop selling all things PWH. For those of you who like the fresh air we need you at Rotary Park to be the ambassadors of PWH encouraging people to visit the museum and the Light Station. There will be some light sales of pictures and posters. At the Museum it is just a matter of being there to watch over the artifacts and perhaps fend a question or two. Information is given at each display but sometimes there are questions. You will not be expected to always have the answer but we can always get their name and address if it is an important question. Which also gives us a name and address for a possible new member. And of course, for all who enjoy sales, the gift shop is waiting

for you.

So please ... let us know if you can help and where you would like to help out. The shifts will be from 10:00am to 2:00pm, 2:00pm to 6:00pm. If you can't do the whole shift we will cover the other hours. **MEMBERS, WE NEED YOU.** Call Geri, (262)284-2547 or Jackie (262) 284-9223.

## Cruise on the Tall Ship Lynx

Thanks to Pat Moren for organizing the Historical Society fundraiser Lynx Day Cruise on August 21, 2010 at 4:00 pm. All 40 tickets have been sold and participants will enjoy refreshments, a tour on a historic tall ship and spectacular Lake Michigan scenery. \$25 of each \$52 or \$49 ticket sale supports the Historical Society.





Photos courtesy of Jackie Oleson.

## Museum Preview Open House

On **Thursday, July 29th** from 6:00-8:00pm, The Maritime Museum at the Lueptow Building on Franklin Street will be open for a membership preview reception. .

The Society invites you to attend our preview night reception to see the fantastic museum displays that Light Station Co-Director, Rick Smith, has created for the Maritime Heritage Festival this August. Champagne, soft drinks, and appetizers will be served. If you do plan to attend, please call our office: 262-268-9150 or e-mail the Society at: [portwashhist-soc@att.net](mailto:portwashhist-soc@att.net).



## 1929 Fire Engine House

*(Continued from page 1)*

National Register of Historic Places plaque at this meeting. The plaque was purchased by Eric and Jackie Oleson and Ken and Sue Brunner. A State plaque, donated by Fire Chief Mark Mitchell, is forthcoming. The plaque reads as follows:

### Port Washington Fire Engine House

**Built in 1928, this Mediterranean Revival structure replaced an earlier 1876 wood frame engine house at the same location. Designer John Topzant of Milwaukee gave it walls of brick, a tile roof, and a notable feature of a campanile-like tower for drying fire hoses.**



A slide presentation on the history of the Port Washington Fire Department by past Fire Chief Marc Eernisse will be followed by general meeting of the membership.

*This photo is from a glass plate negative at the Historical Society Office. It was included in the Spring 2010 newsletter backwards. Here is the photo correctly flipped. Can you guess the date?*



# 150th Anniversary of the 1860 Light Station

As the 1860 Light Station celebrates 150 years, the Port Washington Historical Society and the Directors of the Light Station would like the citizens of Port Washington and the surrounding area to join in our celebration. Special activities are being offered to the public and to members of the Society.

## **Come join in the celebration!**

Free children's admission when accompanied by a Port Washington Historical Society member or paid adult the **1<sup>st</sup> weekend of each month**

Free hotdog and soda to members or paid admissions touring the Light Station the Saturday of the **2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of each month**

Free admission to anyone that joins the Port Washington Historical Society while touring the Light Station

Free surprise gift with admissions, **3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of each month**

Entertainment by Judy Cook, folksinger from the Washington DC area, singing a program of Sea Ballads. Program to be held on the grounds of the Light Station Saturday, **September 4, 2010 at 2:00**. Free to the public, bring your chairs or blanket to sit upon

Seniors of the community: free admission on the **fourth Friday of the month: June, July and August**

Light Station is open Saturdays 11-4 and Sundays 12-4 mid May through mid October

Admission is free for Port Washington Historical Society members, \$3 for adults and \$1 for children,



Photo by John Enright

# 1860 Light Station Historical Society Project

## 17 Years and still going strong!

### THE ONGOING PRESERVATION OF THE HISTORIC BUILDING:

- 1993 PW Historical Society leases building from USCG to house local history museum
- 1998 City of Port Washington acquires the 1860 Light Station; leases to PWHS
- 2000 Major restoration by PWHS begins with offer by Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to build the tower and lantern room
- 2003 Grand opening of Light Station
- 2005 Oil House recreated on site
- 2007 Installation of replica 4<sup>th</sup> order Fresnel lens

### Restoration included:

- Restoration of cream city brick exterior
- Change to front entry and installation of handicapped ramp
- Interior walls demolished and structural reinforcements made
- New walls consistent with 1869 floor plan and a new roof
- Installation of tower and lantern room
- Mechanical systems updated



Photo by John Enright

The work was done by many volunteers donating thousands of hours.

Over the ten years working on the building, funds raised and spent have totaled more than **\$300,000**, the latest of which was \$26,000 raised to purchase the replica lens and recently \$25,000 to add new custom built replacement windows. Over the years thousands of dollars have been donated along with in kind donations of time and materials. We continue to add to this city owned treasure, as well as providing maintenance and utilities, with **no cost to the taxpayers of Port Washington.**

We are appreciative of the city's assistance in allowing us to apply for and receive in 2002 a matching Coastal Management Grant for \$19,000 that helped in the installation of the ADA handicapped ramp and storm windows and the return of the \$850 building permit.

**We are proud of what we bring to the city in tourism. Since opening in 2002 we have had over 28,000 visitors.** We continue to work to be an important part of the success of our city.

# Bob's National Food Store, Wilke's Grocery Store and Emil Krause's Saloon and Bowling Alley

The following is an article from an undated Ozaukee Press from a scrapbook in the Resource Center.

A grocery store that served the Port Washington community for over 44 years was closing. At the time it was known as Bob's National Brands at 119 N. Franklin Street, the location of the present day Bernie's Meat Market. Bob Tietyen had conducted the business the last 13 years. He had worked as a bakery route man with Peter's Bakery in Port Washington and then later with Omar before entering the grocery business.

William "Bill" Wilke purchased the building in 1916 from Herman Krause. The grocery section was an unoccupied saloon (Formerly Emile Krause's Saloon & Bowling Alley). The other section at 121 N. Franklin Street was a bowling alley but was discontinued by Mr. Wilke. Most of that section was torn down and rebuilt in 1920. Mr. Wilke operated a china and pottery shop in that section until 1941 when he leased it to Ben Klein, who operated a clothing store at that location.

Mr. Wilke was a grocery man for 49 years. As a boy of 12 he was employed a few doors to the south of his present building by the Arthur Barth Co., a general merchandise store operated where the present Uselding's is located. He worked as a delivery boy and clerk for the company until age 25 when he rented the business and continued until 1916.

During Mr. Wilke's early days as grocery man, horse and wagon were used to deliver groceries. House to house solicitations were made. Orders were dropped off at the store in person. Those few who had phones used that method of placing their orders. Many delivery routes included twice a day delivery and at times the routes extended into the countryside.

Produce, fruits and many dairy products including butter, cottage cheese, cooked cheese and lard were brought in by families from surrounding areas and sold to the store.

At one time Mr. Wilke employed six people in the business, with three men devoting most of their time to horse and wagon deliveries. In 1913 a change was made to truck delivery.

John Jentges was one of Mr. Wilke's longest associates in the business. They worked together for 25 years. Mr. Jentges later worked at the Wisconsin Chair Co. and then opened his own grocery business at 210 N. Franklin Street just north of the Port Washington State Bank, next to the alley. Mr. Jentges closed his business and retired in 1941.

The article in the Press goes on to say that Mr. Wilke, upon his retirement, devoted his time to his yard and home at 440 W. Grand Avenue, the present location of Attorney Penkwitz's Law Office. According to the article he built his home at the time of his marriage and in addition to gardening as a hobby spent much time at the little museum to the rear of his home. Mr. Wilke learned that in 1843 Abraham Lincoln had stopped to visit the Bohn family who resided in the building. Mike Bohn was county clerk at that time. Leland Stanford spent many evenings playing cards with the Bohn family. According to the Press article, Mr. Wilke constantly gathered unusual items to add to his collection in his privately owned museum. Many of the items were keepsakes from the grocery business and all had local interest.

The museum had been toured by many garden clubs and other groups interested in this type of collection. Though not generally open to the public Mr. Wilke showed deep interest in reminiscing with people.

It would be interesting if there were any who had the privilege of knowing Mr. Wilke who could tell us more about this interesting person.

*by Mary Flierl*

## Hovel on the Ash Heap Tea House

Does anyone remember a tavern or “tea house” called The Hovel on the Ash Heap? Believed to be in the alley north of Poole Funeral Home it may have been operated by Borgenhagens or someone named “Snakey” Freeman. If you have information, contact Mary Flier at the Historical Society 262-268-9150 (M or Th 1-4) or portwash-istsoc@att.net

## Wanted

We are in need of a small shelving unit, 36” wide (not too high) to be placed in the back office on top of 2 filing cabinets to hold the video’s that we have.

## Bylaw Changes

For a number of years the Society has been on a fiscal year that ran from May 1 to April 30. This has created complicated reporting to the state historical society for maintaining our status. This year the Board has been working through the process to switch back to a January 1 to December 31 fiscal year. The financial and tax part is nearly complete. In order to remain consistent, the Board is proposing a change for Board member terms to be aligned with the budget year and the Annual Meeting be held in October. Any questions can be entertained after the evening’s program at the July Quarterly meeting with a membership vote to be held in October at the Annual Meeting.

## Future of the Historical Society Membership Vote

The Fire Engine House Committee and the Port Washington Historical Society Board has been in contact with the City of Port Washington about the acquisition of the Fire Engine House at Pier St. and Wisconsin St. With the acquisition of the building, the Society would be able to house its archives and artifacts, establish a museum to display maritime and local collections, including the fire department memorabilia , and maintain an office for the Society.

Please check off one of the following: *As a member of the Society I:*

*think that the committee should negotiate a purchase price for the Fire Engine House.*

*think that the Board should continue to seek an alternative location.*

*Comments:*

Please send all responses to PWHS, P.O. Box 491, Port Washington, WI 53074



PORT WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. Box 491

Port Washington, WI 53074-0491

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

## *PW* Historical Society Calendar

### QUARTERLY MEETING & PROGRAM

Wednesday, July 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

Fire House / Senior Center

102 East Pier Street.in Port Washington

Summer 2010  
Special Events to Celebrate the 150th  
Anniversary of the Light Station

July 29th, 2010, 6-8pm  
Maritime Heritage Museum Preview

August 20-22, 2010  
Maritime Heritage Festival

September 2010, 2pm  
Judy Cook performance on the Light  
Station lawn

Wednesday, October 20th, 2010  
Annual Meeting and Dinner