

Bayside Historical Preservation Society

P.O. Box 304, Belfast, Maine 04915-304

NewsLetter

Winter 1999

This is the fourth year of the Bayside Historical Preservation Society. As of the end of October 1998 we had 112 members which is a goodly number for so small a community. However, our membership has declined each year from the 132 members we had in our first year. We have new members each year but not enough to offset the number who don't renew. We hope this doesn't reflect disappointment with the BHPS but rather is due to people just forgetting to renew their membership.

I'm sorry to have to report that one of our members, the Reverend Morrill Martin died recently. He was a long-time summer resident of Bayside and his family figured prominently in Bayside history. I am enclosing Ellie Lagner's summary of some of Reverend Martin's reminiscences in his Oral History interview. He will be missed by his neighbors and other friends in Bayside.

Also of historical interest is the enclosed article (which appeared in the December 1998 issue of Smithsonian Magazine) describing George C. Blaisdell's connection with the Zippo lighter. The Blaisdells were long-term summer residents of Bayside. George's father, Philo Blaisdell, gave the land for Blaisdell park which is on Sea Street. The Blaisdell cottage was the one currently owned by Janet Pattee whose father bought it from the Blaisdells. The Bryants lived next door and Ellie Blaisdell, George's sister, married Billy Bryant. Their son, George Bryant, was one of the founders of the Northport Yacht Club. George Bryant has a son, Davey and three daughters, Joan, Gwennie and Nancy, who still visit Bayside occasionally. I am grateful to Joan for giving me this information about George C. Blaisdell.

We had three events last summer--the **BHPS Annual Meeting, Steamboat Fever** and the **Quilt Show**.

The **BHPS Annual Meeting** was held on Saturday July 11, 1998 in the morning and we learned one thing--Don't hold the BHPS Annual Meeting on a Saturday morning! Only 12 people attended the meeting--the Board of Directors, the spouse of one member of the Board and the brother of another. Fortunately a quorum (ten members) was present, so we could complete our business. The meeting was very short and we had lots of donuts to eat, but we missed you. The **Annual Meeting** this year will be held on **Saturday, July 10, 1999 at 7.30 P.M** in the Community Hall.

There is no doubt that **STEAMBOAT FEVER**, which was the culmination of two years of hard work by Bob Witherill and his committee (Martha Borgeson, Bill Cressey, Janet Pattee) and several months of very intense work by about 70 members of the community, was truly the gala event that Bob promised it would be. The research and its presentation was exactly what the B.H.P.S is chartered to do. However, nowhere in the charter does it say that it had to be so entertaining! That was due to Bob's sense of humor (Bob wrote, produced and directed the show) and to the acting ability of the people who took part in the skits. The show was attended by over 200 people who, from all reports, loved it. The

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event was an educational program rather than a fund-raiser. However, the BHPS benefitted from it financially. The money from admissions and from the sale of the prints of Bob's drawings covered all the expenses of the production. A number of items used in show, including the lighting system, were donated to the BHPS; the total value is estimated to be about \$750. Also, Ned Lightner video taped the performance and we have sold 86 copies of the tape, for a net profit of about \$500. We have some tapes still available; anyone interested in buying one should write to the address above and enclose a check for \$18 made payable to the BHPS. Orders will be filled in the order they are received. Bob asks that I mention to anyone who bought a print of the "Golden Rod" or the "Castine" that if the shrink wrap shrunk some more, bending the print, the shrink wrap should be cut off and the print put under a weighted surface for awhile. It will flatten out and then can be framed. The shrink wrap was not meant to be a permanent covering. It may be of interest to you to know that Capt. Perry Coombs' grandson lives in Northport. Perry Coombs was captain of the "Golden Rod" and was played by Don Knott in the Steamboat Fever skit.

The other event of last summer, the **Quilt Show** was also a huge success. About 120 quilts were displayed and over 200 people attended the show. This event was a fund-raiser, sponsored by the **Friendship Sampler Quilters of Belfast**, for the benefit of the BHPS. Almost \$1000 was raised for the BHPS. The quilters worked very hard on our behalf. They spent a year making the king size quilt which was raffled off. They sold most of the 1000 raffle tickets which were sold, and provided most of the quilts which were displayed. They assembled the show and dismantled it with the help of several BHPS people. Jeanne-Marie Robinson, who is a member of the Quilters and the BHPS, co-ordinated the whole effort and provided the publicity for it. Emily Elkins of Bayside won the king-size quilt.

A number of people made cookies and squares for the above events in amounts that were more than adequate for the crowds we had. Ellie Lagner co-ordinated the effort for Steamboat Fever and Jean Witherill, Joanne Coughlin and ?????? oversaw it for the Quilt Show. We thank them and all the people who so generously contributed to the effort.

The Oral History Project is continuing. So far ????? people have been interviewed. Also we have started a Cottage History Project. The focus is to obtain enough information about a number of cottages to make an interesting Cottage Tour some year. Plans are progressing for building a room in the basement of the Community Hall for use by the BHPS. Norman James drew up detailed plans for the room, based on the preliminary plans done by Dick Lagner which had been approved by the NVC Overseers. We hope to start construction in the Spring.

Our plans for next summer aren't final yet. We may have a memorial exhibit of paintings by William Eldridge, who along with his wife, Christine, died tragically two summers ago in a fire at their home in Bayside. Many of his paintings were destroyed in the fire but his family have some which they might be willing to lend us for an exhibit. We're thinking of holding the exhibit in conjunction with the BHPS Annual Meeting. Another event we're considering is a "Big Band Swing" dance. With the renaissance of "swing" this might appeal to all generations rather than just to the older ones. Also, we may have a fund-raising event to provide some support to the Northport Village Corporation if it decides to make repairs to the Community Hall and restore the pump at Merrithew Square.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 1999 (and a happy Groundhog Day)

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