

## BAY SHORE DRIVE REFLECTIONS BY GERHARD MILLER

*As told to Betty Parsons*

For those of you who are new to the 'neighborhood', we take pleasure in introducing Ruth and Gerhard Miller. They reside in their Norwegian home, which was built and designed by Gerhard in 1936. A remarkable couple, Ruth, an interior designer, has worked throughout the world, and has published several books, including a basic high school and college text for interior decorating. Gerhard, who is best known for his watercolor and egg tempera, has had the honor of exhibiting in the Metropolitan Museum. Most recently he published, "A Spiritual Guide to the Scientific 21<sup>st</sup> Century" and is now at work on his next manuscript. Residents and tourists alike are deeply grateful for their generous gift to the community of the Miller Art Museum. Approaching a century of life, we thank Gerhard for sharing reflections, a segment of which appears below.

"There is a brass plaque on our front porch that reads, 'On this spot in 1896 nothing happened.' I laugh when I tell friends that my father, A.W. Miller, who came to Sturgeon Bay in 1897, checked on this undeveloped property. So the sign is correct. However, even in those early days, the Bay Shore was quite well populated."

A one-lane dirt road that included a separate bike lane inland went as far north as the quarry and eventually became the paved route for Bay Shore Drive. The locals traveled by foot, bike, and many owned or hired a horse and buggy. Most of the early homes were built close to the road, as unplowed winter roads were their enemy. In 1916, Gerhard's Dad purchased one of the first cars in Sturgeon Bay. As the car was open, protection from the dust was provided by dusters, which everyone wore. Mr. Miller's other driving accessories included goggles and gauntlets. One afternoon a family drive, which began at 2 in the afternoon and ended at dusk, covered ten miles and included three flat tires, each caused by a horseshoe nail.

As we know, Lake Michigan water levels fluctuate over a period of years. In 1914, Gerhard's Dad built a home at 816 Memorial Drive. Several years later he bought the cells from the old county jail, which was located at the corner of Michigan and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, across from the Episcopalian Church. The cells were made of strap iron, and were 2" wide and ¼" thick. Adolph Miller had Harry Hawks, a town mechanic, divide the cells in two with a blowtorch. They were then used for cribs upon which a boathouse was built. Gerhard had the task, along with his brother, of filling the cribs with stones, and he recalled that the water immediately off shore was about four feet deep. Within two years, however, rising water forced his Dad to build a concrete wall to prevent the water from crossing the road and flooding his front lawn.

Should you be on the Bay, you can see one of the cells wedged between rocks on Gerhard's beach. Gerhard moved the cells to his property to serve the same purpose as they had on Memorial Drive, which they did until winter ice dismantled them.



Better (at least warmer) days are coming. This is the view at Old Quarry park looking toward town. Photo by Jim and Barb Bunning.

## BAY SHORE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION GOALS

**Purpose:** The purpose of this association is to maintain the primary natural, safe, and aesthetic character of the Bay Shore Drive area.

### Association Goals:

- To monitor development proposals of recreational/commercial properties that relate to and affect residential character
- To keep members informed of development proposals and issues that impact the residential character of the neighborhood
- To educate and motivate members and non-members to preserve and enhance the natural, visual and historic resources of the area
- To encourage management of growth through effective township, city and county land use planning
- To form alliances with other existing property owner associations

## PUBLIC POLICY UPDATES AND OBSERVATIONS

*By Terry Lappin*

- The Appeals Court rejected the Moorings Condo/Hotel appeal. The court ruled that the Door County Board of Appeals acted properly in refusing to approve a permit for this large development. The owners of the Moorings may further appeal this ruling or they could develop a new, scaled down plan, and restart the permit process.
- The Sevastopol Ad Hoc Land Use Committee completed their work and formally presented their results to the Town in September. Since then, nothing has happened and the Town Board seems to have little enthusiasm for proceeding on any of the report recommendations.
- Work continues on attempting to get legislation prohibiting the construction of private, solid fill docks. A meeting will be held with our new State Representative, Gary Bies, to inform him of our concerns and to try and get him interested in pursuing the legislation drafted by Dave Hutchison. The meeting is being organized by Door Property Owners and will include as many interested organizations as possible.
- Several Bay Shore Drive residents joined other citizens reviewing the proposed 2001 Sevastopol Budget. We wrote to the town chairman, Leo Zipperer prior to the Town Budget review meeting and presented our issues at the meeting. The budget (and tax levy) did not change as a result of the discussion. It is clear that to have any impact, citizens must attend the "Budget Workshop" session in October.
- Another "tax observation" is that tax bite for the North East Wisconsin Technical School is becoming significant. It is now a larger part of our tax bills than the Town of Sevastopol. It may well be money well spent, but it seems to be uncontrolled by local citizens.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*By Jim and Barb Bunning*

We think of each of our property owners as members of the BSPOA "Committee of the Whole." "To do what," you might reasonably ask. Well, as members you each represent the eyes and ears support for our organization. The Steering Committee members try their best to be aware of activities or projects in the area that might affect the membership in general and the natural, aesthetic character of the Bay Shore Drive area. They then respond to those issues as best they can. We are only a few, however, and we count on each of you with your varied information sources and perspectives to help monitor activity and happenings in our area.

Those not knowledgeable about our Association might wonder if we stand against all development in the County. Our Steering Committee does not look at our mission in that way at all. Rather, we try to highlight information for members that illustrates projects and ideas that attempt to protect the natural beauty of the area and manage development in order to help maintain the same. If there is a proposal that appears to threaten the character of the area, we then respond and inform membership of the situation. We hope that in turn members will be motivated to preserve their own properties in order to attain the overall goal. Growth and change is a fact of life and is often a wonderful thing. The trick is managing the growth and development in such a way as to preserve the character of the area.

Now back to the Committee of the Whole concept. We encourage your input to Steering Committee members on matters relevant to our purpose and goals. We count on your multiplying our own knowledge of issues with your own contributions. You can encourage a non-member neighbor to investigate what we do and consider joining. The newsletter photos taken this Fall and Winter are illustrations of what we treasure—and hope to maintain along Bay Shore Drive.

Thank you for your continuing support of our efforts.

## BSPOA – 2000 – 2001 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following members were elected to terms of leadership in BSPOA for the 2000 - 2001 association year running from the September 9, 2000 annual meeting date through the September 2001 annual meeting. Please address questions, comments, or suggestions regarding our association on e-mail to BSPOA@aol.com or by phone to steering committee members listed below. (Area codes are 920, addresses are Sturgeon Bay unless otherwise indicated.) We value your input.

### **Co-Chairmen**

Jim & Barb Bunning ..... 4227 Bay Shore Dr. .... 746-4025

### **Vice Co-Chairmen**

Terry & Marilyn Lappin... 4379 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-9517

### **Secretary/Treasurer**

Betty Parsons ..... 4147 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-2303

### **Steering Committee, One Year Term**

Richard Follmer ..... 4537 Laurie Lane ..... 743-4219

Henry Martens ..... 5084 Bay Shore Dr ..... 743-7822

Bryan Troutman ..... 2800 Blackhawk Rd. .... Wilmette, IL ..... 847-256-6146

..... 5787 Bay Shore Dr. .... 920-743-9088

### **Steering Committee, Two Year Term**

Joan Follmer

(Membership Chrm.) ..... 4537 Laurie Lane ..... 743-4219

Corky McWey ..... 5413 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-9517

Shirley Pickering ..... 5633 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-0060

### **Steering Committee, Three Year Term**

Bob Graef..... 5451 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-8455

Marlyce Jirovetz ..... 4880 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-4251

Katie Richards ..... 4565 Laurie Ln. .... 743-9550

### **Emeritus Members**

Bill Parsons ..... 4147 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-2303

Cathe & Bob Tilden ..... 4169 Bay Shore Dr. .... 743-6442

## NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH AND CLEANUP

*By Barb Bunning*

We encourage all property owners to provide throughout the year their own personal "neighborhood watch" for neighboring properties, observing for unusual activity along roadsides and near part time resident properties. Although roadsides are now buried in snow, most can recall driving or walking on Bay Shore Drive and noting occasional litter lying in ditches. We can all make it a New Year's resolution to help main-

tain the drive's natural beauty by picking up trash papers, cans and bottles on our individual properties and carrying a small trash bag for collection as we walk along our beautiful road. The County highway department does not employ adequate personnel to absorb this responsibility, so it's up to us. We're good picker uppers!



A winter view of Bay Shore Blufflands from about ½ mile south of the Carlsville Road-BSD intersection. Photo by Jim and Barb Bunning

## BAY SHORE BLUFFLANDS UPDATE

*By Terry Lappin*

The Bay Shore Blufflands property is now identified with signs and the Door County Land Trust has paid over half of the \$1.2 million mortgage. The Bay Shore Blufflands is located about seven miles north of Sturgeon Bay on Bay Shore Drive. It is 180 acres of Niagara Escarpment, rolling hills, and beautiful woods near the old Chateau Hutter property.

Land Trust fundraising efforts continue. At the moment, they are about \$400,000 short of the goal for their capital fund raising efforts for the Blufflands project. Mortgage interest alone in 2000 was nearly \$90,000.

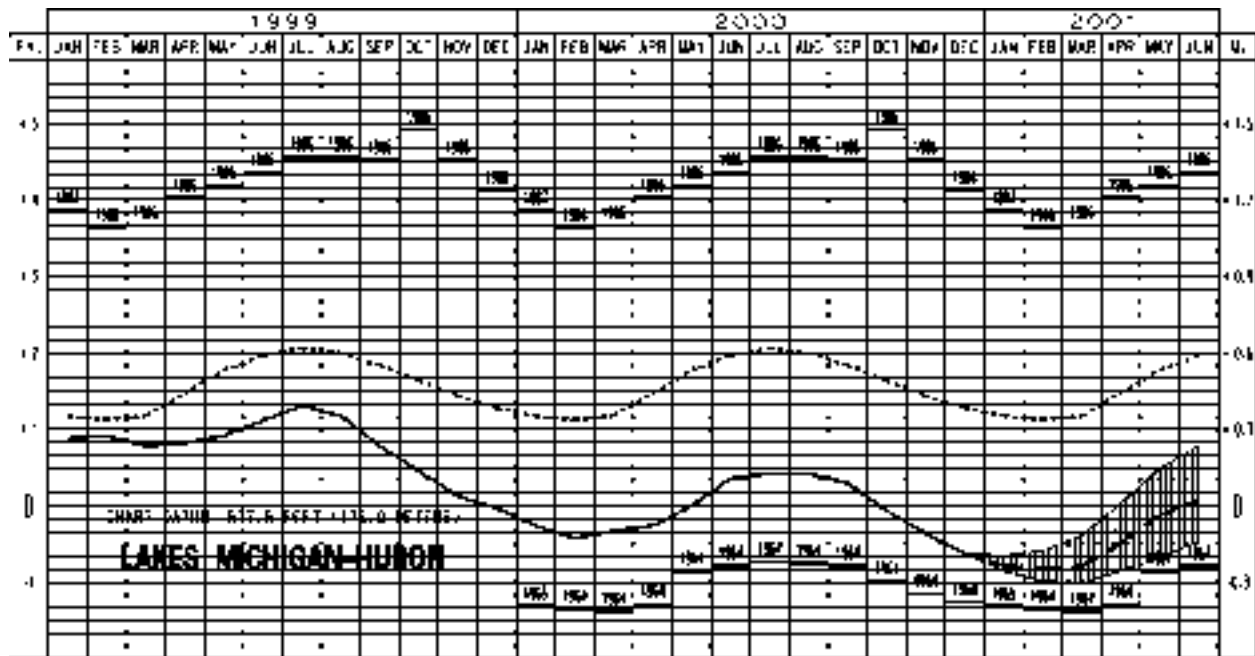
One option the Land Trust is considering to pay off the debt is selling a very small portion of the former Hutter Estate property (about 11.3

acres) to a conservation buyer. A conservation buyer is an individual who agrees to buy the land subject to a very restrictive conservation easement. The easement will permanently limit the amount and type of development that can take place on the property. In this case 11 of the 11.3 acres will be off limits to any development.

In the spring, the Land Trust will be establishing a trail system and informational kiosk on the Blufflands Preserve. If you can help, call Terrie Cooper at the Land Trust office, 839-9990.

Further financial help would always be highly appreciated. (Door County Land Trust, PO Box 345, Ephraim, WI 54211).

## LAKE MICHIGAN LEVELS & FORECAST



Lake levels are down about 7 inches from last year, but are forecast to be about the same as last year by May 2001. This Corps of Engineers chart can be downloaded from: <http://huron.lre.usace.army.mil/levels/bltnhmpg.html>.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- September 8, 2001 **BSPOA Annual Meeting** at Cherry Hills
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month: **BSPOA Steering Committee** meetings. All members are welcome. (Call Jim or Barb Bunning for location.)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, usually: **Sevastopol Town Board** meetings, but check at [www.doorbell.net](http://www.doorbell.net)



### Can't always be in Door County?

Connect to DoorBell.Net on the World Wide Web and get your fix — a Lake Michigan picture is posted daily along with a weather observation. Other items of general and local interest are changed frequently!

[www.doorbell.net](http://www.doorbell.net)

## BAY SHORE RESIDENT PROFILE

### *SELECTED HISTORY of the GRAEF PROPERTY*

*By Dorothy Laipple, 1991*

Our family came to Sturgeon Bay from Colorado in 1955, purchasing the property (5451 Bay Shore Drive) from Reynold and Harriet Houte in 1961. We had rented the house from them for 5 or 6 years, but did not have use of the cottage. The Houtes lived in Kenosha where he was a detective in the police department. Harriet was an aunt of Duke and Elizabeth Hanson of the Bay Shore Inn Hansons. The Houtes originally paid about \$1300 for the property and planned to move there when they retired. They later found shore property (with income) in Kenosha which they decided suited their needs better, so they offered to sell the property to us. We had to scrounge a little to be able to afford the purchase, but we were able to do so. My husband and I would agree that this was the best thing that could have happened to us.

The Houtes had purchased the property from the Hood estate. Mr. Hood had established a leather goods factory at the cottage. Mrs. Hood was a sister to Jack Anderson who owned a paint store on 4<sup>th</sup> Street in Sturgeon Bay. She had the reputation of being able to catch fish just off-shore. Many tried to find her secret spot, but it remained her secret.

A tragic experience took place while Mrs. Hood lived there. She was down at the shore one summer evening and heard someone calling and crying out. She investigated and found Leathem Smith's daughter, Patricia, hysterical and exhausted after having swum to shore from her father's overturned sailboat. Her father, a young man, and a young woman all died in that accident.

Mrs. Hood was also an avid and excellent gardener. She was the one

who originally planted all of the tulips, iris, and other flowers that so prominently adorned the property.

The Hoods bought the property from a Mr. Voeks, who had moved a building from the Parkinson Estate where he was employed. Voeks had blasted the basement and put in a foundation for the building at its present location. He then remodeled the building so it could be used as a home. It had been a dormitory for workmen on the Parkinson Estate.

My daughters have reminded me that a part of the aura of that house and shore was the good times we all shared. Not only was our house a gathering place for relatives, but there were picnics for large groups from church and school, weddings, neighborhood yard sales, New Years Eve parties, game nights, and singing around the piano. The girls all invited college friends for weekends which included picnics and swimming in the bay.

We considered it a privilege to have lived on Bay Shore Drive for more than thirty-five years.



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*Bay Shore*  
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