



Making Kelleys Island History Everybody's Business

# Kelleys Island Historical Association

Volume 1, Issue 1

A newsletter for our members and friends

Winter, 2004

## Inside this issue:

<i>Kelleys' Christmas Past</i>	2-3
<i>Farewell Dr. Boker</i>	3
<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	4
<i>Body Across the Ice</i>	4
<i>Gift Shop Report</i>	5
<i>Butterfly Festival</i>	6
<i>Building Update</i>	6

## Board Members

Mike Feyedelem  
**President**  
 Russ Matso  
**Vice President**  
 Rick Holmes  
**Recording Secretary**  
 Annalee  
**Treasurer**  
 Claudia Brown  
**Membership & Cor. Sect'y.**  
 Ila Dick  
**Acquisitions**  
 Jacquie Kranyak

## President's message

Another year is rapidly coming to a close at the KI Historical Assn. It seems as though we just opened the door for the 2003 season and here we are planning the 2004 season. The older I get the faster time goes!

At the annual meeting in August, new officers and board members were elected. We welcome to the board, new members **Jacquie Kranyak** and **Annalee**.

New officers are: **Mike Feyedelem, President, Russ Matso, Vice Pres., Rick Holmes, Recording Sec., Annalee, Treasurer, Claudia Brown, membership & corresponding secy., and Ila Dick, acquisitions.** All officers are also members of the board.

Our heartfelt thank you

to **Vi Feyedelem**, who served as treasurer for the last three years and to **Rita Eaton** and **Marge Clapper**, our outgoing board members, who have served on the board for several years. They gave countless hours to our organization and they will be greatly missed!!

The summer was filled with many events such as the art show, butterfly festival, quilt raffle, 50/50 raffle etc. Your board has been busy working on these events once again for the year 2004. **All of these events, plus manning the museum could not have been possible without our tireless volunteers. A BIG THANK YOU to each and everyone of you!!!!**

One of the biggest questions that I have been asked

is "when are we going to get the new museum built?" The answer is soon!! Our previous board worked very hard to hammer out a design for the building. Our present board is going to be burning some midnight oil to get a lot of the final decisions made so that the ground breaking will be in the near future. More information will be coming in the building report.

In closing, I would like to say, this is your organization, if you have any questions, ideas or complaints, please feel free to call or write. The only way things can be changed is hearing from you, the membership.

I hope you all have a **HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON** and a **JOYOUS NEW YEAR!!** **Mike Feyedelem**

## 2003 Art Show is multi-faceted success

### Annalee

The Kelleys Island Historical Association Art Show was held on Saturday, Aug. 9, 2003 at the Old Stone Church from 11 to 4.

The following artists participated: **Annalee** (watercolors), **Lydia Bechtel** (oil & pastels), **Cathy Coffman** (sea glass jewelry), **Delores Cole** (photos), **Joe Corso** (oils), **Byron Crabill** (wood carving), **Lisa Luna** (tattoos), **Bea**

**Matso** (towels), **Anne Sennish** (watercolors), **Susan Stacko** (tie dye shirts), and



the **Stacko children—Nathan, Michael and Hallie** sold water and pop.

**Anne Sennish** donated a watercolor "Downtown Kelleys Island, c 1865-1870," to the KI Historical Assn. to be displayed for a year in the Museum and then to be raffled at the Art Show on August 7, 2004 at 3:30 pm. Raffle tickets will be sent out with the March newsletter and will be available at the Gift Shop from May to Aug.

The total profit for the 2003 Art Show was \$470.

## Kelleys Island Christmas past

**Claudia Brown** met with **Sis McKillips**, and **Franklin** and **Laura Jean Pohorence** to reminisce about Christmas on Kelleys Island. As it turns out, the two families attended different churches, so we have a sampling of the activities of both.

Franklin Pohorence says that they never did a lot until recently for Christmas, at least not in the years when they had the store (Island Market). "We did have Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve." As a boy, Franklin's family lived one block south of St. Michael's Church, in the house now owned by **Joanne Gollas**. He says that any other night he could have stayed awake until late, but it was hard to keep awake to go to Midnight Mass. After Mass, he was wide awake.

They used to walk to church and Franklin remembers that it was almost always blowing with a strong wind when they left Midnight Mass, the wind coming off the lake, up Addison Street. His mother would bundle up and pull her coat around her tightly for the walk home. After Midnight Mass, Frank says that he thinks almost everyone on the Island, whole families, came to their house. "That was a big celebration."

Frank's sister **Florence** played the piano. She learned to play "by ear," but could play about any song, and certainly all the Christmas songs. Florence sang alto, his other sister **Josephine**, and Franklin liked to sing too. His mother **Annie Pohorence** would have baked a lot of cookies- cutouts and Lebkuchen, and made popcorn balls, and sandwiches, and they had pickled pig's hocks, and ham. Frank remembers that it was a good time, singing and talking a lot with family and neighbors.

Franklin's father was a fisherman.

The nets were pulled from the lake by Christmas Eve, but the men were still working—mending them. On Christmas Eve the fishermen ended their day's work with their own Christmas

Party, in high spirits, before they went home for the day.

As a child Laura Jean lived in the big **Seeholzer** house on what is today called Deer Look Lane, off Woodford Road. She remembers that her mother made overnight cookies. They were made of brown sugar and had black walnuts in them.

Black walnuts were a local nut that people gathered themselves so many women used them in their baking. The overnight cookies

*After Midnight Mass, Frank says that he thinks almost everyone on the Island, whole families, came to their house.*

started out hard and you dunked them to eat them. Laura Jean's mother would fill up their empty 25 pound lard can with cookies for the holidays. Laura Jean remembers that all the children and family loved them.

You might get only one gift from Santa. Laura Jean remembered a special doll, she says it was as big as she was, that her older sister Ruth gave her. When we talked about gifts it was clear that no one got as many gifts as children do today. It was also clear that the memories remain strong of those simpler Christmases.

**Sis McKillips** remembers that around Christmas time it seemed colder than it does now. School was in session right up to Christmas. As a child they would go to the downtown park, with their parents, on Christmas Eve Day, and she

remembers waiting in snow almost up to her knees, for Santa Claus. Santa always came- sometimes on one of Marchky's horses and sometimes on the fire engine. "You would wait and wait" and finally you would hear the bells coming down the street. Everyone got a little brown bag of candy, and an orange, and peanuts in the shell. "We thought we had wonders." If the weather was too bad, she remembers that they went into the Town Hall. The school Christmas Party was before school ended on the last day before Christmas. The children exchanged names and gifts were bought. The gifts might have cost 25 cents and you were able to buy them at the local stores- people did not go to the mainland to shop as often as they do now. Church was also a big thing on Christmas Eve, at 7:30 pm. The church service started and Santa Claus came after the church service. The church program at the Protestant Church had a lot of Christmas carols and Sis remembers that as a child you had "to learn to speak your piece," memorize a poem or something to say in front of everyone during the program. Between the memorization for the school Christmas play and the church program, children were kept busy. Sis says that all the parents knew the "piece" as well as

their children by the time the task was done. It seems to Sis that there were a lot of years that many of the children were angels, draped in sheets, that came down from the church balcony singing carols. Santa always showed up at the end of the program and Santa

**Sis McKillips** handed out a box of Christmas candy to everyone there. Sis says it wasn't until

*Cont. next page*



## Christmas past, cont.

she was older that she realized someone had to do that candy and eventually she was one of the adults that packed the candy boxes. One pound candy boxes



were used until there were more people around and then they switched to half pound boxes. The candy boxes were packed and given out until sometime in the 1950's. The candy was all weighed. There were gumdrops, hard candy, filled candy, orange slices, chocolate covered nuts, and the chocolate covered vanilla creams that came from Brown's Store.

Sis remembers that they were Ox-heart Chocolates and they came in a big box. The Chocolate Drops were in the shape of a cone and Sis remembers them

as the best Chocolate Drops she has ever had. One or at the most two fit into the candy boxes with the other candy, and they were always at one end of the box. The candy boxes span at least two generations. My mother, Ann Brown, is Sis McKillips age, and both of them and I remember getting the Christmas Box from Santa Claus on Christmas Eve, and if it was a still, quite perfect night, we walked home, chatting, leaving shallow tracks, in lightly falling snow.

## Tell us what you want

What would you like to see? The KIIHA Newsletter has a new look, and at the same old price for membership.

What would you like to see covered in the newsletter? Please send your ideas to KIIHA. And remember to renew your membership.

If you're a current member you should have received a membership card marked 2003-2004. If you don't have one, consider renewing today- \$10 for an individual and \$25 for a family.

## In Memoriam....

Bill Erne  
Warren Elfers  
Andrea Fuller  
Bill Clapper  
Dr. Heinz and Catherine Boker  
Judy Weintraub

## Farewell to Dr. Boker

### Claudia Brown

On Sept. 14th, 2003 we gathered at the cemetery to say a final farewell to Dr. Heinz Boker and his wife Catherine. As mourners reminisced about Dr. Boker, more memories were coaxed from their comfortable dwelling places to fill all our heads with days now past. Dr. Boker was the last of an era—a country doctor, dedicated to the people that he served. He was always available—and did house calls. He appeared to live a simple life, preferring to dress more like a farmer than today's physician.

I think it was his son Arthur that told the story about Dr. Boker being stopped by the police for a traffic offense when traveling, and he was questioned as to what kind of work he did. Dr. Boker replied that he was a medical doctor and the police didn't believe him, because of how he was dressed!

Deb Holmes spoke about Dr. Boker's compassion for young families: she said that when her children were

young, they were all sick, one after the other. Dr. Boker had treated each one and Debbie finally said to him that she didn't know when they could pay him. Dr. Boker replied to her that her husband Rob would probably fix his tractor in the spring, and that would be his pay.

*"It is hard, if not impossible to find such dedication and caring in today's medical profession."*

When my elderly cousin Mary Augusta McKillips had a sore on her leg that wasn't healing, Dr. Boker stopped by every day to look at it and change the bandage, and she paid not a penny out of pocket. It is hard, if not impossible to find such dedication and caring in today's medical profession. Dr. Boker was also an excellent diagnostician, he listened to your complaints and your

answers to his questions, before he decided how to help you and he could explain every medicine that he gave to his patients. My father thought that was because Dr. Boker began his professional career in chemistry.

So farewell to you Dr. Boker and your beautiful, thoughtful wife Kate, and so long to an era marked by simplicity, caring, and enough time. You are both already missed.

Dr. Heinz Boker was born in Berlin, Germany January 6, 1918 and emigrated to the United States as a child. The Boker family settled on Kelleys Island and Dr. Boker attended and graduated from Kelleys Island School. His passing was on August 30, 2003.

If you have a story about Dr. Boker, please write it up and send it to us. We would like to print other reminiscences and also gather stories for a display about Dr. Boker in the new museum.

You can also call me at 419-746-2508 (in the evening) and tell your story over the phone.

## Treasurer's Report

Vi Feyedelem

As of November 11, 2003

Checking account \$ 28,044.19

Savings account \$198,246.46

Total \$226,290.65

## Election results

At the annual meeting in August, two new Board members were elected: **Annalee** and **Jacqueline Kranyak**. Both had been active as volunteers in the gift shop. At the first Board meeting after the annual meeting, officers were elected and the results were as follows:

**President- Michael Feyedelem**

**Vice President- Russell Matso**

**Recording Secretary- Richard Holmes**

**Corresponding Secretary- Claudia Brown**

**Treasurer- Annalee**

Board members are also serving on

the following committees: Ways and Means- Annalee & Mike Feyedelem; Acquisition and Display- Ila Dick, Russ Matso & Mike Feyedelem; Education- Claudia Brown & Mike Feyedelem

The committees will finish forming as interested parties come forward and join them. The election for committee chairman will be in the spring or early summer. If you have any interest in a committee, we'd love to hear from you as soon as possible. Please contact the Board members associated with the committee, or send a note to KIHA on the attention of the Board member.

The winner of the quilt from the KIHA annual raffle was Lydia Bechtel. The butterfly wall hanging was won by Dee Mack. Congratulations to them both!



## Geneology ramblings .....

The Historical Association gets inquiries about families and persons quite regularly. We are planning this as a regular column, so if you have someone you are researching or have information about a family, please let us know.

The most recent inquiries are: **Maryanne Laubner** is researching the

**Roesch (aka Rush) and Titus families.** She already received statistical data from KIHA: cemetery and census information. Anyone who knew family members, please write to KIHA, attn. Claudia, at P.O.Box 328, Kelleys Island, OH 43438, and we will pass along the information.

**Jean Slavin** is asking for information about **Catherine Casey Slavin**, who is buried in the cemetery, and **Meg Laughlin** is inquiring about her Great Uncle **Johnny Himmelein**. If you have information or stories to contribute, please write KIHA or call Claudia at 419-746-2508 (in the evening).

## A later account "Newspaper Blade"

*Editors Note: Mrs. Catherine Casey Slavin was 29 years old when she passed away, leaving a husband and daughter. Her body was brought back to Kelleys Island on Sat., Jan. 27, 1900.)*

With reference to a perilous trip of a funeral party across the lake from Marblehead to Kelly Island, some mention of which has already been made in these columns, the *Toledo Blade* prints a detailed report and an interview with **Mr. Slavin**.

**The Blade Says (copied verbatim):**

A battle with floating ice, in a small boat, is not an infrequent occurrence with

the brave young men who carried mail between Put-in-Bay, Catawba and Kelley Island and the mainland. The young men are sons of **Henry Elfers**, of Kelley Island and they have been brought up to have absolutely no fear of water in any conditions. They are sturdy boys, and in addition to the money which Uncle Sam pays them, they make a good sum in transporting passengers and small packages.

The Elfers boys had a new experience last Friday, in which a Toledo man figured, and which none of the men will ever forget.

The Toledo man was **James Slavin**, who lives at 28 Fourteenth Street, Toledo, Ohio. He is a sailor, and has sailed on the lakes for more than 15 years. Last week his wife died. She was a Kelley Island girl, and it was decided to take her remains to her old home for interment. Mr. Slavin left here with the casket on Thursday afternoon, and it was late when he arrived at Marblehead. He had telegraphed ahead to have the Elfers boys meet him, but when he arrived with the boat; boats lights could be seen far out in the lake and making very slow progress.

Mr. Slavin tells his story as follows: "The lake had been clear, but the wind

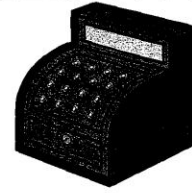
## Gift shop report

The responsibility for the gift shop has been handed over to **Annalee**, the Board member who expressed the most interest and who volunteered for the Ways and Means Committee. For the summer season of 2003, **Claudia Brown** did the buying and **Betsy Walcott** was the head volunteer (which means she communicated with all the volunteers frequently to keep the shop staffed and she worked many hours volunteers couldn't).

There were fewer tourists in the shop this year. In 2001, there were 4,815 visitors; in 2002 there were 5,052 visitors; and in 2003 there were 2,249 visitors.

The KIHA volunteers were great, giving history of the building, displays and KIHA while clerking for the shop. We give thanks for a job well done to **Betsy Walcott, Pam Stoup, Annalee, Shirley Crabill, Dee Mack, Don Gilles, Pat Hayes, Pat Seeholzer, Mary Ann Pileski, Sue Clepper, Ed Frindt, Frannie Minshall, Artie Mader, Sharon McIntyre, Madeleine Williams, Marv Byer, Sherry Otto, Jon Pejeau, Anne Eddowes, Jacquie Kranyak**.

The shop participated in the first annual Chamber of Commerce Christmas Boutique at the Town Hall, open the weekend after



Thanksgiving. **Claudia Brown** volunteered to do the sale for KIHA.

Also many thanks for the beautiful quilt made by **Terri Betzenheimer** and to all those volunteers who helped sell quilt tickets at Chamber events in the parks—**Laura Jean Pohorence, Ann Brown, Phyllis Humphrey, Laura VonBenken** and **Terri Betzenheimer**, in addition to others already mentioned in connection with the gift shop.

## New website...check it out

### Ila Beatty Dick

In 2001 our website was born. **Delores Cole** is our Webmaster and has done an outstanding job. It has been fun working with her and we want to thank her for providing us with such a wonderful tool. For those of you who haven't visited our website: just type in

We receive many interesting E-mails asking for information about Kelleys Island and family members who were raised here. Occasionally we

receive information that is invaluable to our Historical Assn.

**Jean Slavin Day** from Rocklin, CA wrote for cemetery information for some of her family and offered us her family tree. I was overwhelmed when I received it. Many, many hours have gone into it over a period of years.

In future issues we would like to share with you newspaper articles, that were included in that family tree, about Kelleys Island many years ago.

## Recent accessions

1. A 1950's era Kelleys Island souvenir tumbler from **Gretchen Larson**
2. Some memorabilia from the KI Athletic Club: membership card, meeting card, and envelope—donated by **Medeleine O'Meara Beam**.

The items were in **Buster Mooney's** garage when they were cleaning it out. The garage and home had been previously owned by **Jay Norris** who had been very active in the Club.

3. Some small items from an underwater shipwreck, collected around 1972 were given anonymously.

### Blade—trip From page 4...

shifted to westward, and the ice was blowing Down, shutting in the little boat. After five hours' work, the tired men arrived safely at 10 o'clock at night, but it was not thought best to attempt the trip back to the island before daylight, as the men were almost exhausted. The distance is about five miles. "At sunrise there was a very heavy fog, with little breeze blowing. It was one of those January fogs which is almost sure to bring up a northeaster. When we started out at 7:30 we could not see a hundred yards ahead. There were three boats tied together in a tow. In the first boat were one of the Elfers boys, myself and my brother-in-law, **Patrick Berry** and the second Elfers boy. **George E. Hughes** rode in the third boat with the corpse, which was in a hermetically sealed, metallic casket. From the very outset, we had to contend with floating ice. Cakes as large as a house were floating close together. The ice was from eight to ten inches thick, and as blue as the sea. We couldn't row, and had to propel ourselves as

well as make openings in the ice by the use of pike poles. To add to our trouble, our compass was no good. I was very much worried, too, for fear a breeze would spring up, as is usually the case on a foggy day. In the last boat was the casket, in which lay all that was dear to me. All that I had on earth. If the wind had blown up, we could never have prevented that last boat from foundering and the casket would probably have sunk to the bottom. All of the boats were equipped with runners, but these were of no use, as the cakes of ice were not large enough to carry the boats. There was nothing for it but to push ahead - sometimes to the eastward, sometimes west and sometimes north - anywhere to find an opening through those great floating cakes. The whistles at Marblehead were kept blowing so that we could be guided, and after we had been out several hours, we could hear the sound of horns from the direction of Kelley Island. We pushed forward without any special incident until nearly 2 o'clock in the afternoon, without food, and almost exhausted. We knew from the sound of horns and bells of

the horns that we were nearing the Island, when suddenly, not 150 feet ahead, the dock and warehouse loomed up in the fog. Some of the men lay down in the boat at the sight. They were simply tired out. "Half of the people of the Island were gathered along the dock with horns and bells of every description, which they had used to guide us in, and willing hands assisted us to land. Some of the people had been up all night about twelve or fourteen hours earlier. They had blown the horns and kept lights burning to guide us in." Mr. Slavin paused, and was silent for some time. "I have sailed the lakes for fifteen years," he finally resumed. "I have been in ice gorges in the Soo and bucked the ice for two days at a stretch; I have been shipwrecked and nearly drowned, and almost starved and frozen; but I never again want go through what I did on that day. A vessel is a sailor's home and he can feel safe on board his boat, but a small boat, in the floating ice is absolutely at the mercy of the wind and wave.

Submitted by **Jean Slavin Day**, who sent us this account, is a relative of Mrs. Slavin.



***Making Kelleys Island History  
Everybody's Business***

Kelleys Island Historical Association  
P.O. Box 328  
Kelleys Island, OH 43438

*A 501(C)3 organization. All  
contributions are tax deductible.*



*We're on the Web!*  
[kelleysislandhistorical.org](http://kelleysislandhistorical.org)

## Butterfly Festival 2003

### Directed by Russell Matso

This year's Butterfly festival was blessed with good weather, unlike the last two years that had very heavy rain and wind. This year started great and stayed that way the whole day.

From the food stand **Bea and Russ Matso** would like to say thanks to all who worked so hard to get the food out and to make everything tasty: **Jack & Mary Ellen Thinner, Bruce & Leslie Korenko, Marcie Mielke, Florence McKillips, Lydia Bechtel**, and others.

Also many thanks to the guys and gals who helped put up the food tents and who worked again to take them down.

**Kim & Rob Watkins** at the Island market donated potato chips, which helped our income. **Gary & Jackie Finger** donated all the ice and the plywood flooring that was needed to get the Health Dept. permit to serve food. And there were so many others who

pitched in to make the 2003 Butterfly Festival a success.

We are now looking forward to next year's Butterfly Festival and to doing the food stand again.

We hope that it will be in the area with the new Museum Building. And we hope to have one or two new items on the menu. Hope to see all of you again next year. Until then, the Kelleys Island Historical Association thanks you for all your help.

Our best to you,  
**Russ & Bea Matso**

### More Butterfly notes

A special thank you to the 4-H



Camp that loaned us benches to use during the Butterfly Tagging demonstration, and a special thank you to **Pat Hayes** for doing the tagging.

**Fran Johnson** and **Kathy Lange** headed up the volunteers at the bakery table. And many, many thanks to all the volunteers that baked such wonderful cookies and desserts. **Claudia Brown** organized the garage sale items and thanks everyone for their donations and the help with selling.

The keynote speaker was **Judy Semroc**, who had a slide show of Butterflies and spoke about types in our area and their habitat. We all learned a lot.

## Building Update

**Mike Feyedelem** has sent out plans for the museum building to a Port Clinton construction company and to a local builder who requested them. He is also looking into Amish builders. The holding tank permit will be renewed with the State of Ohio.