



# BAY VIEW • Historian

VOLUME 2012, NO. 5

OCTOBER 2012

## Stemper Co. Historical Landmark Dedication September 29

BY RON WINKLER

The Bay View Historical Society will present the T.H. Stemper Company, located at 1125 E. Potter Avenue, with a Bay View Historical Society Landmark plaque on Saturday, September 29th, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. This is a free event and we encourage everyone to attend.

The T.H. Stemper Company is one of the nation's leading firms in the religious goods industry. It has a commitment to excellence that has always been a key ingredient in the company's success.

The company began in 1911, when Thomas H. Stemper, a teacher and organizer with no background in the church goods business, purchased the bankrupt European Statuary & Art Company (ES&A) at the present Potter Avenue site on Milwaukee's southeast side from Simon Rosenblatt, who had founded the business in 1894. As implied in the name, the company's primary business was the manufacturing of plaster statuary and

altars. T.H. Stemper returned the business to economic health, relying upon the design skills of European craftsmen, supplemented by the production skills of a domestic workforce. In 1913, T.H. purchased another bankrupt business - H.E. Schwartz Co., a religious goods store. He renamed it Milwaukee Church Supply Co. and relocated it to a building adjacent to ES&A. Again he applied his management skills to turning around this previously failing business.

In 1946, he incorporated the two businesses under the current T.H. Stemper Company, Inc. name. As the business evolved and customer expectations changed, so did the company's focus. Religious goods became the company's dominant activity. Currently, the store has a huge in-stock inventory and are authorized representatives of some of the world's leading religious goods manufacturers.

T.H. Stemper demonstrated early in his

business career the need to be willing to change, a valuable trait he passed on to those who would succeed him. His immediate successors were sons Eugene and Daniel J. Stemper, who had joined the company after graduation from Marquette University. In 1968, Daniel assumed ownership of the company and guided it successfully through a series of changes in the marketplace influenced primarily by a period of transition in various Christian denominations.

Today, the Stemper Company is in the capable hands of six sons of Daniel, along with their mother, Jean. Daniel G. Stemper is the President. Peter is Vice-President. Also playing key roles in the day-to-day operations are brothers John, Joseph, and James Stemper. This third generation of Stempers shares the same vision and dedication to excellence that T.H. Stemper brought with him in 1911.

Refreshments will be served at the Beulah Brinton Community Center after the landmark ceremony and everyone is invited. For further information, please call John Manke at 414-304-5039.

### MAKE YOUR RESERVATION NOW!

### BEULAH BRINTON AWARDS DINNER

### A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY

.....  
**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2012**

**SOUTH SHORE PARK PAVILION**

**2900 S. SHORE DRIVE, MILWAUKEE 53207**

**6:00 PM SOCIAL TIME/CASH BAR**

**6:30 PM DINNER AND PROGRAM**  
.....

### HONORING AWARD WINNERS



**Sr. Edna Lonergan**  
*President, St. Ann Center  
for Intergenerational Care*



**John Gurda**  
*Local historian, writer,  
lecturer and columnist*

**Individual Tickets are \$60 per person**

Invitations will be mailed or call (414) 744-5674 if to reserve your space.

*Proceeds from this event will support preservation of the historic Beulah Brinton House*

## WRITE YOUR OWN MEMOIRS WORKSHOP

The Bay View Historical Society will host a ten-week workshop in creating your personal history through Guided Autobiography. Personal histories record our lives in words and images, creating a history of community and bringing our personal stories to life through the stories behind those statistics on the family tree. Learn how to discover, write and organize your stories in a meaningful way. Topics and questions introduced by the instructor will prepare you for writing and sharing, one step at a time. Each meeting will include instruction, with tools and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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#### **Membership**

\$20 Individual/\$17 Seniors (Age 65+)

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\$30 Nonprofit/Small Business

\$55 Corporate

Bay View Historical Society

2590 S. Superior Street

Bay View, WI 53207

www.bayviewhistoricalsociety.org

The Bay View Historical Society is  
a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization.  
Your donations and in-kind gifts are  
tax-deductible as allowed by law.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

BY NANCY TAWNEY

The Beulah Brinton Awards Dinner will be held on Thursday, October 4. This inaugural event promises to be an exceptional evening for the Bay View Historical Society. Beulah Brinton (1836-1928) was a Bay View pioneer who worked to give immigrants educational and social opportunities that strengthened the fabric of the community

in early Milwaukee. In honor of Mrs. Brinton's legacy, this event is being called a "Celebration of Community". We will recognize Sr. Edna Lonergan and John Gurda for their contributions to our community. I urge you to attend this night of celebrating the special life that we enjoy in Bay View.

## WRITE YOUR OWN MEMOIRS WORKSHOP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

perspectives to inspire your writing and time to read your story to your small group, as well as listen to the stories of other group members. No writing experience is necessary. Preserve your life stories, meet new friends and have fun doing it! Workshops will be held at the Beulah Brinton House, 2590 S. Superior Street. They will be facilitated by Patty Tomaszewski, a member of the Association of Personal Historians.

A free introductory session will be held on Tuesday, October 2 at 10 a.m. at the Brinton House. The workshop will be held over ten consecutive Tuesdays beginning October 9, from 10 a.m. until noon. To register and get more information contact Patty Tomaszewski at (262) 376-8107 or momtoma@aol.com

## OCTOBER MEETING CHANGED

The Bay View Historical Society Presents meeting that is usually held on the first Monday in October is being moved to December 3 since the Beulah Brinton Awards Dinner will be held on Thursday October 4.

On Monday, December 3 there will be a Bay View Historical Society Presents meeting at the Beulah Brinton House. The annual election of new board directors will take place, followed by a holiday party.

## Nominating Committee Update

BY SUSAN BALLJE LESLIE BACHHUBER, AMY MIHELICH, AND KATHY MULVEY

It's exciting to be working on the nominations for the next board members of Bay View Historical Society in 2012. The committee has started meeting and preparing for the Dec. 3rd meeting. Be sure to attend as the holiday gathering is also the same evening.

We are reviewing all the interests and needs of the Society and carefully investigating how to continue the important mission and work that began in 1979. The Nominating Committee is being responsive to the by-laws and task of finding those who will best represent the interests of BVHS.

Watch for the nominations and process that will be included in the next Historian!

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We welcome the following new members who joined the Society since May 1st:

Stevan Augustin, Mary L. Cicerelli, Kurt Connerton, Walter G. Groth, Mary E. Gutzwiller,  
Virginia Prince, Bonnie Rae, John Toutenhoofd

# Northern Border Walk Wrap-up

BY RON WINKLER

The Bay View Historical Society's 2012 August Walk featured the Northern Border, an area outside of the original Village of Bay View. The walk was open to the public and was led by tour guides Ron Winkler and Greg Wernisch on Saturday, August 4th. The walk was sponsored by the Society to help Bay View residents and visitors gain an appreciation for the history, architecture and lifestyle in northern Bay View. Each participant received a tour brochure.



TOP: This image from the 1950s shows the old Walgreens Drugstore on the corner of Kinnickinnic and Allis. Today it is the site of Stone Creek Coffee, the start of this year's August Walk.

LEFT: This grocery store that once stood on the northwest corner of Lincoln and Woodward was built in 1898. It was taken over in 1927 by Max Kohl (Senator Herb Kohl's father), his brother Jack, and his brother in law, Jacob Shapiro. Max Kohl was the founder of Kohl's grocery stores and Kohl's Department stores. This building was razed in the 1980s.

The walk's first section was in the residential area north of Lincoln Avenue and east of Kinnickinnic Avenue. The second section centered on the industrial area north of Bay Street. The final section was along Kinnickinnic Avenue with its historic buildings. Most of the Northern Border Walk is unfamiliar to even Bay View residents.

The walk started at 9:30 a.m. from Stone Creek Coffee, 2266 S. Kinnickinnic Avenue. Although the weather kept many people away due to the heat (88 degrees) and humidity, 52 people came out to learn about Bay View's history. A rest stop at Hamburger Mary's, 2130 S. Kinnickinnic Avenue, allowed everyone to get out of the heat to enjoy a cool drink and a snack.

One of the stops on the tour was the home of Elias Stollenwerk, 2246 S. Aldrich Street. He was the senior member of Elias Stollenwerk and Company, contractors and builders. He built his Queen Anne home in 1890 as his home and office. He started his business in 1883 and employed his brother John. They built St. Augustine School (1888) and Church (1908), which was the Stollenwerk Family's parish.

Approximately ten Stollenwerk Family members and friends were present for the tour including Jim Stollenwerk (grandson of Elias) and Elias Stollenwerk (great-grandson of Elias). Another family member, who was not present, is John J. Stollenwerk, the Chairman of Allen Edmonds Shoe Corporation in Port Washington.

Many people assisted with the walk. Thanks to Greg Wernisch for being co-tour guide. Bill O'Brien prepared the tour brochure and had them printed. He also helped with registration as did Bob and Erin Lenz, Susan Ballje and Alice Winkler. John Miller guarded my folder of historic photos of the Northern Border and showed them at the appropriate times. Thank you all.

## FOREST HOME CEMETERY: A HISTORICAL TOUR

The Friends of St. Francis Library are hosting the "Forest Home Cemetery: A Historical Tour" program. Presented by Forest Home Cemetery President, Tom Kursel, this fascinating event will cover three topics: Milwaukee history; cemetery art and symbolism; famous Milwaukeeans and their monuments.

Milwaukee history will include a discussion of the gravesites of many famous Milwaukeeans who helped build Milwaukee in the period of 1836 - 1914. The famous people include such names as Uihlein, Usinger, Harnischfeger, Layton, Best, Marshall and Ilsley, Blatz, Pabst, Mitchell and many others.

During the Victorian era, symbols were an important part of the art forms used in cemetery monuments. Use of such symbols as urns, Bedford tree stones, lilies, and wreaths as well as special stone cuttings and labor memorialization will be explored.

The Victorian era was also a period when families were memorialized with large and unique monuments. Learn about the family history and unique monuments that were created to memorialize significant accomplishments. Some of the family names included in the discussion are A.O. Smith, T.A. Chapman, Falk, Pfister, Vogel and many more familiar to Milwaukeeans.

The presentation will take place at the St. Francis Public Library, 4230 S. Nicholson Avenue, on Wednesday, October 3 at 6:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. There is no fee to attend, but reservations are requested. Call (414) 481-7323 to reserve.

## ENJOY THE MUSIC OF LIL' REV AND LARRY PENN, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25

Lil' Rev, a midwestern traveling musician and storyteller, and singer-songwriter Larry Penn are returning to the Beulah Brinton House to perform an afternoon concert on Sunday, November 25 at 2:00 pm. (The Packers do not play that day until 7:20 pm.) Last year there was standing room only when they gave a delightful performance that was thoroughly enjoyed by all the attendees.

Refreshments will be served at the performance and a free-will offering will be taken. Plan to attend this entertaining event at the Brinton House, 2590 S. Superior Street.



Mary Becker  
(Courtesy of John Becker)

# Tribute to Mary Becker

BY RON WINKLER

Longtime Cudahy resident Mary Elizabeth Becker passed away at the age of 93 on July 20, 2012 at her home in Howard Village in St. Francis. Prior to Howard Village,

she lived at 3641 East Lunham Avenue in Cudahy. She was an active member of the Bay View Historical Society and was still attending the society's membership meetings this year. In 2005, she was honored as Person of the Year by the BVHS.

Becker was a historian, author, reporter, Girl Scout leader, PTA President, Chairperson of the Cudahy Fair Housing Committee and Vice President of the Cudahy Historical Society. She and her husband Christian I. Becker, who died in 2006, had four children, six grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

## Girlhood

She was born Mary Partridge on January 28, 1919. When she was five years old, her parents, Edith and Carroll Partridge M.D. moved from Shorewood to Cudahy at the invitation of Dr. Arthur Sidler, who had been Cudahy's first mayor from 1906 to 1908. Later, the Partridges remodeled their Layton Avenue home into Cudahy Hospital, which they ran for over 25 years.

Living in a hospital deterred her from entering the medical profession. However, she could joke about it and her son Christian told me her favorite joke. The story takes place in the burn unit at St. Mary's Hospital. A patient noticed that each day the same doctor would walk into the room, start a stopwatch and leave without saying a word. After several days, the patient asked the nurse what was going on. "That's Dr. Heel," the nurse replied. "Heel times all wounds."

Becker graduated from Cudahy High School in 1935 and went on to attend the University of Wisconsin. She became interested in journalism when an upperclassman interviewed her for the school paper and she saw her name in print. She went on to become the news editor of the student newspaper the *Daily Cardinal*. She graduated in 1939 with a degree in journalism.

In August of that year she married Christian Becker who she had met at a church potluck in 1935. The Beckers owned the Cudahy Fuel Company at 5009 S. Packard Avenue.

For 18 years Becker was active as a Girl Scout leader and was chair of Cudahy's committee for fair housing, which worked to eliminate housing discrimination during the 1960s.

## Career in Journalism

By 1966, her children were grown and she was invited to write for the old *Cudahy/St. Francis Reminder Enterprise*, which was owned by Bee Stonek and her husband. She started by covering meetings of the St. Francis common council and school board. She also covered proceedings of the St. Francis and Cudahy courts. Later, she wrote the columns "City Sidelights" and "What's the Good Word?" about life in the suburbs. She also had a history column titled "This Week in History." She joined the historical societies in Cudahy, St. Francis and Bay View, which she did in part as a way of making contacts and gathering news. When the *Reminder Enterprise* was sold to *Community Newspapers*, she remained on the staff until her retirement in 2005.

One of Becker's favorite stories was about the organization of the Cudahy Historical Society and how it obtained its home. In 1971, the city of Cudahy condemned the Cudahy railroad depot on Kinnickinnic Avenue just north of Layton Avenue. Several women challenged the common council and circulated petitions and even got the railroad involved. The depot was saved and the Cudahy Historical Society organized in 1972 and took possession of the depot in 1978.

Becker developed a self-guided historical walking tour of Cudahy, which is included in *Generations of Pride: A Centennial History of Cudahy*, published in 2006 and available from the Cudahy Family Library for \$25.00.

In celebration of her 90th birthday and to commemorate her service to the community, the city of Cudahy proclaimed January 28, 2009 "Mary Becker Day." At that time, Cudahy Mayor Ryan McCue said, "Mary Becker is a wonderful journalist and historian who has graced us with her stories and knowledge of Cudahy. She holds the pulse of this community in her heart." She

was referred to as Cudahy's local historian, having reported the news since 1966.

Becker took piano lessons and always spoke about how important music was in her life. For fifty years, she was piano accompanist for music students in Cudahy and South Milwaukee during recitals. Starting in 1986, she accompanied the Kelly Singers at the Kelly Senior Center in Wernimont Park, playing more than 100 songs from memory. She also enjoyed playing bridge and reading novels by J.P. Marquand and John Updike.

She continued as an active member of the Cudahy Historical and coordinated its election of officers in the spring of 2012. She was a member of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cudahy. Burial was at Arlington Park Cemetery.

## BAY VIEW AUTHOR RON WINKLER ON THE ROAD

In case you missed Ron's talks earlier this year, here is the fall series. Each one is unique and admission is free

Thursday, November 8  
Slide show lecture 6:30 p.m.  
Cudahy Family Library  
3500 Library Drive

Wednesday, November 28  
Slide show lecture 6:30 p.m.  
Tippecanoe Library  
3912 S. Howell Avenue

Winkler was interviewed for Channel 10's *I Remember* by host Jim Peck. Watch the program at [www.mptv.org](http://www.mptv.org) (*I Remember* Program #1813). Listen to Dan Harmon's interview with Winkler on WUWM's (89.7 FM) *Lake Effect* at [www.wuwm.com](http://www.wuwm.com). Select the link for "Lake Effect" and then type in key word "Bay View" or "Ron Winkler," then select "Bay View Tackles Turf Wars and Building Bridges."



## LITTLE FREE LIBRARY AT BRINTON HOUSE



Stan Doty with the Little Free Library that he designed and built in the style of the Beulah Brinton House

A Little Free Library now resides on the Brinton House porch. It is just what the name implies - a very little library that anyone is free to use,

either taking a book or giving a book. The Brinton House library was built by Bay View Historical Society member Stan Doty. Donna Pogliano financed the construction. Doty's design of the library is a replica of the Brinton House.

The Little Free Library movement started with a Hudson, Wisconsin man who built one in the shape of a schoolhouse in honor of his mother, a retired schoolteacher. Little Free Library has a mission to promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide and building a sense of community.

Beulah Brinton started the first library in Bay View in her home. Given this history, it is especially fitting that the Brinton House is now home to a Little Free Library of its own. Visit the library and take a book or leave one or do both. The porch is also a nice place to take a break and do some reading.

## See Your Name in Print!

Write an article about Bay View history or of historical interest to BVHS members and we may run it in *The Historian*! Word documents are ideal and articles must be 1,000 words or less — photographs are a plus!

Contact Jenn Kresse  
at [jrkresse@gmail.com](mailto:jrkresse@gmail.com)  
or 414-531-0225  
to find out more!



## BVHS Education Committee teams with Bay View Students for *Community: A Place Where We All Belong*

BY SUSAN BALLJE



BVHS Education Committee at the Beulah Brinton House, heading out on field experience to Port of Milwaukee. Pictured (L to R): Mary Balough, Leslie Bachhuber, April Swick, Stephanie Klopp, Susan Ballje, Paula Holman, Nancy Tawney, Kathy Navarre and Ann White

The Bay View Historical Society is dedicated to building community through knowledge of the area's considerable history. The Bay View Historical Society's mission is to enhance a sense of community by conserving, celebrating and sharing the region's rich heritage. We are very excited to now have grant funds from Wisconsin Humanities Council to work with local schools that will promote education and the mission of BVHS.

*The Community: A Place  
Where We All Belong*

education project is promoting experiences with students and schools in the area and the Bay View community. The framework for this project is based on *Community: The Structure of Belonging* by Peter Block. Block makes a point of not trying to define a healthy and well-functioning community. The idea isn't to create a visionary ideal for people to try to live up to, he says. Rather, it's to encourage a shift in thinking about community so we can develop an authentic sense of belonging. That, after all, is what community is based on Beulah Brinton's story.

Initially, BVHS will be creating a sense of belonging by having students experience being in community. According to Block, the first and most pressing challenge is to transform people's sense of isolation and self-interest into an experience of connectedness and caring for the whole. Creating that transformation requires a shift from seeing problems that need to be solved in the community to seeing the possibilities that can be realized.

The second part of the program is the implementation of instructional activities throughout the school year. Each classroom will work with members of Bay View Historical Society to learn about the history of Bay View, tour the Beulah Brinton House, experience historical artifacts, and research information related to a study students are interested in doing. Students will work on a project about their community based on the book, *Thinking Like a Historian* By Nikki Mandell and Bobbie Malone. They will learn to ask questions about the past, discover what has changed, and find out why community is significant. Students will choose to write a story, create a display, use drawings or photographs to share what they have learned. The culmination will be for students to participate in an exhibition of their projects at their school and the Beulah Brinton House. They will have time for conversations and feedback from the community.

Over the summer, staff from Clement Ave., Fernwood Montessori, Humboldt Park and Trowbridge Schools participated in community building workshops with BVHS members. They have volunteered time to learn and plan for the coming school year by sharing possibilities and interests, finding new resources, and touring the Port of Milwaukee. BVHS is benefitting by bringing in new members who are working with local schools as well as using our valuable members & archives who will be involved with this education initiative.

We welcome member participation! Please let Susan Ballje know if you have an interest (414) 481-3369 or [susan.ballje@yahoo.com](mailto:susan.ballje@yahoo.com).

# Calendar 2012

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29:**

T. H. Stemper Landmark Dedication  
1125 N. Potter Street  
2:00 pm

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4:**

Beulah Brinton Awards Dinner  
South Shore Park Pavilion  
2900 South Shore Drive  
6:00 pm

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20:**

Beulah Brinton House Open to the Public  
2590 S. Superior Street  
1:00 - 4:00 pm

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17:**

Beulah Brinton House Open to the Public  
2590 S. Superior Street  
1:00 - 4:00 pm

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25:**

Concert with Lil' Rev and Larry Penn  
Beulah Brinton House  
2590 S. Superior Street  
2:00 - 4:00 pm

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 3:**

Membership Meeting and Holiday Party  
Beulah Brinton House  
2590 S. Superior Street  
7:00 pm

## Upcoming Board Meetings:

- Monday, October 8, 6:30 pm  
Beulah Brinton House
- Monday, November 12, 6:30 pm  
Beulah Brinton House
- Monday, December 10, 6:30 pm  
Beulah Brinton House

*Board meetings may be subject to change.*

SIX

ENCOURAGING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY BY PRESERVING, CELEBRATING AND SHARING BAY VIEW'S RICH HERITAGE.

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