



BAY VIEW Historian



VOLUME 2021, NO. 4

www.bayviewhistoricalsociety.org

WINTER 2021



Bay View Historical Society Thanks Bradley Wiles, Volunteer of the Year Award Recipient, for His Hard Work and Dedication

The BVHS 40th Anniversary Oral History Project is still underway and we are hoping to have more content available through the BVHS website and YouTube channel by the end of 2021. In 2019 we were able to get nine new interviews from individuals with deep roots in the Bay View neighborhood and we hope to get several more through 2022. All new content gathered for this project complements the dozens of hours of legacy interviews and recordings compiled by BVHS members in the 1970s and 1980s, all of which was digitized in 2018. Together, these recordings represent a unique and significant resource for Bay View history that can be added to and repurposed as needed. Currently we are looking for volunteers to help out with interview transcription and indexing (which can be completed online), and we are open to suggestions for new interview prospects. The recent recordings can be accessed through the project page on the BVHS website: <https://bayviewhistoricalsociety.org/publications/bvhs-40th-anniversary-oral-history-project/>. Please contact Brad Wiles (bradleywiles1@gmail.com) or Kathy Mulvey (kfmulvey90@gmail.com) with any questions about the project.

Beulah's BIRTHDAY BOOK DRIVE

NOVEMBER 12 – DECEMBER 12, 2021

The Bay View Historical Society is holding a month-long book drive benefiting **SHARP Literacy**, a Milwaukee-based nonprofit that brings learning to life through innovative STEAM-based experiential programs.

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BAY VIEW BOOK STORE PARTNERS TO PURCHASE OR DONATE AT WWW.BAYVIEWHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG!



Beulah's Birthday Book Drive: Nov 12 - Dec 12, 2021

In the second half of the 19th century, as migrants flooded to the Milwaukee area - particularly from Europe - many settled in the Bay View neighborhood as workers at the Milwaukee Iron Mill. One of the mill's managers, Warren Brinton, built a home in Bay View with his wife Beulah. Located on South Superior Street, Beulah and Warren Brinton's home quickly became a sort of community center where Beulah welcomed the families of these migrant workers for education, recreation, English language learning, and community building opportunities. Beulah's library became the core of "Milwaukee's first branch library." MPL downtown was almost a decade old by the 1887 establishment of the Bay View Branch, later Llewellyn.

It is with our neighborhood's rich history and one of its founders' strong connection to education in mind, that the Bay View Historical Society has chosen this holiday season to support the work of SHARP Literacy in fostering in students a love of learning in Milwaukee's diverse communities. We are planning this book drive to take place in honor of Beulah Brinton's birthday on December 12. We couldn't think of a better way to celebrate her birthday than by giving back to our community while promoting literacy and learning.

Visit one of Bay View's partner bookstores (Lion's Tooth, Voyageur Book Shop, and Bay View Books & Music) to purchase books from SHARP Literacy's wish-list below, supporting their efforts to bring learning to life. Don't have time to shop? Leave it to us by donating directly to Beulah's Book Drive via our online shop and we will purchase the books for you!

- **Elmer & the Rainbow** by David McKee (K3)
- **Pandamonium** by Chris Owen (K4)
- **A Bad Seed** by Jory John & Chris Oswald (K5)
- **Bumblebear** by Nadia Shireen (1st grade)
- **Water** by Frank Asch (2nd grade)
- **Maybe Something Beautiful** by Isabel Campoy (3rd grade)
- **Prairie Boy: Frank Lloyd Wright Turns the Heartland into a Home** by Barb Rosenstock (4th grade)



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\$55 Corporate

Philanthropic Levels:

\$100 Friend

\$500 Leader

\$1,000 Patron

\$2,500+ Benefactor

Bay View Historical Society
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www.bayviewhistoricalsociety.org

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with 501(c)3 status operating for educational purposes.

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President's Message

2021 has been a busy year for the Bay View Historical Society and Beulah Brinton House. Major improvements were made to the outside of the house. Painting was completed, and the roof on the house and garage were replaced. If you haven't driven past in a while it looks great. Over the past year we've added significantly to our social media presence and are reaching a wider audience. Last winter we offered a few collaborative lectures online, and we have a few future winter online lectures in the works. This spring we launched our virtual tour of the house, making the house accessible to anyone interested in taking a tour from anywhere. The tour also includes a quiz option aimed particularly at schools who may use the tour and the quiz for teaching local history. Thanks to the continued work of Bradley Wiles in our archive, some of the oral histories are now available on the website, with more becoming available in the future. Our Historian continues to publish excellent articles about local history under our Editor Kevin Petajan and from our prolific local history authors Ron Winkler and Bill O'Brien. We have engaged with an online audience with our 3-part series of book club meetings on local history. This summer our house was again used for recreation for our 3-part yoga series. We also had an excellent turnout for the return of our August Walk.

We also received a very nice piece of local history from the Garibaldi Society, a poster listing local American Italian servicemen who served during WWII. We're hoping to use the poster as a primary source for an exhibit on Bay Views Little Italy in the future. Our work to bring local history to life and make it feel relevant to our growing community will continue to be the cornerstone of our focus. Our next year will bring a greater effort to bring our archives into a digital format and our hope is that will further our mission to make local history more accessible. Your continued support as members makes this work possible and provides us with the tools we need to make these updates both to the house and the archives. We are putting your membership dollars to work and we can't do it without the collective strength of our members. If you have already returned your annual membership renewal, thank you! If not, please return it promptly so we can build our 2022 budget with your support in mind.

Thank you,

Hannah Hazelberg



This Old House Needs You

The Beulah Brinton House will soon be 150 years old. She was built well and proudly stands as an example of the architecture of earlier days in Bay View. This year the appearance of the house exterior was greatly enhanced with a new roof and painting. The Bay View Historical Society (BVHS) had received an estate gift that made these updates possible. Like any house, she is always in need of refurbishing and repair. Please consider remembering BVHS in your will or estate plan so that funds are available in the future for the inevitable projects that will need to be done to keep the house in good condition. You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to maintain this wonderful historic structure for the enjoyment of others for many years to come. For more information, contact Nancy Tawney, 414-744-5674 or ntawney@aol.com.



August Walk 2021

BY RON WINKLER

After a one-year "Covid hiatus," the Bay View Historical Society (BVHS) resumed its annual August Walk on Saturday, August 7th. The Fernwood & Sauerkraut Hill Walk started and ended at Cream City Realty, 3474 S. Pennsylvania Avenue. Cost was \$5.00 for members and \$10.00 for non-members. Thanks to society members Sue Herzfeld and Margaret Herzfeld who registered the walkers. Thanks also, to Joe Sliker, our official photographer.

Each of the forty-five participants received a copy of the newly-printed walk brochure, sixth in the series of nine walking tours designed to help Bay Viewites and visitors gain an appreciation of Bay View's history, architecture and lifestyle.

The morning began with Cream City Realty owner Joan Sliker giving a history of the building, which is a BVHS landmark. The participants then, as usual, had their choice of tour guide, either Greg Wernisch or Ron Winkler. The walk covered the area between Oklahoma Avenue and Morgan Avenue from Lake Michigan to the Lake Parkway.

The walkers took a refreshment stop halfway through at SmallPie, 2504 E. Oklahoma Avenue. The 75°, cloudy day was ideal for the walk and we all made it back to Cream City Realty before the rain began.

Mark your calendars for the 18th Annual August Walk, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, August 6, 2022.



Is it Time to Renew Your Membership?

Please look at your Bay View Historian mailing label to see when your membership will expire.

All yearly membership terms run from January 1 thru December 31. Any new memberships will be current through the end of the calendar year (one year plus pro-rated months). Members receive our newsletter, *The Historian*, with interesting articles and the latest information on all our events as well as discounts at a variety of Bay View merchants.

Thanks for supporting the programs of the Bay View Historical Society!

PLEASE RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAY VIEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Dues

- ☐ Individual.....\$20
- ☐ Household.....\$30
- ☐ Senior (65 or older).....\$17
- ☐ Senior Household.....\$25
- ☐ Nonprofit/Small Business.....\$30
- ☐ Corporate.....\$55

Philanthropic Levels:

- ☐ \$100 Friend ☐ \$1,000 Patron
- ☐ \$500 Leader ☐ \$2,500+ Benefactor

☐ Also enclosed is a tax deductible contribution of \$_____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$_____

Please make checks payable to:
Bay View Historical Society

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

☐ Please contact me! I'd like to volunteer for a project or committee.

☐ Please save a tree and send *The Historian* to the email address above.

Send your Membership Renewal to:

The Bay View Historical Society
Attn: Membership
2590 S. Superior Street
Bay View, WI 53207



Passing, Seen

BY BILL O'BRIEN



"They must be company houses; they're all the same."

That's what I was once told about the 35 dwellings that stand just west of Milwaukee Forge, in the block bounded by East Oklahoma Avenue, South Nevada Street, East Manitoba Street, and South Hanson Avenue. Their age and proximity to the plant made the remark a fair supposition, but a bit of digging shows that they weren't (company-owned) and aren't (all quite the same).

Built in 1924 and 1925, the wood-frame residences filled a subdivision owned by Dr. Charles Wesley Graham (1869-1928). The 1½-to-2-story structures were completed to 4 plans. There are 8 hip-roofed squares (above), paired at the corners of the Oklahoma-Nevada-Manitoba-Hanson block, and 16 flat-roofed rectangles within that block (below). There are 7 flat-roofed, longer rectangles (above right) on the east side of Hanson that have shallow, rectangular side bays, and 4 side-gabled bungalows (below, right), a pair each on Oklahoma and Manitoba. Erected when car ownership was first booming, each house has a driveway



The Milwaukee Assessor categorizes all but 2 of the buildings as duplexes or O/S (other style), while distinguishing 1418 and 1414 East Oklahoma – identical to the flanking duplexes at 1424 and 1404 – as "Colonial." It's not clear why.

The buildings have changed in many small ways. Most units' original wood cladding has been succeeded by aluminum or vinyl siding and all but a few early 3-over-1 sash windows replaced and covered by aluminum storms. Balconies up and porches down have been stripped away, rebuilt, or widened. Two flat roofs have been built over, with 3022 S. Nevada sporting a gable roof and 3017 S. Hanson a hipped roof. One expects that kitchens and baths of a century ago have been substantially modernized.



Most of these residences are now rentals, as they were when new. The 1930 Federal Census, our earliest comprehensive source on occupants and occupations, shows only 3 owners among 50 households. 44 householders were born in the United States, 3 in Germany, and one each in Canada, Denmark, Poland, and "Ugoslavia." The Americans originated in Wisconsin (23), contiguous Midwestern states (10), and from 8 others from Maine to, poetically, Oklahoma. More than 40s of the Americans had immigrant parents; 8 from Germany; 2 each from Austria and Sweden; one each from Canada, Czechoslovakia, England, Norway, Poland, Scotland, and "Ugoslavia."

The heads of 29 households worked in manufacturing, 15 as auto factory machinists, assemblers, painters, polishers, a driver, a tinner, a tester, and a production clerk. Fourteen householders worked in box, brass, cabinet, chemical, door, furnace, harvester, shoe, and steel concerns. The building trades had 6 representatives, with an architect, carpenters, a painter, a plumber, and a road builder. The food sector showed with 2 butchers, a baker – no candlestick maker – 2 coffee retailers, and a canned fruit salesman. The public sector was accounted for by a bus driver, a postal employee, and Roscoe George, a "Patrolman, Public Park," perhaps nearby Humboldt Park. The sole resident white-collar professional was a securities salesman; how might he have fared as the Depression worsened? Four householders listed "none" for occupation, two being widows.

Only Minnesota-born Matyas Thomas, a boarder at 365 Manitoba (today's 1407 East), is listed as a forge worker, a pickler. You're familiar with granular rust on ferrous metals. Oxidation of cooling forgings forms surface flakes that are removed by "pickling," submersion of the metal in a heated acid bath. For a quick view of the essential forging-forming process, Milwaukee Forge has an informative video, "Watch the Forging Process in Action," at the bottom of its home page, <https://www.milwaukeeforge.com/> and on its Facebook page. It shows a steady operator positioning a hot steel blank, aglow at 2100° F-2300° F, to be struck twice in enclosed dies by a hammer force of 1,500-4,000 pounds. As the piece advances on the conveyor, cooling slightly, you can make out details of the complex form produced by the strikes.

The auto factory repeatedly cited in the census was presumably the complex at the southwest corner of South Clement and East Euclid avenues, which functioned in turn for Nash Motors, American Motors, and Chrysler. It is now the Milwaukee distribution center for Fiat Chrysler America's Mopar division

*Milwaukee Sentinel,
5 December 1925*

NEW 5 AND 6 ROOM FLATS.
Inquire at 594 Nevada Terrace, near
Nash and Nordberg plants. Children wel-
come. Hanover 416.

Trick question for your friends: Can you direct me to 594 Nevada Terrace?

If they're savvy to Nevada Terrace being the name for Hanson until 1926 and that the post-census revision of street numbers updated 594, they'll tell you to proceed to 3022 South, where chemist Edmund Budnik lived in 1930.



The Hoan Bridge: Bay View's Link to Downtown

BY RON WINKLER

Bay View and the South Shore suburbs are adjacent to Lake Michigan in the southeastern corner of Milwaukee County. They are physically separated from downtown by the Kinnickinnic and Milwaukee Rivers. The Hoan Bridge on Milwaukee's lakefront spans the harbor connecting Bay View and the South Shore suburbs with downtown Milwaukee and the east side. The Hoan opened in 1977 and is used by 43,000 cars each day. This is the story of how that occurred.



In 1867, Bay View was established as the company town for the Milwaukee Iron Company. Although the name contained the name "Milwaukee," that was as far from the truth as the company was from Milwaukee. Therefore, workers were recruited from Great Britain, cradle of the Industrial Revolution, with its pool of skilled iron workers.

Although Bay View joined the city of Milwaukee in 1887, it was physically isolated from downtown by the Kinnickinnic and Milwaukee Rivers. Over time, as downtown became the focus of jobs and shopping, Bay View lacked quick access. Its sole route, via Kinnickinnic Avenue and South First Street, was a long journey.

Initial solutions

In 1909 the Wisconsin State Legislature authorized a bridge from downtown across the harbor to Jones Island, which is just north of Bay View. From there, a boulevard was to be built along the shoreline to Oklahoma Avenue. The plan included a park and protective breakwater.

Work began in 1913, but violent weather and shoreline erosion slowed progress. In addition, the Illinois Steel Company (formerly Milwaukee Iron Company) refused to allow construction near its property on Jones Island. By 1922, the park, named South Shore Park, and the adjacent breakwater were complete, but there was no bridge and no road.

As automobiles became popular, Milwaukee's traffic congestion increased. In 1929 North Lincoln Memorial Drive was completed, providing east side residents with a quick, scenic route to downtown. There were also plans for the south side. In 1928 a consulting firm recommended the "Bay View to Broadway" viaduct, part of a city-wide system that eventually would encircle the entire city. In 1930, the Milwaukee Common Council approved "Bay View to Broadway," but the project never materialized due to the Depression.



Caption- Sketch for the 1928 "Bay View to Broadway" viaduct looking east. Lake Michigan and the breakwater is at the top of the sketch. Jones Island is inside the breakwater with the Illinois Steel Company on the extreme right and the Port of Milwaukee to its left.

New Hope

Despite the Depression, Bay View politicians and residents pressured the city for the bridge with the Bay View Business Association obtaining 60,000 supporting signatures. In 1936, the city of Milwaukee set aside the first annual sum of \$500,000 for the "Outer Drive Project." Unfortunately, the dream ended in 1941 when the US entered World War II.

When the war ended in 1945, the automobile's increasing popularity created massive traffic jams between downtown and the south side on the Sixth Street Viaduct and Kinnickinnic Avenue/South First Street. By that time, the cost for the Outer Drive Project had skyrocketed. The plan was modified in 1955 with the addition of the Southeast Traffic Improvement Plan, favored by Bay View Alderman Erwin Zillman.

Two key parts of the plan were accomplished. The first was that Bay Street, which intersects Kinnickinnic Avenue, was widened to aid traffic flow through Bay View. The second was construction of a bridge that would connect with the Outer Drive when it was eventually built. That bridge still stands today, over the railroad tracks and Bay View Dog Park, connecting Bay Street to Jones Island.



continued page 7



One thing leads to another...

BY KATHY MULVEY

A few years ago, Charles Franza donated a sword that he had used as a young man in the Giuseppe Garibaldi Drill Team, along with a photograph of the drill team. We hung the articles in an upstairs room to protect them from people who might want to play with the sword.

Then, in August, Paul Troglia donated a wonderful poster -- an Honor Roll of Bay View members of the Garibaldi Society who served in World War II. He had discovered it in the basement of the Garibaldi Club, much the worse for wear. Paul had the poster cleaned and restored, then had it handsomely framed. The Archives Committee hung the two pieces together, and it made a nice display about the role of the Garibaldi Society in Bay View's history.

However, the words "Honor Roll" brought to mind a panel that had been rescued from the trash several years ago. Several panels had hung in Marino's Bar and Restaurant, across the street from the Garibaldi Club. The panels listed the names of Bay View men who served in World War II. When Marino's closed, the panels were given to the veteran's post on Kinnickinnic Avenue. When the post was torn down, someone called the Bay View Historical Society and told us they were putting everything in the trash. We were able to rescue one of the panels. So, we pulled out the wooden panel and repaired it, and hung it in the same area with the Garibaldi Society Honor Roll.

But wait -- there's more! Since long before I became involved with the historical society, an interesting piece had hung in the Archives workroom. It was a cloth pillowcase, signed by several Bay View residents. The signatures then were embroidered, and the piece framed. A little research revealed that this was a practice during World War I -- sending the pillowcase to a soldier to let him know that people back home were thinking about him. Guess what happened to that piece!

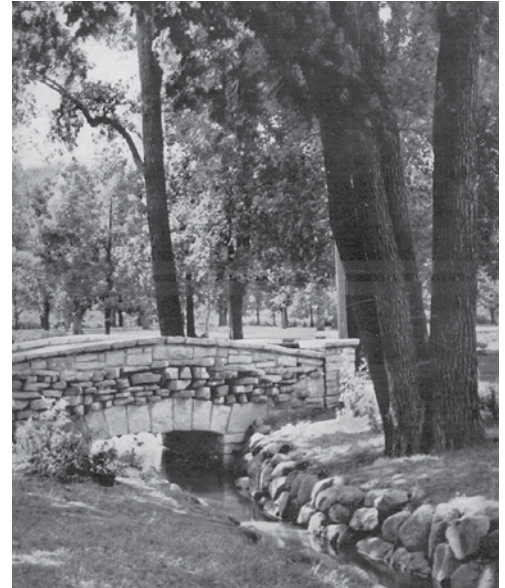
Next time you are at the Beulah Brinton House, be sure to ask to view this collection in the upstairs computer room.



Humboldt Park Creek

BY RON WINKLER

In the Fall 2021 issue of "The Historian," Bill O'Brien wrote, "A shallow Humboldt Park gully winds southwest of the lagoon and ends by a raised grated drain near Oklahoma and Quincy Avenues." That creek once drained the Humboldt Park lagoon's overflow. Here are two photos of that creek.



Humboldt Creek & pavilion - The creek flowed past a pavilion that was built in 1891 and razed around 1960.



Humboldt bridge & creek - One of three rustic bridges that crossed the creek.



Happy Holidays





The Hoan Bridge: Bay View's Link *continued*

Freeways

In 1956 Milwaukee County took over and updated the Outer Drive Project, but no action was taken on the Outer Drive Project as President Eisenhower's federally funded interstate highway plan was being designed. Interstate 794 (I-794) would include a harbor bridge between Bay View and downtown.

The bridge was approved in 1963 and construction began in 1970. In 1975 the \$75 million Daniel Webster Hoan Memorial Bridge won the "Long Span Bridge Award" from the American Institute of Steel Construction and the American Society of Civil Engineers. Hoan (1881-1961) was mayor of Milwaukee from 1916-1940, a term considered to be the longest continuous socialist administration in the country.

However, as the freeways were built throughout Milwaukee, citizens became aware of the negative side. Homes and businesses were destroyed. Neighborhoods were divided. Opposition to the remaining freeway projects grew throughout Milwaukee County, including Bay View. The six-lane I-794, which was to continue south through Bay View to the state line, would divide the neighborhood and eliminate an estimated 535 homes and 19 businesses (\$6 million in taxable income).

Bridge to Nowhere

Dissent halted further freeway construction in Milwaukee. The Hoan Bridge, unconnected to any roadways, was dubbed the "bridge to nowhere." It finally opened in November 1977 after connections were made to Carferry Drive at the south end of Jones Island in Bay View and to I-794 and downtown at the north end. Bay View and the South Shore suburbs finally had their quick link to downtown and the east side.

There was a down side. The popularity of the Hoan Bridge caused traffic problems in Bay View, especially on South Superior Street. One of many suggestions was a southern extension from the Hoan Bridge to Layton Avenue, but there was concern over traffic noise and the destruction of homes. After years of debate a compromise was worked out for a four-lane arterial following the Chicago Northwestern Railroad right of way south to Layton Avenue with ramps at Oklahoma Avenue and Howard Avenue, a speed limit of 40 miles per hour (later raised to 50 miles per hour) and the loss of only six homes. It opened in September 1998 as State Highway-794/Lake Parkway. A few years later it was extended south to Grange Avenue in Cudahy.

Bridge Failure

On December 13, 2000 a 217-foot section in the northbound lanes of the Hoan Bridge buckled and cracked during morning rush hour. The section sagged approximately four feet due to failure of two of the bridge's three support beams. No one was injured, but the bridge was immediately closed in both directions causing traffic problems as motorists sought alternate routes.

The damaged portion was removed and the entire bridge inspected. On February 17, 2001, the southbound lanes reopened with one lane in each direction as the northbound side was repaired. The bridge reopened on November 1, 2001, returning Milwaukee's traffic to normal.

In 2010, approval was given to redeck the Hoan Bridge and repair steel joints where water had seeped in and caused damage. The three-year project was completed in December 2015 for \$226 million. It is estimated that the life span of the Hoan Bridge has been extended at least 50 years. There is also talk of extending Highway 794 to the Racine County line.

Where in (Historical) Bay View?

BY RON WINKLER

Do you recognize this Bay View landmark? Look for the answer in the next issue of The Historian.



Answer to last issue's quiz (September 2021):

A house belonging to Elizabeth and Ernest Morgan once stood at the north end of what today is Cupertino Park on the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan near Russell Avenue. Elizabeth was a teacher at Trowbridge Street School. The Morgans sold their home to the Steel Mills Yacht Club (organized in 1910) which eventually merged with the South Shore Yacht Club. The American Legion Post 180 acquired the building and used it until they built a Georgian revival building at 2860 South Kinnickinnic Avenue in 1941. That building was razed in 2019.



The Will to Give

Have you thought of including the Bay View Historical Society in your will? The Brinton House is almost 150 years old. Its presence is a Bay View treasure documenting time past. This house and the work of the Bay View Historical Society will continue for generations to come through the generosity of its members and friends. Please consider naming the Bay View Historical Society as one of the beneficiaries in your will. Doing so ensures that the resources needed to preserve and maintain the Brinton House will be available and the house will remain a landmark in this community.

For more information, please contact Nancy Tawney, 414.744.5674; ntawney@aol.com



The Immigrants of Bay View

BY DAVID HB DRAKE



While walking down Kinnickinnic Ave, I paused to read the Wisconsin Historical Marker in Zillman Park commemorating Bay View's Immigrants. It occurred to me that each of our families who live here now are in this community because at some time in the past, an ancestor and relative set down roots here on the shores of Lake Michigan, south of the growing city of Milwaukee.

The stories of these pioneers who created the community Bay View is today is part of why the Bay View Historical Society exists – not just to document the folks who have lived here before, but perhaps help us find out more about the people who made this their home, and in turn, our home.

If you would like to feature an ancestor who brought your family to Bay View, please contact me at bbrintonhc@gmail.com and we can write their story together.

Events:

Visit BayViewHistoricalSociety.org for more information

Beulah's Birthday Book Drive
November 12 – December 12

BVHS Board Meetings
via Zoom until further notice
Wednesday • December 8 • 6:30pm
Wednesday • January 12 • 6:30pm
Wednesday • February 9 • 6:30pm

The Maritime History of Bay View
via Facebook
Thursday • January 27 • 7:00pm

Bay View Historical Society Annual Dinner
South Shore Yacht Club
Saturday • April 30

