

Winter Harbor Historical Society

P.O. Box 93, Winter Harbor, ME 04693

August 2015

NEWSLETTER

Next Program:

August 12th

7:00 pm

Historical Society Museum

The next program sponsored by the Winter Harbor Historical Society will be August 12th at the Museum, Hammond Lane. The guest speaker will be Winter Harbor's Reverend Charles Joy presenting the life and times of John Moore of Steuben; founding father of Schoodic Point and supporter of the Grindstone community.

Admission is free but donations are always welcome!

July Program Recap

Sanford Phippen took dozens of people, who attended his talk at Hammond Hall down memory lane. Sandy kept the group chuckling about the characteristics and habits of the rusticators of the 1950's. He shared the influence of his experience on Grindstone Point on his future, as a writer and educator. Sandy was honored to be asked to speak about his book, Kitchen Boy in the town of its setting and after 50 years, he revealed the actual identities of his characters, as described in his book.

Lobster Boat History

As Chris Byers and Keith Young planned for the lobster boat races at the 50th Winter Harbor Lobster Festival, they reminisced about the evolution of the boat building industry and the people, who contributed their ingenuity and knowledge to the construction of these vessels. Chris carried on a family legacy, as chairman of the Lobster Boat Races for Winter Harbor; a position his grandfather, Ralph E. Byers, Sr. held beginning in 1969. Ralph Byers, Sr. drowned in 1973 off Turtle Island while pulling lobster traps with his son, Kenneth (Danny) Byers, who was also lost. At the time of their deaths, Mr. Byers was a town selectman, fire chief, past harbormaster, officer in the Winter Harbor Lobster Co-op and president of the Coastal Seiners and Weirman's Association. He piloted the H. G. Bennett Fish Company plane for 17 years to

search for schools of fish. The lobster boat races became known in following years, as the Ralph E. Byers Memorial Races and last year; Michaela Byers, Mr. Byers' great granddaughter dropped the starting flag for the races. Michaela, a seventeen-year-old senior at Sumner Memorial High School aspires to attend college, seeking skills in international marketing to continue the family contribution to the lobster industry. Michaela used the actual flag constructed for the very first lobster boat race in Winter Harbor.

Although Winter Harbor race organizers acknowledge that Jonesport fishermen held the first lobster boat races, Winter Harbor soon followed. Lobster boat races were eventually held in 12 communities and a state wide association evolved to establish rules and classes for competition. This year 10 races will be held in Maine.

Winter Harbor's lobster boat races began with four classes for gas-powered boats and there are now 24 classes for typically diesel-powered boats. News clippings from the 1973 boat races announce that first place winner, Robert Potter received \$100 and a barometer. A \$20,000 truck was awarded at last year's August 9th Winter Harbor Lobster Festival. Keith Young personifies the spirit of the evolution of the lobster boat industry in his 40-year history with its development. Keith recognized the opportunity for refinement of the crafts and the engines that power them through the healthy competition of the annual races. Over the years he has procured significant incentives, such as boat engines and hulls to increase the interest in participation. Boat builders have rallied to the challenge by designing boat hulls to be more efficient in the water and engines to provide greater and more effective power. The by-product of this competition has been the ingenuity and resourcefulness to create new designs, use new materials and refine the engines that power them. While fishermen have a practical daily need for a reliable boat, the races have given builders a venue for advertising their innovations. Scott Young is the chair to this year's Lobster Boat Race on August 8, 2015.

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Museum

The museum is opened on Saturdays from 1-4pm. Please stop by and enjoy the displays and artifacts.

The museum will not be open on August 8, 2015, as we encourage everyone to enjoy the Winter Harbor Lobster Festival. Our museum has a past linked with not only education, but other community organizations.

When the Winter Harbor Grammar School moved to its new building on School Street in 1953, the Schoodic Grange used the former grammar school and current Historical Society building as its meeting site for twelve years. In 1965, the town of Winter Harbor voted to place the building under the sponsorship of the Chamber of Commerce. The building became a contractor's workshop a few years later and finally became home to the newly formed Historical Society in 1979. The society sponsored weekly beano games to raise the significant funds required to stabilize the former school building and initiate repairs to Hammond Hall. When the Naval Security Group Activity left Winter Harbor in 2002, the Chamber of Commerce became the catalyst for discussions regarding potential economic benefits of creative arts. Schoodic Arts for All gained momentum and eventually adopted Hammond Hall as a site for regular performances; bringing new life and purpose to this historical building. Winter Harbor continues to benefit from the spirit of volunteerism that has honored the past, while collaborating for change and the future.

Peninsula Gazette

The Peninsula Gazette, a local newspaper written and published by Bernice Richmond from 1954 to 1960 is available on the Winter Harbor Library computer. In digital form, the Gazette can be searched for particular articles and names. This insert describes the events of January 7, 1960 at our old school house.

NEWS

At the Jan. 7th meeting held at the Old School to elect officers for the Winter Harbor Chamber of Commerce there was an enthusiastic group present which included, for a start, 15 paid up members. Officers are: Pres. Austin Joy; Vice Pres. Rudy Johnson; Sec'y and Treas. Clarence Buckley. The Executive Committee: Arthur Cole, Helen Gerrish, Gordon Rand, Freda Smart and Mort Torrey. By-law Committee: Albert Hallowell, Earle Tracy Sr., and Clarence Buckley. It was voted to establish dues at \$3 yearly to include husband and wife, to hold meetings the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 8 PM. All persons interested in joining are requested to contact any of the officers.

Winter Harbor Historical Society

President: Diana Young

Vice-President: Deborah Joy Martin

Secretary: Victoria Taber

Treasurer: Cathy Lilly Carruthers

Building & Grounds: Brent Hurd

Board Members

Johanna Smith

Mary Laury

Pearl Barto

Dan Keegan