

# The Lake Area Preserver



White Bear Lake Area Historical Society

Summer 2009

## *White Bear Lake's Memorial Beach* **A Legacy of Community Pride**

By Sara Markoe Hanson

In the spring of 1946 representatives from the local Junior Chamber of Commerce led by Walter Berg decided the City of White Bear Lake needed a bathing beach of its own. The self-designated committee petitioned the City Council on June 4, 1946 and received the approval to forge ahead with the beach project.

Two members were selected from each of the local civic organizations to serve on the Municipal Beach Committee along with two members of the city council. A plan was quickly developed and work began almost immediately.

More than fifty volunteers came forward to clear the beach over two Sundays. "All the workers need said Mr. Berg, is a shovel or axe, which ever tool they do the best job with, plenty of ambition and a good community spirit." They



**The shoreline at Memorial Beach prior to being cleared, 1946**

changed the "jungle of shrubs, trees, long grass and weeds, to an inviting strip of cream colored sand," according to the *White Bear Press*.

The Lake Avenue Improvement Association furnished the funds to level and plow the beach surface. Other community organizations such as the Ninth Street Dock Association and the White Bear Taxpayers Association also contributed funds to support the creation and maintenance of the beach.

Other funds were raised through creative means such as benefit shows at the White Bear Theatre.

Continued on page 2

### **Governor's Fishing Opener Events at White Bear Lake**

Don't miss history as it's happening. Please join us at the following events...

**Friday, May 8th**      **9-10am Governor's Radio Show  
at the Historic Boat Works**

**1 pm Grand Re-opening &  
Dedication of Memorial Beach**

**4-7pm Community Picnic Down  
town White Bear Lake**

**Saturday, May 9th**      **6:45am Fishing Send-off  
Ceremony at Tally's Dockside**

Continued from page 1

A membership drive canvassed the neighborhoods around the beach area and residents were asked to purchase subscriptions to use the beach. Businesses were also approached for support. The community's response was overwhelming and for years the beach flourished as a wonderful place where families could safely swim and enjoy the lake.

In 1980 the White Bear Lake Optimist Club approached the City Council with a proposal to take over maintenance of the beach. In exchange, the name of the beach was changed to Optimist Beach. A generation of White Bearites grew up knowing the beach by that name until the Optimist Club disbanded nearly twenty years later.

In 2000 the City Council took action and reinstated the name Memorial Beach to again honor our veterans. From 2007-09 improvements along Lake Avenue, including enhancements such as historic markers along the trail that runs parallel to the street, and a renovation of the beach have improved the area and upgraded the trail system that runs all the way to Lion's Park near the White Bear Shopping Center.



**Volunteers break for a picnic lunch, 1946**



**The nearly cleared beach showing the bank coming down from Lake Avenue above, 1946**

### ***In Memory of Rodney L. Olson***

The following individuals have made donations in memory of long-time White Bear resident and business owner Rod Olson. Thank you!

**Marshall & Elizabeth Hatfield  
Sara & Jeff Hanson**



## **Proudly Serving**

**T**he White Bear Lake Area Historical Society is proud to serve the following communities:

- Birchwood
- Dellwood
- Mahtomedi
- White Bear Lake
- White Bear Township



If you have a story, pictures, or any information that you would like to share, please contact Sara at 651-407-5327



The White Bear Lake Area Historical Society is blessed with many wonderful volunteers. During the Governor's Fishing Opener dozens of dedicated individuals have helped to make our organization and our community shine. Thank you for all that you do for this special occasion and always!

## From the Director's Desk...



Over the past year the White Bear Lake Area Historical Society has been actively preparing for the Governor's Fishing Opener event taking place in White Bear Lake May 8-9, 2009.

The Opener serves as the kick off to Minnesota's summer tourism season and this year's theme is White Bear Lake--Minnesota's First Resort Town.

In its 61st year, the Governor's Fishing Opener has never before been held on a metro lake. As Executive Director of the WBLAHS I am proud to play a role in this historic event. We have worked tirelessly to infuse the history of our community into many aspects of the event and look forward to the exposure the history of the White Bear area will receive from hosting more than two hundred media representatives throughout the weekend.

We are also recording this moment in our history for future generations to enjoy through photographs, video and written documentation. This once in a lifetime experience will be over before we know it, but it will last forever in our archives.

*-Sara*

---

## Jean's Jottings...from Jean Woodberry, Program Coordinator

In March we had a wonderful turnout for the eGrowing Up in White Bear Lake During the 1930s and '40s Program. Thank you to everyone who came and shared a part of our rich history. Some of the memories shared include:


- In the 1940s students from New Brighton, Centerville and Little Canada all attended White Bear High School.
- Teachers also drove the school buses during World War II.
- A common pastime of boys during deer hunting season was to sit at the train to count the number of dead deer being brought back on the train.
- When money was scarce, kids would eat lard sandwiches seasoned with salt and pepper.
- The streetcar turnaround or "wye" was at 6th and Banning in Downtown White Bear Lake.
- The White Bear Theatre charged 12 cents instead of 14 cents admission during World War II if you brought in empty aluminum toothpaste tubes to be recycled for the war effort.

This month residents of Mahtomedi will get their turn. This program will be open to the public and will begin with a short presentation and then a time for sharing your Mahtomedi memories. Future programs will focus on topics such as living in Bald Eagle, area schools and memories of the railroad history of White Bear.

To suggest a program or learn more about this series, please contact me at [jean@whitebearhistory.org](mailto:jean@whitebearhistory.org) or by calling 651-407-5327.

# Calendar of Events

Thursday, May 14th 2-4pm	WBLAHS Round Table Discussion on Mahtomedi Memories at St. Andrew's Village
Saturday, May 30th 10am-10pm	WBLAHS Quarterly Crop Scrapbooking Event at the White Bear Armory-pre-register at <a href="http://whitebearhistory.org">whitebearhistory.org</a> or by calling 651-407-5327
Saturday, June 6th 10am-noon	Book Reading & Signing by David Grabitske Author of <i>Six Miles From St. Paula</i> biography of Sarah Sibley
Saturday, June 20th	WBLAHS Treasure Sale 9am-4pm at the Depot
Monday, June 22nd	Downtown Then & Now Walking Tour 4-6pm*
Saturday, June 27th	Downtown Then & Now Walking Tour 10am-noon*
Wednesday, July 8th	Historic Boat Tour 6-8pm*
July 15th-19th	Northern Pacific Railway Historical Assn Convention
Tuesday, July 21st	Historic Boat Tour 6-8pm*
Wednesday, July 29th	Lake Avenue Stroll Walking Tour 6-8pm*



TO SHARE YOUR  
MEMORIES IN  
FUTURE ISSUES,  
CONTACT:

SARA MARKOE HANSON  
DEPOT MUSEUM  
4751 HIGHWAY 61  
WHITE BEAR LAKE, MN  
55110  
651-407-5327

\*These courses are offered through the White Bear Lake Area School District Community Services & Recreation Department and require pre-registration. For more information, please call 651-407-5327.

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
WILBERNE, MN  
PERMIT NO. 49

White Bear Lake Area Historical Society  
P.O. Box 10543  
White Bear Lake, MN 55110-0543  
Address/Service Requested