

The Kaleva Historical Society Newsletter

April, 2022

[Http://www.kalevamichigan.com](http://www.kalevamichigan.com)

Greetings from the Kaleva Historical Society

Letter from the President —

Dear Members of the Kaleva Historical Society,
The Bottle House Museum was open on Saturdays from May through October and many visitors stopped to take photos of artifacts and browse our displays. We decided to hand out candy at Halloween and some of our board members dressed up to entertain the trick or treaters who stopped by. We held special events on Saturdays in December to celebrate the season. See photos and descriptions of these events inside this newsletter.

The Kaleva Beautification Team (KBT) was busy throughout the year with planting the flower barrels, re-doing gardens on the walkway and Asiala park. We will be replanting these this spring. The KBT also decorates with scarecrows in the fall and pine greenery in the winter. During the Christmas season we again attempted to light the sculptures on the walkway with battery operated lights, which doesn't work so well. We hope to have electric installed on the walkway so we can plug in real lights to light up the sculptures.

The Depot Railroad Museum was open Saturdays during the summer, staffed by Robert Ramirez, who lovingly cares for the building and the artifacts. A successful Log Cabin concert season was again sponsored by our generous local sponsors, as was the staffing of the Depot.

We have had the good fortune of a gift from the Alice Edwards estate which will help us ensure that the programming and staffing of the Bottle House will be able to continue well into the future. The board plans to invest the funds in order to make that possible. Our sincere thanks to Bill and Alice, who loved our museum and our community.

The town of Kaleva has changed greatly over the past few years. The downtown is practically vacant as the grocery store closed in 2016, Superior Energy moved out of the first bank, and mBank sold out to Nicolet which closed our current bank in December. The township purchased the first bank and is looking into preserving it as an historic site and finding some use for it. The recent



Kalevala Glass Mosaics created by Tricia Boucha at Kaleva's Sculpture Park.

bank building is for sale as is the grocery store. However, there are some exciting things happening in Kaleva that the KHS is proud to be a part of. See photos and stories inside.

As you can see, our community continues to benefit from generous individuals and organizations that strive to make Kaleva the best it can be. We are so grateful for that. With your continued support we will reach that goal. Thank-you!

Cynthia Asiala, president

KHS MUSEUMS OPEN FOR SEASON

Bottle House Museum:

Sat : 12 —4 pm Memorial Day —Christmas

Depot Museum:

Sat 12 —4 pm Memorial Day—Labor Day

Special thanks to also to the businesses that support our Depot Museum Operations: Cherryland Rural Electric, Fruithaven-Lutz Farms (in memory of Calvin & Lorraine Lutz), Kaleva Telephone, mBank, Northern MI Dragway, Terwilliger Funeral Home.

2021 KHS Board Members

Cynthia Asiala	Kris Flaherty
Sandy Asiala	Margaret Johnson
Pam Bagley	Alin Kuuttila
Georgia Brown	Dennis Risser
Beverly Fennell	

25th Anniversary of the Kaleva Art Gallery



The Kaleva Art Gallery was founded in Dec. 1997 by the Brethren High School Service Learning class and their teacher, Deborah Crandell. It was one project of the five year effort to bring economic growth and revive the Finnish culture in Kaleva. The students who developed the gallery recruited area artists to display and sell their work in a cooperative in which the artists work a few hours per month and are paid a percentage of their sales. The gallery is celebrating 25 years of success this year at their location in the former drug store.

With the recent move of the village offices to the Community Center (former elementary school) the gallery is expanding into the village office space which allows more spaces for display plus meeting and classroom space. Events planned for his 25th year include: student art show in April, Bee Creative planter competition, arts and crafts show on July 16, and other special events leading to birthday party in December.

Maple Grove Community Center is Open!

Good news is that the township purchased the Kaleva Elementary School and it is open as a community center as well as governmental center with village and township offices located there. A large local donor and donations from the community helped that to happen after 12 years of it standing empty. Many volunteers have been busy cleaning and sorting to set up the rooms for various purposes. There's a coffee room, an exercise room, an art room, rooms for rental and for teaching classes. The food pantry is housed there and Senior meals will be served starting in April. Visit the Maple Grove Township Community Center Facebook page for updates. The township is taking donations for improvements to the kitchen and to pay off the loan for the purchase. Those can be sent to **Maple Grove Township, 2108 Kauko St., Kaleva.**



Christmas in Kaleva. Each year, the KHS decorates the Bottle House with a Christmas Tree, wreaths, a Finnish Heaven, and outdoor nativity scene. This year the KHS added some special events such as giving straw ornaments to visitors, serving hot chocolate and homemade cookies and also a Saturday filled with Finnish foods such as Pannukukku, nisua, Finnish meatballs, cheese crisps and other Finnish inspired treats. A true "Taste of Finland."



Historic Notes—The first bank in Kaleva

Charles Billman, his wife Anna and identical twins Ellsworth and Elmer, moved to Kaleva in 1912 from Cedar in Leelanau County. They started a bank called Billman and Sons in 1913. It was located in this building which later became a post office, township offices and Superior Energy office. It is now owned by Maple Grove Township.



In 1921 the bank was renamed Kaleva State Bank. It met all startup bank regulations in force at that time. Officers were: Gust Haksluto, president; August Lenz, first vice president; Charles Billman, second vice president; Ellsworth Billman, cashier, Elmer Billman, auditor and Frank Wilson, assistant.

A new bank building located across the street, on the corner of Aura and Wouksi, was constructed in 1929. On Thursday, January 5, 1933 at 11:15 am a group of four men robbed the bank. One of them shot Ellsworth in the chest and he died instantly. They stole \$2800 and fled in a black Buick sedan. A state-wide manhunt caught all four men in Osceola County. They were tried, found guilty and were sentenced to life terms in Marquette Prison where three of them died. The fourth died in Jackson prison.

Kaleva State Bank was able to survive the Great Depression from August 1929 until September 1933. The bank obtained the support of local farmers and business people as they provided the monies to meet the new capital requirements.

Kaleva State Bank has operated under various names: Security National, First Michigan, Huntington, mBank and recently Nicolet National Bank. These have all served an important role in the lives of Kaleva's residents and the surrounding area.

Log Cabin Concert Schedule ***Fridays in August 7pm***

- ***August 5—Truck Driver Bingo Band***
- ***August 12—Mary Sue Wilkinson***
- ***August 19—Ruth and Max Bloomquist***
- ***August 26—Barefoot***



2021 Sponsors: Blue Water Transportation, Countryside Restaurant, Environmental Recycling, Melvin & Beverly Fennell, Finan Steamer Service, Jared Henry-Attorney, Kaleva Barber Shop, Kaleva Country Flowers, Kaleva Telephone, Larry's Party Store, mBank, Mark Quinn-Attorney, Robak's Kaleva Tavern, Somsel Lumber Company, Terwilliger Funeral Home, and Traks Bar and Grill. **Memorials:** Anonymous in memory of Michael, Richard, Charles, John T, and Dennis Asiala; Fruit Haven-Lutz Farms in memory of Calvin and Lorraine Lutz

Kaleva Historical Society
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This photo is a copy of an 1908 event to honor Civil War veterans in Kaleva. Marvin Laaksonen gave it to the KHS. His dad told him it was the first time he saw motorized vehicles. The original Kaleva Bank is shown near the center of the photo. This building is next to where the current post office stands today. Maple Grove Township owns this building and it is one planned for preservation work.

Please put an X in front of the 2021 dues level desired:

____ Individual (s) @ \$15. each =\$_____

 Business (or) Family\$ 25.

_____ Patron.....\$ 50.

_____ Friend\$100.

_____ Benefactor.....\$200.

Total Dues Paid.....

The Kaleva Historical Society depends entirely on dues and donations for museum operations. We appreciate your contributions to preserve the history of this remarkable community.

In addition to your annual dues, your contribution to designated funds is encouraged! Please indicate your additional support to the following specific funds:

Museum operations & events..... \$_____

Kaleva Beautification Team..... \$_____

Historic Preservation..... \$

Total Contribution (Total dues + Total designated funds contributions)

.....\$_____

The KHS is a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Do you need a receipt indicating the amount of your donation and that you did not receive any goods of value for your donation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Member or Business Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Email Address _____

(email addresses will help us save postage....we will not share these addresses.

Would you like to volunteer at the Bottle House on Saturdays ?

If yes, how can you be reached?