

# **“Celebrate” The Legacy of Door County Women!**

Revisited at the February 26, 2010



**This booklet contains 22 essays written by various high school students about 23 women from all walks of life that portrayed substantial contributions to the Door County Community in their lifetime. The exhibit has been in storage for several years and the Family Centers of Door County, Inc. has been given permission to bring back the exhibit for the community's enjoyment. In partnership with the Door Community Auditorium and Door County Memorial Hospital, Ministry Health Care we hope you enjoy this first Installment of the photo exhibit that was initially featured in 1999, 2000 and 2001 at the Door Community Auditorium.**

**Photos by Daniel Anderson and David Currie**

## Historical Synopsis

### Celebrate!

#### The Legacy of Door County Women

In 1999, Terry Lundahl, then Education Coordinator of the Door Community Auditorium conceived the idea of celebrating Door County women who contributed to the rich past and present of our community. She met with many people up and down the peninsula asking who had touched their lives and the lives of their families. Approximately 60 women over a 3 year period were featured. Photographers Dan Anderson and David Currie volunteered their time to create artistic portraits that make up the exhibit. Area high school girls were chosen through the English Departments to meet and interview the honorees and then write what they had learned and recognized about these women that made them so special. Over and over in each essay we hear of the pleasure of serving, and the belief that kindness and giving to others are a central part of rich life.

After the last showing in 2001, the exhibit went into storage at the Door Community Auditorium. Nine years later Lundahl was helping to organize an annual women's event, "Pampering and Practicalities, an Evening for Women" that is hosted yearly by the Family Centers of Door County. Lundahl together with Executive Director, Gina Wautier felt that this exhibit should be shared again with the public. Permission was granted by the Auditorium to use the photos for the event. The Family Centers' mission is to *"Strengthen & Support Families and Communities."* What a better way to enhance our event than to honor those who make our community stronger.

This booklet contains 1/3 of the initial exhibit essays. To preserve them electronically they were re-typed by Stephanie Wautier. She commented, *"When reading through the magnificent array of women whose articles I've re-typed, I noticed a common theme of strength in confidence and chance in risk that they have all faced throughout their challenges in life. Perseverance is what has made these women notably legendary in Door County's history. It was an absolute pleasure to be a part of."*

It is our intention to honor the women in the other 2/3 of the exhibit over the next 2 years and eventually add to the collection with stories of more women to recognize the contribution that they make to the quality of life in our community.

After this event the photos and essays will grace the halls of the women & children's Center at Door County Memorial Hospital.

# Marjory Allingham

By: Ashley Kurschner, 2000

Marjory Allingham is kind, spirited, young soul. As a young girl and also an adult, she was involved in Girl Scouting, Girls Athletic Association and various church activities. She grew up in Milwaukee and attended Carroll College, receiving a degree in Biology and Physical Education. Her first job was at Gaenslen School, a school for kids with orthopedic troubles. She was the swimming teacher and was instructed to teach every child, no matter what handicap, how to swim. Bound and determined, she encouraged the children to go farther than they thought they could.

Marjory has lived in many places throughout the world. She lived in Germany for eleven non-consecutive years; she took painting classes and learned a version of folk painting while there. She is passionate about her painting because it stimulates the mind. She also lived in Korea for two years, where she started to take Tae Kwon Do for five years on the American Base; she also taught some self-defense classes. Her interest in Tae Kwon Do is strong because it involves physical and mental stimulation.

She has lived in Door County for the last eighteen years and still teaches Tae Kwon Do and some self-defense classes. She always teaches with love and respect. She believes in inner beauty and she encourages people to do what they want to do and follow their dreams. She also is a supporter of individuality and doing things for pleasure. "If it's not fun why do it?" She believes.

The wonderful women who attended seminars of the National Martial Arts Association influenced Marjory, especially her shopping buddy Wasentha Young. At one of these NWMAA seminars, everyone was supposed to introduce herself and said something blasé about her interest in Martial Arts. However, when it was Wasentha's turn to introduce her, she said, "All the children who were taught by Marjory went off better able to accomplish other things. They had acquired skills to help them through life; they also had acquired a responsible positive attitude and self-confidence.

Marjory has touched the lives of many people. When she meets someone new, she is drawn to his or her eyes and expression of openness. She is a very caring and compassionate individualist who believes in herself, other people, and in doing what you want to do. If you ever meet Marjory, she would tell you to follow your dreams and, when you find them, to hang onto them. She is indeed a kind spirited, young soul.

# Joanne Ator

By: Sara Tomjanovich- 2000

Some people take the opportunities in Door County today for granted. In 1978 the unemployment rate soared, and opportunities for women were limited. Young families needed help getting back on their feet and were struggling to make ends meet, especially those with one-parent incomes. However, Joanne Ator was bubbling up with new ideas, and the future of Door County's employees was in her hands.

In October of 1978 the Women's Employment Project (WEP) opened in Sturgeon Bay with Toni Christensen and Joanne Ator as founders. At the time, there were not a lot of openings for women in this shipyard-based community, but Joanne and Toni took it upon themselves to create a job-training program that soon earned the highest job placement rate in Wisconsin. In 1996, a new welfare reform program at WEP, called Wisconsin Works or W-2, was the beginning of many successes at the Women's Employment Project. W-2 was designed to take the place of the long-standing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which had been running for over 6 years.

These successes were only the first of small positive influences Joanne made in Door County. Another program she designed was the Teen Parent Program, which gave young mothers who dropped out of high school a chance to get their diploma. This program helped young families with education, child care, and career assessment.

In 1996 Michael Van Dyke, Director of the Door County Department of Social Services, hired the already successful businesswoman, who would try to turn problems around. "I wasn't really looking for a job, but a good opportunity came along, and I thought I could help influence the progress of W-2," Joanne said. She is currently the Economic Support Supervisor, a new position created due to the arrival of W-2. Her job is to oversee the agency's contracts with their employees and to design programs, classes, and services to help people. Her position controls the distribution of food stamps, Medicaid, and Badger Care, and she is also involved in childcare subsidies for parents attending educational classes or who are working. "It's all continuous improvement for the community, a collaboration of people," Joanne said.

These jobs may sound like a lot of paperwork, loads of frustration, and plenty of ripping up of ideas, but Joanne is the kind of person that would not give up on a good idea, unless someone threatened to attack her precious garden. Along with her wonderful sense of humor, credited to her parents, her garden has been a "growing place" for many ideas that have made the difficult days at work seem like a spring rain. There have also been some admirable people that Joanne believes have been influential in her life.

From a warm home life in a small Chicago-suburb, Joanne learned not to complain, but instead ask what could be done to make her situation better. This information has broadened her views at work and at home. She attributes to her parents the importance of holding high standards, having courage, and enjoying a good laugh.

Another person who has had an impact is Marion Stern, a former teacher at Southern Door High School. She has been a role model for Joanne and all women. Marion was a member of the National Organization for Women, or NOW. "She inspired creativity and learning the basics," Joanne recalled. Stern's chapter was the first in the state to get the policy changed so that wives' names could be listed along with their husbands' names in the telephone book. "She could organize the bark off of a tree" was a joke that Joanne once heard of her role model.

A role model herself, Joanne believes that it takes dedication to help others in need. One future hope is to finish her garden, travel, continue to design programs to help families, and to learn all of the lyrics of American composer of popular musical theater, Jerome Kern. Some people have a simple goal in life, but for Joanne, life is her goal.

# LaVonne Callsen

By: Ashley Schartner, 2001

“I live my hopes and dreams every day doing the best I can to make the world a little warmer, kinder, and friendlier.”

These words from LaVonne Callsen reveal quite a bit about the person she is. She believes it's important to do what she can for others. Best known in Door County as owner of the Main Street Market with her husband Dave, Lavonne is also president of the Door County Chamber of Commerce Board, a member of Door County Memorial Hospital Board of Directors and Auxiliary, and a member of the Egg Harbor Business Association. She is a Eucharistic minister and lector at St. Paul's Church in Fish Creek and is involved with the Door Community Auditorium.

Growing up in Madison, Wisconsin, LaVonne (Nachreiner) found life to be easy and a lot of fun. She enjoyed school and was very involved in cheerleading and intramural sports—they didn't have competitive sports at her Catholic high school. After marrying Dave at age 18 and moving to Illinois in 1963, she stayed home for a while until they started a supermarket in Valders, Wisconsin. They worked there for 15 years before moving to Door County where they have owned Main Street Market in Egg Harbor for the past 14 years. Owning a business involves hours and hours of work. Lavonne said, “Nothing comes without hard work and long hours. You have to surround yourself with good people. You also have to have a lot of faith and a lot of luck!”

Aside from working at the market and being involved in many community organizations, LaVonne always finds time for family and friends. She enjoys traveling with her family and going out to eat with good friends. The most important people in her life are her immediate family, especially her husband Dave, her children Karren, Julie, and Michael, her six grandchildren, and her parents. She also cherishes her store family.

The best piece of advice that she would like to share was from Sister Marie Christine, a teacher at her Catholic school. She said, “The only person you really have to be true to is yourself, and then everything else falls into place.” Whether she's working at the market or spending time with family and friends, LaVonne has a friendly smile on her face. She enjoys people and values friendship. She believes that “to have a friend, you have to be a friend.”

LaVonne believes it's important to grow as a person spiritually, physically, and mentally. “It's a big world out there, and I think it's exciting. Living in Door County never ceases to amaze me with how beautiful it is. It's a great place to be,” she said. Despite her love of the country, she never misses the opportunity to travel. She has been to every state except Alaska, Vermont, and New Hampshire. She has also traveled to Mexico and Italy. During her free time, she enjoys reading biographies and John Grisham mysteries.

In all, she feels blessed. She said, “I have been very fortunate to have the family support I have, my friends, and also the opportunities. I have no regrets about anything.”

# Cassie Cibik-Moeller

Essay Author (Undocumented), 1999

The first time a person meets Cassie Cibik-Moeller, her vitality and energy is immediately noticeable. Every morning she wakes up and wants to have fun. Be it in school, at home, or anywhere in the community, this 45 year-old physical education teacher is always raring to go. Whether it be in the wide variety of opportunities that she provides for her students, such as snowshoe races, roller-blading, mountain biking, or just a family project, her life is filled with activity.

Cassie is a very motivated person and her energy is contagious. She gets inspiration from the smiles and hugs she receives when her students achieve the impossible. From the overweight student who finishes a 10k walk to the volleyball team that wins a state championship, she wants every student to love some aspect of physical activity. When this happens, she says, "It's like getting roses everyday."

Her accomplishments are numerous. She had brought gymnastics, cross country skiing, self defense, step aerobics, and a new twenty-station outdoor fitness trail to Sevastopol. She annually takes students on trips to Ski Brule, Badger State Games, and Fond du Lac's Turkey Trot. She started the annual Ski Swap where anyone in the community can buy or trade skis and winter equipment at reduced prices. She began a summer gymnastics program to give kids something to do while not in school. This program flourished and was subsequently taken over by the YMCA. She was instrumental in setting up the first family cross-country ski race that was eventually incorporated into the Fish Creek Winter Games. Last year the local Wal-Mart store recognized her as the Teacher of the Year, and she is currently nominated for a Kohl Teacher Fellowship Award.

In her job she has several dreams. Her goals are to provide her female students with an atmosphere to become strong-willed, independent, young adults. She believes that school should provide this and many other opportunities for its students. Her most innovative program is "Fit for Life," which emphasizes the importance of intense physical activity combined with good nutrition. She truly believes that every person can experience and maintain a high level of personal fitness.

Throughout her life, her family has been there for her. Her dad gave her the genes which make her so much like him, and her mother gave her every opportunity to release her energy. Be it in sports camps, clubs, or extracurricular activities, she was taken everywhere. "My mom provided and sacrifices everything, especially time," said Cibik-Miller. Her five brothers and one sister provided her with their ideas and their support.

Entering college, she didn't have any goals or plans. "I just wanted to meet people. I went with open arms," said Cassie. It wasn't until she met Professor Susie Whipp at the University of Wisconsin Madison that she got started in the right direction. Whipp was "fun, spirited, motivated, and firm. She was everything I wanted to be." said Cibik-Miller.

Throughout her life, four mentors have helped to guide or shape who she is today. “Heather Fellner-Spetz, Dan Hein, Doreen Carmody, and my mother all have an outlook on life that is positive and real, and so happy,” said Cassie. They have always provided a challenge for her, the motivation to improve.

The best advice she has ever received came from Heather Fellner-Spetz, her former student, her friend, and now her colleague. “She told me to keep being me,” said Cassie. This advice helped her to make important decisions in her life by enabled her to find the strength within herself. It still affects her in the way she teaches her classes today. She encourages her students to find strength from within and to just be themselves. She promotes individualism and teaches students to be proud of whom they are. When asked how she does it, she says, “Don’t change. Find the good and don’t feel so bad. When you do something you know is wrong, reflect and learn from it. Then get up and get on with it.

She is very close with her family. She has two young children, Haley and Max. She loves having summer vacation time with her kids. “We don’t miss a beat. We have a good balance of play time and family time. Every Saturday night is family night where we have a special meal and play,” said Cibik-Moeller. In the future, she hopes that her kids enjoy life and find happiness in whatever they do.

If there’s one thing that she would want in her autobiography, it is that she is lucky. She had been offered several jobs to leave Sevastopol and considered taking them. At the time she was involved in coaching volleyball and was beginning to see the progress in her “vision” for her team. She didn’t want to leave and not knowing how far her team could progress, so she decided to stay and meet the challenge. As a result, in both 1984 and 1991 her volleyball team won the state championship.

Cibik-Moeller loves teaching at Sevastopol. She loves the atmosphere that the administration, students, staff, and classes provide. The personalities of these people make her job fun. With anyone of them missing, it just wouldn’t be the same.

Cassie Cibik-Moeller has touched many lives. No matter how they meet or get to know her, everyone soon realizes how lucky they are to know this loving, influential, and unforgettable person.

# Ginka Cohn

By: Laurel Jessup, 2001

*She is small but her presence is huge, quiet yet speaks her mind beautifully, is inspired by the world, yet she is an inspiration. She is a celebrated woman.*

Approaching her house there is a fading “Love Mother Earth” poster in the window. They do not print those anymore, but she wishes that they would. Stepping inside the front door you see the things that represent Ginka and her husband Abraham: their favorite chair, the calendar that is full of dates and times, trinkets that are in a way a part of them. Following Ginka up the stairs to a quiet spot where the two can talk you see a large table piled high with pictures, magazine articles, and newspaper clippings, all things that Ginka finds very important.

She leads you into her studio, walking with grace over the wooden floors. You look around in amazement: a large, spacious white room with windows on the eastern wall. It is her room, a place to capture the sunlight in the morning, her favorite part of the day. There is a rack of gongs in the corner, a variety of sizes, some gifts and others she has bought. She plays one for you and the sound fills the room, she gives you a padded mallet, but you are too timid to try playing one. There are many drums, some her husband sculpted with his own hands out of clay; others she has acquired from different sources over time. Ginka is inspired and fascinated with music, the different responses your body has to classical, jazz, and percussion. There are pictures all around the room; she walks you to each and explains their significance. Many are of some of the most inspirational people that have ever had a place in her life—dance teachers from long ago. There is one picture in particular that catches your eye: a woman clapping her hands and two children, one playing a drum and the other dancing. You look at Ginka and she tells you that it is her and her first two children. It was taken at a time in their lives when Ginka had a television show that demonstrated how a family could have fun and do exercise to music at the same time. You turn and your eyes land on pictures, beautiful pictures, of a woman dancing. It is Ginka and she is glowing.

You both go sit on the guest bed in the corner; she leans against the wall and you face her. She tells you about how she used to want to be a writer and how she wanted to move to Africa. She tells of how her parents came over from Europe, how brave they were... How her mother had the greatest influence on her life not only because she was her mother, but because she was strong and had a hunger for learning. Ginka tells you about her children and about how she and her husband are about to leave for a trip to the West Coast so that they can visit them. She tells you about her greatest challenge in life: polio. She tells you how she overcame it and what she learned from her experience. How she went to New York on her own to study dance when she was just 8. How she discovered modern dance and that she loves it because “you can dance for yourself” and it keeps her healthy. Ginka tells you why she chose to be a teacher. How when she has a student she feels like she is truly making a difference because she is sharing her gift. Ginka’s students are not just students to her; they are teachers. She is constantly learning from them too.

Ginka stands to stretch and you glance at the clock; my how time has slipped away. You ask Ginka what advice she has to share with the world, what she has learned from her experiences and what she would like to pass on. She looks you straight in the eye and tells you never to forget the golden rule, do unto others as you would have done unto you. She tells you to listen to older people because you can learn so much from their experiences and their perspectives on life. Ginka tells you to always have hope and to follow your dreams.

To learn to differentiate between a want and a need, to learn how to make something good out of something bad that happens in one's life that is out of their control. To wake up each morning and challenge yourself to new ideas and experiences. She says to look at a person and judge who they are not by their outward appearance but by the inner spirit that is coming out through body language. She tells you to love; love life, love your neighbor, love yourself, and love the world. She tells you to listen to your body and learn to slow down in life. She tells you to read as much as you can and be aware of what is going on in the world around you.

She tells you all of this and you sit there listening, trying to take in every word she is saying and trying to memorize her face. The light has faded in the room and the hour hand has made several trips around the clock. You both stand again to stretch and you thank her for her time, but really silently to yourself you are thanking her for her grace, for her presence, for her wisdom, and for sharing herself with you. You walk back down the stairs, kiss her on the cheek and walk towards your car. You glance back at the house and see the fading "Love Mother Earth" poster in the window and smile to yourself. You get in your car and drive away, not fast and in a hurry trying to get home, but slowly, taking in the world around you and savoring Ginka's essence..... It is an inspiration.

# Anne Haberland Emerson

By: Heather Dannhausen, 1999

“If you can see beauty, you have what you need to get through.” These words seem more than a mere musing on life for Anne Emerson, but a guiding force that resonates through every aspect of her life. Art to her is more than a career, a subject, or a decoration, but creative spirit that connects us as human beings. As she says: “We, as people, have more in common than we have differences, and art brings that out.”

Anne grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; her mother was an artist, her father a doctor. Her mother gave her a joy in living, her father showed her how to serve. She attended Lawrence University with the intention of becoming a writer, moving on to work for the University of Chicago Press. When her mother, Irene Haberland, asked for her help in 1969 to open an art gallery on the plot of land in Fish Creek that she had purchased on a whim two decades earlier, Edgewood Orchard Galleries was born. The fledgling gallery, in a barn of the old orchard, narrowly survived many seasons before attaining its success and diversity of today.

It was through waiting on tables during the off-season, before the gallery turned a profit, that she met her future husband, UWM architecture student Minnow Emerson (whose architecture and glasswork grace the gallery). The births of a daughter and son, Nell and Tucker, would bring about new forces of change in her life. With Nell attending elementary school, a referendum at Gibraltar School was proposed that Anne and others feared would shortchange the students. This inspired the founding of “Friends of Gibraltar,” a group formed to increase communication and bring a sense of community to a school whose students spanned such a broad area. In this it has succeeded, and so much more.

Through Anne’s inspiration and guidance, FOG has worked to involve students with various Artist-in-Residency programs with the idea that “hands on involvement increases learning, and makes you excited to learn.” The FOG newsletter continues to combine the efforts of community members, as well as students, to inform local residents of events taking place and give an impression of what the learning environment is like at Gibraltar.

It was not long after FOG was established that Anne became involved in an effort to build an auditorium that would serve Gibraltar as well as the rest of the county. Aside from the massive fundraising efforts, it was a long and arduous process to convince the community of its necessity. It was nearly a decade from its inception until construction was complete, and the Door Community Auditorium opened in 1991. There is little evidence today of the protest it once faced, and it is easy to see the joy that it brings Anne to see elementary school theatre productions share the stage with world-class performances.

Anne holds the belief that there is good in everyone, that in working together, people are capable of doing amazing things. She draws connections between every facet of life: learning, art, sports, family, and radiates with the qualities of a truly complete human being: at ease, optimistic, and in love with life. When she states that our purpose as human beings is to bring out the best in each other, it is evident in her consistently positive influences on the world around her.

# Marge Grutzmacher

By: Jacquelyn L. Petroni, 2000

Marge Grutzmacher is an extremely valuable person in Door County, not only because she strives to help others in the community and around her, but also proves that one little girl can grow up to make a difference.

Marge was adopted at birth into a Scandinavian family in Chicago. Marge, the Irish red head, grew up learning to be giving and considerate of others. She also retained knowledge and learned about her native heritage from her grandmother. One major part of Marge's childhood that has stayed with her today is the fact that she grew up during the height of the depression. This taught Marge "if you have, you give." She was taught to contribute to society and to "do unto others as they do unto you." Marge was also taught to be thankful to be an American citizen. This was due to her pure Swedish grandmother who immigrated to America.

Marge Grutzmacher's interest in teaching and reading began at an early age. She remembers her favorite Nancy Drew mysteries and The Little House on the Prairie series. As Marge became older and more mature in her literature of choice, Emily Dickinson and Wallace Stagner appealed to her. An event Marge will never forget is when she met Wallace Stagner, the author of her favorite book, All the Little Live Things. An important person that influenced Marge in the direction of her life was her high school English Professor who challenged Marge and her friend, the quiet students in the class, to become leaders in a class discussion in order to become social. "Mutt and Jeff" were chosen to show a presentation to a group of teachers because they were terrific leaders in class. This event went over so well that it was then that Marge realized looks don't matter in a person, you just need to do "your own thing" that makes you satisfied and happy in your life. This gave Marge the self-confidence she needed to go out in to the world.

With her new found confidence, Marge decided to give back to her community and became an editor of a newspaper. In this endeavor, Marge interviewed many famous and inspiring people, such as Charleton Heston. Marge had then realized that she had been given a talent to write. As college rolled around, however, her interests were pointed towards being an actress or lawyer. Because of conflicting ideals with her father, Marge's major became journalism, a sign that Marge was put here to enjoy and create literature.

Marge became a first grade teacher at forty years of age, and remained in the field for twenty-two years. Before that she worked as Editor at Arthur Andersen & Co. and as a free lance writer while raising three children. She said that teaching was more exciting than journalism, because you learn something about children and their minds every day. Through this experience, Marge was introduced to the wisdom of children.

One of Marge's philosophies on teaching is that a teacher needs to "work on their wisdom," and that "every child is born a genius, but they get sidetracked along the way." To this day, the greatest feeling Marge has is the look on a child's face when he or she suddenly discovers he or she can read. If you want to see genuine joy and excitement in a person, be there when a child's mind clicks to reading; "It's enough to give you goose bumps."

Completing the circle of writing and education, Marge and her husband Hal purchased a bookstore, known as Passtime Books located in Sister Bay. This business has sprouted an organization in community hospitals called Door County's Books for Babies Project. This project started from the donating of the classic

children's book Goodnight Moon, to babies born in Door County hospitals. This project has now grown into a full community effort. The Door County Library system has contributed to the project by providing each newborn with a library card. This project as Marge knows it has made a long-term impact on the community and hopes the project will continue for years to come.

In addition to being an avid reader, lover of children, and grandmother of seven, Marge enjoys all of the fine arts. The arts are her source of inspiration, and are one of the only things that can move her in a way nothing else does. The arts are also an essential part of what she believes makes a well-rounded individual. Along with the arts, she believes in risk taking. Not jumping out of an airplane without a parachute risk taking, but doing something that's spontaneous and wouldn't be expected. Above all, Marge says a person needs to know how to laugh. She believes that these elements contribute to self-confidence, which in turn, allow the person to contribute to the community.

Marge Grutzmacher is a valuable member of her community. She has touched many people's lives directly and indirectly in her countless undertakings, providing to be an important person in every community of which she has been a member. She has a drive that has helped her achieve desirable results in her life and in the community. She has proven to be an essential citizen, and is indeed worthy to be commended in this celebration of influential women in Door County.

# Betsy Guenzel

Essay Author (Undocumented), 1999

In her childhood, Betsy Guenzel dreamed of changing her name to "Trixie" and joining the circus. Memories like this make her so fun and interesting to talk to. Born September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1917, in St. Paul, Minnesota, Betsy developed her imagination at an early age during naptime. She would often nurse her pneumonia-stricken doll "Dorothy" back to health by dinnertime. A discarded wig allowed her to "switch" from being a Spanish dancer to a Scotch lass ready for a highland fling, or a Bavarian peasant girl ready to play with Heidi on her mountainside. A wind-up Victrola played three treasured albums by Dvorak, Beethoven and Kreisler. Her bookcase contained volumes that, "were illustrated with care and beauty of that time"

Saturday afternoons often meant going to the matinee where Tom Mix westerns and Charlie Chaplin movies were her favorites. Every show began with an audience sing-a-long to the bouncing ball.

Betsy's father was warm and energetic. He loved to share conversations and they often went to the museums or the zoo. Nighttime found him reading aloud to Betsy and her only sibling, Bill, who was six years younger. Betsy's mother from St. Louis was "a beautiful and a dear person," but she frequently suffered from medical problems and had little energy. Nonetheless, her gentle and tender nature taught Betsy the importance of kindness.

Second grade was thrilling for Betsy when the explorer Admiral Richard Byrd came to speak to her class. She suffered chronic sinus problems in the winter and missed a lot of school. As a relief, she went to a small ranch school in Tucson, Arizona, at the age of 13. She never felt she learned much but she loved the West and even met the outlaws John Dillinger and "Pretty Boy" Floyd.

In 1894, Betsy's grandparents began to visit Fish Creek for the summer. Eventually they built several cottages on the water where many generations came to visit. These were wonderful summers of swimming, boating, hiking, tennis, horses, and endless play. She treasured her walks alone after dinner to town when the bluffs and everything below were bathed in sparkling golden light of the setting sun.

Betsy's father believed that what mattered most in life was a person's integrity along with the courage to face misfortune. Betsy's first adversity hit at age 20 when her mother died of cancer. Eight year later her brother was killed in World War II. Nevertheless, good things came her way when she met another summer visitor, Paul Guenzel, from Chicago. They were married in Fish Creek in 1937. A daughter and son soon arrived and eventually came grandchildren.

Betsy raised her family in Winnetka, Illinois. Involved in community affairs, she served on the Women's Board of Chicago Symphony and Children's Memorial Hospital, where she also volunteered. In addition, she started and managed a local branch for "Recording for the Blind." But her most rewarding work took place as a teacher's aide in a classroom for emotionally disturbed children in Albany Park, Chicago, a melting pot community for U.S. immigrants.

Sadness came to Betsy when her husband died in 1996. They were extremely close while maintaining their own separate identities. Still, she was blessed this March with the arrival of her first great-granddaughter. She looks forward to the future by keeping her mind active while "continuing to find my true center." She is "vitaly interested in aging with some measure of good grace."

Betsy is a very warm person who possesses a certain glow you rarely see. She is always interested in what you have to say while encouraging you to feel as though your ideas and options are valuable. Her presence somehow helps those around her illuminate and kindle their own hopes and dreams. She is a very special person.

# Karen Hintz

By: Natasha Viste, 2000

As the mother of two, Karen Hintz's number one priority is her family. The continual support of her husband Jerry and the affectionate hugs from 12 year-old Cassie and 8-year-old Karl are what give her energy to keep going.

Growing up on a farm in Webster, Wisconsin, Karen never found herself without anything to do: there were always 4-H projects and garden produce that needed extra attention. She lived on a family farm run by her father and grandfather, where an adult always had time for her, despite all the work that needed to be done.

Pursuing her goal as the Family Living Agent at the UW-Extension office in Sturgeon Bay for nearly twenty years, she has realized it is the little things, such as words of appreciation and thank you notes that make all her time and effort worthwhile. In a job where everything changes on a day-to-day basis, her belief in the community and people of Door County make the difference. "I just keep hanging in there," she said. "I've gained a lot of patience with age." Much of her day is spent in meetings with community leaders such as Door County board members, co-workers, agency partners, and volunteers. However, she also records local radio tapes, teaches classes on parenting, and sets up programs such as Home Alone, which assists children who will be home alone after school or throughout the summer.

Karen would like to thank each of her family members who have given her special gifts: her kids, for their unconditional love and for challenging her to grow; her husband, for being the risk-taker and saying "go get it"; her mom, for emphasizing the importance of doing your best and working hard; her dad, for having a sense of balance, for teaching her to not take life too seriously, and to treat people how you want to be treated; her brothers Mark and Kent, for keeping her competitive and fun-loving; and her mother-in-law Rosemary, for her acceptance, giving nature, and support.

The customs and values of her parents have helped shape her into who she is today. When she first entered college at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, many thought that women went in the home economics profession only to learn to be a better wife or to find a husband. Through her hard work and determination, Karen proved that women have choices of a family or a career or both. "Women need choices, respect, and to be taken seriously," she said.

As one of the first female members in the Sturgeon Bay Rotary, Karen said that it is important to believe in service above self. She has housed two international exchange students; in fact, one named Reka came back to live with them for six years. In the future, she hopes to visit her in Budapest, Hungary.

Karen enjoys attending Packer and Badger games with her husband to escape from the office and relax. The yelling and screaming side of Karen comes out as she cheers for her favorite team. "It feels great to be part of the celebration of something big," she said. When she isn't attending football games or spending time with her kids, she helps her husband, who is starting Door County Skate, a program for the youth of the county.

One hope for the future is to teach at a college campus to inspire students. She has three pieces of advice to be handed down to future generations: you can't love your kids too much; you are lucky if you have a father—some don't have the chance; and you can't take memories away. Most of all, she wants to be remembered as someone who cared about the community and its people as well as someone who was a good mother and wife. She said, "Above my career, it's all the time I've spent with my kids that counts."

# Marian Hislop

Essay Author (Undocumented) 1999

“Decency, Integrity, and Class” Marian Hislop is truly the epitome of class, whether she does or does not realize it. Writing an accurate description of her is much like attempting to paint a flawless sunset. Still, given the chance, one finds there is certainly more to this Door County woman than meets the eye. Marian Hislop is a woman of values and integrity. In addition, she has a wonderful innate ability to enjoy life in and of itself.

Born in Green Bay, Marian grew up in a strong and loving family. She fondly recalls her early experiences of Door County, where she would often spend her summers. She believes the peninsula is a very unique and beautiful place, with the water as one of its key attributes. Over the years, Door County retained a special place in her memories, and at last, the beautiful atmosphere coaxed Marian here to stay. On the Door Peninsula, she soon had a wonderful family, including a husband, George Hislop, and three exceptional children, whom she thoroughly enjoyed. Marian feels she has truly been blessed, both with her own solid upbringing and the loving family she has today.

Among Marian’s most passionate hobbies is theater. She was heavily involved in the Racine Theater Guild much of her life, including both performances and monologues. She was also a speech major. Therefore, when the time came, she was more willing to become involved in creating an auditorium in Door County. In fact, so suited was she that she was one of the initial forty volunteers selected to begin the processes for the new theater.

In addition, Marian enjoys seeing the world and has traveled to many foreign countries. She has visited Egypt, France, Greece, and Norway, among many others. She enjoys collecting sculptures, small intricate carvings, and other pieces of artwork while overseas.

Speaking to Marian, one finds her zest for life very outwardly apparent. In fact, she has a rather admirable motto” “Go for it! If you’re going to live, live. Take chances and go for it!” In the hectic society of the new millennium approaching, this is extremely admirable. Marian claims she doesn’t dwell on the past, but lives for today.

That is, she lives for today with regard to valuable lessons and etiquette accumulated throughout her past. It is her belief that a little discipline and tradition are necessary in one’s life. Marian lives by this, and it is truly a beautiful and reminiscent lifestyle. On Wednesday afternoons, one may find her engaged in a bridge game with the ladies, or sipping tea, hats and gloves required. Marian also speaks impeccable English. In regard to common slip-up, she claims it is her mission to have people pronounce the word “chaise lounge” correctly. Each of these values to proper living is passed on to her close-knit family. Marian is proud to tell a rather touching story in which her fifteen year-old grandson informed her that his date liked him because, she said, he had such good manners.

These are just a few of the reasons Marian Hislop is a very special woman to have with us in Door County. It is remarkable to have such a woman to go out into the community and to have a positive influence on others simply by being herself and sharing of her knowledge and values. There is much to be learned from Marian Hislop, and she is truly to be admired by all.

# Gretna Johns & Elaine Johnson

Essay Author (Undocumented) 1999

From the outside it looks like an ordinary farmhouse. However, when one walks through the doors, it becomes immediately apparent that it is a house that has been a labor of love, remodeled from scratch with their own hands. For Elaine Johnson and Gretna Johns, this house can be viewed as a symbol of their independence of working hard as single women all their lives. From traveling solo around the country to establishing their own commercial fishing business in a male-dominated world; these two cousins have made their mark in the community and have set an example for other women to follow.

Elaine learned early in her life that she was just as capable as a man. When she was a sophomore in high school, the local theatre was looking for a projectionist. The theater owner said, "But Elaine, you're a girl, and this is a guy's job." She replied, "Well, why is that?" He said, "Well, I guess just because." She said, "Just because isn't a reason." Elaine told him that she would work for a week with no pay, just to see how she would do. She got the job and continued to work there until she graduated from high school.

After graduation, Elaine worked at a radio repair shop and soon decided to open one of her own. She found a way to replace old radio tubes with a new kind, making the business thrive. When her brother came home from the service in 1946, they turned the radio repair shop into a tavern, putting all the money into her brother's farm. Deciding the farm would not be enough for both of them, Elaine called up her cousin Gretna.

Gretna and Elaine decided to get in their 1940 Chevy and drive to Texas City, Texas, to find a job. An explosion had occurred there, and they figured that they would be looking for a "couple of good looking', well-trimmed girls." However, they couldn't find a job. They continued to look, but their money was getting low; infact, they had eleven dollars ad some cents in their pockets, so they decided to start back home. They drove straight home, never turning off the engine. They got as far as a couple of blocks away from Elaine's parents house. "You've never seen a couple of girls so happy to sleep in their own beds," said Elaine. This was not the end of their adventures. They continued to travel to Nebraska and Florida looking for work. Once they returned home, they got jobs as cocktail waitresses, but this did not last long. After buying some perch nets, borrowing a boat from a friend and an engine from their uncle, Elaine and Gretna decided to become commercial fishermen. This was to be an enterprise that would prove very successful.

At first, they didn't know what to do with the perch they caught. They talked some friends who owned a restaurant into having Friday night perch fries. They sold the perch for 50 cents a pound, and in turn, the restaurant sold the perch plates for 75 cents. It was so successful that before long, they were selling 70 to 80 pounds of perch every week.

As their enterprise grew, they processed 500 to 600 pounds of fish a day. Before they bought an automatic scaler, Gretna scaled the fish by hand while Elaine filleted them Elaine recalled, "While fishing, we would strip down to our underwear and bras to get a sun tan. The commercial fishermen would get in as close as they could just to get a good look." Humorous incidents aside, they have worked hard all their lives. When Gretna decided that they needed a more stable business and so they bought a grocery store, which also flourished. They worked up to 84 hours a week at bother the store and fishing.

They have these words of advice for young women; "Go for it, do anything, reach any height. It is possible to survive in a man's world."

# Charlotte Lukes

By: Becky Ripp, 1999

Charlotte Lukes is a generous woman who tries to share her knowledge and love of nature in every way possible. Although she began her career as a dental hygienist, she fell in love with the outdoors after moving to Door County many years ago. Both she and her husband Roy have become well known for writing, inspiring, and helping others.

Charlotte has been honored with various awards for her work in the community. In May, 1997, which just happened to be Roy & Charlotte's 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, they were king & queen of Door County's Festival of Blossoms. She also received two Passenger Pigeon awards from the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology, a silver in 1984 and a bronze in 1999. The Door County Environmental Council awarded her with the Environmentalist of the Year Award in 1998.

Although Charlotte was born and grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, she loves the openness and natural surroundings of Door County and would never go back to city life. One day, while on a walk with her husband, she became intrigued with an unusual mushroom. Since then she has scoured Door County to make a database of different kinds of wild mushrooms, which is currently at 497. Charlotte also has compiled a species list for Whitefish Dunes State Park, the only Wisconsin State Park with a brochure listing the mushrooms found there. Another of her interests is the weather. She takes daily records of the rainfall or snowfall as well as barometer readings. With the help of the internet, she can track nearby weather systems.

Charlotte would like to be remembered for two things; her 34 year career as a dental hygienist, and her countless hours of volunteer work. Charlotte attended Marquette University and graduated from the School of Dental Hygiene in May of 1964. She then found a job at Dr. Berg's office in Sturgeon Bay where she took pride in trying to give a "gentle cleaning."

When Roy started writing his fourth book, Charlotte decided to stop her dental career to help him. She currently proofreads, types, and sends his articles to three different newspapers in the area. Roy has written a total of four books and in the first two, Charlotte drew all the illustrations. She began drawing as a young girl. She can recall that when she was 16, her father teased her about only drawing horses. To prove she could draw more than that, she drew her foot and took it to her father. He smiled at her and said, "Stick to horses."

Teaching classes and leading numerous hikes are just two forms of volunteer work that Charlotte does throughout the year. She has volunteered at the Birch Creek Music Center and served on its Board of Trustees; the Door County Land Trust; Emmanuel Lutheran Church; Whitefish Dunes State Park; the Nature Conservancy, including as a member of its Door County Board of Directors; and the Peninsula Music Festival where she served as president of the sustaining committee and Board of Directors. From 1995 to 1999 she was the regional Door County Coordinator for the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology's statewide five-year breeding bird atlas project. In 1993 she and her husband also opened their home to those adults interested in learning about outdoor wonders.

Whether it is gardening, biking Door County's back roads, canoeing or cross country skiing, Charlotte loves to spend time outside. Her home, where she sometimes bakes bread and listens to classical music, is an important place as well. Hanging on her door is a saying that reflects her love of puns as well as music: "Gone Chopin, be back in a minuet." She credits her love of classical music to her parents.

Charlotte's advice to others is to never give up. She said, "If you feel a project is worthwhile, then keep plugging away at it." Through hard work she has touched the lives of many people as well as made an impact on the landscape of Door County. As an example to others, she has led a healthy lifestyle, lived in harmony with the earth and taught others about nature.

# Lorraine Mengert

By: Kendall Surfus, 2001

As a girl growing up in Milwaukee, Lorraine Mengert remembers finding inspiration and wonder in simple things: a flash of sunlight exposing the brilliant red of an apple or the basic compositions of the objects around her. Because she learned early on that everyone sees things differently and that life experiences shape people's perceptions, she knew art was comprised of every element of the imagination. This wisdom, combined with her innate determination, leadership skills, and creativity, has always been the cornerstone of Lorraine's life. It's all art to Lorraine Mengert.

After 22 years of teaching elementary art classes and organizing summer travel trips for the students with whom she worked, Lorraine became a fulltime Door County resident. However, Mengert had already proved instrumental to arts programs in the area prior to her 1985 move. In 1981 she began teaching classes at Peninsula Art School and then directed the foundation for the next five summers during its beginning and most vulnerable seasons. From there, Lorraine, who had initially come to the county to retire, became the director and curator of the Miller Art Museum. During this time, Lorraine accepted the challenges of filling the hall with exhibits she selected and organized. Unsurprisingly, one of her favorite exhibits featured craftsmen and artisans from the area. This unusual display revealed works such as handmade rugs and blankets, items "people don't usually think of as art," explains Mengert.

While directing the Miller Art Museum, Lorraine encountered many challenges. However, she readily admits that she thoroughly enjoyed every aspect the job encompassed. Mengert called upon her utmost creativity while organizing a jewelry show in the early 1980s. Because this form of art utilizes much less space than standard two-dimensional art, Lorraine was aware of the abundant wall space remaining once the exhibit had been placed. To enhance the exhibit, Lorraine visited the artists; studios and photographed them at work. These pictures were then framed and hung.

Mengert is a true artist, and she continues to create in every aspect of her life. Lorraine is an avid knitter, and some of her works have been shown in exhibits and used for 4-H events in the area. She also leads elementary tours at the Miller Art Center, is Vice President of the Miller Art Museum foundation, and is a desk volunteer there as well. She writes news releases for the Door County Art League, heads the Door County Advocate's "Arts & Entertainment" column from May through November, and writes and edits "The Peninsula," a brochure instituted by the Door County Historical Society, an organization of which Lorraine is a board representative. "The Peninsula" is published every four months and includes a variety of articles and interviews. Researching the past is nothing new to Mengert, and during her time as director of the Miller Art Museum, Lorraine began compiling notes of the artistic development in the county. In 1996, at the prompting of a friend, Lorraine published her findings as Door County's Art History, a book that reveals the beginnings of art, music, and theater in the area.

From both her writings and daily life, Lorraine has discovered that the amazing progress Door County has made in the Arts results from the different backgrounds of the people working toward growth. "I contribute what I can," Lorraine says of her work, "but there always comes a time when change is necessary, both for myself and for the organization." Modestly and with wisdom, Mengert insists that many ideas must be contributed if any growth is to take place. So then, the advancement of arts foundations and individual lives are works of art in themselves. "It's all art," Lorraine claims, and through her, one can see truth in this statement. Where people begin, whom they are influenced by, and who they grow to become is an untouchable masterpiece all on its own. "It takes awhile," Mengert muses, "to grow up, know what you've got, and not to simply accept it." And that, one notices, provides a perfectly appropriate finishing touch on any work of art.

# Alicia Mulliken

By: Laurel Cox, 2001

Born in Milwaukee, Alicia Mulliken moved to Door County when she was only six weeks old. Her mother, the co-founder of the Peninsula Music Festival, and her father, who was the treasurer of a large manufacturing company, met there. Her mother's family had a summer home in Sister Bay and her father's family were the first owners of Wilson's Restaurant in Ephraim.

Alicia grew up in both Door County and Shorewood, a suburb of Milwaukee, where she attended Nicolet High School. After graduating, she went on to attend Stephens College, an all-girls campus in Columbia, Missouri. It was one of the few colleges that offered a Bachelor's in Art, which was just what Alicia wanted. Her dream was to become a clothing designer. She described college as being some of the best years of her life. She had a heavy social life in between a lot of studying.

When she graduated from Stephens, she found her first job at a company in Chicago. She found this job to be very difficult and her boss let her go. Alicia decided to move back to Milwaukee and later found that her boss from Chicago had also moved there. She was rehired and had a successful five years in Milwaukee. Alicia then found her way back to Door County where she opened her own clothing shop in Ephraim and sold her own custom designs. One of her biggest successes was her knit headwear. The design was eventually named "The Alicia Collection" and was successful in both America and Europe.

After moving back to Door County, Alicia met her future husband, Hugh, in 1980 and they were wed in 1982. Soon after, her daughters were born, Carly, age 17, was born in 1983 and Hollace, age 15, in 1985. Most of Alicia's extended family lives either in Sister Bay or Ephraim, including her younger brother, Tom, a dentist in Sister Bay. Their father, who was born in Ephraim, died 20 years ago and their mother passed on in 1986.

Some of Alicia's favorite things to do include staying close to home, whether it be taking walks, talking on the phone, sewing, cooking, or sitting on her beach watching the stars. Although she says that traveling is not a priority, Alicia and her family have been to Europe five times and to the Virgin Islands.

Alicia also spends much of her time volunteering at the Hardy Gallery in Ephraim and helping with the Ephraim Foundation. She sees herself as a peaceful person with a lot of ideas who likes everyone. The most important thing that Alicia loves in a person are those who have a certain willingness and open themselves to possibility. She also believes that it is important to be a good friend and maintain friendships as much as possible. She finds it interesting to see both her and her husband's personalities shine through their daughters' personalities and believes that it is important to teach them the difference between right and wrong.

Although basically speechless when asked if she wanted to take part in this project, with her strong Door County background and volunteer work around the community, Alicia Mulliken was the perfect candidate for this special biography.

# Irene Newkirk

By: Katie Nieman, 2001

## An Inspiration To All

“Art means more than the resuscitation of the past: it means the free and unconfirmed search for new ways of expressing the experience of the present and the vision of the future.” This quote by John F. Kennedy serves not only as the mission statement of the William S. Fairfield Public Gallery, but it is also the inspiration for Irene Newkirk, its founder and chairperson. During the past twenty years, Irene has accomplished more than most people do in an entire lifetime. She is someone from whom we can all learn a lesson in determination, courage, and generosity.

Twenty years ago Irene was faced with hardship as she fought to keep her husband alive during an extended illness. After her husband died, she knew she wanted to give something back to the community as a means to revive her own life. It was Phyllis and Jim Ingerson who first took her under their wings as she started to become involved in the arts. She began working with the Door Community Auditorium.

Through her association with The Scand, Irene met someone who would change her life. During a short tenure as vice-president of The Scand, one of her duties was organizing a house and garden walk. It happened that William Fairfield’s house was one the list of “bachelor pads.” In preparing for this event, she had to go with a group of women to locate his house and from there she met Bill Fairfield. As her relationship with Bill developed, it brought new depths to her interest in the arts. He owned a Henry Moore exhibit and dreamed of building a house for his collection where it could be displayed, as a way to give something back to a community that had been good to him. Unfortunately, he was unable to accomplish this dream before he died unexpectedly.

Consequently, he had written in his will that he wanted this collection to be displayed and Irene felt it was her moral duty to do so. She decided to build the William S. Fairfield Public Gallery. The first task was to convince the trustees of Mr. Fairfield’s will to let her build the museum, which wasn’t an easy job. Designed by John Vinci and constructed by O & M Construction, the museum was born. There were a lot of ups and downs during the process of making the museum, but Irene learned that patience is very important. She says that even though anyone can build a museum, the important thing is that it satisfies the needs of the donor and the community. Through the William S. Fairfield Public Gallery, she hopes to add another dimension to the arts by introducing more contemporary art to Door County, another of the missions of the museum.

The challenge she still faces is encouraging more young people to be involved in the arts and instilling and appreciation in everyone so that the arts can remain an entity that will go on forever. Irene Newkirk has been an inspiration to many and she will continue to inspire with her words and actions. She once said: “Fear is inefficient thinking about the pivot of fear.” Through adversity and her experiences, and by overcoming her fears and doubts, she is prepared to meet the challenge of keeping the arts alive in Door County.

# Audrey Off

By: Apryll Tong, 2000

Audrey Off has known for a while that she has had an artistic knack. In the sixth grade she was told she had a special talent in art. The next year she began studying art at a college level. When she was about 16, Roy Lukes purchased her first piece of art. Audrey said that she still gets her biggest laugh from that painting.

Raised by women on a Door County farm, Audrey appreciates the beauty of the local environment. In fact, her inspiration often comes from nature. Audrey spends time trying to preserve the place she loves by making donations to save the Door County shoreline and working for other environmental issues. She believes that it is "difficult to damage your environment when you live in it and really love it."

Audrey is widely recognized for her paintings of local landmarks, including lighthouses as well as the two Sturgeon Bay bridges. She works with different media, from lithography to jewelry, but prefers to paint with watercolors. When she was interviewed by the Door County Advocate, Joe Knaapen wrote, "When Audrey is satisfied enough with a piece, she adds her 'AMO' signature. When the work is good enough...it carries the artist's love for her home and holds a piece of her soul."

Indeed, Audrey considers art a kind of therapy, a way of finding a balance in life. She has studied psychology in art and feels that art can heal someone that is not willing to be healed. Audrey also believes in a balance physically. She believes in good nutrition and does a lot of work with herbs and natural remedies. Yoga and meditation also help her enjoy life.

Being a single mother has helped her realize what is important. Her daughter, Annie, is one of the best teachers Audrey could have had. She has found that one of her greatest loves is sharing ideas and thoughts with people she cares about.

Audrey feels that she has chosen the best possible career. Spending most of her day as a custom framer, she does not feel overworked. She always sets aside time to paint. In addition, she has recently begun to form a collection of stories about her family's local heritage. In doing research, Audrey found there were many things she did not know about her parents and relatives. She soon came to the realization that generations after her would not know the history of her family, which needs to be passed along.

"What you do to others will eventually come back to you" is Audrey's advice to young women. She added, "You have to find freedom. In school there is a lot of pressure. Find something that you love to do and pursue it. This helps balance your life. You can never escape your life, so learn to love things rather than fear them."

Audrey has been an artistic person almost her entire life. She believes people must embrace life and find a place in their heart where they can be content with themselves. Despite life's ups and downs, she feels the best, most fulfilled individuals are those who go out and really live their lives. Audrey Off is one such example.

# Carla Peterson

By: Katie Daubner, 2000

The inner spirit of a woman is a gift that shines through happiness and hard times. It not only shapes character, but it creates a compelling person inside and out. Carla Peterson has carried a strong inner spirit throughout her life. She has learned to see things as a hole and to grab opportunities life has to offer. She is a self-motivated woman glowing with courage and compassion. Her balance between knowing who she is and society's expectations is the root that holds her together—nothing can shake her.

Growing up during a time when women were limited with choices, Carla took control and was determined to push her self in a challenging society. She encountered many hardships but remained strong and took on responsibility for herself. She has learned how to take life's obstacles and turn them into stepping-stones for the future.

While living in a house with several generations of women, Carla had many influences directing her as well as strict guidelines to follow. She was expected to be a "proper" woman, which meant helping out at home. It is there that she began to develop herself, layer upon layer, growing into a woman in mind and spirit. She realized that the ingredients of a woman set her up to be vulnerable, but she worked hard to preserve herself.

Throughout her life, Carla has traveled to many countries and has met many different people. She finds it easier to see the good in someone rather than the bad. Her positive vision inspires her to help others and to have fun along the way. She is always projecting ahead at what possibilities lay before her. There have been many crossroads where she has had to make difficult decisions. During these times, she checks in with herself to determine if it is the right thing to do. Carla has much advice for women in today's society, but most importantly she said, "Protect the self-esteem engine that runs through your whole life. How you view yourself is part of the balance that will determine your inner strength."

While talking with Carla, one finds her energetic attitude toward life refreshing. Her sense of humor, along with her smile, makes it easy to understand why her outlook on life is so pleasant. She loves to read and entertain people. She also enjoys reflecting on the past while tuning into the beauty of nature. One of her dreams is to someday play the charming grand piano that sits in her living room.

Carla believes that the essence of a community is what makes a whole country. She said, "The gist of success starts in your own backyard. Life is what you make it." Carla has definitely added a "gist" to life. She volunteers at various places in the county including Door County YMCA, the Door County Maritime Museum, the Peninsula Players, and the Sturgeon Bay Rotary Club, in which she was the first woman president. She attributes much of her success to her husband, Ellsworth Peterson, who supports and honors her female spirit. She also has a son, Brian McKown of St. Paul, Minnesota.

In addition to volunteer work, Carla is the president/owner of Door Travel Inc., one of the oldest retail agencies in Wisconsin, started in 1954. As co-trustee of the Ellsworth and Carl Peterson Foundation, both she and her husband provide funding to many Door County non-profit organizations.

The qualities that Carla Peterson holds within her are very admirable. She is a woman of compassion, beauty, and spirit. As a wife, mother, and role model, she has made a difference to the community and the people in it.

## Keta Steeb

By: Sarah Groth, 2000

“I am a smiler and I have all the wrinkles to prove it.” This quote from Marcheta Peterson Steeb describes what may be a first physical impression one might have, yet it doesn’t describe who the woman really is. She has inspirations, passions, a career, a family, and has made many contributions to the Door County community, one of which was her writing. Keta, as she is commonly known, has succeeded in the writing aspect of her life on sheer tenacity alone.

Keta grew up in a farming community in the Upper Michigan, where reading and writing for the fun of it was like a sin. Yet, she still had been “known all her life as a reader.” At age nine, one of Keta’s earliest memories of writing occurred when she entered a Milwaukee Journal poetry contest. After her mother sent in her poem, Keta received a certificate with an ivory boarder saying that she was the first place winner. As the years passed on, Keta graduated from high school as a National Honor Student and the president of her class. However, these credentials only got her a job working at Walgreen’s Restaurant in Milwaukee where she moved to after graduating high school. Though Keta never went to college, many of her friends did. Most went to Marquette University in Milwaukee. Keta would write themes for their college papers and her friends would receive A’s and B’s on them while she was still washing dishes in a restaurant kitchen!

In 1948, she started her writing career as a copywriter for a radio station at 75 cents an hour. To get the job she wrote about her love for writing; “I wrote how I love short skinny words and long fat words,” Keta remembers fondly. She moved on to various jobs such as working a Norton Grinder in a factory and being one of the few women at that time to sell real estate. Still, Keta kept turning back to writing. After moving to Sister Bay and buying a “ma and pa type general store,” she would write advertisements for the store and she wrote a column called, “Ket’s Corner” for the local newspaper. Since she didn’t go to college and didn’t know much about anything, or so Keta says, she wrote about what she knew: herself, her friends, and her family.

After Keta’s store went bankrupt, she moved her two sons and husband to Green Bay where she successfully battles sixteen other college students to get a job at the Press Gazette. Writing about women’s interest stories such as tea parties, auctions and so on, Keta enjoyed her job, but in 1969 she decided to move back to Door County. The Door County Advocate hired her as a reporter and she has been there ever since.

Her stories are humorous—scathing at times—and always written about what she has experienced personally, even though she does admit to adding a few over-exaggerations at times. She has put her heart and soul into all of her writing and she says, in her own words, “I still enjoy going to work.” Although Keta has semi-retired, she is still very active in her life. She enjoys going for boat rides, shopping, looking in art galleries and anything that keeps her around people. She has also taken up new hobbies. “I am learning to cook. I started at age seventy!” she states unequivocally. Keta’s greatest satisfactions are writing, reading, and visiting with her family. From her passion for

writing, she derives the greatest gratification. She loves laughing at her columns, for she knows that what she has written has been good. She also laughs because others reinforce her own opinion. If she could live life over again, Keta would go to college for journalism. She believes that “doing good work regardless of whether writing, tending a family, working a Norton Grinder in a factory, or cleaning house,” is one of two best pieces of advice that she has been given over the years. The other is “Don’t let the bastards get you down!” Keta has proven this over and over in her life. When her mother died unexpectedly and then her husband, Keta said, I could not let loss ruin my life.” Nor did Keta let the changing of technology stop her from writing. She went from writing with a pencil on lined yellow paper to many different typewriters and computers.

When asked what she wants her contribution to the community to be, she pronounced without hesitation, “My contribution would be a laugh. I really do enjoy a good chuckle.” However, Marcheta Peterson Steeb has contributed much more in the form of her tenacity and dedication to writing. She has written 1560 columns over the years, which she now plans to turn into a book. Overall, Keta has overcome all obstacles, surmounted all challenges and laughed in the faces of all barriers. She has definitely beaten—everybody!

# Cynthia Stiehl

By: Emily McCain, 2000

“Music has been my rock, my stability.” For Cynthia Stiehl, better known as Cindy to friends and family, even talking about music brings a smile to her face. Ever since she can remember, music has played a huge role in her life. Since the tender age of six or seven, Cindy has been involved in the art of music. “My mother used to tell me as a little girl I would sing myself to sleep,” explains Stiehl. Cindy was born in Appleton, Wisconsin where she spent most of her life. She has one sister and a very large extended family. She started coming to Door County with her grandfather in 1960. She ended up permanently settling in the peninsula in later years. During high school, Cindy played guitar in the masses held during the 1960’s. These experiences raised her confidence level, and she went on to do more solo singing. After high school, Cindy went on to study and later graduate from Lawrence University Concert Choir, Band, and Orchestra, among other groups such as the White Heron Chorale and the Fox Valley Symphony.

Though Cindy loves all aspects of music, performing gives her the biggest joy. Cindy sings mezzo-soprano, performing mostly classical music. The works of George Gershwin and others of his time are typical pieces of performance. Stiehl also has done quite a bit of performing in church. “I have had to sing at multiple churches on one Sunday, which is very fun,” she adds with a chuckle. Cindy also plays guitar well enough to accompany herself.

Through Cindy’s involvement with music, she has had the opportunity to be a part of many organizations and concerts. Ms. Stiehl lived for a time in Massachusetts where she continued her interest in music. Here she taught, studied, and performed with many groups including the Boston Cecilia Society and the Cantata Singers. Year’s later, Cindy returned to Massachusetts to sing Bragns Liebeslieder waltzes in an inaugural concert for the James Library Series. In past years, Cindy performed with Midsummer’s Music. She has also used her talents to benefit the Peninsula Music Festival, Birch Creek Music Festival, the Hardy Gallery, the YMCA, and the American Folklore Theatre.

When asked about her view on music being taught in the schools, Cindy gave a powerful response. She quoted a meaningful saying from the movie *Mr. Holland Opus*; she felt that summed it up well. “Learning about reading and writing is important, but if we don’t have the arts, we will have nothing to read and write about.” Cindy added to the debate by saying, “Art feeds the soul, and we need soul food as much as we need brain food.”

One might wonder what kind of music Cindy enjoys listening to when she is not making her own. “Marilyn Horn is number one,” she exclaims without a doubt. She ranks John Browning as her second favorite, followed by Dawn Upshaw, a talented soprano. Whether she is singing or listening to it, Cindy manages to surround herself with music.

Music is not an easy art. It takes time, effort, energy, and patience. So how does Cindy do it? Cindy explains that she is inspired by an upcoming performance. “That’s when I do my best work...when I have a deadline,” Cindy informs us of her secret. Cindy explains how she doesn’t just think about the musical line, but the text and poetry within. She feels it is important to develop an understanding for the piece, and then to add technique. “For three to five minutes, I’m in a mini-drama, in which I play a character.” But she loves it and couldn’t imagine life without music.

Before saying goodbye to this exceptional woman, I asked her what valuable piece of advice she had received in her life that she would share with others, “Pursue something you love. Fulfillment will come, money will come, success will come.” And there you have it!

# Ingrid Thea Stroschein

Essay Author (Undocumented) 1999

Ingrid was born in the non-communist sector of Berlin, Germany. The daughter of a famous orchestra conductor, she was fourteen when her mother died, and has many fond memories of her still. The first meeting between her and her future husband Bill, an American soldier stationed in Germany, was on a beach in Berlin in July, 1958. At that time, young German girls were usually told to stay away from American boys because they were “trouble.” Bill and some of his buddies were admiring the ladies when he spotted Ingrid and announced, “That is the girl I’m going to marry.” Prophetic words since Ingrid and he became engaged on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 1958, her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Ingrid and Bill arrived in the United States on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1959, and were married in February. They lived their first year in Milwaukee where Bill, employed as a glass and metal architect, helped design the Mitchell Domes. Owning a summer cottage at Sand Bay Beach Resort prompted them to buy the entire resort when she was only twenty. Ingrid and Bill have two children—a daughter Carrie and a son Dale, who now owns and operates the resort.

Ingrid first took swimming lessons in 1967, at the age of twenty-seven. She started as a beginner and advanced to become a certified water safety instructor and lifesaver. Soon after, the Sturgeon Bay Parks and Recreation Department employed Ingrid as a swimming instructor. In December of 1970, she expressed an interest in coaching and became an assistant coach with the Door County YMCA.

The love of her life is teaching kids to swim. “In the beginning you can take a child into water which frightens him so much he can scarcely breathe, and by the end you see him or her jumping into the deep end and swimming without fear. Since Door County has two hundred and fifty miles of water surrounding us, it’s so important.” She loves teaching children and believes that swimming is a formation of community among swimmers, coaches, and families. “Working with an age group swimming program has always been so satisfying to me. Seeing young swimmers progress, achieve various skills, develop and mature as people, as well as athletes, is everything a coach can ask for. I believe that swimming competitively can and should be fun. My personal goals as a coach are to produce swimmers who are self-reliant and intelligent, who show discipline toward their coach and fellow teammates, who gain confidence as they grow older, and who have the desire to succeed in and out of season.” Obviously, she feels strongly about the importance of knowing how to swim.

For a time she gave up coaching to support her own children in their swimming. Dale was a state champ in 1979, and Carrie was the number one girl on her swim team. In 1985, after her two children graduated from college, she went back to coaching where the thrill of competition and the fact that swimming is a lifelong sport still keeps her going strong today. “Everyone competes, and not one child is overlooked. You work as a team by working toward your personal best time. This all requires a lot of commitment from the child and parents. Swimming is a place for the child to belong, not hanging out on the streets.”

Another of her proudest achievements is becoming an American citizen in 1968. Ingrid accomplished this goal after years of study and learning the history and customs of the United States.

Ingrid also loves to garden, and to watch and feed the birds in her backyard. Gardening would be something she could see herself doing after her coaching days are over. This won't be anytime soon, though; she plans on coaching as long as her health and enthusiasm make it possible. "With coaching you never say you know it all, so that keeps me on my toes—always learning," she adds. Keeping her mind challenged with crossword puzzles is also a favorite hobby. She still does math mentally in German.

In fifty years she wants her family to be healthy, so she can spend time with her grandchildren. She loves to travel and would like to see the rest of the country someday, but she hates to fly. She will though, if that is her only choice. Does she have any regrets in her life? "None," she answers confidently.

# Dolores Allen

By: Jimmie Riley, 2001

When I was first asked to write for “Celebrate! The legacy of Door County Women,” I wasn’t sure what to expect. It read like a straightforward interview and compilation of facts, but it turned out to be much more than that. I was given the pleasure of interviewing Mrs. Dolores Allen, a smart and learned woman who has made quite an impression on our community. Her story is one that proves that big dreams can, and should, be realized.

Dolores Allen was born in Winona, Minnesota. Growing up an only child along the banks of the muddy Mississippi River, she loved to swim and dreamed of being writer. “Writing was something I always wanted to do,” she says. She received her degree at the College of St. Theresa, also in Winona. From there, life was an open book.

Mrs. Allen worked as a schoolteacher, teaching both English and French. She loved the profession and her students, but didn’t feel there was enough to challenge her in her work. She took a vacation to Chicago and became enchanted with the city. She didn’t go back to Winona. While in the Windy City, she wrote for *Life* magazine and several radio stations in the area. She also worked for an ad agency that promoted Maytag washing machines, which she admitted to never even having used. She also wrote some scripts for her roommate, who was an aspiring actress. It was that roommate who introduced her to her future husband, a radio announcer named Ed Allen. The two were married, and not long after, moved to Door County, Wisconsin.

In 1951, the Allens founded the radio station WDOR, which is still going strong today. The station serves Door County by reporting area news, school closings, sporting events, and much more that is important to the community. WDOR is the tourist’s guide and the local’s friendly voice. Mrs. Allen even has her own cooking show, which has been a popular feature since the station first went on the air. It is called “Five Minutes with Dolores Allen.”

Mrs. Allen’s talents don’t stop there. Once an avid golfer, she has always loved games, noting bridge and Scrabble as two of her favorites. She also has a vast collection of cookbooks, “Probably more than the library,” she says. She has, in fact, written a cookbook of her own, which has been published and is on sale all over Door County. It’s called *Door County Recipes Old and New*, and it also contains a little bit of local flavor and lore. In addition to the cookbook collection, she likes to read “good clean” murder and mystery stories. Mary Higgins Clark is one of her favorite authors, and she recommends Clark’s books to anyone looking for a good read.

She did a good deal of traveling with her late husband, including an enthralling Mediterranean cruise. On that cruise, they traveled to Greece and the Grecian isles, making stops in Athens and Egypt. Also, she went to England a few times, and likes Scotland very much.

When asked what she would advise young people to do for their careers, Mrs. Allen replied: “People should do what they enjoy doing, something that they look forward to each day. If you like to write, then write. You shouldn’t come home at the end of the day and say, ‘Thank goodness today is over.’ You should say, ‘I can’t wait for tomorrow.’” She loves her job at WDOR, and says she’ll work there as long as she possibly can.

Mrs. Allen is a dedicated woman who hasn’t let anything stand in the way of her dreams. Now, with three children, thirteen grandchildren, and several great-grandchildren, she leads a placid life in northern Door County. She doesn’t mind the quiet, saying that she’s reached a point in her life where she enjoys the serenity.

I was inspired by Mrs. Allen in just the brief moments we spoke on the phone. She seems like a brave and strong person, the sort of woman who knows what she wants and isn’t afraid to succeed and live her dreams. I think that young people today could take a lesson from Mrs. Allen, which is best said in her own words: “Don’t work at something you don’t enjoy doing. If you don’t really enjoy your work, I then quit it and find what you do like.” She certainly made me want to pursue my ambitions.

# Emma Toft

Essay Author (Undocumented) 1999

Emma Toft. Nature was a way of life, and preserving it was her passion. Whether she was at Toft Point hand feeding the wildlife, or at the Ridges Sanctuary, leading groups of school children and teaching them to respect the outdoors, Miss Emma always surrounded herself with nature.

Emma Toft was born on February, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1891, to Tom and Juleyanne Toft. She was one of seven children in the family and the last to be born at what is actually called Moonlight Bay. She gave it the name “mud Bay,” of which she was very proud. From an early age, Emma was enamored with nature. Growing up, her mother had taught her and her siblings how to truly appreciate their surroundings. Juleyanne Toft was one of Emma’s biggest influences and molded her appreciation for the outdoor into an all-out love for it.

Emma has also formed a powerful bond with the animals surrounding her, so much so that later in life she often took orphaned wildlife and cared for them until they were able to be on their own. She had a gentleness that has allowed her to lure birds to her waiting hand and would often strap on her snowshoes to bring peanut butter and sunflower seeds out to the birds, and cob corn, apples, and alfalfa to the deer.

Around the age of 16, Emma started teaching school. Perhaps her experience as a teacher is what made her such a magnificent leader. She was always more than happy to guide groups through the Ridges and show them the “proper” way to walk. She insisted that there was a certain way to talk through the woods, a way so as not to step on the tiny flowers.

She always thought that by preserving nature, she could make a difference, and she did. She wasn’t shy about her feeling on the subject either. She met Governor Lucey in Madison once, and shaking her finger just a few inches away from his face, said, “Please Mr. Governor, DON’T let them straighten that beautiful winding road to Northport at the tip of Door County!” Her words must have made quite an impression because that road is still winding.

Emma’s involvement with the Ridges Sanctuary spanned 45 years. She was one of ten people who started the sanctuary. While there, she was treasurer for 17 years, resident for 5 years, and on the board of directors for 43 years, and in the last two years of her life, director emeritus. Even when the acquirement of new land was suggested, one that would set them back \$50,000, she thought it better to have more protected land than think about the cost. She always felt that if anything was worthwhile, then do something about it. And that she did. Emma never passed up a chance to teach someone about the little things. Those, to her, were the most important parts of nature because they could be so easily be ignored. She always thought that the beauty of nature could be ruined by too many people enjoying it.

As Emma got older, she was unable to live by herself and spent the last few years at the Dorchester Nursing Home. She always kept a bag packed and ready in case she could persuade someone to bring her back home to Mud Bay. As they were driving, she would ask for the names of the creeks to be said aloud as they passed. The creeks were significant landmarks all throughout Emma’s life. She would often take trips to the creeks when she was younger to see the array of cowslips and marsh marigolds that were growing alongside the banks.

Emma Toft died on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1982, at the age of 91. Hers was a soul that was truly connected to nature and all of its inhabitants. Emma put in countless hours towards the maintenance, preservation, and appreciation at the Ridges Sanctuary. From all the trees, animals, plants, and great admirers of nature, thank you Miss Emma.

# “Celebrate” The Legacy of Door County Women!

The 22 accompanying photos for this booklet will be on display in the  
Women & Children’s Center at Door County Memorial Hospital.

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MINISTRY HEALTH CARE

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