

## Keweenaw Heritage Center—Opening Doors to Our Heritage.



[www.keweenawheritagecenter.org](http://www.keweenawheritagecenter.org)

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**2023** marks a landmark year for Keweenaw Heritage Center. This was a year of great successes and profound losses. In the 122 years of its existence, the building has gone through three major phases:

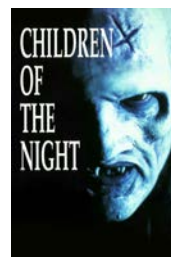
- For the sixty-five years from its dedication in 1901 to 1966, the beautiful St. Anne's Church was a place of worship and reverence for a French-Canadian congregation.
- In the twenty-six years from deconsecration in 1966 to 1992, the building suffered great neglect when it offered antiques of little value. In 1991, a horror movie, ***Children of the Night*** attracted crowds as they watched cars being driven through the building, compounding the damage done by pigeons and animals that had entered through cracks and broken windows.
- Beginning in 1993, concerned people worked to rescue the building and turn it into the Keweenaw Heritage Center, a place to honor the whole community's history and a place for community use. Their efforts, over the past thirty years, have raised close to \$1,750,000 either through individual donations or grants. Although the building is owned by Calumet Township, taxes do not support either its restoration or maintenance. Volunteer efforts are key to the building's survival. Members of the Board, hosts, and others have contributed approximately 100,000 hours in various different roles.

Admission fees, Musical Mondays, organ concerts, and rentals all mean that utility fees can be paid, supplies can be purchased, and routine maintenance can be done. While the building is a place of beauty at the entrance to Calumet, it is also a place to celebrate life events, enjoy concerts and exhibits, and meet with others in a community that cares about its heritage.

Every contribution, whether that be money or time, is important. We are pleased to highlight four people whose contributions have made it possible for the building to survive.

## In Appreciation: Generosity, Goals, and Gratitude

The **goal of rescuing** a landmark building on Calumet's main street is getting closer to being accomplished. Thirty years ago, in 1993, that **goal** did not seem realistic. The building on the corner of Fifth and Scott Street had once been beautiful but now showed the effects of twenty-seven years of neglect and abuse. Its life as an antique/junk shop and use as the setting for a horror movie had left their marks.

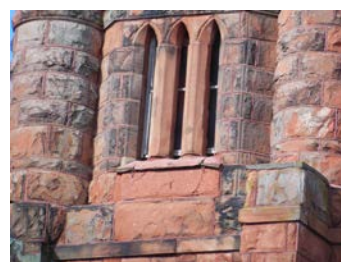


In an economically struggling community, there were too many challenges to survival to be concerned about an old church that had become a junk shop and the setting for a horror movie. Would there be another demolition project in Calumet? Where would money come from to fix:

Broken Windows



Cracked Sandstone



Bushes in Sandstone



Moldy Walls



Falling plaster



What made the difference? Why does the building still stand, with a new identity and restored beauty?

Those two questions should start with **who**, not what or why. And the answer is simple — since you are reading this newsletter, **you** made part of the difference. Many, many people made the difference. In **gratitude**, this newsletter would like to highlight the **generosity** of four who made outstanding contributions. While we mourn the loss of Bob Langseth and Janet Locatelli, we congratulate Gracia Bracco and George Siira on having retired to a few less demands on their time and talents. Learn more about their contributions to **appreciate all they have done**.

## Appreciating the Contributions

Imagine you have time-travelled back to 1993. Rumor has it that Olde St. Anne's has been sold and the new owner will remove stained glass windows and doesn't care about the rest of the building. What a mess there will be as the building continues to decay!

"Too bad," you think. "Someone should do something — maybe the newly created National Park will step in." But it turns out that they can't buy buildings, according to the way KNHP is set up. A group called Foresight is going to different groups to find help. Most would like to help but "are just trying to keep their own heads above water." Since the building was once a church, would the Council of Churches be a resource?

### Rev. R. V. Langseth (1933-2023)

Luckily for the building, the Council did have an important resource — someone who had played a vital part in the establishment of the National Park; who saw benefits in preserving the history and heritage of the community; and who was willing to ask for donations. Of course, that someone was **Bob Langseth**. Bob went into action, contacting prospective donors. In a fairly short time, he was able to raise \$50,000, enough to purchase the building for \$38,000 and to start cleanup and some critical repairs.

June 1994 saw a great cleanup crew working hard — hard enough to fill **five 2-ton dump trucks** with junk and detritus from the building. Pigeon feathers abounded and so did other souvenirs from the birds. No wonder the volunteer crew was wearing masks! A video Bob shot allows us to still see the enormity of the task.

To function efficiently in converting the former church into the Keweenaw Heritage Center required a volunteer board. Bob chaired those efforts for some years, developing goals, running meetings, writing applications for grants, directing building projects, setting up an endowment project, hosting in the summer hours, and recruiting volunteers. Those volunteers included people who had retired from various fields, including accountants, artists, broadcasters, construction workers, dentists, educators, electricians, engineers, historians, physicians, politicians, professors, students, tourism workers — anyone who was willing to help.

Major projects like recreating the front steps, installing heating pipes in the basement floor, and repairing the steeple all required money. Bob worked tirelessly to find grant opportunities and the required matching funds. Keweenaw Heritage Center stands almost completely restored today because of his caring and commitment. We were able to recognize his many contributions with a plaque at the Volunteer Party in October.



Sadness struck at the learning of his passing shortly afterward. A luncheon was held in the Heritage Center after his funeral. Contrasting the picture of the state of the basement right after cleanup in 1994 with a picture of tables set up for the luncheon shows some of the impact of Bob's work.



In his memory, the Sandstone Hall will now be the *Bob Langseth Sandstone Hall*.







**Gracia Bracco** was also among those who joined the early efforts at rescuing the building. Having been a Calumet Township officer, she served as a liaison during the process of purchasing the building. But her involvement didn't stop when she retired.

Gracia served as Treasurer on the volunteer Board, responding to donors and keeping track of income from rentals and admission income. In the early years of the rescue efforts, reporting expenditures to granting agencies took both time and knowledge of bookkeeping methods. As electricity, water, and heat were installed in the building, Gracia helped keep Board members up to date as to those expenditures.

Like other Board members, Gracia's contributions didn't stop with being an officer. She and her then six-year-old granddaughter greeted visitors in the summer. During Musical Monday performances, she helped pass donations baskets and prepared deposit forms to submit to the Township. Did the floor need sweeping or the bathrooms need cleaning? Gracia would be sure to join other Board members in maintaining the building.

Like Bob, Gracia supported the Heritage Center by endorsing the rescue efforts. This was so important in the mid 1990s when the building was in such poor shape. Many people clearly wondered whether it was wise to donate time or money to such a wreck. The visual presence of well-known people helped to encourage others to join the effort. Gracia was made an honorary Board member when she retired from the Board. We still miss her at meetings but love to see her when she attends performances.

**George Siira** retired from serving on the Board this fall. If you walk or drive past the Heritage Center during December, you'll see a beautiful soft glow coming through the stained glass windows. Early during his more than ten years on the Board, George used his experience as electrician to figure out how to light up the corner of Fifth and Scott Streets during the holiday season.

His contributions didn't stop with lighting and/or wiring. If George saw something that needed to be fixed, he fixed it. Seeing him on a ladder was not unusual and always brought great results.

When George walked into a meeting, there was almost always a round of applause. He has terrific insight into what needs to be done and asks great questions to help evaluate proposals. His presence brightened up any Board meeting.



Presenting George with a Certificate of Appreciation at the Volunteer Party, Co-Chair Phyllis Locatelli followed with a very appropriate hug for him. George, we'll think of you whenever the lights go on.

## **Janet Ann Locatelli (1936-2022)**



Volunteer efforts have made a significant impact on the process of restoring the building. The generosity of donors has been equally important in providing resources for improvement. Janet Locatelli continued her support of the Keweenaw Heritage Center with a very generous bequest received in December of 2022.

Janet was a regular attendee at Musical Monday performances. A polio survivor at 14, she showed her concern for others with mobility difficulties when she purchased chairs that would be easy to get in and out of to be placed upstairs. Learning of progress toward universal accessibility in the building undoubtedly pleased her. Like others in her family, she made annual contributions to the Heritage Center.

Janet's gift continued a tradition of support from the Locatelli family. In the very early days of the rescue, her mother, Ann Sandretto Locatelli, funded the restoration of the front doors helping everyone to see that the beauty of the building could be regained. Janet's sister-in-law, Phyllis, served on the Board and became Co-Chair. Her niece, Tricia Golus, became Treasurer after Gracia Bracco retired. For several years, Joe Locatelli, Janet's nephew, has coordinated a summer car show that benefits the Heritage Center. In 2011, the Locatelli Family was the recipient of the Keweenaw Heritage Center Legacy Award. Janet's bequest continues that legacy.

As a non-profit organization made up of volunteers, Keweenaw Heritage Center depends on donations as we work on the restoration of a historic building. Janet Locatelli's bequest will provide resources for that important work to continue. We could not be more grateful.

## **Continuing the Efforts**

Behind the scenes, the Board of Directors continues to plan and coordinate activities. An agency of Calumet Township, owner of the building, the Board refers its actions to the Township for approval. Members of the Board do not receive any pay for their service and may quietly contribute as they purchase things without being compensated.

Since 1994, ninety-seven people have either served on the Board or acted as hosts or done both. In the early days, Bob Langseth quietly recruited many of them. In 2023, Board members included Kathleen Alatalo-Arten, Jean Ellis (Co-Chair), Dave Geisler (Secretary), Tricia Golus (Treasurer), Phyllis Locatelli (Co-Chair), Jerome Patryjak, Nathan Perreault, Marcia Primeau, and Patricia Schmitt-Miller. This year, the Board reviewed and updated the ByLaws and Master Plan, as well as signed the Agreement between the Board and Calumet Township and the agreement as a Heritage Site in the Keweenaw National Historical Park.

Hosts keep the building open for visitors during the summer, working from approximately 12:30 to 5 p.m. Phyllis Locatelli is in charge of scheduling and providing training information for them. In 2023, Kathleen Arten, Janice Crouch, Jean Ellis, Margaret Kekko, Bob Langseth, Elaine Lemler, Marilynn Lightfoot, Phyllis Locatelli, Jerome Patryjak, Annette Preston, Patti Schmitt-Miller welcomed guests.

## Ongoing Projects

### Left over from 2021

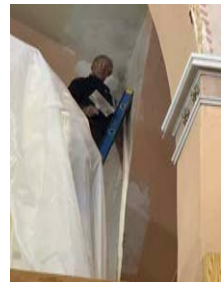


Two years ago, early in 2021, a hole in the ceiling above the balcony showed new leaks. KHC was fortunate in obtaining funds through grants from the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission and the Americana Foundation. Using matching KHC funds, KHC hired A-1 Contracting to find and patch holes in the roof and repoint the sandstone in the area. Work was completed by September, but there was some uncertainty as to whether the source of the leak had been found. It seemed wise to wait to patch the ceiling.

Early October 2023 brought Duane Coponen to work on the ceiling. First step was to wrap the



organ to protect it from dust or falling plaster. Here, Duane has finished repairing the hole and started start to paint. He had the challenge of an unwelcome guest but succeeded in trapping the pigeon that had somehow gained entry to the building. Challenges never cease in this building!



### The Final? Major Project in the Restoration — Raise the Roof!

At long last, the list of major projects may be almost complete. While a 122 year-old building will always need something repaired, there's hope that those things will be minor. But the one remaining project is anything but minor. In fact, it will probably be the biggest ever.

A tally of projects from 1994 until 2021 shows six different times when roof repairs had to be made. Replacing the whole roof will be extremely costly but may be wiser and less expensive than waiting for holes in the ceilings to show where more repairs are needed. We don't know number of layers of roofing, kind of shingles, or dates of any total replacements .



Digging through documents has turned up some information. According to the Historic American Buildings Survey done in the 1970s, the shingles are asphalt and contain (of course!) some asbestos. An article written by Father Dion in 1953 reported that the roof had been replaced in 1928. A picture of the roof damage after a windstorm showed at least two layers.

Estimates for total replacement have ranged in hundreds of thousands (\$200,000 — \$350,000) a huge amount for a volunteer organization. Is it wise to put it off or wise to start making steps? The latter seemed to be right choice.

## **Raise the Roof (continued)**

KHC is grateful to the Advisory Commission for a \$15,000 grant to hire consultants to evaluate. Along with our funds to match the amount, we hired UP Engineers and Architects to investigate. UPEA has met with Board members and has done additional inspections to determine what will need to be done.

To date, they have provided this summary of their findings:

From Ryan Patrick, UP Engineers and Architects

We completed our inspections last month, (October) and the holes have been patched by the contractor.

A few general findings:

1. The layers from top to bottom: Asbestos shingles, underlayment, wood shingles, wood planks.(we did not cut through the wood planks).
2. The shingles contain asbestos.
3. The bell tower is structurally sound.
4. After being in the attic space, it looks good structurally for the most part. There appears to be some water damage near the bell tower, likely due to previous leakage issues there. There also appears to be some water damage on the south end of the church roof, where it has 5 sides to it. The damage was done to one of the western sides.
5. Some additional bracing may be needed, and we would definitely recommend installation of a few catwalks in the attic to make movement safe and easier while any work is done. If someone were to lose their balance and fall, they would likely fall through the ceiling of the church space to the floor, it was a little nerve wracking.
6. Our structural engineers are taking the notes from up there to try and recreate the truss system 3 dimensionally to analyze what it can support.
7. From there we will look at the costs of a full tear down w/ asbestos abatement vs building a double roof and enclosing the existing roof (if it can structurally handle the additional load.

Last year, we began a fund-raising drive to “Raise the Roof!” Proceeds from the dinner and from donations have been set aside into a CD that is raising interest. The membership blank also had a place to earmark funds for the roof. Some of the funds raised were used to match the \$15,000 from the grant.

These are the names of people who specified that their donation should go for specifically for the roof. To date this year, those additional donations have amounted to \$10,788 that can be added to the amount already raised.

## **Gifts Received by November 28, 2023**

### **Specified for the Roof**

Mary Ann Bammert  
Keri Ellis  
Brian and Charlene Laakonen  
Jim and Judy Plute  
Donna Ryan  
Carmen Sandretto  
Guy and Kathleen St. Germain  
Claudette Vairo

Jean Ellis  
Debbie Frontiera  
Joseph and Carol Lizzadro  
Bruce and Karen Rovano  
Ruth Sablich  
Pam Shaughnessy  
Patricia Tosto  
Valerie Zimdars

We thank the following people who made unspecified donations. These are important in meeting general expenses and in paying for necessary but more minor projects.

### **Unspecified Donations**

Carl Adams  
Sigmund Boberg  
Tony and Chris Clements  
Copper Country Ford  
Mike and Janet Dudenas  
Clarence and Yvonne Fisher  
Tricia and Randy Golus  
James Ruppe Foundation  
Ann Kemppainen  
Brian and Charlene Laakonen  
Larry and Nancy Molloy  
Judi Nuottila  
Jim and Judy Plute  
Joseph Ruppe  
Carmen Sandretto  
Raymond and Diane Tiberg  
UP Engineers and Architects  
Bob Wareham/Betty Antilla  
Valerie Zimdars

Mary Ann Bammert  
Marvin and Ruth Bradford  
Mike and Sylvia Cooper  
Peter Cornlis  
Marilynn Ehrenreich  
David Geisler  
Insight Eye Care  
Margaret Kekko  
George and Linda Kingstrom  
Rodney and Pat Mishica  
Robert and Marjorie Nelson  
Gary Olds  
Bruce and Karen Rovano  
Jerome and Carol Sachinski  
Guy and Kathleen St. Germain  
Patricia Tosto  
David and Carol Waisanen  
Michael & Bonnie Wolff

### ***Specified for the Organ from***

#### ***Gifts in Honor of:***

Charles and Lisa Anderson's wedding  
  
Jean Ellis  
Phyllis Locatelli

Lois Siler

#### ***From:***

Jean Ellis  
Harold and Carol Lyman  
Tim and Paula Ellis  
Gina Nicholas



***Gifts in Memory of***

Greg Bracco

Robert Colont

Joseph DesJardins

Tom Ellis

Myra Imperati

Fred Kekko

Andrea Lane

Bob Langseth

Pat LaRochelle

Janet Locatelli

Louis and Emma Sandretto

Tom Sustarich

Jerry Vairo

Mary Wheeler

**From**

Carl Adams

Jean Ellis

Joseph and Anne Locatelli,  
Phyllis and Tony Locatelli

Kevin Wright

Gregory Gardner

Dan and Lynn Glinn

Randy and Tricia Golus,  
Tony and Phyllis Locatelli

Margaret Kekko

Pam Shaughnessy

Laura and Michael Bourdo  
Travis and Sherry Buntin  
Ann Christiansen

Jean Ellis

Dorothy Jamison

Fay Langseth,

Geri Langseth

Tony and Phyllis Locatelli

James and Sandy Meredith

Harvey and Mary Morken,

Gregg and Cheryl Patrick

Donna Ryan

Kelly Ryan

Shiloh Baptist Church

Guy and Kathy St. Germain,

Ray and Diane Tiberg

Claudette Vairo,

Ruth Warmanen and family

Jean Ellis

Gene La Rochelle

Tony and Phyllis Locatelli,  
Carmen Sandretto

Tony and Phyllis Locatelli

Pam Shaughnessy

Tony and Phyllis Locatelli

Claudette Vairo

Jean Buschell

## Events, Exhibits, Fundraisers, and Rentals

A long-range goal is to reduce or eliminate KHC's dependence on donations, including money, time, and talent. That's a truly ambitious goal and one we are nowhere near achieving yet. For now, we are grateful to many for their generosity in offering their time and talent.

**Musical Mondays** continue to benefit from the generosity of people like Jim and Teri Enrietti and John Peiffer, Cathy Isaacson and Friends, Gail English, Mike Irish, and Scott Veenstra, along with the Copper Country Community Band. Kathleen Arten and Jan List are at the organ on Thursday afternoons.

*Finding New Places* highlighted the lives and challenges of eight local women who followed non-traditional careers and made outstanding contributions to the lives of many. The exhibit closed this fall after three years of showcasing their lives.

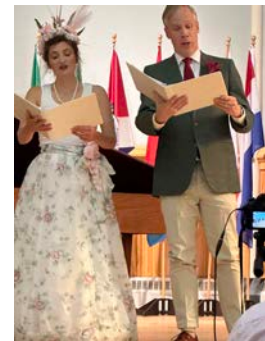
Kathleen Arten's report shows some things that went into the Love and Flowers Gala. The event featured performers including Kathryn Summersett, Jared Anderson, Mandy Kramer, and Kathleen Arten, all of whom waived their regular musicians' fees.



The many donated items included gifts or discounts from Keweenaw Coffee Works, Calumet Floral and Gifts, Studio 13, Eric Munch Photography, Shabby Chic, and Sew Cranky. The refreshment table was underwritten by Keweenaw Dental with a meat and cheese platter donated by Pat's Foods, Calumet. Kathleen and Kathryn

Summersett supplied additional refreshments.

Proceeds from the raffle/auction, tickets, and bar netted \$1,124. Net gain after expenses was \$901, benefitting the organ and the Heritage Center.



**Renting Keweenaw Heritage Center** has become more and more popular. Rental fees are very reasonable: Hourly rate — \$30; Wedding upstairs — \$400; whole building (upstairs and down) \$800 plus \$250 deposit. A \$35 heating fee is charged from November to April. KHC is universally accessible with two lifts. There are two separate public address systems, a separate catering kitchen, and KHC has internet accessibility. Each level can easily accommodate approximately 200 people.

The building has been rented for weddings, receptions, meetings, and family reunions. In 2023, it was the venue for forty different meetings, parties, or weddings. This could be the place for *your* next event. Check the website [www.keweenawheritagecenter.org](http://www.keweenawheritagecenter.org) for further details.

### ***From the Board Co-Chair***

Greetings and Gratitude to all who receive this newsletter,

Often, when I think of Keweenaw Heritage Center, Dan Truckey's words come to mind. Dan is the Director of the Beaumier UP Heritage Center. He was here to introduce an exhibit and spoke at the opening, saying to the audience,

*“What you have done for this building is a model for every community. Far too much of our history has been lost. You kept that from happening.”*

Looking at the building today, it's easy to forget what its condition was thirty years ago. If you are a visitor or a younger member of the community, you may assume that it has always been in pretty good shape because that's what you see. You won't know about all the hours and the funds that have gone into rescuing an architectural treasure. You might even think that, based on its exterior appearance, the building is still a church that serves and is supported by a particular congregation.

This newsletter tries to show what had to be done and who worked on doing it. How fortunate is a community where so many have been willing to contribute time, talent, and money to rescue a sadly neglected building!

Like many who have served on the Board, I so appreciate all who have helped. It's truly is privilege and a real pleasure to work with people who care, who are willing to give. We are all grateful to the Charter Township of Calumet for having been willing to become the owner in 1993. Supervisor Tim Gasperich, Clerk Robin Hicks, Treasurer Lana Hyrkas and other staff members provide continuing help to the Heritage Center.

As mentioned, 2023 has definitely been a landmark year. We have been thrilled to celebrate progress and major accomplishments. We have also had to bid sad farewells to workers and supporters. Our hope is that other people will step forward to help fill their shoes.

Can you be one of those people? Would you be willing to spend an afternoon or two during the summer meeting visitors who want to learn about Keweenaw Heritage Center and the community? Would you spread the word that this magnificent building is a great place to rent for events and celebrations? Would you think about learning more about what the Board does and possibly joining in the work of running the building? You can help assure that the building stays a place of beauty and an important part of community heritage.

There's a saying we need to keep in mind — if we don't use it, we'll lose it. No one wants that to happen. Thank you for all you do to keep it from happening.

Best wishes for a Happy Holiday season and for wonderful things ahead in 2024.

Jean Ellis, Board Co-Chair and Newsletter Chair

**MEMBERSHIP AND DONATION FORM (GIFTS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE)**

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ I'd like to help by volunteering. \_\_\_\_\_ Please contact me.

Enclosed is my donation to help keep the building going. Make checks payable to **Keweenaw Heritage Center**.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Designate (all/part of) my donation to ***Raise the Roof!*** Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Earmark \$ \_\_\_\_\_ of my donation for \_\_\_\_\_ the organ fund or \_\_\_\_\_ the exhibit fund

In addition, please accept my donation of:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation made in memory of or to honor: \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify \_\_\_\_\_ of my gift in memory or honor:

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, ST, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Check total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Thank you for supporting the **Keweenaw Heritage Center!**

Mail to: Keweenaw Heritage Center, 25880 Red Jacket Rd., Calumet, MI 49913

Keweenaw Heritage Center  
C/o Calumet Township  
25880 Red Jacket Road  
Calumet, MI 49913