



## The ELEVENTH HOUR of the ELEVENTH DAY of the ELEVENTH MONTH

In recognition of what is arguably one of our most important holidays, commemorating those who served both living and dead, this month we asked Dick Purinton, Post Commander for the Gislason-Richter Post of the American Legion, write a guest column regarding the day and the American Legion. Not all our veterans are members of the American Legion, but the local Post represents them just the same.

The Washington Island Electric Cooperative would like to recognize all those who have served and sacrificed in order to insure the freedoms we hold so dear are not lost.



### Island Veterans Day Observance

Like other rural communities Washington Island honors military veterans and their service.

This year, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, a Veterans Day Program will not be held at the Trueblood Performing Arts Center. Instead, a few words on these

pages are intended as a reminder of the importance of November 11th, with encouragement to pause and remember the time of the Armistice of WWI, and the sacrifices of our nation's soldiers, sailors and airmen over the course of history.

The Island's Veterans Day Program, very much a community event, has been arranged and led by members of the American Legion Gislason-Richter Post 402, with participation by many members of the public, including Island school children. Highlights have typically included: a slideshow of Island veterans past and present; the singing of patriotic songs; prayers, and the observance of silence at 11 a.m.; a guest speaker presentation on a patriotic topic;



Dick Purinton,  
Guest Columnist

and a rifle salute followed by taps. Such events are intentionally programmed in the minutes surrounding the 11th hour of the 11th day of November, the precise time when the Allies signed the armistice with Germany to end WWI in 1918—then believed to be “the war to end all wars.”

Initially, I was encouraged to join the American Legion by Ray Krause, a man often mentioned in these same pages as the major force in organizing, and then managing, the Island's electric cooperative. Ray was a WWI veteran, and he became an active American Legion member.

At the first American Legion meeting I attended, in the late fall of 1975, I was one of four or five members present. Seasonal residents comprised a significant part of membership, and in anticipation of winter they had already left the Island. Mr. Krause, Post Adjutant (secretary), ran the meeting in the absence of other officers. He sat at a small card table set up at the head of the stairs, what was once the choir loft in the old church building that became the Legion Hall. At the very next meeting, and despite my inexperience and reluctance, I was nominated and elected Post Commander! Over the next 45 years, I learned more about the American Legion as an organization, and about this particular

Post and its members, through listening, absorbing, and participating in activities. It is my privilege to once again hold the position of Post Commander in 2020.

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Ray Krause served in WWI. He became a Washington Island teacher, and later he was instrumental in the effort to organize and later managed the Washington Island Electric Cooperative. He was also a stalwart member and participant of Gislason-Richter Post 402 of Washington Island. (Island Archives photo)



A primary purpose of this veteran organization is to recognize fellow veterans, both the living and deceased, and to respect the service of those recently passed with graveside military honors. Such honors are bestowed whether a veteran served a 20-year military career or a two-year hitch. Another important American Legion goal is to help educate youth in Americanism. We do this through emphasizing the preservation of democracy, its values and its symbols. We also provide sponsorship of a Badger Boy and Badger Girl, and we challenge youth with writing essays that promote

balanced thought on current topics. Most meaningful, I believe, are the Memorial Day and Veterans Day programs attended by citizens.

Even though we can't join together for a public program, let's continue to honor Veterans Day in 2020. Our thoughts and prayers can still be directed toward the men and women who have sacrificed in life, mind, and spirit—and those who actively serve today—for the principles and well-being of our nation.

*Dick Purinton, Post Commander  
American Legion Post 402 of Washington Island*

**Left:** The monument to Island veterans was constructed following WWI, and dedicated in 1921. Names of Island servicemen on active duty during WWI, WWII, Korea, and Viet Nam are listed on bronze plaques. Now approaching 100 years of age, this monument is slated to be restored in the coming year. (Purinton photo)

## ISLAND VETERAN'S MONUMENT TO MARK 100 YEARS IN 2021

### Fundraising underway for restoration project

If you have never taken the time to stop at the Island Veteran's Monument located just south of Bethel Church on the Main Road, you really should. Next year will be the 100th anniversary of its construction. The granite "hardheads" of which it is constructed are symbolic of the strength of the men whose names are memorialized on its bronze plaques and all those who have served.

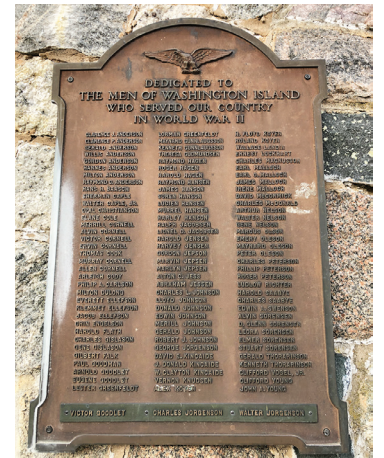
It has held up pretty well over its 100 years, but is definitely showing its age. The Gislason-Richter Post is spearheading a very needed restoration effort, but it will be an expensive one. Years of exposure to the elements have taken their toll. If you look at the picture in Dick's column, or better yet, go up and physically take a look yourself, you will see that the concrete base is severely cracked and deteriorated and the stonework is in need of stabilization and tuck pointing. In addition, the concrete cap is cracked in numerous places. The Post is working to gather costs for this worthy project; however, it is looking like this will be a \$20,000 undertaking.

To help with this effort, the Washington Island Lions Club is donating \$5,000 to this project and the Washington Island Electric Cooperative is donating \$2,000.

Once again, if you haven't ever, or haven't recently, visited the memorial and read the names

on those plaques, take the time to do so. If you can find it within your means to donate to the American Legion Post 402 of Washington Island to help with the funding of preserving this important memorial and piece of Washington Island history, please do so. Every dollar donated will help do justice to the memory of those bronzed names, the names you hear during the "reading of the roll" during the Memorial Day Services, and the recognition of those who served and are still with us and those who are serving still.

Send your donations noting the Veteran's Memorial to: American Legion Gislason-Richter Post 402, P.O. Box 143, Washington Island, WI 54246.



# WASHINGTON ISLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

We are continuing our perusal of board meeting minutes throughout the years.

**1973** The Washington Island Ball Club became members of the cooperative, ensuring that the beer served during games could be kept cold with refrigeration rather than ice.

Oliver Bjarnarson, Norbert O'Connell, Nathan Gunnlaugsson, Steve Ellefson, Kirby Cornell, John Herschberger, and Arni Richter were elected at the annual meeting this year.

Leonard Jorgenson retired after serving the cooperative for 28 years. It was noted at the annual meeting that he was hanging up his hooks and going fishing.

Extensive discussion and planning to run an extension to Detroit Island occurred this year. Underground construction was required due to the Island not being safely accessible

during the winter months. The cost of this construction made the project not feasible for the property owners.

**1974** Oliver Bjarnarson, Norbert O'Connell, Howard Young Jr., Steve Ellefson, Arni Richter, and John Herschberger were elected to the board this year.

Due to drastically increasing fuel oil/diesel prices, a rate increase was implemented. The fuel costs had increased 104% since the previous rate increase.

The cooperative purchased a used air compressor and sent Larry Young and Butch Jess to blasting school to become licensed blasters.

A new substation transformer was purchased for Engine #5.

## BILLING SYSTEM PROGRESS and other items of note

We are entering our third month of the automated meter reading/mailed billing and so far so good, with only a few glitches. We will hopefully be moving towards the online invoicing system for the January billing, perhaps earlier. It is important for us to emphasize that late charges are added by the system so it is important that you pay your bills on time. Late payment charges will not be removed from your billing and you should take this into consideration when sending your payments.

We are also on track to convert all seasonal members to monthly members starting in January. For those of you who are currently seasonal members, this means your last seasonal bill will come in December.

Mary is emailing a large number of bills each month, which means that you should receive the bill within a day or so of us reading them, giving you additional time to return payment. Everyone should understand, however, that until the online system is up and running (January or perhaps earlier) this is an arduous task that involves scanning each invoice as it is emailed. If you are expecting an

emailed bill, but receive a mailed bill, bear with us. It is easy to miss one when pulling them out of the stack of bills to be mailed. We read the meters on the 20th of each month (or the next business day if a weekend or holiday) and you should receive your bill shortly after that. Once the online system is up and running this will all be automated (with the exception of those who are having their bill sent by U.S. Mail).

Of note lately is a number of outage calls that have actually been an issue in the member's home. In some cases a seasonal member who has returned has forgotten that they turned their main breaker off before they left. Before calling the cooperative, please check your breakers. Also, if the meter on the pole or on your home is lit up and displaying numbers, you have power to the meter and the issue is after it, or in the home. We are here to help and make sure the lights stay on, but check those few things before you call please! Do not be afraid to call should there be no power to your meter. We do not necessarily know there is an outage unless you call, and responding to them is our job!

## FIBER UPDATE

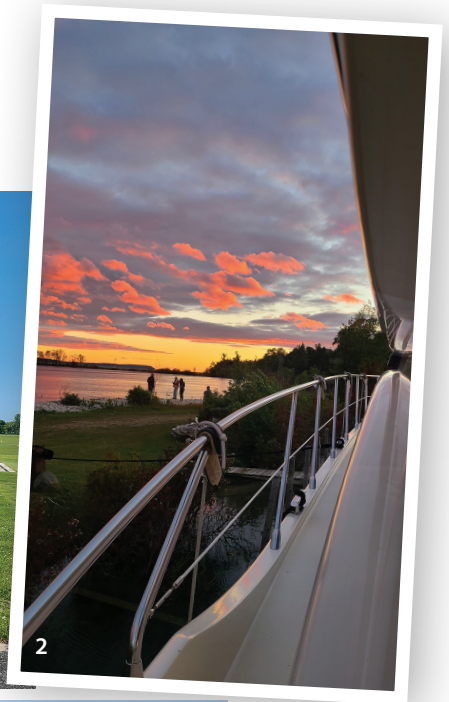
NSight, parent company to Cellcom, partnering with the Washington Island Electric Cooperative, Inc. is once again applying for a broadband expansion grant in order to complete the middle mile work necessary to make the opportunity for fiber to the home a reality. It is our intent, as part of this project, to initiate a pilot project around the Green Bay Road/Lobdell Point Road loop and to serve anchor institutions and businesses along the way.

This is a similar grant application to last year's unsuccessful application. We have the support of Door County, Door County EMS, The Town of Washington, The Fire Department, The Washington Island School, The Door County Economic Development Corporation, Door County Medical Center, and numerous businesses.

# ISLAND SUMMER PHOTO CONTEST ENTRIES

We have received a fair number of late entries to our Island Summer Photo Contest and are posting some here. We are delaying our announcement of the winner until the December edition to give us some time to review all the entries we received.

1. Tyler McGrane submitted this photo reminding us that EMS is there to help when summer fun goes in unexpected directions. Pictured are Door County EMS Lou Small and Lee Engstrom with Eagle Three in the background.



2. Tyler McGrane submitted this photo of a summer sunset.

3. Jennifer Emmert submitted this photo of a hungry monarch caterpillar eating milkweed.

4. Gloria Small submitted this photo, which she titled "Lazy Days of Summer."

## Robert Cornell, Manager

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Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

