



DEPOT DISPATCH

Summer 2020

BEHS Past President Paul Skalet Passes

"A TRULY GOOD AND RESPECTED MAN"

Black Earth Historical Society board member and past-president Paul Skalet died on Monday, 8 June 2020 at age 81. Skalet was born in the town of Vermont, resided and served in the Black Earth area his entire adult life.

"Paul was involved with the historical society from its beginning in the early 1990s. He was a board member for many years and president of the society for eight years," said BEHS president Wayne Barsness.

"Paul was a meaningful presence in the Black Earth community. He gave of his time and talents to the business community, local clubs, and organizations and to his church. He was always willing to help and provide

the leadership to get things done."

"He certainly will be missed by everyone who knew or worked with him over the years, a truly good and respected man," Barsness added.

Born in a cheese factory at Hwy. 78 and Vermont Road just south of Black Earth in 1939, Paul Skalet is featured on the Recollection Wisconsin digitization program about the history of the Black Earth area. The oral interview may be heard by going to a direct link at the BEHS website home page at blackearthwihistory.org.

Library director and historical society member Carolyn Shaffer said the . . .

Please see LISTEN TO PAUL, Page 2

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Monthly meeting 6:30 Wednesday, August 5 at BEHS.
- Brat Fry Fundraiser 9:00 to 4:00 or until the brats run out Saturday, August 22.
- Monthly meeting 6:30 Wednesday, September 2 at BEHS.
- Garage Sale Fundraiser early October at Museum on Mills Street, pending dates set by the Black Earth Area Chamber of Commerce. Check BEHS website for updates.
- Monthly meeting 6:30 Wednesday, October 7 at BEHS.



U.S. Army Reserve veteran Paul Skalet on Memorial Day 2017. Photo courtesy of BEHS member Jenny Pauley



Left to right: Paul Skalet on banjo, Bill Brunner, and Paul Dybdahl as The Bards in 1961. *BEHS photo*

Listen to Paul at Recollection Wisconsin

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sound recording is almost two hours long with Paul talking about Black Earth and briefly singing.

Paul was very proud of his Norwegian heritage and lifelong member of the Vermont Lutheran Church, singing in the church choir.

Paul is survived by his wife, Joan; daughter Erika Forseth, and son Trygve.

Memorials may be made to the Vermont Lutheran Church and the Black Earth Historical Society, according to his newspaper obituary.

Tusen Takk For Skalet Memorials

A thousand thanks for the many memorials made to the Black Earth Historical Society in memory of Paul Skalet. As of the BEHS July 1 meeting, at least \$1,685 have been donated in Paul's name so far.

Generous donations have been come in part from Nancy Jesse, Sandra Bennett, George Stauffer, Lawrence & Donna Rush, Saundra Roth, Jeffrey & Ann Wick, Julie Schmitt, Janice Cowan, Steve Schmitt, Jason & Krista Handel, Donna Fulton, Harold Miller, Marc Mickelson, James & Elaine Turk, Virgil & Gloria Simley, J. David & Sandra Stanfield, Carolyn Shaffer, Larry & Patricia Ziemer, Leland & Shirley Danz, Joanne Skalet, Ruth Haglund, Wayne & Susan Barsness, Jason & Krista Handel, John & Eileen Bonine, Robert & Faye Danz, and the State Bank of Cross Plains.

Museum Closed For 2020

CHANCES OF BRAT FRY & GARAGE SALE LOOK GOOD

The Black Earth Historical Society has closed its museum at the restored railroad depot on Mills Street for the remainder of the 2020 season. Prevented from opening in spring by mandates from Dane County due to the coronavirus pandemic, the board voted to keep it closed for the remainder of the summer due to continued restrictions on attendance and cleaning requirements.

Board members expressed hope in holding

a BEHS brat fry fundraiser on Saturday, August 22, and participating in the village-wide garage sale that may be held in early October, as earlier fundraisers have been cancelled so far in 2020.

BEHS board member Rita Miller said the Black Earth Area Chamber of Commerce will be deciding on the fall garage sale dates soon.

Please check the historical society website for updates at blackearthwihistory.org.



Massey tractors (all sold from Patrons' Mercantile) line up c.1946 for Black Earth Field Days at the Black Earth School with **Randolph Michaels** (third from right), **Melver Bordson** (fourth), **John Haugen** (fifth), **Grant Skalet** (eighth), **Hjalmer Haugen** (sixth), and **Bill Aeschlimann** (unknown order). Photo from the BEHS archives, originally sourced from **Gaige Paddock**, who is reportedly unseen in the photo but seated at a combine far left. A similar reprinted photo was published in the News-Sickle-Arrow on 4 August 1994. Sadly, Field Days is cancelled in 2020 due to Dane County mandates.

Black Earth Historical Society

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P.O. Box 214

Black Earth, WI 53515

Looking to the future, preserving the past

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Welcome New Members, Board Seat Open

The Black Earth Historical Society welcomes new members **Ron & Elaine Koenig** of Black Earth. Thank you to all those who have renewed their membership for 2020. Membership expires on December 31 of each calendar year.

Also, anyone who is interested in filling the remainder of Paul Skalet's term on the board until February 2021, please contact Wayne Barsness at barsnessws@gmail.com.



BLACK EARTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Website: blackearthwihistory.org

Email: behistoricalsoc@gmail.com

AmazonSmile Fundraiser: smile.amazon.com

Facebook Group: *If you grew up in Black Earth you might remember*, Administrator Gary Ballweg

Board: President Wayne Barsness, Vice-President Harold Miller, Secretary Jan Cowan, Treasurer David Cooper, Lavonne Clason, Rita Miller, Gary Ballweg, Jan Schroeder, Shirley Williams, Paul Skalet, Debbie Huelsemann

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