



## Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society e-NEWS



SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY | BOX 617 | DOUGLAS, MI 49406 | 269-857-5751 | [www.sdhistoricalociety.org](http://www.sdhistoricalociety.org)

NOVEMBER 2009

### UPCOMING PROGRAMS

*Mark your new 2010 calendars*

- **Wednesday, February 10, Tell Your Story --- You Are The Program**, 7:00 PM, Old School House
- **Wednesday, March 10, Other Female Artists of the Saugatuck-Douglas Area**, 7:00 PM, Old School House

A list of possible artists to discuss could include: Olive Williams, Mabel Wheelock, Minnie Harms Neebe, Elva Albrecht, Dorothy Helmuth and Christiana Ackermann Hoerman. If you have any information or images of works by the above mentioned women artists, please contact Ken Kutzel evenings at 269.857.4475 or by email at [kkutzel@yahoo.com](mailto:kkutzel@yahoo.com)

- **Wednesday, April 14, Annual Heritage Preservation Awards**, 7:00 PM, Old School House

### WHAT YOU MISSED

November 11, 2009 SDHS Meeting at the OSH, 55 present

President Harold Thieda called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. VP Jon Helmrich announced that each RSVP is due for the December Holiday Party at the SCA, there are three open positions on the board and that the OSH will have its Holiday Gift Shop open the first three weekends in December, Saturdays and Sundays, from 1-5 p.m. Volunteers are needed.

Jane Van Dis stated that she has collected \$4,000.00 of her hopeful \$5,000.00 for the annual sleep out November 14. Checks can be made out to CRS.

Ken Kutzel revealed two paintings, an oil of ferry boatman Jay Meyers and a cottage watercolor, received from Penne Laingen, granddaughter of the Shippers of Saugatuck.



# REMINDER



Have you sent in your reservation for the  
2009 Holiday Party??

The invitation all members received in early  
November provides all the details about this  
year's "new look" party on Sunday, December 6  
at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts.  
There are a limited number of seats and they are  
filling up quickly. Be sure to mail your  
Reservation Card no later than December 1 or if  
you have misplaced it, call Fred Schmidt at  
269.857.5751

The report on the survey of the Saugatuck Historic District should be available November 24 and Jim Schmiechen's timely reminder was that our own historical heritage group, the SDHS, enhances the community via awards, tours and lots of educational opportunities.

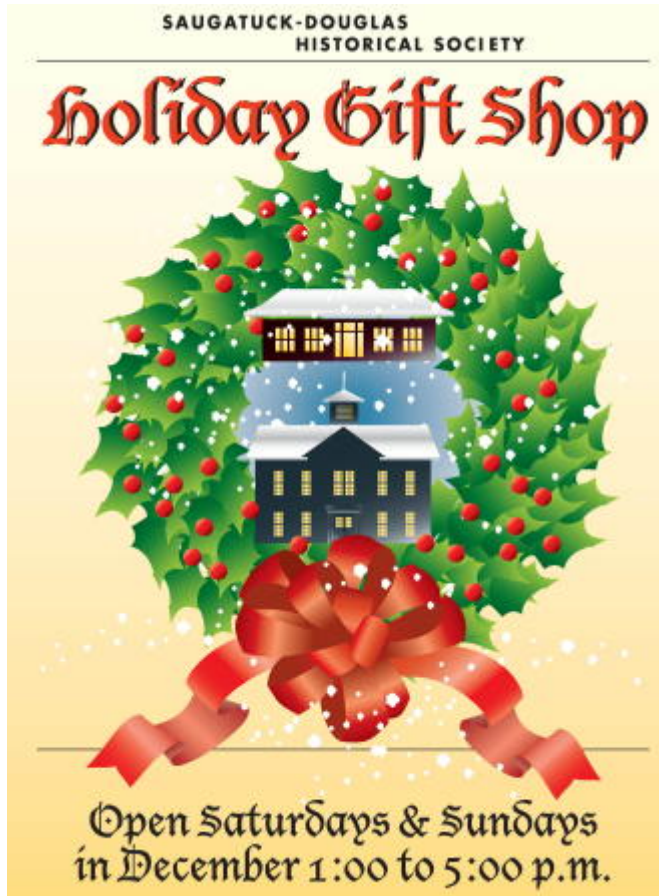
Jane Underwood introduced our speaker, Nan Taylor, field representative for the Michigan Historic Preservation Network. After an afternoon tour of the area and a restorative dinner, Nan responded aptly to the invitation, enlightening us on ***THE VALUE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION***. She answered questions on why and how to preserve, defined contributing structures and preservation easements, listed criteria for eligibility expenditures, tax credits and refunds, plus shared many other economic benefits of preservation. Click [HERE](#) to check out the Preservation Network's web site.

## MAKING IT EASY!

We may bemoan the challenges of the digital age, but we also love the connections and conveniences it has brought us. One such convenience is the ability to make financial transactions over the internet. And the Society is not behind the times in this regard! On the front page, upper left hand corner, of the Society's [web site](#) home page is a "Donate" button.

[Donate](#)

Click on this button and you will be able to donate either by credit card or, if you're really with the times, through PayPal. Yes, it has been tried and it does work. Our thanks go to Erin Wilkinson for researching and suggesting this feature, and to Fred Schmidt for making it a reality. We love preserving the past, but we are also in line with today's technology.



### At the Old School House

The Society will open its Holiday Gift Shop during the first three Saturdays and Sundays in December from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Old School House, 130 Center Street in Douglas.

The shop's gift selection reflects pride in its community's heritage with such items as the Society's popular books on area history, framed prints of historical photos and maps from the Society's archives, commemorative art notecard sets and coffee mugs, plus a return of the unique Saugatuck-Douglas afghan throw in both blue and multicolor formats. Some items will be available in colorful holiday gift-wrapping.

Proceeds will benefit the Society's many volunteer-driven programs. Volunteers to help staff the shop are welcome; contact Jon Helmrich at 857-3574 or [jon@ibctv.info](mailto:jon@ibctv.info) for details.

## NATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING

The [National Day of Listening](#) is Friday, November 27, 2009. On the day after Thanksgiving, set aside one hour to record a conversation with someone important to you.

Or, how about using this opportunity to write up one or more of your favorite memories of Saugatuck and Douglas by contributing your story to the Society's on-line archives. You can post your story by clicking [HERE](#).

The easiest way to do that is to write up and edit your tale in the normal word processing program you regularly use, and when you are satisfied with the result use "copy and paste" to place the text into the guestbook. If that is a problem for anyone, you can just email your story to me at [cyoder@tds.net](mailto:cyoder@tds.net) and I will post it for you or you can mail it to SDHS, Box 617, Douglas, MI 49406.

*submitted by Chris Yoder*

## TREASURE IN THE SINGAPORE SANDS?



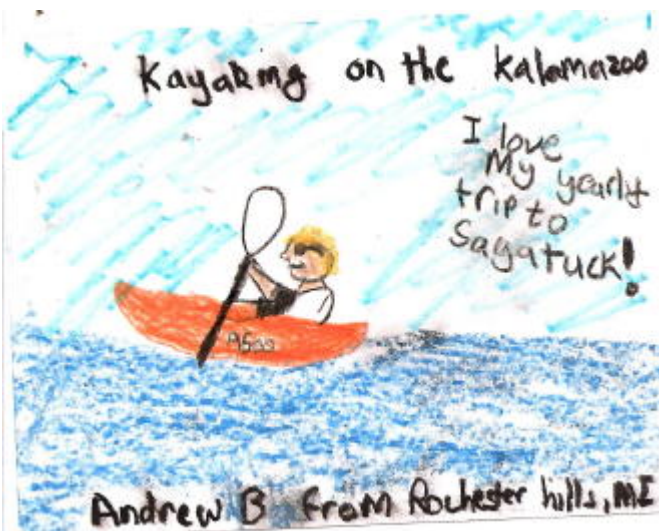
The Lake Shore Commercial (Commercial Record) of March 4, 1887 reported:

*"Last Wednesday a son of John Hirner found an old coin bearing the date 1682, in the sand hills near the old ruins of Singapore. One side of the coin bears the inscription "Patronahun Gaviae 1682". On the other side is "Leopoldus" "Schab Rex". There is a difference of opinion as to what nation the coin belongs to. Mr.*



Judy Anthrop, Jon Helmrich, Stephen Mottram and Sharon Bauer look at some of the items for sale at the Society's Holiday Gift Shop.

## 369 KIDS (AND A FEW ADULTS) DID IT



One of the winning post cards.

Coming Soon -- "My Summertime" Post Card Winners As you recall, the 2009 museum exhibition "Summertime" included a *"Summertime Post Office"* for kids (and some adults) to create their own "My vacation in the Saugatuck area" post-card.

369 post cards were created and posted -- and an independent group of teachers has selected the top

*Hirner calls it a Spanish coin, but others acquainted with the Spanish language and money say it does not belong to that country. The problem is whether or not there are more of the coins in the hills. The discovery re-awakens all the old stories of hidden Spanish treasures of which every town in the state claims an inexhaustible supply."*

Michigan was under the government of the French from 1634 until 1760. The year of this old coin was the year that Rene-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle (1643-1687) discovered the headwaters of the Mississippi River. In his sketch of St. Joseph, Michigan, Robert C. Myers writes that the French Crown wanted to strengthen French ties with the Miami Indians and granted the Jesuits a tract of land along the St. Joseph River to establish a mission about 1684. In the fall of 1691 Ensign Augustin Legardeur de Courtemanche, apparently with a small force of soldiers, built a military post near the mission.

This outpost, became known as Fort St. Joseph, and was located near present day Niles, Michigan. "Fort St. Joseph became the keystone of French control of the southern Lake Michigan region --- served as a military, commercial and diplomatic center to influence and develop trade with the French-allied Indians." Today Niles maintains a small museum to the Fort which is open several days each week to visitors.

Certainly a coin minted in 1682 could have found its way into the "New World" with the Jesuits by 1684, or the decades thereafter. But was the coin found by that Saugatuck youngster a French coin? The wonders of the internet tell us it was a silver Hungarian coin, minted under the rein of King Leopold from 1661 to 1686, with Leopold's bust surrounded by a laurel wreath on one side and the Madonna and Christ child on the other. "Patronahun Gaviae" was really "PATRONA HVNGARIAE (Hungary)".

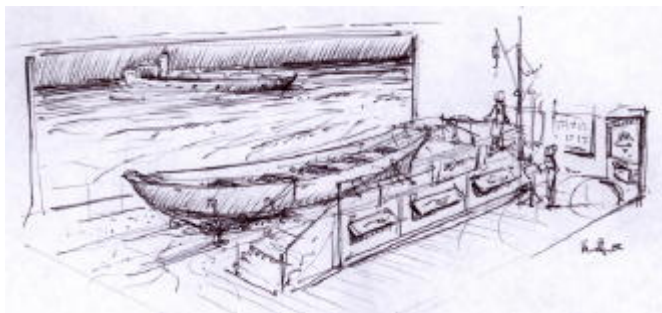
Was it part of a yet unfound treasure hoard lying in the sands of Singapore, or just a single coin dropped by an early French explorer, Jesuit priest, or Indian ally? Perhaps as construction crews put in the future condos and horse trails they will unearth a "pot of gold"? (silver?)

dozen entries. These will soon be shown on the Society's web site --check it out shortly. It is interesting to see what kids found most attractive about their summer visit.

## SOCIETY'S LIFESAVING BOAT PROPOSED FOR MAJOR EXHIBIT

The Society's restored 1854 life boat, the *Gallinipper*, is one of two known remaining of its kind in the United States and is to be the centerpiece of a display to be built on the new 'Back-In-Time' garden site at the Society's Old Schoolhouse "History Center" in Douglas.

Designed by the famous inventor, Joseph Francis and built by the same ironworks that built the Civil War era ironclad, the Merrimack, the boat was one of 48 such boats placed along the Great Lakes shoreline.



The 26 foot boat will be the centerpiece of a display titled "***Rowing Them Safely Home: Shipwrecks and Lifesaving On the Great Lakes***" with concept by Jim Schmiechen and design by Brian Alexander. The exhibit will include images, text, the story of its restoration, an interactive video and a special 'voices from the past' component developed by Mr. Mike Shaw's Saugatuck High School Advanced Placement English classes. Funding is needed and the Society offers it as an opportunity for individual or corporate sponsorship. Contact the Society's development team leader, Nancy Woods, at [nwoods370@hotmail.com](mailto:nwoods370@hotmail.com)



Herman Hirner enjoys picnic lunch, Osa Welch in the background

And what became of the young boy who found the coin? Six year old Herman Hirner was to live out his life in Saugatuck. He served in WWI and worked for the Saugatuck Lumber and Coal Company. In 1940, he married Idessa Annable, daughter of summer resorters from Chicago who had come to Saugatuck beginning in 1893. At the time of his death in 1966, he was serving as Saugatuck Village Assessor. Herman passed away at his residence, 642 Lake St, and was interred in Riverside cemetery. *submitted by Chris Yoder*

# HISTORY MYSTERIES

*by Jack Sheridan*

*(Answers are at the bottom of the Newsletter)*



**HISTORY:** Ca 1910 Jack Roda bossing carp netters.

**MYSTERY:** *Carp are not native to the Kalamazoo River. When were the fish first planted?*



**HISTORY:** Ca 1952 The waterfront building on the left was home to an early fast food caper named Hamburger Heaven.

**MYSTERY:** *What is the location?*



**HISTORY:** Thanks to Joe Migas, Mabel Underwood enjoyed the sun while watching others swim ca 1972.

**MYSTERY:** *What was the name of the pool?*



**HISTORY:** Ca 1938 The Fruit Exchange near the background shoreline was second in size to the Pavilion.

**MYSTERY:** *Where was it located?*

# ABOUT THE SOCIETY

To become a member or renew your membership select from the following categories:

Individual	\$25
Household	\$45
Senior (65+)	\$18
Senior Household	\$30
Student	\$5
Corporate	\$150
Life, Individual	\$300
Life, Household	\$500

Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406. You can also click [HERE](#) for a Society Membership Application.

Send items for the newsletter to: Fred Schmidt, PO Box 617, Douglas MI 49406 or email [info@sdhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@sdhistoricalsociety.org)

## MUSEUM AND TECH CENTER

The Saugatuck-Historical Museum is located in the historic Pump House at the foot of Mt. Baldhead on the west bank of the Kalamazoo River. The Museum's 2009 exhibit was titled:

### **"Summertime: A Century of Leisure at the Lake Michigan Shore"**

The Museum is now closed and will reopen May 31, 2010. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Museum and view images of the 2009 exhibit.

The Society's Technology Center has moved to the Old School House.

Society Phone: 269 857-5751

Museum Phone: 269 857-7900 (temporarily disconnected)

Tech Center Phone 269 857-7901

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

Upper left: The Michigan State Fish Association first planted carp in the Kalamazoo River in 1880.  
Upper right: The intersection of Water Street and Main Street on the Saugatuck waterfront.  
Lower left: The Mi-Ro on the corner of the Blue Star Highway and Wiley Road in Douglas.  
Lower right: The building was on the southeast corner of Griffith and Culver Streets in downtown Saugatuck.