We're busy planning the 2010 Society Directory. Only Society members will be included so if you still haven't renewed your 2010 membership, better do it NOW or be left on the cutting room floor! Click HERE

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Mark your calendar
- Wednesday, May 12, 7:00 pm at Old School House, Annual Meeting & 2010 Museum Exhibit Preview.
- Wednesday, June 9, 6:00 pm at Oval Beach, Picnic and Land Conservancy of West Michigan led tour of our Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area.

WHAT YOU MISSED

April 14, 2010 SDHS Meeting at the OSH
51 present

The following announcements were shared after President H. Thieda called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
- Weekly deadheaders/waterers are needed to sign up for the Museum
- April 24, 10 - 12 a.m. yard clean-up at OSH
- May 19, 7:00 p.m. Family History Group at OSH
- May 22, 10 - 12 a.m. composting and fertilizing at Museum
- Walking Tours Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 in July and August
- Support restoration of 1870’s All Saints' windows by purchasing Uncommon Grounds Coffee with All Saints’ on label
- August 14, 2010 1:00 p.m. May Heath Memorial Dedication – donations gratefully accepted
- May 12, 2010 SDHS Annual Meeting 7:00 OSH
- June 9, 2010 SDHS Picnic Celebration and Walk Through Dunes 6:00 p.m.

Ruth Johnson, landscape architect and Jim Schmiechen, curator, designer and historian, presented their power point OSH Garden and Back-In-Time Pathway Merging Nature and History for the 21st Century. This "garden
Have you ever wondered what it would be like on board one of these big freighters that deliver bulk cargo to Holland and other Lake Michigan ports? Holland author Valerie van Heest journeyed across Lake Michigan on board the 620-foot self-unloading freighter *Maumee*, the Lakes oldest operating self-unloading freighter, to gather data for her book "Buckets and Belts: Evolution of the Great Lakes Self-Unloaders". Her journey began in Chicago loading 13,000 tons of coal. Along with the captain, chief engineer and 18 other crewmembers, she traveled 12 hours across the lake to arrive at Holland and deliver their cargo to power the homes of Holland residents. Along the way, she piloted the boat, explored every nook and cranny of the vessel and spent time getting to know the crew and understanding their fascinating and unique career choices.

Van Heest will share her experience in her exciting program, "Deckhand for a Day" that will also take you underwater to explore the shipwreck *Hennepin*, the world’s first self-unloading vessel, now listed on tour" is the living 14th SDHS "pop-up book" bringing stories to life by touching, tasting, looking and listening while wandering in this one and a quarter acres in the center of historic Douglas.

Volunteer professionals including Brian Alexander, Chuck Carlson, Mike Economos, Ruth Johnson, Dottie Lyon, John Migas, Kristi Mueller, Marcia Perry, Greg Raymond, Jim Schmiechen and Nic Wilkens shared their expertise to provide six garden area stories labeled with Julie Kelly’s glass panels for each visitor:

1) Ironclad Gallinipper Lifesaving Boat Pavilion
2) Rhododendron and Azalea Garden
3) Mt. Baldhead Observation Deck
4) Schoolyard Garden Games
5) Crane’s Peach Orchard and
6) The Architect/Builder Table with OSH questions and answers

Phases are projected through the winter of 2010, but can only be completed with money. Promote SDHS' 14th "book". Eagerly engage in available fundraisers. This target IS do-able!

submitted by Jane Osman

**OSH GARDEN PLAN**
the National Register of historic places, which her team found in deep water off South Haven, Michigan. Buckets and Belts, along with her young readers book, *Icebound! The Adventures of Young George Sheldon and the SS Michigan* will be available for purchase and signing.

**About the Presenter**
Award winning author, shipwreck explorer and member of the Women Divers Hall of fame, Valerie has documented Great Lakes shipwrecks for over twenty years and her efforts led to an award from the Historical Society of Michigan for excellence in preserving and promoting State and local history. She writes for several maritime and historic magazines, produces documentary films, designs museum exhibits, and has appeared on an episode of History Channel. Valerie volunteers as director of the non-profit, Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates and spearheads the team’s search for ships lost off west Michigan’s shores. Her books, *Icebound! The Adventures of Young George Sheldon and the SS Michigan*, and *Buckets and Belts* both won Michigan State History awards from the Historical Society of Michigan.

**OSH PROGRESS**
Volunteers busy at work on the OSH Lower Level.

Detailed plans for developing a "Back-In-Time Pathway" through the 1.16-acre grounds surrounding the Old School House History Center in Douglas went public Wednesday, April 14 with a presentation at the SDHS meeting.

Introducing its theme "exploring history one step at a time", Saugatuck landscape designer Ruth Johnson and project coordinator Jim Schmiechen discussed the history of this project, displayed the latest plan drawing and described features designed to weave historical and ecological stories together in a walk-through, living classroom exemplifying our area's heritage.

"We're packing lots of knowledge into this site," Johnson explained. "We want it to have a strong educational impact that will attract groups from schools and garden clubs as well as those interested in local history, ecology and land conservation. We also want it to give visitors useful ideas about how they might improve their own property with plant selection, better use of water, organic fertilizers and other landscaping techniques that let
Al Lyon and Chris Yoder

John Sanford

PAVILION FIRE 50 YEARS AGO

The Back-In-Time Pathway concept, Schmiechen noted, is modeled after the overlook "learning stations" that have shown great popularity among visitors to the Historical Society's Museum garden at Mt. Baldhead Park since 1991, and has attracted start-up funding from the U.S. National Park Service.

At the top of the driveway, an arbor covered with flowering vines will welcome the visitor to the grounds alongside the first "learning station", a pavilion exhibiting a Civil-War-era, 26-ft. metal-hulled Francis Lifeboat, telling of the battle against shipwreck and storm a century ago. The boat was stationed at Saugatuck Lighthouse and abandoned there in the 1930s, but its remains were saved in storage for decades until Historical Society volunteers restored it several years ago as one of only two remaining along the Great Lakes.
Friday morning, May 6, 1960, a persistent breeze waltzed briskly from the west, then turned to the southeast. The Big Pavilion’s fifty first season opening loomed three weeks away. Manager Jack Repp was out to tell the Village maintenance boss Harry Newnham to turn on the water and to negotiate the summer advertising rates with The Commercial Record. From his Chicago office, owner Herb Shutter ordered red paint for the summer paint job. Somewhere among the thousands of light sockets and miles of 1909 wiring, a cancerous short had sparked, maybe ---

The Big Pavilion had minutes to live. In the Hotel Saugatuck next door, Viola Fox tallying last night receipts answered the phone. From across the river, the caller could see smoke coming from the Pavilion. Vi punched the in-house direct line alarm button to the Village fire hall. Minutes later it was already too late as chief Bill Wilson smashed through the Dock Bar door. Flames churned skyward

This and all subsequent learning stations will be identified by etched-glass signs mounted on sculpted wood pedestals. The glass is a 1/2-inch-thick laminate matching the break strength of Plexiglas. The pedestals will be fashioned from maple trees that were removed from the grounds for safety reasons after a consulting arborist confirmed that they were near the end of their life and could become a falling hazard. A preservative favored by park services will be applied to the wood for durability.

The pathway, also surfaced with permeable crushed concrete, will continue to the second learning station, a circular rhododendron garden recalling earlier American landscape architects O.C. Simonds and Charlie Mann, who lived here and "reinvented" our landscape after the lumber-boom deforestation.

The garden conceals a 5,000 gallon underground cistern that collects rain runoff from the Old School House roof and adjacent grounds. An underground sprinkler system will first consume the water from this reservoir before drawing any city water to irrigate the schoolyard lawn and plantings. A visible water feature such as a retention pond or recirculating fountain is being considered to highlight the water conservation concept demonstrated here.

From the rhododendron garden, two pathways will wind around a planting area to arrive at the third learning station, telling the history and significance of the Mount Baldhead dune, visible from a raised observation platform at the northwest corner of the grounds. A boardwalk approaching this platform will include a commemorative section using planks salvaged from the old Mount Baldhead stairs, which last year were dismantled and replaced with a new wood stairway.

Leaving this area, the pathway will proceed south toward Center Street and pass the fourth learning station, an exhibit depicting schoolyard games played there in the mid-late 1800s. Nearby, across the pathway, will be a seasonal garden of heirloom vegetables favored by residents of that era.

Directly ahead, the pathway will pass through the fifth learning station, a small grove of peach trees recalling the orchards that once covered the town and surrounding
and inky smoke boiled from the eaves of the towering dockside wall.

The beloved barn was already a funeral pyre. The only doubt was how much of Saugatuck would survive. In the end, a lucky wind swept blast furnace heat and burning embers westward, out over the river and ten fire departments, hoses streaming river water, were able to contain the conflagration and save the town.

So in mere hours, a Saugatuck legend, "the brightest spot on the Great Lakes" was distilled to blackened ruble. The big red dance hall - symbolically her birth and her death were bigger than life. A brilliant burst of light and excitement, followed by the wonder of it all.

terrain, reviving our area's economy after the lumber boom of the late 1800s had stripped away virtually all of the native trees.

Emerging at Center Street, the pathway will end with its sixth learning station, a building architecture exhibit that highlights the 19th century construction techniques still embodied in the Old School House as it stands today. Three additional learning stations will be featured inside the Old School House.

Throughout the pathway, an audio system accessed by cell phone is envisioned to provide narrative information about the garden, learning stations and ecological concepts demonstrated.

--- Many Donations Cited ---

Updating recent activity on-site, Johnson noted that the grounds have been cleared of non-native plants with grading machinery cutting deeply enough to remove their roots as well, so replanting with native species can begin. The clearing and replanting work is being done by Saugatuck building and landscape contractor John Migas.

Guidance for the selection of native-species trees, shrubs and plants that will best thrive in our area is being donated by Kelly Goward, Allegan County Conservation District officer, with emphasis on deer-resistant varieties. Several theme gardens are planned to attract butterflies, hummingbirds, pollinating bees and predators that naturally minimize harmful insects.

The garden benches and learning station sign pedestals are being made by Laketown wood-sculpting artist Marcia Perry, in collaboration with Saugatuck graphic designer Kristi Mueller and Brian Alexander, a Douglas industrial designer who also designed the lifeboat exhibit pavilion. The signage project is funded largely by the Federal Preserve America grant awarded in 2008, with etched-glass signs donated by Saugatuck's Julie Kelly through her Chicago firm, Blasart.

The schoolyard games exhibit is being planned by Saugatuck's Mike Economos, master gardener in charge of the riverside grounds around the Historical Society Museum, who served as start-up chairman of the garden
OLD MAPLES

100 Plus Year Old Maples at Riverside

The April 20, 1906 issue of the Commercial-Record announced that "A row of maples had just been planted around the new part of the cemetery." Current sexton Aaron Sheridan helped identify where this was and, as you can see above, these trees have done very well over the past 104 years. The photo was taken from the end of "Lilac Street", with the trees appearing on the north side of the road. In 1906, E. H. House had charge of the cemetery and the 30-year-old Mr. House suggested "that those owning lots will do well to attend to them early so that by Decoration Day our cemetery will be in good order." Good advice for our readers today.

contributed by Chris Yoder

Consultation for planning the water conservation system and permeable pavement is being donated by Douglas landscape architect Greg Raymond through his Chicago firm, EcoGardens, working in collaboration with Nicolaas Wilkins of Fenn's Design Mill, the Douglas architectural firm that has guided the Old School House project from its beginning.

SDHS 101

The first "SDHS 101" session of the year is just days away, and lots of information about this year's exhibit and schedule will be available for new members, as well as curious former members. This is a great time to learn about our award-winning organization, its history, and volunteering opportunities. The meeting will take place at the Old School House in Douglas on Saturday, May 1st, beginning at 10:00 a.m. If you plan to attend, please contact Nyla Hensley at noteablenyla@yahoo.com or call 269-857-5704.

YOUR FAMILY TREE

Thanks to the dawning digital age, discovering and recording your family tree is becoming easier as the years go by. Just ten years ago it was difficult. While it still requires diligent effort, now the SDHS will help you start the discovery of your family history.

The first step is to put on paper what you already know and bring it to the SDHS family history meeting 7:00 PM Wednesday May 19 at the OSH.

Your family tree is the roadmap, the framework for the history of your family. The first four generations for instance, can be thought of as a tree with sixteen frames hanging from it, each containing the essential information and perhaps a photo of the parent-grandparent that fits in that frame. The information for each is: name, birth date, place of birth, date of death, place of death and name of parents.

Very few of us are able to complete this four generation tree. Your great great grandparents were probably born
Memories of the Turtle Pond, Anyone?

Over many decades, the "turtle pond" near the intersection of Lake Street and Blue Star was a favorite place of adventure for Saugatuck youngsters. The construction of the East Shore Harbor Condominiums several decades ago inhibited this a bit, but the pond is still occupied by turtles of varying sizes. In this photo you can see the Saugatuck sign at the east end of the bridge peeking over the railing in the center. Are there enough folks out there with "memories of the turtle pond" (or even photos) to help us build a future article? Contact Chris Yoder, 857-4327.

around 1820 and died in the late 1800s. Who were these people? Their history and lives shaped the lives of the generations that followed. The branches lead to your generation. You carry their genes.

To find and learn more about these people is a fascinating project. Click HERE and start your project by filling in the blanks - as much as you now know - and bring to the meeting.
By the time he passed away in 1947, the 81 year old Doc Anderson Heath had left an 8 decade impression on his community as a prominent businessman and civic leader. But who was he on Oct. 30, 1895 when, at 29, he married 22 year old school teacher May Francis at the Congregational Church? Drawing from his obituary and the local newspaper, we'll try to reconstruct a bit of his life up until that time.

Doc was born November 22, 1865, the last of six children to Allegan county residents George P. and Amelia Bigsby Heath. His parents moved to Saugatuck in 1867. George had been involved in lumbering, grist mills, and shipping, and was in the process of building a new mill in Ludington when he died of typhoid fever in December of 1875. Doc was 10 years old at his father's death, and he went to work, according to his obituary "getting what schooling he could between work seasons". At 14 he worked on the city street crew for a dollar a day, taking his earnings home for his mother to save for him. In January of 1880, the paper reported that "Doc Heath cut the thumb off his left hand while splitting wood last Thursday, Dr. Stimson dressed the wounds." (His son Ted recalls him telling that it was so cold out while he was chopping wood that "he didn't even realize he'd chapped the thing off for a bit."

When he was 19, he bought a 30 acre peach farm, and paid it off the first year with the proceeds of his crop. In Jan. 1890, the paper reported that Doc Heath was living on "lactated food" and had "bid an eternal farewell to the teeth Mother Nature provided him and has no use for solid food until Dr. Finn has a new set for him." In Mar. 1891, 25 year old Doc is shown as elected to a term of Saugatuck Trustee, and by Jan. 1892 he is referred to as "Alderman Heath". The same issue said that in recognition of leap year, he had shaved off his moustache (the tradition was that on leap years day (Feb. 29) the custom was for women to propose marriage to men. No results were reported).

In Oct. 1892, partners Doc Heath and John C. Stillson established a new livery in town. In Jan. 1893 it was announced that Doc was sporting Mutton Chop whiskers. In Mar. 1893, he bought out his partner Stillson's interest in the livery. That same month he won a contract for road work. In Apr. 1894 he purchased the stage
line from O. D. Robinson. Mar. 1895 shows him to have been elected a Trustee by a 88-73 vote over hardware store owner John Koning. In Jul. 1895 he was treasurer of the 4th of July Committee.

Obviously Doc was a "young man on the move". submitted by Chris Yoder

The Dedication Ceremony for the May Francis Heath memorial is planned for Saturday 14 Aug 2010. More details to follow. Your donations are still needed. Make out your check to "The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society" marked for "the May Heath Memorial Fund." (SDHS, PO Box 617, Douglas, MI 49406) We are also still collecting photos of May, of her paintings, and personal recollections from people who knew her. Contact Chris Yoder, cyoder@tds.net or (269) 857-4327 or Marsha Kontio (616) 566-1239.
ABOUT THE SOCIETY

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

- Individual: $30
- Household: $50
- Corporate: $150
- Historian: $250
- Life: $500
- Senior (65+): $20
- Senior Household: $35
- Student: $5

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

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 2010 exhibit is titled:

"A Place Called Ox-Bow: 100 Years of Connecting Art, Nature, and People"

The Museum is now closed and will reopen Sunday, May 30, 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
Tech Center Phone 269 857-7901
www.sdhistoricalsoociety.org