OCTOBER 2011

YOU ARE INVITED

TO THE SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS "THANK YOU" CHILI SUPPER ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30

The SDHS Board members will again be hosting a chili supper to show their appreciation to all the SDHS members who have volunteered their time and efforts during the year for the Society's many programs and projects.

The event is on Sunday, October 30 at the Old School House beginning at 6 PM. Look for an "e-blast" with more details coming soon.

If you will be attending, please RSVP by REPLYING to this email. If you are unable to attend, please accept the Board's thanks for your support of your Society this year.

SAVE THE DATE

The December Program is the Society’s holiday gala, Sunday, December 4th - a lively evening of refreshments and food at the beautiful Saugatuck

SILVER ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN UPDATE

The Society's Silver Anniversary Campaign kicked off in September. All members have received our letter outlining the three ways you can help us to sustain and grow our wonderful efforts into the next 25 years.

To date, we have received over $10,000 in donations. The new Silver Lifetime memberships are over half committed - we will only have 25 of these special memberships. We will continue our efforts to reach our goals: $25,000 to the operating fund, 25 Silver Lifetime members, and 25 members of the new
Center for the Arts. Stay tuned for details.

WHAT YOU MISSED

The Society's October Program, *Visitors from Douglas Cemetery To Bring Tales from the Crypt*, featured interesting ghosts from the Douglas Cemetery. Shown below are Steve Williford of Christmas Carol fame as Scrooge (with Art Lane in the background) and our own Kit Lane.

A HERITAGE FESTIVAL

INQUIRY

Legacy Circle (naming the Society in your wills and estate planning).

The campaign will continue into 2012, but we would love to reach our goals by the end of this year. I know we can do this with our committed and active members! Please take some time to review the three pledge cards that were sent to you and send them back to us as you plan your year-end giving. The Society needs your support now more than ever.

We heartily thank the following who have already joined the Silver Anniversary Campaign:

Valerie Atkin and Russ Pitts
George Brown and Gregg Kurek
James and Kat Cook
William Dumbleton
Tom and Donna Farrington
Arthur Frederick
Bob and Bobbie Gaunt
Sarah Harris and Alex Fink
Jon Helmrich and Stephen Mottram
Bill Hess and Mike Mattern
Stacy Honson and Dick Bont
James G. Houser
Steve Hutchins
Sona Kalousdian and Ira Lawrence
Edward J. Kelly
Marsha and Loren Kontio
Karen Lehrer
Stub Louis
Robert and Ruth Marx
Joy Muehlenbeck
David and Kristi Baker Mueller
Sally Munley
Judy Oberholtzer
"Mr. Stillwell and her son Mike ran a hotel in the 60's and 70's [The Casablanca, as shown in the photo above.] on Butler Street.

Do you know what happened to them? Her former husband was Verne Stilwell, a theater professor at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo."

If so, REPLY to this email and we'll include it in next month's newsletter. The contact for the inquiry is Craig Stilwell, 428 Kedzie Street, East Lansing, MI 48823 email is Stilwell@bus.msu.edu ---"and thank you for the memorable tour."

contributed by Jim Schmiechen

Welcome! The Family History Group meets on the first and third Thursday of every month at 3:30 in the Old School House. Group focus is on building family trees by learning and utilizing digital research techniques. Most research is based on the utilization of digital resources - these resources are the many data bases containing historical information that are accessed via the internet. Some of them currently in use by the group are: Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society, Ancestry.com, Family Search, Rootswes, Genweb, New England Historical and Genealogical Society, etc.

Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society website data bases are reached by going to the On-Line Research Center on the Society's web site. One click leads to a page with listings for some fifty data bases that contain local historical data - others are links that lead to sites containing national and international data. All of this is as close as a few clicks of the mouse. Try it!

Tom and Dorothy Otto
Sandra and Travis Randolph
James Schmiechen
Fred and Janet Schmidt
Nancy Schmitt
Tracey Shafroth
Dick and Marty Shaw
Harold and Sandra Thieda
Water Street Gallery
Douglas and Deborah West
Robert and Sally Weist
Sally Winthers and Erik Kirchert

If you need additional pledge cards or have misplaced them, please REPLY to this email and we'll send you another mailing.

We look forward to hearing from you becoming a part of the Society's Silver Anniversary Campaign.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome these new members who have joined the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society since the last newsletter.

● Harvey & Judy Van Dam, Saugatuck, MI & Chicago, IL
● Michael Metty & Mary Currey, Douglas, MI
● Christopher Dietrich, Glenn, MI

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NOVEMBER PROGRAM

A Salute To Our Veterans
7:00 PM on Wednesday, November 9
at the Old School House
There are mountains of historical information awaiting you out there in the cyberworld. Learning to build your tree requires your effort and lots of it - the Society cannot accomplish it for you. But members of the Family History Group are gathered together to support each other's effort. Our experience ranges from novice to experienced and participation ranges from casual to dedicated.

So come and check it out! Our next meeting is Thursday October 20, 3:30 at the Old School House. Contact Jack Sheridan at jack.sheridan@gmail.com or call 857-7144 with questions.

This column will appear each month in the newsletter. Our members plan to tell you about their exciting family tree discoveries. Stay tuned!  

submitted by Jack Sheridan

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Photo of returning vets (World War II) in 1946, organizing the Jones-Woodall Post 6134 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, in the lower level of the River Guild building on Blue Star Highway, now the Button Gallery. Individuals include Gene Lundgren, Jack Campbell, Buster Purchase, Vic Culver, Sonny Alexander, Bob Stafford (Commander), and Ev Bekken.

In recognition of the traditional American veterans month, the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society presents a program on local men who went off to war to serve their community - and country.

After an historical view of Veterans Day (originally Armistice Day) by Jeff Wilcox (a Vietnam war vet), the program will follow in two parts - one, a presentation by Senator Patty Birkholz (now the governor’s Director of the Office of the Great Lakes) who will talk about her book-survey of Saugatuck-Douglas area World War II veterans, and the second a "round-table talk" by local veterans: Gerald Bekken representing the World War II, Dean Batchelor, the Korean War, Dave Harthorn the Vietnam War, and Zach Pedric Iraq/Afghanistan war. Refreshments will be served.  

submitted by Jim Schmiechen
HALLOWEEN AT KEMAH - 1933


Costumes, games and special treats were the fare 78 years ago this month, when twenty-five area children celebrated Halloween at Kemah in 1933. The Commercial Record reported:

"The moon lent its image and a suitable squint in its wicked eye with a dark feathered owl pecking at the other one. There were dangling skeletons minus rattle, grinning pumpkins with broken teeth in need of the dentist but otherwise uncommunicative, black cats without a miau and nobody seemed afraid to cross their feline paths."

Mrs. William J. Springer (Alys/Alice) and children Shirlee/Shirley and Bill were the hosts for yet another

DINE AROUND 2011

Ken Carls prepping for 2 back to back (Friday and Saturday) Dine Around dinners - total of 26 guests.

Friday at the home of Ken Carls and Jim Schmiechen
Curtis and Mary Kamman
Josephine Clark
Janie and Jim Fleming
Shirley and Larry Akins
Don and Ruth Wendell
Mary Kay and Mark Baker
Richard and Kathy Talsma

Saturday at the home of Ken Carls and Jim Schmiechen
Janet and Fred Schmidt
Jerry Carpency and Doug Turner
Herb Bills and Scott Morrow
Floyd Fleming
Mark Barrone
Phil Sabatini & Mark Wilson
Chris Seidel & Mike Mulcahy
special event for children and their wonderful Pleasant Street home.

The Springers had purchased Kemah (an Indian word meaning "In The Teeth Of The Winds") in June 1926 as a summer home from F. S. Thompson and had major renovations done on it by their neighbor, architect and artist Carl Hoerman. The Hoermans were to become fast friends, traveling with the family on a trip through the Southwest and through Europe.

Jane Bird Van Dis lived down the hill under Kemah and says she remembers Shirley standing on the hill and calling out "Jane, Jane Bird, come up and play". June Force Fox's mother worked for the Springers at the house. She recalls that Shirley and Bill were in school at Saugatuck at one time and that Mrs. Dodie Wilson was Alys Springer's best friend in the area.

When the father, William J. Springer (b. 1883), died on Feb. 10, 1941 at their Chicago home, Shirley was attending Columbia College in Missouri, and Bill was a cadet at the Culver Military Academy in Indiana. Wife Alys, who had been ill for some time, died tragically from a heart attack in June of the same year, age 37. Both rest in Saugatuck's Riverside Cemetery.

Saturday at the home of Travis and Sandra Randolph

Dee DeMond
Tana Winston
Herk and Christa Wise
Sally Winthers and Erik Kuchert
Dawn and George Schumann
Arthur Ashley
Vic Bella

Saturday at the home of Mike and Katherine Economos

Harold and Sandra Thieda
Peter and Martha Hanson
Steve Masterson and Tim Spooner
Marilyn and Dean Batchelor

Saturday at the home of Arnold Shafer

Sunny Hill and Maury Decoster
Wayne Nestander and Merle Malmquist
Val Atkins
Jimmy Zisis
Judi and Howard Vanderbeck

Saturday at the home of Steve Teich

Peggy Boyce
Mike Van Meter and Judy Hillman
David Colwell and Mary Ann Quick
Janeen and Glenn Fowler
Jane Dreyer

A BIG THANK YOU to all the hosts, their helpers and dinner guests for a wonderful evening of good food and fun conversation.
Johnson Fox reported when he came home on leave from the war that he had heard that Bill (William J. Springer Jr.) had been killed in an explosion while loading ammunition. His name is included on the "WWII West Coast Memorial" in San Francisco, CA with a date of May 7, 1944. Other sources place the tragedy at Hunter's Point, CA.

During their years in Saugatuck, the Springers made a decided impact on the village, even though they were only part-time residents. Mel Hershaw remembers Shirley driving around town in her car (a Lincoln Zephyr, he thinks) with her pet sheep riding in the seat. Locals did hear she had married, but no one seems to know anything further, or recalls her coming back for a visit. With a birth of Sep. 12, 1924, if Shirley were living, she would have just recently celebrated her 87th birthday. We cannot help but wonder what a wonder trove of photos she might have from the family times in Saugatuck.

There is a rule that prudent lawyers follow: Never ask a witness a question unless you already know the answer! Should have remembered that before displaying a photo of the vessel Placida in last month’s newsletter. I had begun research to determine the history of the vessel and was confident that it was the yacht pictured in other photos in our archives.

Wrong dog breath!

Turns out that vessel here [bottom] in the winter of 1929-30 was the Theo not the Placida pictured last month [upper]. A close look establishes the fact that the Placida is larger with more portholes and superstructure.

The Placida has an unusual history. She was built in
With a little internet effort, I managed to track down one of Shirley's closest girl friends from Chicago, Joanne Boynton. She reports that Shirley (or Shirlee, as she began to spell her name) did marry and then divorced. Her second husband was Johnny Maines, a rodeo circuit star, and there were no children. Shirlee herself, always a daredevil, joined in the rodeo activities and even rode bulls. She had a farm around Palatine, Illinois and Joanne (who had become Mrs. Edward Chrisman) would bring her kids so the family could ride horses. Shirlee passed on some time ago. So it seems the Springer Saugatuck memorabilia, if it even existed, is out of reach to us. 

contributed by Chris Yoder

Bath, Maine in 1930 and probably visited Saugatuck in the early 1930s, as we have photos of her entering the piers and at anchor in Kalamazoo Lake. At the beginning of WWII she was acquired by the U.S. Navy and converted to a patrol boat and submarine chaser, seeing wartime service along our Atlantic coast and surviving the war. Wonder what happened to her after the war?

The Theo was owned by a Frank Parrish [probably a part time resident] and was brought here in November 1929 to have deck work done over the winter. Hence the temporary wooden roof. The November 22, Commercial Record contained a paragraph:

The steam yacht, Theo, owned by Frank Parrish, is in the harbor being laid up for the winter. All the upper works of the boat are being housed in so the winter storms will not affect the fine finish, and the work is being done by local men. It is fortunate to have this work come to Saugatuck at a time when so many of our people are idle and as our harbor is a good one for winter storage it is hoped that this boat's stay here will be the fore runner of many more to come.

There is another photo of the Theo docked near the ferry landing in the summer, likely about 1932. The identity of the owner Frank Parrish is a mystery. He does not appear to be of the Parrish family that owned the drugstore for many years. The vessels have similar lines and I suspect they have a common heritage. Does this story ring a bell with any of you history buffs?

The photo below is a topic for discussion for more than one reason. Find out more next month.

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TOM AND DOROTHY OTTO
REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR

Dorothy Reddy Otto - I was ironing clothes when I heard the news in my parent's home in East Lansing (and I was ironing when I heard that President Kennedy had been shot --- and I don't iron that often). It was just unbelievable that anything like that would happen. The radio was on and I was the first to tell everyone in the family, and they didn't believe me. I was fourteen, and momma had just taught me to iron and I wasn't very good, but I could do handkerchiefs real good. I remember telling momma that I had just finished the handkerchiefs but the Japanese had just ruined Pearl Harbor. I remember

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Daddy sitting us down and telling us what this all meant. I had an older sister who was married later to a B-17 pilot, Fran Ferguson. He was shot down and spent time in the German Camp at Buchenwald. He always contributed to the Red Cross, because the Red Cross taught him how to knit, and he said had he not been able to knit himself socks, he would never have made it when they marched them between camps.

*Tom Otto -* I was up in my bedroom in East Lansing. We had a PA system in the house. We had six bedrooms, and my dad announced on the PA system that we had been attacked by the Japanese. I was ten years old. I had four older brothers and they all went into the service and they all made it back.

*contributed by Chris Yoder*
ABOUT THE SOCIETY

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

- Individual: $30
- Household: $50
- Premium: $250
- Corporate: $500
- Life: $1,000
- 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-Douglas Historical Society History 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 2011 exhibit is titled:
A Village Patchwork: Everyday Life in Saugatuck-Douglas

The Museum is open weekends from noon to 4 pm through October. Click HERE to learn more about the Museum and view images of the 2010 exhibit.

The Society's Technology Center is located in the lower level of the Old School House History Center at 130 Center Street in downtown Douglas.

Society Phone: 269 857-5751
Museum Phone: 269 857-7900
Tech Center Phone 269 857-7901
www.sdhistoricalsociety.org