NOTES FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Well, the weather has certainly changed! We were fortunate to have gotten the cedar planks for the Francis Life Boat Pavilion completed before the weather turned cooler. Thanks to the guys who did the staining: Steve Hutchins, Al Lyon, Dick Lyons, Dean Batchelor, Bob Sapita, Glenn Spoerl, Jim Muir, Chris Yoder and yours truly. These stainers saved your Society a great deal of money by doing the work themselves. Another example of volunteerism at work in your Society. Although the building is not complete as of this writing, the life boat itself is in the building and the art work for telling the story of life saving in the local area is in production and should be completed soon.

The Heritage Weekend was another successful fundraiser for the Society. Thanks to all the hard work put in by those who came out on a beautiful Saturday. We had many visitors from out of town who came to take the walking tour as well as the trolley tour of the lakeshore. I heard nothing but praise for the selection of homes and commercial buildings on the tour. Thank you again to all the volunteers.

Remember, your Society is based upon volunteers - so become one!

Dine Around 2011 is being chaired by Stacy Honson and Judi Vanderbeck. If you did not attend last year you really missed a great time. Ask anyone who

SILVER ANNIVERSARY CAMPAIGN

Look for a letter in your mailbox soon on the Society's Silver Anniversary Campaign.

We have three campaign goals for this year:

- Raise 25,000 dollars for operating funds.
- Enroll 25 Silver Lifetime Members.
- Commit 25 new Legacy Circle Members.

The entire SDHS Board has taken the lead by choosing one or more avenues of support. Keep History Alive
attended one of these great dinners and they would tell you what a fun event this was. Look for more information elsewhere in this newsletter.

Lastly, society member Donald Ruyle, who enjoyed accompanying his long time friend Ken Kutzel to the Tuesday Talks, passed away recently. Your President Harold Thieda

BOAT IS IN THE BARN

In transit (Note the Welcome to Douglas) sign

OCTOBER MEETING PROGRAM

Visitors from Douglas Cemetery To Bring Tales from the Crypt

In keeping with the season, the October 12th meeting at the Old School House, will feature a visit by some of the more interesting ghosts from the Douglas Cemetery. The founding families will be represented with Lucinda Dutcher, and her Civil War hero son, George; Robert McDonald, Frank Wade, the first white child born in Douglas; and William A. May, the first boy of Douglas.

With the help of our technical people who have photographed their tombstones so they will feel at home, there will be a parade of citizens from the distant, and not so distant past. Even a visitor from

Here by joining us in this important campaign.

Happy Silver Anniversary to all of our treasured members.
ANYBODY SPEAK DUTCH?

Last month we featured an article from AmericA magazine, one of the most prominent publications in Europe - a beautiful six page spread. The article is on Saugatuck-Douglas and the ghost town of Singapore entitled “The Pompeii Of The Great Lakes”. Both the Society and Jim Schmiechen are mentioned. Click HERE for a copy of the article written in Dutch.

Thanks to Mr. E-J Ohler and Ms. D Saager-Ohler, friends of Arlene Sherman's family, we now have the English translation. Click HERE "The Pompeii Of The Great Lakes" in English.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome these new members who have joined the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society since the last newsletter.
All 125 individual staves of the old root beer barrel have been stripped and sanded. She is now lead-based paint-free and ready to roll. Fortunately, the Friends of the Barrel decided to hire an abatement contractor rather than attempt it with volunteers. It would have been an overwhelming task taking many weeks for several folks to complete. The staves are now numbered for reinstallation after being refinished. The next step is the careful deconstruction of the building which is planned before bad weather. Then the various components will be stored for the winter and readied for finishing in the spring.

Like any project of this nature, it has taken longer than expected to get to this stage. However, the delay has
seemed to garner more interest, enthusiasm, and eagerness to assist. You are encouraged to visit the Society's web page and blog for more details.

Memorial staves with donor's name, although going fast, are still available for $150 each. To become a Friend of the Barrel, order a "Save the Barrel" shirt, donate or ask questions contact Chris Yoder at cyoder@tds.net or (269) 857-4327. The Friends of the Barrel are also on Facebook.

contributed by Vic Bella

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**THE GLEASON NET SHED**

This painting by Charles Vickery (1913-1998), noted painter of ships and seascapes, is the only one we know of that depicts a local Saugatuck scene. It is the building which formerly stood on the site of the present day Gleason's store on Water Street.

Interviews with Henry Gleason on Aug - Sep 2011.

"This building was used as a net shed to keep the nets and other fishing equipment. My grandfather bought that property in 1919. The abstract shows that it had belonged to the Interurban Railway Company. He built the building and fished out of it. My Grampa and Dad

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**HISTORY by CAMERA**

You Know the Corner

If corners could talk this one was has a history to tell. Today it is the four-way stop corner at the intersection of Center and Ferry Streets in Douglas – lots of traffic but not much excitement.

For a slice of history we can turn the clock back to paint a mental picture of what was there about 1935. This restaurant and gas station were on the northeast corner. Across Center Street was another gas station - a Shell station. Across Ferry from the Shell station on the southwest corner was the Village of Douglas water tower. Across Center on the northwest corner was the West Shore golf course clubhouse. The clubhouse building is there today.

This image and others from his family collection were provided by Phil Quade - his father Lewis had the gas station at the time of this photo. Lewis also drove a truck for the Cook Oil Co which was a fuel distribution business. Another of the Quade photos shows motor scooters for rent, a side business operated from the station.

The restaurant portion of this building sits on the corner today. Now empty, it had been remodeled to be
had gill nets out in the lake. They also did cement mixing, they did sidewalks and steps, and they even did the foundation for the Big Pavilion.

My Dad and Grandfather had a fishing tug and they docked at that. My grandfather lived down on Lake Street, and he and his wife would move upstairs in the building in the summer time - there was no heat up there and of course they could not live there in the winter. I don't know if they rented the house or not, probably did. Their house on Lake was two doors from Dykstra's parking lot on that same side of the street; it was right next to Bird Center. They probably had a cook stove at least in the upper floor (which explains the pipe in the one picture). In later years the water came up so high and the footings settled and it kind of got in disrepair.

My mother and Dad ran a row boat rental, which would have been during the war, say 1942-43. The small boat with the cabin on it was built by my family and named the "Heinie", it was named after me, Henry - it's a nick-name for Henry. It was sunk there and we eventually destroyed it, probably in the 1960s."

"There was a smaller ice house to the north of it, a sales showroom for the West Shore real estate development. A guess is that the gas station portion on the right in the photo is still there also but has been moved to face Center Street.

For next month - the handsome vessel is a genuine history mystery. Stay tuned.
separated by about ten feet distance. The side walls of the ice house were concrete about 6 feet high poured cement, on top were boards, about 2 by 6’s, and between the studs was sawdust poured in for insulation. The whole building was full of sawdust. They used to saw ice out in the river, it would be about 4 to 5 feet thick in the winter time, and they would cut it with ice saws (we’ve still got some), and they’d push it up a ramp there with a pipe pole, and they’d use it all summer to ship fish in, and sell a little bit to people with an ice box. There were a lot of willow trees planted around there to shade the ice house in the summer.

My wife and I bought the property in about 1965. We took down the boathouse around 1965-66 and built the store.

How and when Charles Vickery would have painted the building is a mystery. The photograph of the net shed presented above is cropped from a larger one which has been dated as about 1942, because a section of the fishing tug "Goshorn" was visible in the picture (it sank in Dec. 1943). The stove pipe, seen in the photograph, is missing in the painting, and also missing in a believed later photo by Bill Simmons. Henry's grandfather and namesake died in 1943, and it's reasonable to think that sometime after he was no longer a summertime resident of the upper floor, the pipe could have fallen away without being replaced.

Vickery's talent was evident very early. The late Saugatuck resident Phyllis Pamperien Yoder, sat beside him in High School art class at Lyons Township High School in Lagrange, Illinois, and said it was quite intimidating to see his work and compare it to her own. His official biographies report:

Vickery once said that the early years found him along the shores of Lake Michigan living in a tent and eating peanut butter sandwiches. “Many hours and many years were spent in all kinds of weather studying wave actions and the color of sky and water.

In the 1950s, Vickery became closely associated with the W. Russell Button Galleries, and even today his
works can be found in the Button Gallery in Douglas. 

contributed by Chris Yoder

2011 HERITAGE PRESERVATION AWARDS

New Construction

Cottages at Dolly Brook
Family Resort
2088 66th Street
Ganges Township
The Keag Family, owners

Residence
231 Grand Street
Saugatuck Angela Pastorelli and Sven Roenspiess, owners

Preservation of the Historic Built Environment

Residence
444 Mary Street
Saugatuck
Bill Camp and Paul Butcher, owners

Residence
10 Wall Street
Douglas
Floyd Fleming, owner

The archives were recently given a number of photographs relating to the Saugatuck Fire Department. These three photos above show the evolution of the types of equipment that were being used throughout the years.

The top photo ca. 1908 shows the fire hose carts used before an engine was purchased. One of these carts is on display at the Pump House Museum.

The middle photo shows the brand new 1923 fire truck.

The bottom photo taken in 1966 is of Engine #2. It shows it being used to water the flowers at Oval Beach.

A big thanks to the Saugatuck Township Fire Department and to Cynthia Sorensen for their recent donations to the Historical Society of these photos.

Mary Voss - volunteer archivist/collections manager

WHERE WERE YOU ON DECEMBER 7, 1941?

Al Pshea
Al Pshea was in the service at the Naval Station in Newport, Rhode Island when the news of the attack on Pearl Harbor reached him and his fellow enlistees. He says "we had just gone through training and we were waiting for assignment in different positions. I had enlisted at Kalamazoo in October. Mainly I decided to go into the Navy because I knew I'd have my bed with me, I'd have a warm meal with me, and I'd have my medical care with me, and I'd always been interested in the sea. My great grandfather had been a whaler and I had been in the Sea Scouts. I joined the Galliniper in 1936 and was with her until I went into the service in 1941. Charlie Gilman was the skipper and I ended up being First Mate, and Cliff Dengler was second mate, Bob Peel was one of the crew members." (In the early 1950s, Al was to be one of the managers of the Douglas Root Beer Barrel!).

Sorry Jane Bird Van Dis: The caption was missing on her photo with her Pearl Harbor memories last month. It should have looked like this.

Gather up your Pearl Harbor memories, or those of older family members and friends and send them along: Chris Yoder at email: cyoder@tds.net, phone: 857-4327, or mail at: 551 S. Maple St., Saugatuck, MI 49453.

SECOND ANNUAL COMING UP
Heritage Preservation Leadership

Judy Hillman
for sustained commitment to the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society, the Saugatuck Historic District Commission and her private design clients.

Dorcas Ballard Storms (1782 - 1872) - Taylor Cemetery

The second annual "Dozen Daffodils for the Dearly Departed" planting event will be coming up soon. This is when we identify a number of "orphans" at area cemeteries and volunteers plant bulbs to give a bit of spring-time bloom to the resting places for these.

MEETING MEMORIES

Demi Demerest, Pat Denner and Vic Bella at the July Monthly Meeting "From Fishing Tug, to Net, to Market and Fry Pan"
Saugatuck City Manager explains why he picked this piece of art to show at the August 23 Tuesday Talk "Looking at Paintings and Finding Self" led by Maryjo Lemanski (holding the piece of art) of Water Street Gallery

photos courtesy of Jim Schmiechen

MEMORIES OF MAY FRANCIS HEATH:
FINAL IN A SERIES
The Passing of May Francis Heath

May Francis Heath passed away 50 years ago this month as she was getting ready to go the Congregational Church. She was found sitting at her writing desk, still in the family home of "Heathcote".
From the touching obituary written by her granddaughter Bette Barron Diaz

"It was early Sunday morning --- Sept. 10, 1961. The village of Saugatuck was going about its Sunday business --- women rinsing breakfast dishes, men reading Sunday newspapers, dogs ambling lazily up the street, stretching in the early sun, church bells singing up on the hill. There was nothing unusual about it. Life had gone on like this for years in the village. Peaceful. Quiet. But one thing happened on that early morning to cast a shadow on the village, the county, the community. A long shadow whose fingers reached out to touch every thinking, feeling person --- May Francis Heath passed away.

"May Francis Heath. Born May 13, 1873, daughter of John Francis and Julia Morrison, Saugatuck pioneers. Village historian, writer, artist, clubwoman, churchwoman, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, counselor and friend to all, business partner, devoted wife of the late Doc Anderson Heath. But does this compilation of facts tell the true story. The real story of this wonderful woman who worked for all of her 88 years toward the goal of human love and kindness?

"She was a fair-complexioned, blue-eyed sparkling lady with a soft firm voice, a laugh as contagious as measles, a charming smile and chin that quivered when she made up her mind to do something. She never
talked about things --- she did things. Up to the very last hour, when she was dressing for church on Sunday morning and kept another appointment instead."

For the complete obituary, click HERE.

As the May Heath Memorial Committee winds up its almost two years of effort, I'd like to thank the members (Marsha Kontio, Peg Sanford, Jack Sheridan, Mary Lyons, Sally Winthers, and Jim Schmeichen) as well as the many who contributed to the memorial fund.

I'd also like to thank the great-grandchildren of Mrs. Heath (Bill Bleeker, Lisa Nash, and Jim Diaz) for sharing a wealth of family photos and original documents. Copies of this material will be placed as the "Heath-Morrison Collection" in the SDHS digital archives (over 3 GB, 65 folders, 6,000 files, with an added 1,300 newspaper clippings). For a project overview, click HERE.

Mrs. Heath was one of those selected to be included in the 1998 SDHS Museum Exhibit "Heroes, Rogues and Just Plain Folks". Our own present day premier historian Kit Lane wrote about her at that time:

"I never met May Francis Heath but the more I hear and write about her, and find things she has written, I am convinced that Saugatuck would have been a much poorer place without her. She helped mold the community's sense of identity."

We agree whole-heartedly. 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 in September and 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