JULY 2012

As part of the Society's Silver Anniversary Campaign, the Society Newsletters are being underwritten by a generous donation from Frances Vorys, a Society Life member.

Notes From Your President

With 100 degree temperatures behind us and more 90 degree weather on the way, I wish you all well!

On Wednesday, July 11, 2012; a beautiful evening provided the backdrop for a special event! One hundred five persons enjoyed the history of the circus as a preview to the miniature circus displayed in the lower west room of the OSH. Bob Sapita was the ringmaster for the evening and he gave a most touching and heartfelt description of how his dad created the miniature pieces and parts of this incredible display. It was last displayed in 2009.

Ken Carls served cookies (some chocolate) and punch from the sunny front entrance of the Francis Life Boat. It was a perfect end to a memorable evening. We thank Bob and Ken for their contribution to this event! Also, in need of a thank you are Steve Hutchins, Chad Mitchell, and Greg Farrand for the toting and hauling of tables and chairs outside and again inside so all members were comfortable throughout the evening.

Don't Miss It - Exhibit Open Thru Sunday, July 22

![Miniature Circus Exhibit Poster](image)
The Annual Picnic is scheduled for next month. This year it will be at the OSH on Wednesday, August 8, 2012 beginning at 6:00 p.m. arrive early if you wish to chat with friends and the "nibbles" will begin at 6 with buffet open at 6:30. As always, bring a dish to pass plus your own table service. We look forward to this old event at a new location!

*submitted by Marsha Kontio*

---

**Society's Monthly Meeting**  
6:00 pm, Wednesday, August 8  
at the Old School House History Center  

**The Don't Panic Shipwreck Picnic**

The vanishing story of American traveling circuses, told with an audiovisual presentation and a highly detailed 10 x 20-ft. sound-animated model circus layout, will highlight the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society's exhibit through Sunday, July 22. The exhibit, located in the Old School House History Center, 130 Center Street, Douglas, is open weekdays 11 am to 4:30 pm, Saturdays 11 am to 2 pm, Sundays noon to 3 pm and is free to the public.

The working model is an authentic 1/4 inch-to-the-foot scale model representing the three-ring tent circuses that traveled the United States through the first half of the 20th century. Based on the 1936 Al G. Barnes Circus, it features a performing Big Top, Tent, Menagerie Tent with animals, Side-Show Tent, Dining Tent, and Back-Lot, where performers and animals prepared for the shows. Around the periphery it also depicts a moving street parade of wagons and performers typical of the era.

The layout's Big Top Performance Tent features mechanized acts in each of the rings, depicting a performing lion, a tight-rope walker, trapeze artists and balancing acts. Also seen are Butterfly Girls on spinning ropes, clowns, various other performers and a seated audience.

Click [HERE](#) for some great photos taken by Jim Hayden of the Holland Sentinel and [HERE](#) for video of the exhibit.

---

Gather at the OSH garden and boathouse for the
traditional SDHS summertime good-food picnic with a garden treasure hunt. As always, bring a dish to pass plus your own table service.

---

**2012 Tuesday Talks**

**Village Visits**

**WHEN THE BELL RINGS AT 11 A.M.**

**TUESDAY TALKS**

At the Old School House History Center

These fun and informal Talks continue at the Old School House History Center in Douglas when the school bell rings at 11 AM and run through the end of August.

---

4. July 24 Theater as History: The Red Barn Story by John Huyge, sponsored by Candice Lewis and Kathy & Frank Wilson, BeachWay Resort & Hotel and Bayside Inn


6. August 7 Art Collection Secrets: Stories from the SDHS Art Archives by Ken Kutzel sponsored by Judy Oberholtzer

7. August 14 Saved from a Slow Death: How Mom & Dad Saved Saugatuck's Pump House by Jay Shorey


---

Kay and Bob Sapita getting the exhibit ready.

---

**HISTORY by CAMERA**

---
Welcome New Members

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

- Deb Minton, Ada, MI
- Jim Zissis, Chicago, IL
- Jack & Julie Ridl, Douglas, MI

Randall Higdon, Chicora artist visits Shipwreck Exhibit Site

Randall Higdon, artist of the original image of the Chicora 'lost at sea' visited the Boathouse exhibition barn at the History Center on July 2. He is pictured above with Kristi Mueller, the volunteer graphic designer who converted the original 22"x48" painting into a 47ft x 9.5ft mural for the boathouse exhibition "Rowing them Safely Home," along with Jim Schmiechen, exhibition curator-writer.

THE AVALON - continued

See the May and June issues of this newsletter containing photos of the Avalon and the view of it perched atop a high ridge overlooking Saugatuck.

This month's photo is an interior shot, taken by Herman Simonson about 1907, not long after the Avalon was built. The footings for this fireplace are still visible on the site.

As told last month: "William Harbert was a successful attorney in Chicago. He founded the law firm of Harbert and Daley which specialized in right of way work for railroads in the period 1880-1910. As a personal investment, he bought a great amount of land in the Saugatuck area, including a large parcel surrounding the Avalon location. [his wife] Elizabeth Boynton was a PhD, a successful writer and was very highly regarded for her leadership activities in the National Woman Suffrage movement."

The Harberts were close to the group that established the Forward Movement camp (now the Church Camp). They built the Avalon for their daughter Corrine in 1905. No doubt it was used by them and another daughter, Boynton, at least until they moved to California about 1910.

According to Bill Frederick, great grandson of Boynton, the parents died in California in the 1920s. Although very well off, Corrine was not attuned to financial management and neglected to pay property taxes due on the Avalon property. So it went to the Village for back taxes sometime around 1930. I suspect that the structure was not properly maintained and may have collapsed --- but the details of the Avalon's fate remains a history mystery for the present.

This is beach weather - what is more appropriate than an Oval scene ca 1953.
with a studio in Coloma, MI. The original painting was commissioned by the Society in 2002 and is now in the possession of Andrew Plummer of Douglas. The enlarged digitized image, with names of 100 shipwrecks, was then produced by Agio Printing in Kalamazoo under the direction of John Capotosto.

The architecturally interesting "Boatbarn" is open weekdays from 11-4:30, Saturday from 11-2 and Sunday from noon-3.

---

**Final "SDHS 101" Coming UP**

If you are a new or former member interested in learning the history of the Society and the opportunities that it has to offer, come to the Old School House on Saturday, July 28, at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting will last about an hour, followed by refreshments and a chance for attendees, if they wish, to volunteer their talents for one or more committees of the Society. For more information or if you plan to attend, please contact Nyla Hensley at 269-857-5704 or noteablenyla@yahoo.com

---

**White Run With A Splash Of Rainbow**

---

**The Rube Sewers Net Shed (On Bridge Street)**

Early on the morning of July 1, 2012, the Fire Department burned down the old Rube Sewers net shed on Bridge Street, and then went out and had breakfast. The shed was originally built by Rueben ("Rube") Sewers during WWII after he split from business with his twin brother Frank. According to his nephew, Bud, the building had been rebuilt or modified over the years. It was, however, intact until the roof collapsed from the heavy snow in the winter of 2010-11.

---

submitted by jack.sheridan@gmail.com

---

BEFORE AND AFTER
What's better than viewing the scenery that is Saugatuck and Douglas? Getting covered in color with friends, family and the young scholars and the same time!

The Young Scholars program, through the Saugatuck Center for the Arts (SCA) and the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society (SDHS), will be hosting "White Run With A Splash Of Rainbow" on Saturday, August 18 starting at 9 am at the Old School House on Center Street in downtown Douglas.

The young scholars (Jordan Hathaway, Chad Mitchell, Dustin Moore, Mary Redford and Greg Farrand), while interning for the 2012 summer, are hoping to create funding through the colorful walk/run event for future interns to participate in the Young Scholars program.

"We believe this event will be a great way to combine the arts of the Saugatuck-Douglas community and the Young Scholars program," Moore said. "The internship program offers a lot of great experience for college students in any field they're going into."

The festivities don't stop with the race, however. Show off your colorful new outfit while enjoying food, drinks, music and some amazing silent auction items.

For more information, contact Jordan Hathaway at
News From the Archives

Some recent donations to the SDHS Collection
- Bridgewalk T-shirts (2003 & 2004) - Cynthia Sorensen
- "Ox Bow School of Painting" wood sign - Jane Van Dis
- Three drawings by John Peterson - Judy Oberholtzer
- Wooden plaque with image of the Chicora - Ron Spengler
- Various toys and other items from 1960-1980s for the locker display - Kim Enders
- Framed oil painting of a young boy by John Polka - Ken Kutzel
- Photographs of the Frances Lifeboat - George Worthington
- Ox Bow catalogs and other materials - Mike Van Ark

A big thank you to these people for adding the above items to our collection. They all help us to better tell the story of our community.

We also continue to receive into the collection, outstanding works of art, produced by local artists, many who went on to fame elsewhere. We invite you to visit the Art Gallery on the second floor of the Old School House during our regular daily open hours this summer. submitted by Mary Voss, archives & Ken Kutzel, art collection manager

Welcome from Jack Sheridan leader of the Society

and the shed to take care of the fish, but he had no place for his nets so he built that over across the highway (on Bridge St). This all happened while I was in the service during the war. When I came home it was all news to me that they had split up. I guess they went to the lawyer and he thought my Dad didn't have enough money to buy them out because he just got into what they call the trap net business, but he did have enough."

My uncle, at that time, he had a new boat built in Holland, the Joanne, and he already had that and was in business by the time I got home from the war."
Family History Group. The Group meeting schedule is the first and third Thursday of every month (except July and August this year). Our next meeting is September 6th at 3:30 in the Old School House. Please join us this fall to see what we are all about and most importantly, share "lessons learned" about the many tools available for family research.

Our standing offer to members: Send me information on a person that you want to find and we will find them for you in the U. S. Census, maybe even a Canadian or a British census.

In April 2012 the 1940 United States census data was released. The US census has been taken every ten years since 1790. By law each census cannot be released for public viewing for 72 years after it is taken. The 1940 census has a lot of pages – some 3.8 million. Ancestry.com has completed indexing twenty five states including Michigan. They are offering free access to the census; click HERE.

And thanks to Chris Yoder one of the leaders of our technical team, you can easily browse the 1940 local census. We have placed a copy of the census for Douglas (11 pages), Saugatuck (16 pages) and Saugatuck Twp (19 pages) on the SDHS web site. Click HERE to take a look.

Each month in this column I talk about a family history discovery. Such a discovery is called a EUREKA! moment. Here is a EUREKA! moment experienced by many older veterans of family history research.

Censuses are invaluable research tools. Until about ten years ago the details of the United States census were generally available on microfilm only. Each one was indexed in large books - requiring one or more books for each census. The standard method of searching the U. S. Census was to travel to a large library or family research center, search the tiny print of the index volumes, locate the proper roll of microfilm, and feed it through a cranky microfilm viewer - all in all, a very slow and labor intensive project. To search differing geographical areas and commonly appearing surnames was a real job!

But just wait! To the rescue came digital scanning technology. And the internet. And the ability to search than what was there at the end.

"They did all kinds of work, make new nets and repair the old and store. But there was another building down there beside that one that they kept the trap nets in. They used it for storage. There were net reels all the way around that building - probably ten or twelve reels. The first buildings burned, the 23 of Jan (he doesn't recall the year) - and Rube built things back after the fire. There was also a smoke house down there to smoke fish. I know because I set the smoke house on fire and burned that down myself. Got the fire too hot. We tried to have the nets out of the lake and the shore work all done for spring by the 10th of January. The cement block part of the building was used as an ice house."  contributed by Chris Yoder

Monthly Meeting Refreshment Providers
August     No Cookies - Picnic
September Janeen Fowler
October    Merle Malmquist & Paula Schultz
November   OPEN - REPLY TO THIS EMAIL if you can help out.
December   No Cookies - Holiday Party

The Morning Grind with Young Scholar Greg Farrand
all the U. S. censuses in a wink of the eye. A first session with a personal computer searching millions of pages census data is truly a **EUREKA!** moment. Wow!

To see the detailed hand written record made as the enumerator (census taker) interviewed members of your family is a fascinating experience. If you have not seen a scanned census page, I suggest that you check one out by going to the SDHS web site or to Ancestry.com (see info above).

Questions/comments: Contact me at: [jack.sheridan@gmail.com](mailto:jack.sheridan@gmail.com) or (269) 857-7144.

Young Scholar, Greg Farrand (center) works with Mike Johnson (left) every Saturday morning from 7:30 to 9:00 AM on The Morning Grind broadcast from The Annex in downtown Saugatuck on 92.7 FM. Here he appears with Butch Jones (right) formerly of Saugatuck and now head football coach of the University of Cincinnati Bearcats.
ABOUT THE SOCIETY

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premium</td>
<td>$250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (65+)</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Household</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

HISTORY MUSEUM AND HISTORY 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 2012 exhibit is titled:
The Museum is open daily from noon until 4 pm through Labor Day and then on weekends from noon to 4 pm through October 28. Click HERE to learn more about the Museum and view images of the 2010 exhibit.

The Old School House History Center and Lifeboat Display at 130 Center Street in Douglas will be open daily through the summer from 11:30 am to 4 pm, Monday to Friday; 11 am to 2 pm on Saturday and Noon to 3 pm on Sunday.

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