Again this year, the Society Newsletters are being underwritten by a generous donation from Frances Vorys, a Society Life member.

Still haven't renewed your Society membership for 2013?? Don't miss out on a great year of events and much more! RENEW NOW! Click HERE

Notes From Your President

Who could guess that we would still be wearing mufflers in the middle of April? The daffodils are on hold or at least growing slowly and the woodland animals seem to be ravenous. Our April General Membership meeting, which was to be about our beautiful Back-In-Time Garden, had to be postponed until May due to the slow spring and all of the rain. So, Jon Helmrich and Chelsea Duby from WGVU made a presentation on the Michigan Hometown Stories that will be produced this coming year. The stories are about YOU, so you need to think about sharing your Saugatuck/Douglas experiences --- why did you choose to come here; are you one of the unusual individuals that was born here. Feel free to let me, Jon or any member of the Board know if you would like to share your story and we will be happy to chat with you.

The May General Membership Meeting will also give a brief overview of the Museum exhibit that will open the end of May and there will also be a brief meeting with a "change of guard" in officers and new board members. This meeting will be followed with wine and cheese provided by Renee Zita.

You might also like to visit the Blue Star Antique Mall --- we now have our very own little space with the books of the Society available plus other goodies! Ken Kutzel and Mary Voss have been working to make this

Dining Around The Village Table

Two spring home-tour parties, extending the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society's "Dining Around the Village Table" fund-raising series begun last fall, are accepting reservations for Sunday, April 28 and Friday, May 3, both at 5-8pm.

With all food and beverages donated by event hosts, guest charges will support the Historical Society's volunteer-based programs and activities including exhibitions at its Pump House Museum in Saugatuck and its Old School House History Center / "Back-In-Time Garden Pathway" in Douglas. For information and reservations, phone 269.857.5751 or e-mail info@sdhistoricalsociety.org.

The April 28 "Magnificent Trilogy" tour weaves a progressive cocktail party through three very different homes set side-by-side along the Kalamazoo River immediately north of Saugatuck, with views overlooking Tallmadge Woods. Tickets at $100 per person allow guests to roam from home to home on their own, upstairs and downstairs and in between, enjoying beer, wine and a variety of appetizers served at each house. Volunteer Society docents will be on hand to greet guests and help show off each home.
possible, so stop and see what they have accomplished!

Congratulations to Peg Sanford for being honored as Saugatuck's Citizen of the Year! We feel fortunate to have you as a Charter Member of the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society and we thank you for your many good deeds!

Happy spring to all --- enjoy!

submitted by Marsha Kontio

2013 Society Monthly Programs
At the Old School House History Center except December

May 8: The Amazing Azalea & Rhododendron Show. Join with chief gardener, John Migas as he talks, walks and explains all about growing azaleas and rhododendrons at History Center Azalea Garden. Program sponsored by the Michigan Azalea Society. Bright refreshments.

Secrets for successful growing of azaleas and rhododendrons in our area will be revealed in the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society program on Wednesday, May 8, at 7 p.m. in the Old School House History Center, 130 Center Street, Douglas.

Presenter John Migas, founder of Woodlands Nursery in Saugatuck Twp and key figure in establishing the floral plantings along The Old School House Back-In-Time Pathway, will show and discuss varieties that grow well here. He also will talk about propagation of these plants by taking cuttings and raising them in the

- 3438 Riverside Drive -- This stone-and-cedar-shingle home of Skip Schipper and John Seros reflects the Eastern Seashore "salt-box" motif with classically detailed interiors finished out by the owners and complemented by eclectic furniture and artwork.

- 3440 Riverside Drive -- A two-story Greek Revival design owned by Monty Collins & Jerry Dark reveals totally redesigned interior spaces with transitional decor and a new addition.

- 3442 Riverside Drive -- An airy, contemporary-style
home. After the indoor presentation, Migas will guide a tour through the Back-In-Time garden and answer questions. His SDHS program is sponsored by Michigan Azalea Society.

Migas, originally a carpenter by trade, bought a home here in 1985 and met neighbor Charlie Mann, a renowned landscape architect who introduced him to the world of azaleas and rhodos, prompting the start of Woodlands Nursery and a new career carrying on Mann's work. His nursery primarily supplies professional landscapers and retail nurseries.

**June 12:** Our Local Farmland Forecast: A 2013 Crop Report and Some Ideas for Your Table by David Geen of Hungry Village Tours who talks us through the country with local growers about farm conditions and what to expect at this fall's markets.

**July 10:** Low-Key Genius: O.C. Simonds and his Pier Cove Simonds was one of America's most important landscapers - and had an enormous impact on our West Michigan. Meet the author, Barbara Gieger. Wine & cheese social time.

**August 14:** Eat Your Way to the Top Annual Picnic at the History Center. Celebrating the Garden's Mt. Baldhead Viewing Station. Note early starting time: 6:00

**September 11:** Now and Then: Great Lakes - Hot Topics Long time Great Lakes observer Patty Birkholz brings past and present views of our greatest local asset - the water. Swimmingly delicious deserts.

**October 9:** Tales from the Crypt: Visitors from the Ghosttown of Plummerville (Ganges Township) Led by Kit Lane and Marsha Kontio, a virtual tour by the Cemetery Actors Group. Refreshments to Die For.

**November 13:** Painting: the Town: Landscape, the Artist, and People by Ken Kutzel who brings stories from the Society's art collection.

**December 1:** Annual Society Holiday Dinner 6:00 pm. At the Saugatuck Center for the Arts. Kick off the Holiday Season. Good cheer, Great Food, Good Friends.

The May 3 gathering, "A Toast to the Dunelands", visits the 1860s barn home of Ken Tornvall at 540 Campbell Road, on Saugatuck's "peninsula side" just west of Park Street near the Chain Ferry landing. Once a "classic" Michigan barn in Eaton Rapids, MI, it was meticulously dismantled there and reassembled on a hilltop-ridge farm site here. Now a custom-designed residence, it integrates massive hand-hewn oak beams with the clear modern elements of slate, glass, stone and steel.

Guest charge of $50 per person brings guests into a Mexican theme, with Margaritas flowing as well as beer and wine, and lots of south-of-the-border food. Co-sponsored by SDHS members Howard and Judi Vanderbeck and Renee Zita, the event also will feature a brief talk and champagne toast introducing the SDHS Museum's upcoming "Dunelands" exhibit, presented by Museum Curator Jim Schmiechen.

The Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society is a not-for-profit, volunteer-driven organization with membership open to all and a mission "to provide leadership in enabling the community to connect with and understand its past, to preserve the quality of community life and to use the area's history to shape its future." For more information about the Society, its Old School House History Center, Pump House Museum and volunteer opportunities, visit [www.sdhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.sdhistoricalsociety.org)

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**A Recent New Addition**
Welcome from Jack Sheridan and Chris Yoder leaders of the Society Family History Group. Our meeting schedule is the first and third Thursday of every month. Upcoming meetings are:

Thursday, April 18
Thursday, May 2
Thursday, May 16
The time and place are always 3:30 in the Old School House

Please join us to see what we are all about and most importantly, share “lessons learned” about the many tools available for family research.

The last two months I have told you about my Ancestry.com DNA analysis. I am getting a steady feedback of 10-20 possible matches each week. The project computers continually match my sample with each new DNA sample added to the data base. When there is a possible match based on the comparison, the system notifies me and provides matching surnames from the matchee's tree and my tree. The probability matches are rated from low to high. I can then look at the details of the matching tree.

So far I have confirmed many matches and have some valuable clues that I am researching. I am particularly interested in my surname, Sheridan because I do not know where my fourth great grandfather Joseph came from. Sheridan is a traditional Irish name. I think he was born in Massachusetts about 1754 but then a stonewall. So far I have a few Sheridan DNA matches that lead back to Pennsylvania in the 1700s but these trees go no further. No EUREKA! moment to report yet. Stay tuned

You may go to Ancestry.com to get information on the DNA project. The price has just been lowered to $110. Call or email me with questions.

Sunday, June 30, 2013 - 1 to 5 pm
Celebration of the Arts
TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

Come stroll the gardens and grounds of BJ Silverstone expansive property on Lake Michigan. Tour her home and a nearby 100 year old log cabin. Enjoy Plein Air artists working on site, two cabaret shows, art auction, cocktails, appetizers and lots of fun.

Tickets: $40 per person.
Hosted by BJ Silverstone
2450 Lakeshore Drive, Fennville

TUESDAY TALKS

Tuesday Talks are arranged by the SDHS Program Group. Direct questions and or suggestions for 2014 to Jim Schmiechen at James.Schmiechen@gmail.com

1 July 2: Mike Sweeney, Michigan’s Hottest Town. Procol Harem, Alice Cooper, and others invade Saugatuck.
1 July 9: Elizabeth Chodos, Ox-Bow: Living In Sand For Over 100 Years.
1 July 16: Kimberly Hall, Climate Change and West Michigan.
If you have always wanted to learn more about your family history, but have not known where and how to begin, our SDHS Family History group wants to help you. A starting point is to record what you know about your parents, grandparents, and great grandparents and send it along for a review by our volunteers to SDHS Family History Box 617 Douglas, Michigan 49406, or email a copy to either cyoder@tds.net or jack.sheridan@gmail.com. Give us time for an initial assessment. We will soon be back to you with readily found data and with suggestions on the next steps to take. Future further help is always available from the Family History group. The only requirement is membership in the SDHS.

Your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area.

Still wondering? Questions/comments/advice/needs: Contact me at: jack.sheridan@gmail.com or 269 857-7144. Chris is in Arizona for another month, so I am the guy on the cold seat!

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**A Historical Fly Over**

Thanks to Photoshop, this month we can make a quick fly over of this very historical area. The old river channel has been imagineered and grafted to the new channel circa 1960.

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1 **July 23**: April Scholtz, The Secret life of the Blanding Frog and Other Duneland Nature Stories

1 **July 30**: Ken Kutzel & Dave Ball, Saugatuck and Douglas Art Discoveries & the Art of Restoration

1 **August 6**: The State Park Hikers, To the Dunes: Photos Stories from A State Park Hiking Group.

1 **August 13**: Mary Jo Lemanski, Looking at Dune Formation as Abstract Art.

1 **August 20**: Jack Sheridan, Beach Stories: Low Water, High Water and Beach Life

1 **August 27**: Kit Lane, Goshorn Lake. Is it really bottomless?

If you would like to sponsor one of the Tuesday Talks, please REPLY to this email. Sponsorships are $150.

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**Re-Painting the Totem**

See a higher resolution copy at the end of the newsletter.
1990. What a beautiful, interesting and historical area it is. I have added comments, keyed to the image, that come to mind without me doing bunch of research. Click on the image above for a higher resolution copy showing the numbered highlights below. Enjoy!

[1] The original channel piers were built in 1870 -1873. Note that the south pier extended all the way to Shriver’s Bend, the site of Oxbow. By 1916 drifting sand covered the old river mouth. We see the snaggled remnants today.

[2] Site of the 1859 lighthouse which was destroyed by a tornado in 1956. The Deam cottage now there was built over the foundation in the early 1960s.

[3] Site of Fishtown, where homes and shanties used by commercial fisherman were located prior to drifting sand closing off lake access.

[4] Site of the Shriver homestead. The family farmed, fished and later had a hotel which though much changed, is the large building that is now the anchor structure at Oxbow.

[5] Talmadge woods area, which is owned by the City of Saugatuck and open to the public.

[6] The "Crows Nest" a high dune and great vantage point, which can be reached by path from Oxbow.

[7] A channel through an area somewhat navigable by boat during high water periods. My grandfather, lighthouse keeper from 1909 to 1915, reported dynamiting in the area to keep a small channel open.

[8] The area called the "Basin" was the original channel of the river. Drifting sand covered the old waterway after the new channel rerouted the river. This area was a popular bathing beach in 1900 - 1920.

[9] The so called "Dug Road" passed through here on the way to Lake Michigan. It exists in part today just west of the Pine Trails Camp but ends at the McClendon - Denison property line.

[10] The "new cut" or new channel was dug in 1905-06 to improve navigation on the winding river and reduce dredging necessary to keep the channel open. This reroute eventually created the Oxbow Lagoon we know today.

Judi and Howard Vanderbeck along with Leslie Thompson re-painting the Totem. Plans are to install it in the Old School House garden.

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**Saugatuck Douglas Garden Club Plant Sale at Old School House on Saturday, May 18**

The Saugatuck Douglas Garden Club is pleased to announce its annual plant sale on Saturday May 18 from 10:00 to 2:00 at the Old School House. We are very excited to have our sale at the Old School House this year and hope that you will come and support us.

Proceeds from this sale benefit our scholarship program which is given to a high school senior from Saugatuck High School and/or Fennville High School who meet our requirements of majoring in the Horticultural Sciences in college. The garden club also contributes to Christian Neighbors, Frederik Meijer Gardens, Grace Health Facility, the Old School House gardens and annual flower beautifications in the cities of Saugatuck and Douglas. We are also Horticultural Consultants for the city of Saugatuck.

The sale will include beautiful hanging baskets, flats of annuals, many geraniums and perennials. In fact, the perennials come from our own members yards so they are tried and true. We will also have our members there to answer your gardening questions.

So mark your calendars for Saturday, May 18 and join us for a fun day. **submitted by Jane Dreyer, 616-928-1000 janem.dreyer@gmail.com**

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**New Writing Group Formed**

**History Buffs Alert! An Informal New Writing Group is Formed.**

Do you remember the old Tara lounge and restaurant? How about the motorcycle invasions? What was Oval Beach life like when you were younger?
[11] The site of Singapore. Early settlers built a sawmill here in the 1830s and the last mill closed in 1875. Many of the houses were moved into town by rolling them on logs over the frozen river.

[12] The long building was the Broward Marine factory where very large aluminum hulled luxury yachts were built in the 1980s and early 90s.

[13] Site of the Cook mansion built by David Cook about 1920. The Cook family acquired numerous parcels of land in the area to create what is known today as the McClendon property. Part of that area - between the old and new piers and west of the Oxbow Lagoon - is now the Saugatuck Harbor Natural Area which is owned by the City of Saugatuck.

Next month our view will be of a lower variety.

A new "Writing Group" has been formed and invites anyone who wishes to discuss and write your recollections about times past in the Saugatuck and Douglas areas.

Meets at the History Center (Old School House) at 3:30 on the first and third Thursday of each month. Call Jane VanDis, 269-857-4263; or Peggy Boyce, 259-857-2735 for more information,

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Welcome New Members

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

Fran & Mort Van Howe, Fennville, MI
Dan & Barbara Witt, Saugatuck, MI
Nancy Plantinga, Douglas, MI
Jerry Carpency & Doug Turner, Saugatuck, MI
Bob & Kathy Kubasiak, Saugatuck, MI
John & Linda Axe, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI

submitted by jack.sheridan@gmail.com

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Monthly Meeting Refreshments Needed

We've killed the cookie monster!!! We will now need volunteers to provide wine and cheese for the 2013 Wednesday General Membership Meetings except for August and December.

Ruth Wendell from Chicago, who loves the newsletter, indicated that they would be in Saugatuck for the May meeting (or at least are hoping to be here) and she wanted to bring wine or cheese for the September meeting. It sounded like she would team with Merle Malmquist.

Please contact Marsha Kontio at trollyrde@comcast.net or 616-566-1239 if you can help out. Thanks.

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Volunteer Corner

Spring is here. So says the calendar! Although we have volunteer needs all year, Spring and Summer are when the need (and fun) are most prevalent.

Let us know where you can contribute.

Museum Hosting
Archives
Back-In-Time Garden
Boat House
Art Collection and Gallery Management
Wally Peterson & Mike Tischleder, Chicago, IL
Dave & Janice Varney, South Haven, MI
Ray & Joyce Horath, Fennville, MI
Marcia A. Sikora, Saugatuck, MI
Joel & Patricia Hoitenga, Fennville, MI

And members who renewed their membership as Life Members.

Michael Van Meter & Judy Hillman
Bill Underdown & David Geen

**SDHS 101 Session Coming Up**

The first of two orientation sessions for new and interested former members will be held on Saturday, April 27th, at the Old School House in Douglas, beginning at 5:00 p.m. If you are interested and plan to attend, please contact Nyla Hensley at noteableynla@gmail.com or call 269-857-5704. A response by April 22nd would be appreciated.

**Old School House Hosting And more ---**

Call or email Ed Kelly with your area of interest. 269-857-2843 or KEL179@aol.com

**Social Media Project**

We are living in the 21st century; therefore, social media is not rare anymore but instead very recognized in today’s world. The Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society may be about the history of our area, but that does not mean that they have to live in the past.

With that said, the SDHS has brought together a team of high schoolers from Saugatuck High School to update Facebook, Twitter, and Linkedin and begin to progress in the world of technology.

**Volunteers Needed**

Set aside a couple of days this summer to help keep our garden weed free. A training session will be held on Tuesday, May 14th at 10 AM at the OSH by the Landscape Committee to provide information and scheduling of maintenance shifts available.

Please contact Ruth Johnson at ruthannj@frontier.com or 616-218-0086, if you have any questions.

Nancy Van Benthuyseen

Nancy Van Benthuyseen, a Life Member of the Society, passed away recently in Missouri. Click HERE for more details.

Jenna Chambers, Andrew Wobith, Cheyenne Lubben, and Ashton Greene (shown from left to right above) all have individual tasks that they are assigned to do. But along with those, they will be busy updating the social media websites so that the SDHS can become more widely known as a business, and that people can start to realize what the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society is all about.

submitted by Cheyenne Lubben
ABOUT THE SOCIETY

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

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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 was titled:

![A Village Patchwork: Everyday Life in Saugatuck-Douglas](image)
The Museum is now closed. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Museum and recent past exhibits.

The Old School House History Center and Lifeboat Display at 130 Center Street in Douglas is open to visitors by appointment. Please [REPLY](#) to this email or call 269 857-5751.

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](http://www.sdhistoricalsociety.org)