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

Notes From Your President

The Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society has a new website!! It is beautiful so please take a look. It is the product of James Cook and has taken him many hours of dedicated work and effort to accomplish -- so when you see him be sure to thank him for his efforts. Kristi Mueller provided the art work and deserves recognition in this effort as well. This is such an exciting accomplishment for the Society and has literally been years in the planning. I would say "JOB WELL DONE!"

Mike Sweeney gave a presentation on the music and musicians of Saugatuck in the 1950's and 1960's on February 13th for the General Membership Meeting. It is a topic that I am sure everyone will want to explore in more depth and Mike can again share in this important part of Saugatuck-Douglas History. He has many posters of the era plus other memorabilia. Thank you to Mike for sharing his time and knowledge with us.

I am beginning to feel we are on our slide into Spring! It is almost the end of February and can the robins and daffodils be far behind? Remember what happened this past fall in the Back-In-Time Garden? Those King Alfreeds will be greeting the morning sun unflinchingly to remind us of their presence and to add to our joy of spring!

submitted by Marsha Kontio

Dining Around The Village Table

What You Missed …

A Splendid Table at the Home of Pat Sax

Ricki Levine, Stephen Mottram, Ken Carls and Mike Epstein

John Cannarsa, Jim Flemming, Tim Straker, Pat Sax, Monty Collins, Sharon Kelly, Jerry Dark and Janie Flemming
Thanks to the hard work of web designer Jim Cook and graphics designer Kristi Mueller, the Society's new web site is now live. Click on the home page image above and let us know what you think. Just REPLY to this email with your comments.

**2013 Society Monthly Programs**

*At the Old School House History Center except December*

**March 13:** Finding Your Lost Relatives by Jack Sheridan who brings you to the Society's Genealogy Program with some surprises about people you know and news about how the program works. Refreshments.

**April 10:** 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.


**June 12:** Our Local Farmland Forecast: A 2013 Crop Report and Some Ideas for Your Table by Jim Flemming, Tim Straker, Stephen Mottram and Pat Sax. Photos provided by Jon Helmrich.

*Let The Good Times Roll at the home of Mark Neidlinger*

Jon Helmrich and Ricki Levine

Jim Flemming, Tim Straker, Stephen Mottram and Pat Sax

Laird Stuart and Fred Schmidt
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 Ghostown 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.

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

Look for the 2013 Tuesday Talks weekly summer programs in an upcoming Newsletter. Sponsorships for the Tuesday Talks will also be accepted.
Do You Remember When …

Turn on your speakers, get out your dancing shoes and click HERE for some fun remembrances. If you would like to share some stories about where you were when the scenes in the video were made, please REPLY to this email.

Extra! Extra! Breaking News!
SDHS Historical Chronicle Expanding to 12 Pages for 2013 Edition!

Two of the upcoming events are already SOLD OUT, Red House Repast at the home of Ken Carls and Jim Schmiechen on April 20 and Always On A Sunday Brunch at the home of Mike and Katherine Economos on June 23 so don't miss the fun, get your reservations in for the upcoming events

Next up on
Sunday, April 28, 2013 - 5 to 8pm
The Magnificent Trilogy
TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

A progressive cocktail party and home tour of three magnificent homes on the Kalamazoo River.

Tickets: $100 per person.
Hosted by Monty Collins and Jerry Dark, Sandra and Travis Randolph, Skip Schipper and John Seros
3440 - 3442 Riverside Drive, Saugatuck, MI 49453

Last year's paper sold out. This year, we're adding four more pages. As always, SDHS members get first dibs on this new advertising space.

If you'd like to reach some 20,000 area visitors this summer, reserve your spot before March 1, 2013. For more information, view the rate card PDF or contact Sally Winthers at swinthers@frontier.com
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. Next month meetings are Thursday March 7th and 21st, 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.

In this column I often talk about family history discoveries. Such a discovery is called a EUREKA! moment. Here is my latest EUREKA! moment, well sort of eureka anyway.

Last week I received the results of an analysis of my DNA, submitted a month earlier to Ancestry.com. Unlike other tests, which only test the Y-chromosome or Mitochondrial DNA, this new AncestryDNA analysis uses an autosomal analysis that surveys a person’s genome [genetic information] at over 700,000 points. The test is gender neutral. Men and women are tested in the same way for the same number of locations providing the same level of detail in the results. This procedure enables a comparison of a person’s DNA sample to DNA samples from all over the world, and the analysis results reveal an individual’s genetic ethnicity.

Looking at the results, if not a EUREKA! moment, it was a surprise! Based on fifteen years of family history research and 4300 folks in my tree, I thought I was descended mostly from mid European and British Isles stock. That turns out not to be true!

There it was in front of me:

Sweden, Norway, Denmark 66%
Portugal, Spain, Italy, Sicily, Malta 22%
Turkey, Caucasus, Persia 9%
Uncertain 3%

And I do not have one genuine Scandinavian name in my family tree! How could this be? Stay tuned to find out next

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**Friday, May 3, 2013 - 5 to 8pm**

A Toast to the Dunelands

**TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE!**

Ken Tornvall will host a kick off party for the 2013 SDHS Museum exhibit opening at his home: an amazing restoration of a classic Michigan barn.

*Tickets: $50 per person.*
*Hosted by Ken Tornvall*
*540 Campbell, Saugatuck*
month.

For the March 13 SDHS regular monthly meeting I will be presenting a program entitled "Family Trees Have Deep Roots" about how to research family history. The program will include more on DNA as well as a brief overview of research we are currently doing for the presentation on the families of SDHS members Betty White, Charles Hancock and Marsha Kontio.

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 to learn more. Future further help is always available from the Family History group.

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 a few months so I am the guy on the cold seat!

A Recent New Addition
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

Sponsorship Opportunity
Help the Community Celebrate our Beautiful Dunelands
Blood is thicker than water . . . it is not what you know - it is who you know . . . it's a small world. The lives of Otis Russell Johnson and Francis Brown Stockbridge bring these sayings to mind. These men were born in Maine and came together in Saugatuck and in Singapore forty years later, probably not by accident.

They were quite a pair and key players in the history of Saugatuck.

Johnson was born in Augusta, Maine in 1815. His father, an entrepreneurial New England shoe manufacturer died on a sales trip to New Orleans when son Otis was seven. Raised by an uncle, he apprenticed seven years to be a tanner and started tanning and making shoes in Maine. In 1845, bitten by the "go West young man" bug he moved to Chicago and joined in a partnership with Andrew Shelton Wells. They started a shoe and leather business under the firm name of Wells & Johnson. Two years later he moved to Coldwater, Michigan and soon after that to Plummerville where for five years he operated a tannery.

Surrounded by a great pine forest, he realized a better opportunity was in the lumber business and about 1850 he bought the Spencer mill [where Coghlin Park is today] again with his Chicago partner Andrew Wells. In addition to the mill, the two had a large mercantile store located where the Saugatuck City Hall is today. Three years later he married Emily Wells, eighteen years his junior and the daughter of his partner. In the next twenty six years they had six children, four boys and two girls.

By 1859 Johnson had another partner, Francis Stockbridge, and together they bought and built new mills in Singapore which operated for some fifteen years. During this time the Chicago fire and other disastrous fires of 1871 occurred. Much of the lumber for the rebuild came from the Singapore mills.

By 1874 the prime white pine forest in the Kalamazoo River watershed had been harvested so the Singapore mill was dismantled and moved north to St Ignace, Michigan.

At that time the Johnson family moved to Racine, Wisconsin where the Johnson lumber business continued and there in 1895 Otis Russell Johnson died. His sons and their children eventually engaged in the same business on

The Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society (SDHS) is pleased to announce the receipt of a Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) grant for $12,000. MCACA requires recipients to raise matching dollars for the full grant amount awarded.

To help us match the grant, we invite you help the SDHS by becoming a sponsor at the $1000 level for the 2 year (2013 & 2014) Dunelands exhibit at the Pump House Museum. The sponsorship will include your name or your business name supporting one of the exhibit panels and listed in all media materials promoting the exhibit. Close to 10,000 visitors tour the popular Pump House Museum exhibit each year.

SDHS Program Chair Jim Schmiechen & his team are busy preparing to unveil the expertly designed Dunelands exhibit in late May. Mark your calendar for the opening party on May 25th. The exhibit will celebrate the thousands of acres of dunes in West Allegan County.

Highlights of the exhibit:
• A 480 square foot Waves & Trails Map.
• An indoor "trail" taking visitors "through the dunes" by story-signposts.
• Aerial interpretive views of our dunelands.
• A Water, Sand, and Time Display created by art classes at Saugatuck High School based on the work of Andy Goldsworthy "depicting the magical relationship between art and nature" using natural materials found in the dunelands.
• An interactive space for school children created and
the west coast.

Francis Brown Stockbridge was born in Bath, Maine in 1826, just thirty miles south of where Otis Johnson was born. Russell was Johnson’s middle name. And the maiden name of Stockbridge’s mother, Eliza was Russell. Hmm, logic leads me to believe that the two families were related but I have not yet been able to find any information or identify the parents of Mrs. Eliza Russell [Stockbridge]. How about a little help from any readers of this missive?

Francis Stockbridge's father was a Boston physician, Dr. John Stockbridge, and Francis grew up in Boston. After schooling through twelve grades, he clerked at a wholesale mercantile house in Boston. He was a young when he moved to Chicago and opened a lumber yard in 1847. In 1851 he moved to Saugatuck, where he continued in the mercantile and lumber business.

In 1863 he married Elizabeth Arnold of Saugatuck, a schoolteacher and sister of George Thomas Arnold, an Allegan County and Kalamazoo lumberman who founded the Arnold Boat Line which still exists providing ferry service to Mackinac Island. In 1869 Stockbridge was elected to the Michigan State House of Representatives and in 1871 a member of the Michigan State Senate. He moved his residence to Kalamazoo in the 1870s.

In 1882, Stockbridge purchased land which became the site of the famous Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island. He arranged financing and sold the land to the two railroads and shipping company that provided service to the island at the time. Together, they formed the Mackinac Island Hotel Company, which then built the Grand Hotel in 1887.

Francis Stockbridge was a very successful politician, besides holding Michigan offices, he was elected to the United States Senate in 1884 and in 1890. His business ventures in lumber and timber lands were no less successful. A most notable career which really got its start in Saugatuck and Singapore. He died in 1894 at the age of sixty eight.

Next month we look at the Singapore area half a century later. Stay tuned.

For 26 years, the SDHS has been providing leadership to help the residents of Saugatuck, Douglas and Allegan County and thousands of annual tourists connect with and understand the past and preserve the quality of our rich community life.

Dunelands will be the latest in what has been a succession of critically acclaimed SDHS exhibitions. We welcome you to be a part of this wonderful exhibit celebrating our beloved dunelands by becoming a sponsor. Please contact SDHS Development Director, Bill Underdown at 313.824.2000 bill@shorelinerealtors.com or Fred Schmidt at 616.405.0024 fnschmidt@wmol.com for details.

Charles J. Lorenz Award Nominations

The Lorenz Award was established by the Society in 1997 to honor the memory of Charles Lorenz, who gave generously of his time, talent, money and energy in the formation and development of this organization.

Winners are selected each year by a special Society committee, recognizing distinguished leadership in fulfilling the Historical Society's mission to "help the community understand its past and use its history to shape its future and preserve its quality of life".

Click HERE to download and print a Charles J. Lorenz Nomination Form which includes the names of previous winners.

The Junior Scholars Program

The Society's two new Junior Scholars, Andrew Wobith and Jenna Chambers will be working on the Society's social media project. Please welcome them.
Welcome New Members

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

- Ken Boire & Dave Reinke, Saugatuck, MI
- Keith & Lori Hayward, Douglas, MI

Totem Pole Article Correction

Cynthia Sorensen submitted the following correction to the Totem Pole article in last month's newsletter:

*Debbie Hoffman was Dick Hoffman's wife not his daughter and Dick Hoffman's first boat was the Island Queen.*

Andrew Wobith

Andrew Wobith is a Junior attending Saugatuck High School (Class of 2014). In addition to volunteering at the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society, he is also involved in many extra curricular activities, such as 'Youth in Government (YIG)' and Quiz Bowl. During his spare time, he enjoys playing sports (especially golf), reading, watching movies, and hanging out with friends.

Andrew can be reached at wobitha14@saugatuckps.com

Jenna Chambers

*Jenna Chambers attends Saugatuck High School (Class of 2014). As well as volunteering at the Saugatuck-Douglas*
You Can Become Part of Saugatuck's History

You can follow in the steps of Saugatuck "beloved ferryman" Jay Myers. In 1907 Jay took over the important job of ferryman on the Chain Ferry. Jay endeared himself to the populace of the area because of his devoted ferry work and his good humor. The "beloved ferryman" died in 1928 and was honored with a stone bench at the west shore ferry landing.

The City of Saugatuck is now looking for three new Chain Ferry Captains. Currently the U. S Coast Guard requires the Chain Ferry have a licensed captained on board at all time.

To become licensed, captains must have a Transportation Worker Identification Card from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, know first aid and CPR, pass a physical and be subject to drug testing on a year-round basis. The City will pay for all costs associated with obtaining the five-year license.

Ferry Captains are scheduled to supervise the ferry crank for about 30 hours per week during the period from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. This is a compensated position.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can become a part of Saugatuck history like Jay Myers, please contact Jenna Chambers at jenna.mae.chambers@gmail.com.

News From The Archives

Weren't we all surprised to read about the meteorite that fell in Russia recently? Just a week earlier I had come across a July 10, 1969 article from the Allegan County News that told the story of a meteorite that fell to earth much closer to home. The article featured two elderly eyewitnesses that shared their remembrances of that day.

It was July 10, 1899, at 8 a.m. when a 62 pound meteorite struck the earth in the front lawn of a house on what is now DeLano Street narrowly missing two young children at play 30 feet away. The mother heard a roar - "almost like the sound of a threshing machine," and ran outside to see the crash.

"It happened on 'Thomas Hill' on the fringe of what was then called 'Saugatuck Road'. People ran to the scene. The impact 'like thunder,' reportedly heard as far away as Otsego. Street workers working nearby were startled and they soon joined in digging up the meteorite then cooling. 'Irregular oval'. It had sunk two feet into the earth. The chunk was about 20 inches long, 12 inches through the middle. San Huitt on whose lawn it had dropped claimed it but visitors soon started chipping into it for souvenirs. (from the original 1899 article in the Allegan County Gazette)

Huitt loaned the exhibit for the store window of downtown clothier, Gustav Stern. Chipping continued there. Huitt decided to come after it the next day, but it had mysteriously disappeared. Before long it turned up as an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. There it remained, gradually dwindling through "powdering."

Gustav Stern took a "sample" to Detroit chemists, later receiving the analysis: particles of sulfite of iron mingling with metallic iron, which is alloyed with nickel.
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.

Part of the “Ball of Fire” or its brother had also fallen on a farm in Byron Township, Kent County.

Note: A short time ago, Society historian, Chris Yoder came across a very tiny fragment of the Allegan meteorite, encased in a glass vial, for sale on E-Bay for several hundred dollars. No wonder those people in Russia are frantically searching.

submitted by Mary Voss

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
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](mailto: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:
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)