Oldest Life-saving Boat in America Lives Here

In September 2013, Timothy Dring, the President of the U.S. Life-Saving Service Heritage Association visited the Old School House to see our Francis lifesaving boat the Gallinipper 1.

Mr. Dring’s specialty is technical and design history of all rescue boats used by the United States Life-Saving Service and the early United States Coast Guard from the 1800s to present day. He confirmed that our boat is indeed the oldest lifesaving craft in America and is so rare is because most similar boats were eaten up by war-time needs for iron scrap. He said the Smithsonian would love to have it. We were commended for the restoration work and the “stunning” exhibit display. Mr. Dring will be working with Jim Schmiechen to prepare a nomination for the boat to join the Old School House as a National Registry listing.

The Boathouse Exhibit was made possible by your matching contributions to a National Endowment for the Arts Grant. Some of the other contributions which have come from your contributions are:

- **Pumphouse Museum**, 1993
  - 20 exhibits. More than 8,000 visitors a year

- **Old School House History Center**
  - Purchased and lovingly renovated 2001
  - Archives – maps, prints, photos, oral history
  - Gallery of notable local artists

- **Back In Time Garden**
  - Actually 8 gardens and 6 interest stations

All these accomplishments could create the illusion that we are flush with funds. This could not be further from the truth. Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society is an ALL volunteer organization. Those volunteers have contributed countless talents and hours but it “takes a village” to keep history alive.
The Pumphouse was built in 1904.

The Old School House, while recently renovated, is 147 years old.

Keeping History Alive Here means keeping our structures as healthy as the interest in our communities past. Thousands of visitors, have seen our thousands of paintings, maps, photographs, and objects. Thousands of dollars are needed to maintain, update, and expand our spaces. We want to continue to respectfully care for these gifts.

Where will all these treasures will be in another 100 (or even 20) years? It’s up to you. Please consider a year-end contribution to Keep History Alive Here.

Thank you for you on-going commitment and support.

SCANNED SHARON KELLY SIGNATURE HERE

Sharon Kelly
President

PS. Watch for the next SDHS newsletter for more information on the Gallinipper 1.