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 2015??
Don't miss out on a great year of events and much more!
To renew your membership electronically using either PayPal or a credit card, click HERE or if you would rather renew by check, click HERE to download and print a Membership Form.

Save The Date!
Saturday, May 23rd

Artist's Cottage Open House
Sunday, May 3rd from 2 - 4 PM
730 N. Maple St., Saugatuck
Hosted by John & Debby Topliff
$20 per person
Still a few tickets left. Just REPLY to this email and we will be in touch.

Charter Members, Life Members, and Sponsors are cordially invited to a PRIVATE RECEPTION and PREVIEW of the 2015 Museum Exhibition prior to the annual Members' Reception

Private Reception | 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Members’ Reception | 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Saturday, May 23, 2015
Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum
Park Street at Mt. Baldhead Park
Saugatuck

For your convenience, please park at DeMond’s parking lot and take the free shuttle to the Museum.
Young flowering hydrangea tree at the Topliff's front door greets visitors approaching along a walkway around the garage/studio in background

Snack, sip and explore the home and grounds of Debby and John Topliff, set in five acres on a wooded bluff overlooking Goshorn Creek and Peterson Nature Preserve.

The rambling main house, features a lovely courtyard entrance and is beautifully appointed with family antiques and art collections. Not to be missed are a number of the owner's paintings - large and colorful biblical narratives - in the outlying studio connected to the garage.

Beyond the house, the property includes a charming 1940s cabin with a vertical log exterior and pine plank interior that the Topliffs saved from demolition, relocated and decorated with cottage furniture and antiques. The tour continues with a meditation labyrinth, wooded pathways, a large raised-bed garden and stairs down into the ravine creek.

Debby is an artist, writer and teacher with a passion for finding creative ways to express her faith. John, who has a Doctor of Ministry degree, is newly retired from his career in publishing. The couple recently spent a gap year in St. Andrews, Scotland.

Humankind vs. Nature.
This exhibition chronicles sometimes dangerous, unpredictable, environmentally reckless, but often favorable, interactions between nature's waterscapes and daily life in Saugatuck-Douglas.

What You Missed
On Wednesday, April 8, Jim Schmiechen's Monthly Program presentation titled "Saugatuck's Big Pool and Other Water Stories: A Preview of the 2015-16 Museum Exhibition" examined how much of our community's history has been connected to water and how that relationship has changed over time through eras of sturgeon fishing, steamship travel, loggers rafting millions of logs down the river, bridge building, the "Big
Still a few tickets left. Just REPLY to this email and we will be in touch.

Sunday Supper and Sunset at the Lakeshore
Sunday, July 12th
from 6 PM until sunset (8:31 PM)
Hosted by Ellen & Richard Donovan
2641 Lakeshore Drive
(South of washout) $65 per person

Toast the summer at this lovely lake front home and garden. After a dinner served hot off the grill, sit on the shore to watch the sun set into Lake Michigan.

For reservations, REPLY to this email and we will be in touch.

Mark Your Calendar
2015 Monthly Programs and Tuesday Talks

If you would like to sponsor one of the Monthly Programs, please REPLY to this email and we'll be in touch.
Sponsorships are $150

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

1 May 13, Rosebay Nursery Field Trip
1 June 10, History of Coral Gables sponsored by Jolene Jackson & Lonnie Hannaford
1 July 8, Field Trip to Peterson Preserve sponsored by Monty Collins & Jerry Dark
1 August 12, Society Picnic at the Old School House
1 September 9, Fishing: Commercial & Recreational sponsored by Howard & Paula Schultz
1 October 14, Crane's Orchard Field Trip
1 November 11, Fire, Storm and Ice: Shipwrecks sponsored by the Star of Saugatuck, Marilyn & Bruce Starring
1 December 13, Holiday Party

If you would like to sponsor one of the Tuesday Talks, please REPLY to this email and we'll be in touch.

If you are interested in viewing the complete presentation, click HERE. Be patient, the file will take a while to download.
Small Plates, Small Talk
Thursday, July 16th, 11 am - 2 pm
Hosted by Ken Carls
325 Water Street, Douglas
$100 per person
Only 20 tickets available

Dine Around dinner guests at the Red House, home of Ken Carls and Jim Schmiechen overlooking Wade's Bayou in Douglas, have come to count on sitting down to tasty fare around the big dining room table. This time guests will join Ken in the kitchen and watch what's going on as he prepares a selection of Red House favorites. Then guests will enjoy a "tapas style" luncheon as they sample the day's fare - and experience dishes they can add to their own cooking repertoire. Emphasis will be on fresh, seasonal, easy-to-make dishes for casual dining.

For reservations, REPLY to this email and we

Sponsorships are $150

TUESDAY TALKS
General sponsors: Carolyn Richards and Howard Rochte

1 July 7, Blue Star Trail
1 July 14, Drone Photography of River and Lake sponsored by Sharon Kelly
1 July 21, Bee Keeping sponsored by Osman Flowers & Firs
1 July 28, Perimeter: Photo Talk by Author Kevin Miyazaki
1 August 4, Peach Belt School
1 August 11, Invasive Species: On Land and Water sponsored by Harbor Duck Adventures Co., Brent Birkholz
1 August 18, Water and Art (watercolor painting?) sponsored by Ken Carls
1 August 25, Ship Building in Saugatuck sponsored by the Star of Saugatuck, Marilyn & Bruce Starring

You Are Invited!
Wildwood Progressive Dinner Party
Saturday, Sept. 19th, 6 - 9 pm
Hosted by Vito Masciopinto, Susan & Mark Lauterbach, Sarah Harris & Alex Fink
$100 per person
Only 25 tickets available.

The event combines drinks, heavy appetizers, and desserts with a look inside three new modern homes and ending up on the roof top patio weather permitting (bring a coat!) on Wildwood Lane in a "progressive dinner" styled tour of homes.

Wildwood Lane, when completed, will be a development of 14 future modern lake houses, each committed to the preservation of the natural habitat and celebration of modern architecture. Come explore the uniqueness of each of the three completed homes while drinking and dining and experiencing the latest in modern living, sustainable technologies, and modular construction.

Inspiration comes from the experimental Case Study Houses by Charles and Ray Eames, Richard Neutra, Craig Ellwood, and Pierre Koenig. These houses blend the openness and simplicity of modern living with craft, durability, and sustainability to make them true modern lake houses.

For reservations, REPLY to this email and we will be in touch.

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Garden Happenings

"Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the earth has gladly received the embracing of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of their love."
--- Sitting Bull

We are already starting to see the results of their love with the daffodils blooming along our trail. What a beautiful time of year! It is also a busy one. Our garden will start getting her annual clean with John and Lee at the helm. John, with the support of the Azalea Foundation, will have a "Day of Mulch" on Saturday, April 25. Anyone who wants to contribute their time and energy, please meet John at the Old School House at 10 am. Some other days you may want to put on your calendars are May 16th for the Garden Club's Annual Plant Sale and June 20th for the Rhododendron Pruning Seminar. Also, Dottie Lyon and Mike Economos are creating teams to help with small designs, installations and maintenance of garden projects at the museum and the school. The teams will consist of members of the Saugatuck/ Douglas Garden Clubs who recently completed a Master Gardener program and now are in need of some hours in the trenches. Many thanks to Dottie and Mike and all our future Master Gardeners!

The Root Camp committee is continuing to work on this year's camp. We spent a lot of time down
Welcome from Jack Sheridan and Chris Yoder, leaders of the Society Family History Group.

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

Using DNA as an aid in family history research has come into wide use and no doubt it is the wave of the future. In this column I have expounded on the subject. You may want to reread the February and March 2015 columns.

I am participating in the Ancestry.com autosomal DNA program. As discussed, my primary goal has been to use the program to provide DNA matching information that aids me in growing my family tree.

Another less important but interesting part of the program provides estimates of my ethnicity. The ethnicity of many of us living in the USA is complex as we are mixtures of various nationalities [the American melting pot].

I am a good example of this mixture. My ethnicity is estimated to be 6% Irish plus five others areas. How was this determined?

Understand that the ancestry of many natives of Ireland has been relatively unmixed over thousands of years. DNA samples have been collected in Ireland and used to build a native Irish DNA profile. In the Ancestry autosomal program my DNA sample is compared with

at the Fennville Elementary school, talking with the third and fourth grade classes about our camp. Hopefully we will get kids to sign up for our camp and take advantage of the generous grant from the Mignon Sherwood Delano Foundation. Many thanks to Albert Lombard, the principal of the elementary school, and the teachers and staff, who embraced our camp with open arms and made time in their busy schedule for us. Remember Root Camp will be June 22 - 25 with two sessions available. Please go to the Society's web page for all the information. Also if you know of children that could use our available scholarships, please have them contact Ruth Johnson at ruthannj@frontier.com or call at 616-218-0086.

Until next month,
The Landscape and Root Camp Committees

Saugatuck-Douglas
Gay History Project

Gay Football on the Waterfront

Saugatuck and Douglas have long been known for their rich diversity and high level of acceptance. Though there have been moments of tension in our past, by and large our inclusive nature is more
profiles from twenty five world wide areas. Portions of my DNA sample match the Irish profile. Bingo - the same process is used to compare my DNA sample with profiles from twenty four other areas worldwide. I have matches relating to five more areas. The chart below shows my six areas of ethnicity and other areas of comparison which yielded no matches.

Click on the image for a higher resolution copy

Interestingly, I have identified some 800 grandparents in my tree going back as far as the early 1400s and they all appear to be Irish, British or west to south European in origin. So the DNA matches do not contradict my family history - Yet?

I still have a lot of digging to do!

Remember, your family history does not have to have any connection to the

In the coming months we will be featuring some of our archives, our photographs and our collected stories. It will be interesting to see how Saugatuck-Douglas history compares to what is now becoming a national dialogue. We encourage you to send any old photographs or stories to us at [sdgayhistory@gmail.com](mailto:sdgayhistory@gmail.com). We are also looking for people to interview. Please drop us a note if you or anyone that you know might be a good resource to talk to.

We appreciate your help.

submitted by Mark Neidlinger and Jonathan Schreur

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Dawn Schumann
Saugatuck-Douglas area !!!

Still not sure how to get going? Let us provide a helpful jump start by recording what you know about your parents, grandparents, and great grandparents and send it along for a review by Chris Yoder or myself. The snail mail address is SDHS Family History, Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406, or email a copy to either cyoder@tds.net or jack.sheridan@gmail.com.

We will soon be back to you with readily found data and with suggestions on the next steps to take. Further help is readily available from the Family History group. Again, the only requirement is membership in the SDHS.

Mayflower ancestor, Revolutionary War vet, great grandparents? Still wondering? Questions/ comments/advice/needs - contact Jack Sheridan at jack.sheridan@gmail.com 269 857-7144 or Chris Yoder at cyoder@tds.net 269 857-4327.

On May 15th our own Dawn Schumann will receive the Michigan Preservation Network's Lifetime Achievement Award for her dedicated work in support of historic preservation both here in Saugatuck and Douglas as well as in the many other locations she has lived.

Congratulations Dawn and thank you from all of us at the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society.

This newsletter column is produced by Jack Sheridan

On-line Cemetery Data Reunites Family Album

In the June 2013 newsletter, we presented a young photo of Levi Tuttle, one of the longest lived local Civil War veterans. This, and other photos of Allegan County members of Company
Last September I started a new HBC series of panoramic photographs taken from the top of Mt Baldhead. We history buffs are fortunate to have photos from this great vantage point over a long time period. The photos appearing span some fifty years, are accurately dated, and in most cases the photographer identified.

Other factors make these photos special. First, earlier photos had few mature trees to block the view. Second, the photographers used quality cameras with large glass plate negatives that were capable of capturing details. Though most of the glass plates are lost, the prints made from them, faithfully contain the details. When scanned at high resolution, the images yield marvelous results.

In December we had full photos of 1895 and 1906 without comment. In January, February and March we looked at the details one third of the image each month.

Now in April we have 1906 and ca 1920, the full view. Enjoy it by studying the details. There were a lot of changes in fourteen years.

L, 4th Michigan Calvary, had been found in an old family bible in a book store in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was reunited with living descendants in California of Gurdin N. Kenyon and his wife Destemona Wilson through postings of their grave records on the "Find a Grave" web site. Gurdin had also been a member of that unit.

Within the last few weeks, a doctor in Atlanta, Georgia, found a photo album in that same Tennessee bookstore, and used the same information source to connect with active genealogist and family member Nancy Robison. Among the photos in the album was a photo for Gurdin and his wife.

Gurdin and Destemona Kenyon

Gurdin N. Kenyon was born in New York, April 26, 1836, came to Allegan County with his parents Reynolds and Abigail (Coombs) Kenyon in the
Next month we will begin to compare the two, one third of the image per issue.

The 1920 photographer was Herman Simonson.

*This newsletter column is written by Jack Sheridan.*

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**Pearl Harbor Nurses a Focus of Armed Forces Day Luncheon**

Photo by Lauren Little used with permission of Reading Eagle

The 4th Annual Saugatuck-Douglas Area Armed Forces Day Luncheon will be held May 16, 2015 beginning at 11:15 am at the Community Church of Douglas. The purpose of this yearly luncheon is for the community to come together to honor our service members, past and present.

Mrs. Winifred C. Woll, a community college instructor from Reading, PA, is the daughter of a Pearl Harbor Nurse and will present her slide

Gurdin enlisted on Jul. 28, 1862 in Monterey, and served with the Michigan 4th his entire military enlistment, serving as a scout. The 4th Michigan was renown as the regiment which captured Jeff Davis, the president of the Confederacy. He was discharged as a Sergeant on 1 July, 1865 at Nashville, Tennessee and returned to Michigan. Gurdin's military records describe him as being 5ft 8in, blue eyes, dark hair and a light complexion. About 1874 he moved his family to California. Several of his brothers also were in service, one dying at Nashville, and another achieving the rank of Captain.

According to the *History of Allegan and Barry Counties, Michigan*, Destemona's father Horace Wilson (born 1809 in Vermont) arrived in Allegan in the spring of 1834 "when there were but two log houses in the place". He helped clear the land on which Allegan now stands in 1835, and helped found the Methodist Church there in 1836. In 1837 he was the first settler of the hamlet of Monterey in Monterey Township. He cleared the main portion of the village, and on the organization of the village one of the names proposed was "Wilson" in his honor. Among the offices he held were that of Highway Commissioner -1849, and Justice of the Peace -1861. He moved back to Allegan in 1866 and lived there the remainder of his life.

According to the biographical story of Joseph Thorn, Horace's son-in-law, he also superintended the construction of the dam on the Kalamazoo River at Allegan. He married Clarissa Hicock
program on "The White Caps (Nurses) of Pearl Harbor". Mrs. Woll is a member of the National Sons and Daughters of Pearl Harbor Survivors organization and has made an intensive study of the nurses who were on duty there on Dec. 7, 1941.

The West Michigan Veterans Assistance Program (WMVAP) and the Allegan County Department of Veteran Services will staff an information table, and the traveling "Michigan Vietnam Wall" will be on display. Boy Scout Troop 29 and local cub scouts will provide the color guard and lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Major sponsors of the luncheon include: the Rotary Club of Saugatuck-Douglas; the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society; the Saugatuck Masonic Lodge 328; the Cow Hill Yacht Club; the American Legion - Bruner-Frehse Post 137; and the Saugatuck-Douglas Veterans of Foreign Wars.

A pulled-pork luncheon will be supplied by Blue Star Meats. Any veteran gets a free lunch, other adults $12, and students $6. Tickets are available at Vicki's Family Restaurant in Douglas or Chemical Bank in Saugatuck. You can also arrange to have tickets held for you at the door by calling Chris Yoder at 616-212-3443. Funds remaining after all bills are paid are donated to the WMVAP which provides services to local veterans in need.

Gurdin and Destemona had 4 children, a son Sherman, and 3 daughters: Elise, born in 1859; Etta, born on 1861; and Eda, born in 1872. The family moved to California in 1874, first by train to San Francisco, then by S.S. Aurizaba to Santa Barbara. Gurdin died in 1898 and is buried in Ventura Co. Destemona later married the husband of her late sister Mercy, Solomon Wesley McBride, and she died in 1911.

Clarissa Hicock Wilson, Hickory Corners Cemetery, Allegan Township
Welcome New Members

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

- Dan Ryan & Michael Riemke, Douglas, MI
- Jim & Paula Bedford, Douglas, MI
- Paulette Yetter & Paula Grubben, Fennville, MI
- Ken Welsh, Douglas, MI
- Sarah Oberholtzer, Douglas, MI

Find a Grave presents the grave records of over 121 million people, mostly from the United States. Saugatuck, Ganges and Laketown Township cemeteries have all been extensively documented, and you are invited to check out any local family members by clicking HERE.

Margaret Ann Steel, 80

Marge Steel, a former member of the Society, passed away on Easter Sunday, April 5. Click HERE for more details.
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)

The Museum is closed for the season. Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Museum and recent past exhibits.

The Old School House History Center and Lifeboat Display is located at 130 Center Street in Douglas. For group tours, please contact Steve Hutchins at 616-801-3735 or by email at [hutch343@frontier.com](mailto:hutch343@frontier.com)

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.

The Society's Archives office is located in the lower level of the Old School House and is open for research on Monday afternoons 1-4 p.m. Use the back stairway for easy access. Archives office phone number is 269-857-7901. E-mail: [archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org)

Society Phone: 269 857-5751
Museum Phone: 269 857-7900
Tech Center Phone 269 857-7901
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