

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

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OLD SCHOOL HOUSE CELEBRATES 150TH ANNIVERSARY WITH COMMUNITY "FAMILY FUN DAY" THIS SUNDAY

SEPT. 15, 2017 -- Saugatuck-Douglas History Center invites all to a Family Fun Day celebrating the 150th anniversary of Douglas' iconic Union School, now known as the Old School House, 130 Center Street in Douglas, on Sunday, September 24, from 1 to 4 p.m.

The event, set amid the Center's "Back-In-Time Garden" and historic lifeboat exhibit, promises an afternoon of old-time carnival games and crafts, prizes, face painting, food vendors and live music, along with close encounters with friendly farm animals from The Critter Barn in Zeeland. Prominent local *Plein Air* artists Jim Brandess and Anne Corlett also will be demonstrating their talents on-site, and exhibits inside the Old School House will be open.

An entrance fee of \$10 per family will provide tickets to be used within the event, and additional tickets may be purchased in smaller increments.

Douglas Union School, opened in 1867 just after the American Civil War, marked a revolution in progressive public education in Michigan. The largest and most expensive building in Douglas at that time, it was called a "union" (or "consolidated") school because it brought the area's small, one-room schoolhouses together, and taught children by grade level, in a "modern" school environment, under specially trained teachers.

Although not the state's first union school, it is the only remaining 19th century union school in Michigan. With its architecture and construction faithfully preserved in restoration by the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, its historical significance has won official recognition through listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, giving our area yet another attraction for the growing interest in heritage tourism.

The event will mark the debut of a new exhibit within the Old School House, entitled *Pieces of our Past*. *Pieces of our Past* acquaints visitors with some of the odd and unusual artifacts in the History Center's collection and interprets their interesting stories through additional text and photos from our archival collection.

As a volunteer-based, not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization with membership open to all, SDHC welcomes new members who have an interest in local history or just want to better connect with the unique cultural heritage of the area. Membership activities are enjoyed by long-time and seasonal residents, tourists, and individuals who have recently joined the greater Saugatuck-Douglas community.

For more information about SDHC, its award-winning Pump House Museum, its Old School House, its planned activities, and its many volunteer opportunities, visit www.MySDHistory.org.

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The Old School House, decked out in 150th anniversary banners, invites all to Family Fun Day Sept. 24.