

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS
HISTORY
CENTER

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NEW HISTORY MUSEUM EXHIBIT OPENS MAY 26,
VIEWS LOCAL HISTORY IN EVERYDAY SNAPSHOTS

MAY 17, 2019 -- The all-new 2019 exhibit at the Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum, offering a novel way of looking at life in our area, past and present, opens for the summer season on Memorial Day weekend at Noon, Sunday, May 26. Titled "Then and Now / Snapshots from the Archives", the exhibit builds on the subtle power of "everyday photos" culled from more than 5,000 gathered in S-D History Center archives.

The Museum occupies the historic Saugatuck Pump House at 735 Park Street, in a scenic garden setting along the west bank of the Kalamazoo River at Mt. Baldhead Park, a short walk north from the Saugatuck Chain Ferry landing. Admission and nearby parking are free.

Featuring images never before publicly displayed -- and probably not originally intended to be -- the exhibit reveals personal views of everyday life as far back as the 1860s. Personal and family photography blossomed when the first easy-to-use, handheld Kodak camera arrived in 1888, making everything and everyone fair game to be caught on film, whether posed or candid, serious or light-hearted. The results create a visual dialogue between past and present that engages viewers to reflect on how things have changed in some ways yet stayed the same in others.

A special selection of snapshots will be highlighted as enlarged-print displays accompanied by their stories, and another special grouping will be shown without identity as a creative game inviting visitors to write and post their own captions. Others will be shown with brief captions via video monitor.

Giving the exhibit theme a fun centerpiece is a modern version of the ubiquitous, self-operated, four-shot photobooth familiar to all, which invites visitors to "mug the camera" and e-mail or text the results to themselves or friends. Cautionary note: the images also go to a web gallery running in a loop for continuous display on a monitor in the Museum. Displayed alongside the booth is a turn-of-the-(19th)-century photo album, prompting visitors to ponder the likelihood that the current generation arguably will be the most-photographed yet, but perhaps with its photos the least well preserved due to digital storage replacing traditional albums.

Also on display will be a collection of popular hand-held cameras representing their 100-year evolution from the Kodak Brownie box camera circa 1917 to contemporary cell-phones.

The Museum's south gallery gift shop will continue its tradition of offering locally authored books created to accompany past exhibits, highlighting the popular Big Pavilion book by Saugatuck author-historian Kit Lane, telling the story of the town's grandest attraction from its construction in 1909 to the day it burned down in May of 1960.

Joining these is an expanded selection of new Saugatuck-Douglas themed items, presenting two designs of "I Climbed Mt. Baldhead" T-shirts, two magnetic car-stickers, two coffee-mug designs, an assortment of photo-postcards, plus historic maps, photos and posters board-mounted for framing. Popular returning items include hats, books, and a very limited supply of wooden pens, hand-crafted by

students in the Saugatuck High School Industrial Arts program from lumbering-era timber retrieved from the Kalamazoo River.

Outside, the Museum's riverfront floral gardens will host a collaborative art project by the Douglas Elementary School 5th-grade class under Art Teacher Missy Pawlak, displaying numerous 4" square wooden plaques decorated with historical photos and hand-painted messages, hung in garlands from bamboo tripods

Founded in 1992, the History Museum is open daily Noon to 4pm from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, then with the same hours every Saturday and Sunday through September and October. For more information, call: (269) 857-7900. To learn more about Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, its History Museum in Saugatuck and its Old School House in Douglas, visit www.MySDHistory.org.

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PHOTO ATTACHED SEPARATELY (see jpeg "sign")

Caption: SDHC volunteers Vic Bella and Sally Winthers hang an antique sign, preparing new S-D History Museum exhibit for season opening Sunday May 26