Again this year, the Society's Newsletter is being underwritten by a generous donation from the late Life Member, Frances Vorys.

You're Invited!

Sunday, December 13
at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts,
400 Culver Street, Saugatuck

The festive fun begins at 6:30pm*
*note corrected time
Reservation Required

A Note about Your Membership

In order to minimize paperwork and clutter during the busy end-of-year season, SDHS is moving its membership renewal cycle to March for the upcoming year. All dues-current members will continue to be current through the winter and should look for a membership renewal notice as the snow begins to melt. No dues payment is due at this time. Membership questions? Contact the museum director at director@sdhistoricalsociety.org.

We Missed You!

The annual Society Halloween Bash at the Old School House was frightfully fun on Halloween night. Guests were treated to creative and spooky costumes, delicious nosh, and even a chance to win some original Halloween artwork! Mother Nature even stopped the rain just in time for everyone to see the one-of-a-kind Douglas Adult Halloween Parade. If you couldn't make it, plan to attend next year...you missed some memorable characters!
The SDHS online store is open for business and waiting to help you check off some "to get" items from your list. Our wide assortment of publications are easy to wrap, and support the Society's mission. New this year is the WGVU Michigan Hometown Stories: Saugatuck/Douglas DVD! Visit the online store or go to http://sdhistoricalsociety.org/publications/books.php

**But Wait, There's More!**

Did you know if you shop on Amazon - anytime of the year - a small percentage of your purchase can be donated to SDHS? When it's time to go shopping, go to smile.amazon.com, use your regular Amazon login credentials, and then select that you wish to support the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society. That's it! Amazon will donate a portion of your purchase to the Society. **Click here** to get started.

Don't forget that the Society maintains a booth at the Saugatuck Antique Pavilion on the Blue Star Highway! The booth features some of our selection of publications along with a host of actual antiques and other treasures donated for this purpose. Proceeds from the sales of booth items benefit the operating expenses of the Society.

Care for a drink? This bubbling and glowing draft greeted party-goers at the annual Halloween Bash.
For much of the year you've been hearing about *Keep Your Arts Alive!*, an arts and culture fundraising competition for local non-profits sponsored by the Allegan County Community Foundation. Your generous vote dollars - one dollar = one vote - propelled SDHS to be the first place winner of the competition for the second year in a row! In addition to receiving all of the money donated to our organization through *Arts Alive!*, the top few vote-getters get a bonus prize, in our case $5,000! **Thank you!**

Nearly 20 organizations participated this year, helping to raise funds and awareness for the tremendous variety of local arts and culture non-profits. Since the program was founded in 2010, this has had a cumulative funding impact of **$589,627** across Allegan County. What great news! Unfortunately, 2015 marked the final *Arts Alive!* competition. ACCF will soon be announcing new opportunities - and I will be following along to see what benefits they may have for our organization. In the meantime, we owe a debt of thanks to ACCF for championing this critical program which has benefited the Society for the past few years.
In early November, I had the opportunity to sit in with the Programming Committee to help plan out our slate of 2016 Tuesday Talk and Monthly Meeting presentations. Wow! In half an hour we had the entire calendar tentatively filled and about a half dozen other program ideas for possibilities, back-ups, or "maybe next year." The longer I'm here, the more I realize just how much history there is in our area and how many stories are waiting for a chance to be heard. Sharpen your pencils and prepare your calendars, you won't want to miss what we have in store!

The finalized 2016 calendar will be published in upcoming editions of *SDHS e-News*.

Thank you Programming Committee for developing a busy calendar for 2016!

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Saugatuck - Douglas History? There's an App for that!

A newly released free mobile app, available for Apple and Android smartphones and tablets, provides a new way for residents and visitors to stay in touch with the community, explore the history and heritage attractions of our area, and take advantage of the learning resources offered by the Society. The new app is available for download through Apple Store and Google Play Store, found by searching "Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society".

With this app, users can interact with the Historical Society from anywhere in the world to keep up with breaking news, learn about Society activities and upcoming public programs, and add events-of-interest to their personal calendars. App users can take self-led local history tours, or virtually visit

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You Also Missed...

The November 11th Monthly Meeting rounded out our presentation series for 2015, and featured a lively discussion of the history and mystery surrounding the sinking of the fishing tug *Gotham* in 1943 off the Saugatuck piers. Jack Sheridan's collection of spectacular images from our archives was augmented by recollections and stories by descendants of the Gotham and Jones families in attendance. We hope to see you next year as our Monthly Meeting program series continues!
Society facilities such as the History Museum at Mt. Baldhead or the Old School House in Douglas and its Back-In-Time Garden, even during the "off-season" and other times when these properties may be closed.

Among its variety of other functions, the app also allows users to peruse the Society's permanent collection of artworks and growing archive of historical photographs, records and newspapers, and view social media and YouTube videos of popular programming.

The app was conceived by one of this summer's SDHS interns, Samuel Fitzpatrick, a senior at Central Michigan University, as a way to make the Society's exhibits and programs more inviting to tech-savvy visitors. During its development, the app blossomed into a more comprehensive mechanism with broader functionality and intuitive operation as Fitzpatrick collaborated with Society volunteer Julie Abel, who donated the time and talents of her Douglas web development firm JabberDesign, LLC to the project.

You too can hold history in your hand with the new SDHS app!

By Jack Sheridan

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, such as local records, Ancestry.com, and more.

Got questions on how to get going? That is what we are for! Call or email us or take note, the SDHS Family History Group's regular meeting schedule is the first and third Thursday of every month at the Old School House.

Upcoming meetings at the OSH at 3:30pm in the downstairs tech room are:
Thursday December 3
Thursday December 17

Remember, your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area!!!

Not sure where to begin? 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, PO Box 617 Douglas, Michigan 49406, or email a copy to cyoder@tds.net and/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 always available from the Family History group by phone and email. The only requirement is membership in the SDHS.

Mayflower ancestor, Revolutionary War vet, great grandparents, WWII vet? Stop wondering and get the facts.

Questions/comments/advice/needs - contact Jack Sheridan:
269 857-7144
jack.sheridan@gmail.com
The Bill Simmons Scrapbook

By Jack Sheridan

This is the third month of the History by Camera feature - the BILL SIMMONS SCRAPBOOK. Bill was a semi-professional photographer, originally from Chicago, who moved to Saugatuck about 1940. He had a couple of stints as the editor of the Commercial Record. Over the next twenty years he took numerous black and white photos.

He died in 1962 and these photos went unnoticed until 1998 when some 3000 negatives were given to the SDHS. What a record of our town in the middle of the twentieth century!

Many have appeared in SDHS books and exhibits. However, others ended up - so to speak - on the cutting room floor, because Bill often took numerous shots of a subject. We have used only the best of them and many subjects have not been published.

Garden Happenings

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy

No truer words were said. The Garden Committee has so many people to be grateful for, because without you, our garden wouldn't be what it is today. We do want to give a "shout out" to a couple of people for their help with the peach Orchard. Yes, the graphics are finally finished and it's all due to the help of others. Thank you to Christa Wise, Sally Winthers, John Migas, Dick Bont, and of course our amazing graphics team of Kristi Mueller and Jim Schmeichen. Also to "Amsterdam" Mike and Pleasant Hill Farms for their donations of the orchard ladder and the crates. Thank you!

This winter we will be working on the graphics for the School Yard and Rhododendron Stations. We are looking for some cool old farm/garden "stuff" to integrate in the design of the potting shed, which is part of the Rhododendron Station (rear of the boat house). If you have anything you would like to donate, please contact Jim Schmeichen. Many thanks in advance.

Although it is not yet Thanksgiving, it is never too early to think of Christmas and gift-giving! What better gift to give the kids in your life but a week at camp... Root Camp that is! Our committee is starting to organize for the 2016 sessions and will keep you posted on the dates and teachers in upcoming newsletters.

The Garden and Root Camp Committees would like to wish you and yours and blessed, Happy Thanksgiving.

Until next month,

The Garden and Root Camp Committees

From the Archives
Please examine the images [a history mystery of the mind] to see what you can identify before reading my brief captions. This is a form of my History Mystery series exercise, without hints. Many of subjects are still here, right in front of us. Have fun.

When you feel confident, click on the image above to reveal the answers!

I appreciate your feedback on my captions, and the selection of these images. Please point out my good choices, errors or omissions by sending an email at jack.sheridan@gmail.com. No feedback from last month - how about some discussion? Subject suggestions encouraged!

This photo taken in front of the Good Goods building in 1934 was recently donated by Sandra Finch. It shows a number of local people who are identified on the back. We were wondering what the letters stand for. You can click on the image to see a larger version. If anyone can clear up the mystery, please contact us at archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

Recent Donations to the SDHS Collection:

- A Photograph and business card of the Willow Haven Tourist Home from Robert McDermont
- Postcard of the Big Pool and other historical items from by MaryAnn Curtis
- Poster showing how to properly load a train car with fruit baskets from Ken Carls
- Saugatuck/Douglas vintage tourist map listing hotels and tourist homes on reverse side. Also an original drawing of a boat and building with Mt. Baldhead in the background made by Wilfred Berg in 1951. Given by his niece Peggy Smith.
- Two photographs of the house on the corner of Hoffman and Griffith before and after the addition was added in 1936 from Vic Bella.
- A 1920s era visible Texaco gas pump from the De Windt family given in memory of Clyde Battjes
- Oil Painting of beach by Rose Marie Taft, numbered water color print of Coral Gables by Mae Vander Ark, and a print of a drawing of the Butler Restaurant 1972 by Hugh Riker all donated by Warren Lewis in memory of Sue Lewis.

As approved by the Board of Directors, "The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society strives to collect, preserve, interpret and make available for research items and archival material that fulfill and further the mission of the Society.

Doris Mersbach, 91
Doris Mersbach, a longtime Life member of the Society, passed away on October 16th. She and her late husband were long-time supporters of our organization. Click HERE for more details.

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**Welcome New Members!**

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

- Michael & Deborah Lewis, Holland, MI

"These collections will document the past and the unfolding multicultural history of Saugatuck, Douglas and Saugatuck Township and vicinity; to maintain and build upon the present collection of items and archival/photographic material; and maintain and increase existing documentation on these collections."

The Collections Committee is always on the lookout for items to be donated which will enhance the stories of our community. Contact the archives directly if you think you may have something you wish to donate. By policy, the museum cannot accept unsolicited "drop off" items.

Archives direct phone: 269-857-7901
Email: archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

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Recently donated postcard of the Big Pool.
(Click image for full size)

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**ABOUT THE SOCIETY**

To become a member of the Society, select from the following categories:

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Membership renewal notices will be sent in March, 2016. No payment is due at this time.

Send items for the newsletter to: Nathan Nietering, PO Box 617, Douglas, MI 49406 or email info@sdhistoricalsociety.org

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORICAL SOCIETY FACILITIES

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum is located at 735 Park Street in Saugatuck, in the historic Pump House building. The History Museum closed for the winter season on October 25. WATER, our feature exhibit, will reopen, with some new elements, over Memorial Day 2016. Always free to the public but donations gratefully accepted.

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 of the School House, please contact Nathan Nietering at 269-857-5751 or by email at director@sdhistoricalsociety.org. The Lifeboat Display and Back-in-Time Garden are open to the public as weather permits.

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. Open by appointment.

The Society's Archives office is located in the lower level of the Old School House and is open for research on Monday afternoons 1-4pm. Use the back stairway for easy access.
E-mail: archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org

Society Main Phone: 269-857-5751
Museum Phone: 269-857-7900
Tech Center/Archives Phone: 269-857-7901
www.sdhistoricalsociety.org
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