March Monthly Meeting

Sunlight filters through shallow water casting an eerie glow on the bow of the SS Novadoc. (click to enlarge)

Author and underwater explorer Valerie van Heest commemorates the tragic Armistice Day Blizzard of November 11, 1940 in which five Great Lakes ships and 67 sailors were lost at our March Monthly Program. She and the dive team from Michigan Shipwreck Research Associates have examined the wrecks of the Novadoc, William B. Davock, and Anna C. Minch, all lost off Pentwater within a few miles of each other during the gale. Their research now provides insight into what caused these massive freighters to sink when others survived the storm. Also lost that day were South Haven fishing tugs Indian and Richard H, never to be found, while 12 other vessels were damaged or grounded.

Driven by winds reaching 80 mph, Lake Michigan waves reached 27 ft. heights at Pentwater, while power and phone lines fell, trees were uprooted, buildings collapsed, and road and rail transportation were paralyzed. The blizzard hammered the West Michigan shore overnight for twelve hours and is among the most harrowing and deadly Lakes storms.

Barrel Update!

Work has been moving slowly (until recently) on the reassembly of the famed Douglas Root Beer Barrel. Behind the scenes, a small team of Barrel Committee members have been finalizing plans for the fabrication of an all-new steel base. After years of sitting in moisture, the original barrel base was rusted to near the point of non-existence. With all of the wooden staves completely refinished and ownership of the barrel officially transferred to the City of the Village of Douglas, attention has now turned to this important structural component.

A partnership was formed between the Barrel Committee, the City of the Village of Douglas and the Saugatuck High School Industrial Arts Education program to do the fabrication and assembly of the steel base and internal structure. The high school program is capable of this task thanks to the direction of Industrial Ed teacher Vince Heyser and the tools and equipment in the program - namely facilities to do welding on-site, and a CNC plasma cutting machine.

Chuck Carlson did the engineering for the necessary steel design. Student Dominic Tedaldi took these physical plans and converted them into CAD designs which would govern the CNC machine's work, creating the necessary pieces out of steel. Then student Andy Reitveld has been perfecting his welding skills constructing and fitting the pieces of the base. This is a fantastic partnership between the Barrel Committee (and by extension, SDHS) and the school, enabling an entirely different realm of education than our typical presentation of history.

Thanks to volunteers Brent Birkholz, Duane Brown, Vic Bella, and others for shepherding this project forward. We can't wait to see the barrel rise at the corner of West Center and Ferry streets this year!
on record.

Please join us at 7:00pm on March 9th at the OSH.

Mark Your Calendar!
We're looking for program sponsors!
If you would like to sponsor one of the 2016 programs, please REPLY to this email and we'll be in touch. Sponsorships are $150 and help ensure we can continue our tradition of varied and interesting programming throughout the season!

All upcoming Monthly Meeting presentations begin at 7:00pm in the Old School House History Center, 130 Center Street in downtown Douglas, unless otherwise indicated.

March 9, Caught in the Vortex, The Armistice Day Storm of 1940, presented by Valerie Van Heest
   Sponsored by Star of Saugatuck Boat Cruises
April 13, History of the SCA, presented by Kristin Armstrong
May 11, Field trip to the Saugatuck Woman's Club, with a presentation by Peg Sanford, Donna St. Andre, and Jim Schmiechen

We're working hard to finalize what will certainly be a stellar lineup of Monthly Meeting and Tuesday Talk programs for the rest of the year. The full calendar will be published when complete!

Thelma Coghlin, 94

In late February, a mock up of one section of base steel was prepared (click each image to enlarge)

Andy (L) and Dominic (R) with some of the steel to be used for frame and base construction.
Thelma Coghlin, longtime Life member of the Society, passed away in early February. Click HERE for more details. She and her late husband Fitz were active supporters not just of the Society but of many organizations in Saugatuck-Douglas. Donations in her memory may be made to Christian Neighbors or the Rotary Club of Saugatuck.

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**A tribute to Thelma**

It wasn't because of the affirmation, accolades or attention that Thelma Coghlin gave.

She gave because she knew people, places and gardens needed help. She gave because many couldn't, but she could. She gave because of her love for the water, the wind and the sails. She gave because she thought everyone should be able to enjoy what she was blessed with. She gave because she knew how important art, music and theatre were to a person's well being. She gave because she knew that giving opportunities to children would create a better world for adults.

She gave because she loved her God her Fitz her children, her grand-children her community her friends
She gave because she learned from the past enjoyed the present hoped in the future.

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*Industrial Ed students get to use actual equipment in class which gives them skills for employment, such as this CNC machine cutting out a section of curved base steel.*

*By early March, Chuck (L) and Brent (R) fit two sample barrel staves into the first assembled section of the base. Thanks to Art Tolsma of TNT Roofing for stave transport!*

*Detail of first segment of welded base frame construction.*
She gave because her heart was too big not to.

Thank you Thelma, for your generosity, your friendship and your beauty.

We will miss you.

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**Vernon "Ray" Babb, 76**

Ray Babb, longtime member of the Society and resident of Saugatuck, passed away on February 2. For more details, click HERE.

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**Director's Corner**

You've probably noticed these two logos visible on most Society publications, in exhibits, and on our website and letterhead:

![Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs](logo1.png)  ![ART WORKS](logo2.png)

But what exactly do these agencies do, and how does it benefit SDHS?

The Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs (MCACA) is the state agency that promotes arts and culture education and access across the state. Specifically, they:

- administer arts and cultural grant appropriations
- set arts and cultural goals and policy
- establish/facilitate relevant communication networks
- expand and develop funding resources for arts and cultural activities

In short, they coordinate grants of both state and federal funds to arts and culture organizations, cities and municipalities, and other nonprofit organizations to encourage, develop and facilitate an enriched environment of artistic, creative, cultural activity in Michigan.

Their disbursed funds support many aspects of growth and support, including general operating support, special project support, professional development, assisting with traveling exhibits and

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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!

- Susan and Randall Miller, Saugatuck, MI

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**The Radar Tower Project**

Thelma (R), with her husband Fitz and past SDHS President Dottie Lyon in front of the Old School House in Douglas, in 2008. (click to enlarge)
By Sam Fitzpatrick

A team of researchers for the Saugatuck-Douglas Historic Society is seeking any and all information regarding the Radar Station atop the Mount Baldhead sand dune to be used for a public program scheduled for later this summer.

The "Tuesday Talk" presentation will look at various topics relating to the importance of the Radar Station and its role during the early Cold War and the impact on the community both during active duty and peacetime. The Mt. Baldhead installation was a part of a "gap-filler" radar net over North America used to pin-point incoming aircraft or nuclear missiles. Smaller stations like these helped to fill the gap so to speak between the much larger radar locations. Radar scanning information from the Mt. Baldhead station was transmitted to Fort Custer in Battle Creek along with data from other facilities. The entire system was a part of SAGE (Semi-Automatic Ground Environment), which controlled NORAD's responses to potential Soviet air attacks.

The Society is looking for stories of local programs, capital improvements, and an arts in education residency program. The strength of the statewide program is its diversity; MCACA funding can be found in both rural areas and inner cities, and in arts, education, and cultural settings. MCACA receives its award dollars from the State of Michigan and also the National Endowment for the Arts/Art Works (for specific types of projects), hence the two logos often seen in tandem.

In FY2015, 1,042 direct and indirect grants were funded by MCACA. While this may seem like a lot, consider that these are still competitive grant awards. Out of the nearly $9.7 million MCACA could award in 2015, significantly more funds were requested. What is awarded has a significant multiplier, as all granted funds must be matched 1:1 with other donated monies across the state.

Here at SDHS, MCACA funding has made a tremendous difference over the past several years. It has supported renovation work to the Old School House building and the archives storage and research spaces within, enabled the completion of several of our award-winning exhibitions, enhanced our programming lineup, and supported our general operating expenses. Even during the dark days of Michigan's recent recession (and the subsequent state budget tightening), SDHS annually received some kind of an award, a true testament to what this organization accomplishes and the persuasive pen of grant writer Sharon Kelly over the past several years.

In 2016, it'll be my opportunity to apply for funds from MCACA, which I look forward to taking on. Dollars granted by MCACA and NEA clearly make a huge difference - not just to SDHS, but across the state of Michigan. You can help voice the importance of this work by stating your support for MCACA's funding by sending a quick email to our state senator Tonya Schuitmaker here and Michigan governor Rick Snyder here. Every time you see those logos, know that good work is being enabled by important agency help....helping History Live Here!

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involvement with the radar station and its personnel during the time of its construction and active duty - any pictures and stories relevant to the radar's construction, operation, and impact on the community or individuals.

Relevant information may be gifted or loaned to the Historical Society. Consider sending it through the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society's new mobile app in the "Mt. Baldy Info" tab on the menu, or via email to the Museum Director at director@sdhistoricalsociety.org. Physical information, images or artifacts can be submitted directly to the Society by mail to PO Box 617, Douglas, MI 49406 or can be dropped off at the Society office during business hours in the back corner of the Old School House, 130 Center Street, Douglas.

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**Saugatuck Pump House named to the National Register**

On December 29, 2015, the National Park Service approved the Society's nomination to list the Saugatuck Pump House building on the National Register of Historic Places.

According to the Park Service, "The National Register is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Sites must be significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture" and "possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association." They may also be "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history or with the lives of significant persons in our past."

The Pump House building, which today houses the Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum, is significant under a few of these criteria. The building served as the first water pumping station (and later an electric powerhouse) for the Saugatuck municipal water system, among the first such systems in a town of its size. Additionally, the entire Saugatuck system including the pump house was designed by John W. Alvord, a nationally prominent hydraulic and sanitary engineer of the time from the Chicago area (who summered in Saugatuck for several decades).

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**Garden Happenings**

"No winter lasts forever, no spring skips its turn."

~Hal Borland

Believe it or not, spring is just around the corner. You can tell by the longer days, the symphony of birds, and the upcoming daylight savings! Our days of planning will soon be over and you will start to see John and Lee moving around in our garden. It takes a lot of hands to keep our garden looking good, so the garden committee this year, is asking for people to join our Green Team. We would like enough volunteers to have a couple of teams so we can alternate garden tasks throughout the season.

Responsibilities may include small design, weeding, small installation projects and other garden related jobs. The committee is in the process of working on dates and times, so we will be as organized as we can. Please contact Ruth Johnson at ruthannj@frontier.com if you have any questions or would like to be added to our list.

**Root Camp** has our first camper thanks to Jolene and Alonzo Hannaford. They are sharing their little grandson, Lucas, again this year. Our Junior Counselors loved him and are so happy Lucas is returning. We have an amazing line-up of activities for our campers this year, from pioneer cooking and visiting sheep to science experiments and shipwrecks. It gets better every year! Please get the word out to all the little ones in your lives. With the help of the Holland Horticulture Club's scholarship money and the reduced cost of camp, no child will need to miss out on the opportunity to go to Root Camp. Click [here](#) for more information and to register now. Space is limited.

Until next month,

The Garden and **Root Camp** Committees

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**HISTORY by CAMERA**

**The Bill Simmons Scrapbook**
Preservation and documentation are important components of the Historical Society's work focusing on the heritage of the community...and beyond. The Pump House now joins the Francis Surf Boat on the National Register, which was listed earlier in 2015. We're proud to be stewards of these important cultural resources and their reuse as educational facilities in our community. Learn more about the National Register nomination here.

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**Membership Update**

Watch your mailbox later this month for your 2016 membership renewal statement. No payment is due at this time. When you receive it, you will also have the opportunity to update your contact information for the 2016 Membership Directory due out in the late spring.... the "other" phone book!

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**Intern Re-turn**

**Where are they now?**

For the past several years, SDHS has provided summer educational opportunities for college interns looking for experience in the fields of public history, museum studies, education, tourism and hospitality, and more. Interns learn from and work alongside some of our knowledgeable volunteers on a variety of projects and tasks, among them: interacting with the public at the museum and during presentations, assisting with exhibit design, undertaking research, documentation and cataloging in the archive, and even developing our new smartphone app!

The Society is planning to keep up to two interns busy during the summer of 2016 by assisting with celebrations for the Old School House 150th Anniversary, continuing digitization in the archives, expanding our programming, and more. In the meantime, we followed up with a few former interns over the winter and wanted to share their stories.

**Jennifer Fisher, 2010 intern:**

"My time as an intern at the SDHS during the summer of 2010 was a wonderful highlight to both my educational path and future career. As an undergraduate major in anthropology, I have always been fascinated by the importance of documenting and maintaining historical records. Museums and historical societies are very important in helping

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By Jack Sheridan

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This is the sixth 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 two years he took numerous black and white photos.

He died in 1962 and these photos went unnoticed until 1998 when some 3,000 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.

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.
maintain these crucial moments in history. I spent much of my time in the archives at the SDHS, organizing files and looking through the years of the community history. The project was not only personally fulfilling, but it helped me master the Past Perfect museum/archival and library software, which helped me gain skills to land a later internship at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Currently, I am getting my graduate degree in International Education from Florida State University. I work full time for the University's Study Abroad Office as an Academic Program Coordinator. The attention to detail I learned from archival work has helped me to stay organized, focused and sharp.

Once I finish my degree, I plan to return to the museum world as an educational coordinator, ideally for family and children's programs. Perhaps if fortune is kind, I will make it back to the Midwest within the next few years. I hope things at the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society are going well!

**Sam Fitzpatrick, 2015 intern:**

I'm back in school and I am set to graduate in May of 2016 with my BS in History from Central Michigan University. At this point I've started to narrow down my interests for a post-college career search.

The benefits I have from interning with SDHS include networking and making connections, learning much about the work involved in a non-profit/museum, the mechanics behind making a mobile app, time management, efficient research and data gathering, project overseeing, communications, and being historically knowledgeable. I could go on, I benefited much from this experience!

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**Difference in Decades**

This month, we look at the northeast corner of Butler and Mason Streets. Today, this is the home of the Saugatuck Drug Store, and a pharmacy has been on this corner for over 100 years. But before that, a different landmark occupied this site.

By the early 1850s, Saugatuck had grown into a
small but busy port and trading community. Finding local lodging for travelers and guests was a challenge. The Saugatuck House was constructed in 1852 as the first hotel, and for over 50 years was an important focal and social center in village life.

In 1913, the site was purchased for the construction of a new drug store. Rather than outright demolition, the Saugatuck House (later renamed the Hotel Hamilton) was carefully deconstructed, and parts of the structure and its decorative facade were used elsewhere in town - a form of recycling only today catching on again!

These upcoming meetings are in the Old School House in the downstairs tech room, and begin at 3:30pm. Note that your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area!

The mailing address is SDHS Family History, PO Box 617 Douglas, MI 49406, or email to the addresses below.

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.

Questions/comments/advice/needs - contact
Jack Sheridan:
269 857-7144
jack.sheridan@gmail.com
Chris Yoder:
269 857-4327
cyoder@tds.net
Thank you for your participation!

In late February, we sent you our membership survey, one of many steps to creating a new Strategic Plan for the Society. Thank you so much to the +25% of members who shared your perspective on our programming, exhibitions, and membership experience! That is a great response rate as surveys go, which shows that our members really care about the organization. Your feedback will help improve the member experience going forward.

We will report on the survey results, and announce the winner of the Dine-Around ticket drawing, in the April e-Newsletter. If you have not responded to the survey yet, we would still like to hear from you; you can respond to the link in the email we sent you or contact Nathan for another copy.

**COME JOIN US FOR**

**ROOT CAMP!**

An Interactive history and nature day camp for children ages 6 - 11


**JUNE 20TH - 23RD**

Two sessions available!

9am - 12pm OR 1pm - 4pm

Space is limited so sign up early. Registration is available through the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society’s website at:

[http://shistoricalsociety.org](http://shistoricalsociety.org)

Scholarships available

Click the Root Camp logo above for camp information and to register!

**ABOUT THE SOCIETY**

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

- Individual $50
- Household $70
- Premium $300
- Corporate $500
- Life $1,000
- Senior (65+) $30
- Senior Household $45
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.

Membership renewal notices will be sent in late 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 Saugatuck Pump House building. The History Museum is closed for the winter season. 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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Again this year, the Society's Newsletter is being underwritten by a generous donation from the late Life Member, Frances Vorys.