Watch your mailbox in July for your invitation to the Old School House 150th Anniversary Celebration benefit gala on September 23. You won’t want to miss it!

Cold War | Hot Towns Opens

After two years of research and months of

Columns continue on next page
design, collaboration and construction, the all-new History Museum exhibit *Cold War | Hot Towns: Saugatuck-Douglas in the Cold War Era* opened to the public on Sunday, May 28 and is already drawing crowds. This 2017-18 exhibition chronicles how the two small lakeshore villages of Saugatuck and Douglas reflected the contrasting worlds of fear and fun during the Cold War era of the 1950s-1970s.

A few days before the opening, Museum Sponsors were treated to a special behind-the-scenes preview, to hear and see some of the research that went into this exhibit and examine some of the different design plans and concepts which morphed into what visitors see today. Thank you to all of the individuals and entities which sponsored the Museum this year, listed in the right column >

It's an exhibit you truly have to see to believe, and we believe it's one of our best ever. If you visit the exhibit and feel a connection to the past, there's still room to add your name to the list of Museum Sponsors, with a minimum gift of $100. **Reply to this email** if you are interested in becoming a Sponsor this year!

If you have enjoyed visiting *Cold War | Hot Towns*, we invite you to leave an online review for others to find to learn about what we're doing. Consider doing so at **Yelp**, **TripAdvisor**, or **Google**!

Our traditional Museum Opening Party for members was held on the evening of Saturday, May 27 and did not disappoint. Events Management intern Kayla Britten and board member Leslie Thompson coordinated the evening and food was provided by The Kirby. An estimated 150 members attended. The photos below highlight construction of the exhibit over the past few months. Scroll to the end of this newsletter to see images from the opening party.

Don't miss the next upcoming **Dine Around** event, on Thursday, July 13. Click **here** for more details.

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**Thank You**

**Museum Sponsors**

Thanks to the following individuals and entities for their generous sponsorship of this year's Museum!

**$3,000 Level**

Allegan County Community Foundation

**$2,000 Level**

Adrian Vincent Estate

**$1,000 Level**

Ross Hanley
Jim Sellman - Shoreline Realtors

**$500 Level**

Larry and Shirley Akins
Chemical Bank
Bill Hess and Mike Mattern
Steve Hutchins
Sona Kalousdian and Ira D. Lawrence
Lynn McClure
Judy Oberholtzer
Frances Vorys Estate
Deb and Doug West
Bill and Nancy Woods

**$250 Level**

Arthur Ashley and Darin Reiling
Val Atkin
Bud Baty and Max Matteson
Ken Carls
Richard and Ellen Donovan
Janie and Jim Flemming
Bob and Bobbie Gaunt
Judy Hillman and Mike Van Meter
Marge Hutchins
Ed Kelly
Candice Lewis

*Columns continue on next page*
The mobile squadron of Cold War aircraft is assembled. (Click each for Full Size)

The brothers Bella assemble the "fins" of the Radar Station exhibit.

Rob Moroni and Tom Zeman
Greg Plowe and Steve Debbink
Mark Randall and Chris Saldivar
Sandra and Travis Randolph

$100 Level
Jerry Carpency
Jon Helmrich and Steve Mottram
Christina Lewis
Nathan and Kristen Nietering
John and Peg Sanford
Leslie Thompson

Support for this exhibit is also provided in part by grant funds from

Did you know that The Old School House is still an active place for learning? While it may no longer host children every day, we're always happy to have school field trips when spring comes around. This year, in addition to students from Douglas Elementary School, we were pleased to have 90 3rd graders from Maple Grove Elementary in South Haven stop at the OSH for a field trip. They learned about

Columns continue on next page
Thank you to RJ Peterson and Tower Marine for the donation of Radar Station components and for this "muscle" to bring it over!

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Mark your Calendar!

MONTHLY MEETINGS
Our "Monthly Meeting" presentations are open for free to members and the public and begin at 7:00PM at the Old School House at 130 Center Street in Douglas, unless otherwise indicated below.

**June 14, History of the Coral Gables,** a field trip to the venerable Saugatuck landmark where generations of memories have been made, presented by owner Mike Johnson.

**Sponsored by The Button Gallery**

**July 12, Field Trip to the Felt Mansion,** Explore the recently renovated carriage house and learn more about the fascinating stories of Dorr Felt and the Felt family.

**Sponsored by Osman Flowers & Firs and Marianne and Michael Giersch**

**August 9: Time TBD, Annual History Center**

shipwrecks and the Francis Surfboat with "Captain Jim" Schmiechen and about the history of the OSH building and did a special scavenger hunt with Kayla. We are looking forward to hosting more school field trips in the future!

South Haven students explore the Old School House exhibit while doing their scavenger hunt.

Captain Jim keeps both students and chaperones enthralled with stories of shipwreck history.

On September 23, 2017, join us for a gala evening in celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Old School House. Watch your mailbox in July and forthcoming issues of this newsletter for more details.

Columns continue on next page
Welcome New Members!

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

- Brenda Bos, Holland, MI
- Michael Pcolinski and Thomas McCarthy, Fennville and Royal Oak, MI
- Joyce Wright, Fennville, MI

New Lifetime Members!

With gratitude we welcome these members to our Lifetime membership circle, acknowledging their lasting commitment to the support of the SDHC.

- Rich and Jane Forbes, Fennville, MI

Grace Cappelletti, 78

Longtime Life Member Grace Cappelletti passed away on May 23. Click here for more information.

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(Sponsor list current as of June 6, 2017)
Support the History Center in Douglas this weekend

Each month in the summer the Saugatuck-Douglas Antique Market takes over Beery Field for one weekend, hosting a variety of vendors selling almost anything old you can imagine. Market organizers generously donate the entrance proceeds to local organizations. On June 10, the proceeds will be donated to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to help support our programming series. Stop by the Market this Saturday and look for that must-have item knowing that your admission dollars are helping to support a local non-profit you love!

Dine Around
A Delicious Series of Dinners and Parties
All proceeds support the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center

Tickets now available!
Shuffle on Sheffield Lane
Thursday, July 13, 5:00-8:00PM

Come and enjoy a peaceful evening overlooking "Arthur's Lake" in Fennville with us in mid-July.

Start at the home of Arthur Frederick and Mark Vanderleek, at 2232 Sheffield Lane. From the moment you step in the front door, you will agree that it exudes such a warm feeling, you might just want to stay put! Inside, the beautiful furnishings and colorful decor are only enhanced by the fabulous artwork. Outside, you can relax with drink in hand at the edge of the bubbling Koi Pond, stroll on the pool deck or wind your way down to the gorgeous lake in the back yard.

Further down the lane you will be greeted by somewhat newer members of the community, Eric LeJeune and Bryan Kemp, at 2238 Sheffield. Eric and Bryan, originally from Louisiana, were Chicago-based for many years, and then about a year and a half ago made the decision to become
full time west Michigan residents. Lake Home Builders (Doug and Jeff) took on the task of building this wonderful home. Eric wanted a modern home whereas Bryan had envisioned something more of a farmhouse, and thus the 'Modern Farmhouse' was designed by the owners and built to please them both!

**Tickets: $50 per person**

*To reserve your space for Shuffle on Sheffield Lane, simply reply to this email and we will be in touch.*

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**An update from our Intern, Kayla Britten**

Over the last few months, I have been involved in the planning of the 150th Celebration, the Museum Opening Party, and Family Fun Day. I have assisted the SDHC in partnering with the Library, the Douglas Elementary School PTO and the DES Wellness Committees for two different events for children and their families. One of these was "Winterfest: Day with the Dogs" in March, which I assisted Christina Lewis with at the Old School House, and then the SDHC hosted an after-school session during "Screen Free Week" (which encourages children to get away from the screens of technology).

Children ages 5-11 were able to come create old fashioned crafts, and complete a scavenger hunt through the Old School House exhibit rooms. I am continuing to help with Root Camp, and will also be working with the City of Douglas to bring the first Douglas Social of the summer to the Old School House (June 29!). I have also been able to assist in administrative tasks for the History Center, mainly assisting with membership renewals and Dine Around lists.

As I near the last half of my internship, I have already learned so much from everyone I have worked with, and continue to learn on a daily basis new skills that will help further my future career in Event Management.

The Museum Opening Party was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who attended. I was excited to demonstrate my skills in event planning by coordinating the event with Leslie Thompson and other volunteers. Working with everyone from vendors and volunteers was a great experience and I enjoyed working with them all. I have heard many good things from members
who attended, and I am grateful I was given the opportunity to coordinate the event.

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**Michigan Polar Bears Featured at Armed Forces Day Luncheon**

*By Chris Yoder*

The war-time photo album of Robert Colton Johnson (1894-1969), whose family has owned Pier Cove property since 1897, was featured at the May 20, 2017 Saugatuck-Douglas Armed Forces Day Luncheon program in Douglas. The luncheon commemorated the centennial of America's involvement in WWI. Johnson was a member of the "Michigan Polar Bears" which was sent by President Woodrow Wilson into northwestern Russia to help British and other allied forces contest the Red Army. They arrived at Archangel, Russia on Sept. 14, 1918, and consisted of about 5,000 troops of the 85th Division, including Johnson's own 310th Engineers.

Father Corwin Stoppel, rector of All Saints' Episcopal Church, told of the events leading up to the war, and gave details of the allied incursion into Russia. A highlight of his program was the display of more than 60 photographs from Johnson's album, shared by his daughter, History Center member Mary Ann Curtis, who was present with her family at the luncheon. These photos had never been viewed publicly.

A primary goal of the allied forces was to prevent a stockpile of allied equipment from falling into the hands of German or Red Army forces. When the British arrived a month before the Americans, they found the Reds had already taken the supplies. The Michigan Forces were placed under the command of the British and initially used in offensive operations, but an overextended supply line and the rapid on-set of winter soon led them to regroup into defensive positions. At about the same time an American Expeditionary Force of almost 8,000 men was arriving in Vladivostok, Siberia.

Following the Allied Armistice with Germany on Nov. 11, 1918, American newspapers and family members lobbied for the return of US forces from Archangel, now frozen in for the winter and closed to shipping. In mid-April 1919, an icebreaker arrived with an American Brigadier General on board, charged by General Pershing to organize the American withdrawal. British relief troops arrived in late May and in June the bulk of American troops (over two thirds of whom were Michigan boys) departed for France and then on to New York City.

By varying reports, the Polar Bears lost about 245 soldiers, with 94 of them dying after the United States decided to withdraw from Russia, but before thawing allowed them to leave. Some soldiers died in battle, and many died of disease (mostly
due to the influenza epidemic). About 30 more went missing and nine became prisoners of war.

In 1922, the surviving Polar Bears began lobbying to bring home the bodies of more than 125 known soldiers left behind in Russia. Remains of 86 soldiers were brought home in 1929, and another dozen were sent back by the Soviet government in 1934.

The graves of 56 Polar Bears today surround a statue by Leon Hermant in the White Chapel Memorial Cemetery, Troy, Michigan. Their compatriots in Vladivostok, Siberia were to remain there another 10 months.

Robert Johnson went on to an active engineering career, returning to service during WWII and retiring as a Vice Admiral in the US Naval Reserve. His remains rest in the Plummerville Cemetery south of Pier Cove.

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**Board Bio**

**Leslie Thompson**

[A suggestion from the recent Communications Survey was to better introduce readers to the leadership of the organization. In each issue this year, we'll feature a quick bio of a member of the SDHC board of directors.]

**What is your role on the board?**
I am the treasurer for the History Center

**What other aspects of SDHC are you involved in?**
I sit on both the Finance Committee and the Landscape Committee. I volunteer as a docent at the Museum whenever I can. I have planned many of the SDHC social events over the past few years including the Museum openings, member picnics and holiday parties.

**What interests you most about Saugatuck-Douglas history?**
It has to be the people. The thing that I like most about living in Saugatuck-Douglas is the sense of community. I have so enjoyed getting to know people and hearing the stories of their families visiting and living here over generations.

**What is your background?**
I moved to Douglas in June 2012 after working 32 years in banking in both Detroit and Chicago. I had visited Saugatuck-Douglas several times over the years and I was looking for a location that
would be a reasonable drive to visit both my ailing mother in West Bloomfield and my daughter in Chicago. It took only one more visit to sell me on the beauty and lifestyle that is available here.

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Garden Happenings

"A society grows when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in."

~Greek Proverb

We had a wonderful Wednesday night program on our gardens this past month. Thanks to all of you for coming and listening to the Landscape Committee explain why we do the things we do! We are very proud of our gardens and were very grateful to share our experiences with you. For those who did not attend the program, we introduced a fundraiser that will help keep our Back-In-Time garden green. For $30.00 a piece, the Landscape Committee is selling seedlings from our very own Golden Rain Tree located near the driveway and picket fence of the Old School House. Each seedling will come with a Certificate of Authenticity and care sheet. Please contact Leslie Thompson at caitsmom90@aol.com to place an order or ask a question. Seedlings are limited, so please don't wait too long to order. We also took a moment to thank Dottie Lyon for her years of service on our committee and as the "go-between" between our committee and the Saugatuck-Douglas Garden Club, who have assisted us with a number of projects. Dottie, we will miss your warm smile at our meetings but please visit the gardens when you can! We also welcome Maryrita Peters as the new Garden Club liaison!

On June 17th at 10:00am, John Migas and Lee Ver Schure will share their knowledge on pruning, fertilizing and dividing plants during a program open to all in the Old School House garden. They will also answer any
questions you may have about your own gardens. Please join us!

**Root Camp** will be here in a few short weeks and we are very excited for the days that are planned! Our afternoon session is full and we have a few spots left in our morning session. Please consider sending the children in your lives to this really great camp or sponsor a program, $100 per session or $200 to sponsor an entire day. The **Root Camp** committee really appreciates all the support you give us.

Until next month,
The Garden and **Root Camp** Committees

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**HISTORY by CAMERA**

The Bill Simmons Scrapbook

*By Jack Sheridan*

In the second year of the History by Camera feature - the **BILL SIMMONS SCRAPBOOK** - the format has been changed to fewer photos and more historical commentary and analysis.

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 SDHC. What a wonderful record of the middle of the twentieth century!

A week before the opening for the 2017 Exhibit **COLD WAR | HOT TOWNS**, I reviewed a video belonging to Mike Johnson featuring Saugatuck and the Coral Gables in the turbulent mid-1960s. This video, part of the exhibit and part of Mike's upcoming presentation at the June monthly meeting, got me thinking of the Bill Simmons gals he photographed in the '40s and '50s.
So to get you thinking 20th Century Saugatuck Beauties, here are some of my favorites shot by Bill! The middle two are classics at the Oval. The others are well .... Simmons wholesome cheesecake from a sleepier place in the early 1950s.

This column is one of the SDHC PR tools used to promote the Cold War | Hot Towns exhibit in 2017.

I appreciate your feedback on my captions and selection of the images. Please point out my good choices and my goofs by sending me an email at jack.sheridan@gmail.com. Any reader comments will not be published without reader permission.

By Jack Sheridan

Are you interested in your family history but you are not sure where to start? Learning about family history is a personal connection to the past and you can find who your ancestors are and what they did. The SDHC Family History Group can help you get started!

Chris Yoder and I are busy reviewing family histories of volunteers for our October 11 "WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE" presentation. We have some very good family histories to choose from and do not need additional volunteers. Please plan to attend the show - October members meeting - this will be fun!

Not sure where to begin with family history research? That is what we are here for! Call or email Chris Yoder or Jack Sheridan for information, and note that the Family History Group's meeting schedule below:

**Thursday June 1**
**Thursday June 15**
**Thursday July 6**
Thursday July 20

These upcoming meetings are in the Old School House (use the back door) and begin at 3:30pm. Note that your family history does not have to have any connection to the Saugatuck-Douglas area! If you can't attend a meeting, we can still provide assistance. The only requirement to participate is a current membership in the SDHC.

Questions/comments/advice/needs - contact
Jack Sheridan: 269 857-7144, jack.sheridan@gmail.com
Chris Yoder: 269 857-4327, cyoder@tds.net

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From the Archives

Property tax time will soon be upon us. Ever wonder what taxes were back "in the olden time?" We recently found a receipt from a tax bill dated 1925. It was for a small house on Union street near the boat docks. Lot 22, section 9 Leland's addition. The valuation was $500. State tax $1.50, County tax $1.25, Town tax .75, School millage $4.85, Highway tax .90, County road $1.25, Road bond, $1.23, Drain tax .14. All for a total of $11.99.

Did you know that you can do an Allegan County property search for your property records? Go to allegancounty.org>equalization>searchpropertyrecords. You can search by name, street name or Permanent Parcel Number (PP or Tax ID)

As an example: 03-57-300-130-00
03 County Code, 57 Municipality,(41 Douglas, 57 Saugatuck City, 59 Douglas city, 20 Saugatuck Township, 11 Laketown); 300 Section block, 130 parcel, 00 split. (This same works for plat maps too.)

We have a number of old Allegan County Plat maps dating back to 1873 in the archives office. Come take a look if you are researching your property. The SDHC archives office is open to the public on Monday afternoons 1-5 p.m.

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Photos from the Museum Opening Party

Thank you to everyone who attended and volunteered during the Museum Opening Party! Enjoy this small selection of photos, courtesy of the cameras of John Peters, Jim Schmiechen and Nathan Nietering. (Click each for Full Size)
ABOUT THE SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER

The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society was founded in 1986 by a group of charter members interested in preserving and sharing the unique history of Saugatuck, Douglas and the surrounding area. In 2016, the Society was renamed the **Saugatuck-Douglas History Center** to celebrate its growth and to recognize the development of the History Museum and Old School House sites. We are a vibrant organization with nearly 700 members residing in nearby communities, around Lake Michigan, and across the country.

Members are the lifeblood our largely volunteer organization. To join as a member, select from the following categories:

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Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406. Click [HERE](mailto:) for a printable Membership Application.

It's membership renewal season! Send in your 2017 renewal with payment today or click [HERE](mailto:) to renewal online.

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

SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER 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 open daily through Labor Day, 12noon-4pm. 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** and **Francis Surfboat Exhibit** 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](mailto:director@sdhistoricalsociety.org). The adjoining **Back-in-Time Garden** and Surfboat Exhibit are open to the public as weather permits. Admission is free but donations gratefully accepted.

The History Center'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 History Center **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 the archives directly: [archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org)

History Center main phone: 269-857-5751  
Museum phone: 269-857-7900  
Tech Center/Archives direct phone: 269-857-7901  
Follow us and learn more history on Facebook! Click the logo below.

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Again this year, the SDHC newsletter is being underwritten by a generous donation from the late Life Member, Frances Vorys.