Tales of Michigan's "haunted lighthouses" will headline the next free public monthly program on Wednesday, March 22, starting at 7 p.m. in The Old School House at 130 Center St. in Douglas.

According to presenter Dianna Stampfler, founder/president of Promote Michigan, our state has 117 lighthouses built between the 1820s and 2006, more than any other state, and nearly two dozen of them are said to be haunted -- in most cases, by former keepers or their families.

"Lighthouse keepers were known to be extremely dedicated to their profession", she says, "and it seems that many were never able to give it up -- even after death. Although I've never experienced any of these ghostly encounters myself, I'm always delighted to share the stories that have been passed along to me by others."
Plan to join us at 7pm on March 22 at the OSH!

Mark your Calendar!

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.

March 22**, Haunted Lighthouses of Michigan, presented by Dianna Stampfler of Promote Michigan
   Sponsored by Laura and Bob Godfrey

April 12, Field trip to the Judson-Heath House, with a presentation about the history and renovation of this Butler Street landmark by owners Jennifer Davenport and Steve Boyd
   Sponsored by Lynne Snyder and the Bouchie Family

May 24**, To the Garden!, a walk and talk field trip through the Back-in-Time Gardens at the Old School House with a presentation by the SDHC Landscape Committee during the height of azalea and rhododendron season!
   Sponsored by Tom and Donna Farrington

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.

Still looking for a sponsor! Might it be you?

** indicates this program has been pushed back 2 weeks from the traditional "2nd Wednesday" date

Thank you to those folks listed above who have sponsored one of our upcoming programs! Multiple sponsors for each program are welcome and encouraged and will receive billing in future announcements. If you would like to sponsor one of our 2017 programs, please REPLY to this email and we will be in touch. Sponsorships are $150 and help support our high caliber presentations and field trip opportunities!

The remainder of the Monthly Meeting and summer Tuesday Talk programming calendar is being finalized and will be announced when complete!

Welcome New Members!

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

- John Regas - Chicago and Douglas, MI
**We Want YOU!**

This year's October Monthly Meeting has an audience participation component! Chris Yoder and Jack Sheridan, our family historians, are looking for individuals who are interested to learn more about their own family history. Click here to learn more!

**Membership Update**

Watch your mailbox later this month for your 2017 membership renewal statement. No dues payment is due at this time. When you receive it, you will also have the opportunity to update your contact information so our records are up-to-date.

Membership questions? Contact the Executive Director at director@sdhistoricalsociety.org.

**From the President**

*By Board President Steve Hutchins*

The members of our Saugatuck-Douglas History Center have approved the recent revision of the organization's By-laws with a 98% yes vote. Thank you to all who took the time to mail in a ballot. In addition the Board of Directors has approved an update to all of our policies and procedures. These actions bring the SDHC into compliance with all of the relevant State of Michigan statutes and current IRS regulations. All of these documents are available for review in the Executive Director's office and when our website is overhauled they will also be accessible online. A special thanks to Board member Richard Donovan and Past President Sharon Kelly who drafted many of the by-laws and policies.

**Looking for your "groovy" artifacts**

An exciting new exhibit titled "Cold War | Hot Towns" is being planned by the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center. It will highlight the events of the local area in the context of a changing world during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The History Museum presents a new display bi-annually and has chosen this period to build a visual re-creation that will entertain and inform visitors.

The exhibit design team is presently seeking help in obtaining supporting material of the era for the show. Possibilities include but are not limited to:

- Area photos, slides and home movies
- Local business signs, ads and artifacts
- Civil Defense items
- Nautical pieces, water skis, etc.
- Music concert items, posters and the like
- Military items
- Electronics, TV and radio
If you and/or your family might have a unique item to loan for the exhibit, please contact Vic Bella at (616) 550-0280 or deltuck@aol.com. All photos and paper materials would be copied and returned. Other artifacts, if used, would be on a loan basis, unless specifically donated.

2017 Dine Around Tickets now available

Double the Fun
Friday, April 28, 5:00-8:00PM

We will be welcoming spring in downtown Douglas at the homes of Scott Habermahl (8 Wall Street) and Rick Bradley and Ken Welsh (41 Spring Street) in late April! They have each completed amazing projects in the past year that have expanded their residences in unusually creative and very different ways. You have the opportunity that evening to stroll from one to the other, and back again, to indulge in appetizers, desserts, and various libations.

Tickets: $50 per person
To reserve your space for Double the Fun, simply reply to this email and we will be in touch.

Experience Spear Street
Friday, June 2, 6:00-9:00PM

Gather with friends and neighbors to hang out on Spear Street's cul-de-sac for an evening of appetizers, beverages and camaraderie. We've been invited to visit three wonderful homes.

Check in at the home of Saba and Adam Kadlec, at 550 Spear Street, who just recently moved into their beautiful, contemporary home overlooking the Peterson Preserve. Its fabulous uniqueness will be your "sight to see." Jim Sellman and David Balas, at 555 Spear Street, are anxious to greet you just across the street for conversation and laughter as you stroll through their wonderful home, its new additions and beautiful gardens. Matt Hermes and Brian Jeffords welcome you at the end of the road at 668 Spear Street. Their exquisite, warm home features expansive decks with surprise views into the woods "beyond the hill."

If you live in or around Saugatuck, you know the phrase "up on the hill." So come on "up" and enjoy a fun evening "on the hill!!"
Tickets: $50 per person
To reserve your space for Experience Spear Street, simply reply to this email and we will be in touch.

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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.

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!

This month we revisit the late 1950s era and Saugatuck's youngest and likely smallest Chief of Police, Russell Colling. In 1957 he was attending Michigan State majoring in law enforcement and spent the summer in Saugatuck as a police officer intern. He so impressed the powers that be he was hired as Chief in the summer of 1958. This was a challenging era for the local police and Chief Colling proved to be a big man and more than up to the job.

The article reprinted here appeared in the Holland Sentinel and was then picked by no less than the Detroit Free Press. Not sure whether it helped or hurt the tourist business!

These photos are from 1958. Some officers are interns, some worked weekends only. In the officer line up shot, Chief Colling is in the center, James Boyce is second from right.

Click on the image to see the high-definition photos!

War/Hot Towns" exhibit. I appreciate your feedback on my captions, and the selection of these images. Please point out my good choices and my goofs by sending an email to jack.sheridan@gmail.com. I'd love to hear some feedback on my choices - how about some discussion? Subject suggestions encouraged!

What You Missed
Holland Museum tour delights crowd

36 members and friends of SDHC were treated to a behind the scenes tour at the Holland Museum early last month as our February "Monthly Meeting" field trip. Knowledgeable staff and volunteers of the museum led guided tours of their permanent and temporary exhibits and of their collections storage facilities.

The Holland Museum is an "artifact wonderland" and a great place to visit if you want to see actual historical objects. Our guests were particularly impressed with their extensive artifact collections, including furniture, manufactured goods made by Holland firms, and plenty of pairs of wooden shoes. They also have collections of objects from The Netherlands and the Dutch East and West Indies, reflecting the Museum's early collection of items relating to "the old country."

In addition to interesting exhibits in their main Museum facility on 10th Street including a beautiful
collection of Dutch art and an exhibit "For the Future Peace: Holland on the Home Front," about Holland's contributions to WWII, the Museum also operates the Cappon House and Settlers House at other sites nearby. Visit www.hollandmuseum.org for more information about this nearby historical neighbor.

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By Ken Kutzel

Charles Aschbrenner, 1936-2016

Charles Aschbrenner, one of the most generous donors to our art collection and archives passed way late in 2016. He had first enjoyed the Saugatuck-Douglas area as a camper spending several summers on Lake Michigan at the Presbyterian Camp. A famed pianist, Charles taught music at Hope College for 53 years. Besides generously loaning photos and art work for several exhibits and publications, he and his spouse Chris Spencer had given SDHC a large Elsa Ulbricht oil painting titled "Autumn;" a large canvas of the Coral Gables by Len Lynema; watercolor paintings of the Ferry Store by Mar Deam and Emily Parks; Carl Hoermann etchings; and prints by Mike and Alice Mason. The SDHC was also given archive materials from the Saugatuck Chamber of Commerce and Pier Cove. Charles and his quiet generosity will be greatly missed. For more information, click here.

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Rolla Sims Taylor added

One of the exhibits at the Old School House this winter tells the story about the Saugatuck Chain Ferry and the Ferry Shack on the east bank of the Kalamazoo River and the Ferry Store on the west

Folks nostalgic for the SS Keewatin will find artifacts and models of Great Lakes steamships which once frequented west Michigan in the Holland Museum.
A Texas artist named Rolla Sims Taylor did one of the most charming paintings in the exhibit in the 1920's. Mr. Taylor traveled to Michigan to study with Fredrick Fursman and created the work here in Saugatuck. The painting, which had been loaned to us, has been acquired and gifted to us by a group of generous members and friends. These donors include the following: Joan Voelker memorials, Tom Slater, Mark Barrone, Joan Brigham, Marie Muha, Bill and Nancy Woods, and Ken Kutzel and Bill McGlone.

**The Jane Bird Van Dis Collection**

*By Chris Yoder*

Over the past ten years, the History Center has been allowed to scan the old albums and photos of a number of long-time local families and to establish these as digital collections on file at the Old School House. Examples include such family collections as: May Francis Heath; Bud Sewers; Henry Brady; Barr-Wright; Greenhalgh; Hames-Houtkamp; Edgcomb; Morris-Freshe; Till-Schuman; Plummer-Eddy; and Jane Bird Van Dis. Jane passed away recently after being a prominent contributor to our community over the course of a lifetime, including selection as a Saugatuck "Citizen of the Year". She also recorded several oral histories which can be found in the History Center archives.

Jane was born in Ann Arbor in 1921 where her father, Cary Bird, had gone to work at the University Hospital after his military service in WWI. Cary had been born "on the hill" on Allegan Street to a Saugatuck pioneer family. His wife Elsie was the daughter of George and Mary Azling, who came to Saugatuck in 1902 to open a funeral home on Lake Street (the present day Dykstra funeral home). In 1924, Jane's parents moved back to Saugatuck and purchased the Bird Center resort (also on Lake Street near the funeral home). They would run Bird Center into the 1940s when Jane and her husband Bert Van Dis took over management and ran it into the 1970s.

In her childhood, Kemah, on top of the hill above her home, was owned by William Springer, a prominent member of the Chicago Board of Trade. A story Jane told me which remains vividly in my mind is how Springer daughter Shirley (Jane's age) would come out on their patio and yell down the hill "Jane! Jane Bird! Come up and play!".

In celebration of Jane Bird Van Dis, I'd like to share a few of the photos from her digital collection (totaling 470 images). Click on each image for full-size.
Jane's first grade class: Rear from left- Cartwright, Bird, Powers, Rowley, Kreager, Brackenridge; front- Ely, Force, Newnham, Naughtin, House, Marriott

Author's Note: As I was working on this article and came upon the 1st Grade Class photo, I noticed that one of those pictured was Dale Marriott, daughter of the man who built "the Big Pool". In the February and March 2012 SDHC Newsletters, Dale shared with us the story of her family and of the Big Pool. It had been five years since I had been in touch with the family, but I decided to email along a copy of the photo to her daughter's address. Her daughter replied that her mother Dale (Marriott) Williamson passed away Feb. 15, 2017 after a short illness. It seems she, not Jane, was the last survivor of this Saugatuck First Grade Class.
If you are a member of a long-time local family and have a collection of photos to share, we can scan them and return the originals to you. Help preserve them by sharing a digital set with the History Center. Contact Chris Yoder at cyoder@tds.net or call 616-212-3443.

Jane also was generous with her time and knowledge doing several oral history interviews over the years, which now reside in the SDHC collections. A synopsis of these interviews is available here.

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By Jack Sheridan

Who do you think you are???

By Jack Sheridan

Jack Sheridan and Chris Yoder are preparing a special presentation for the October 11, 2017 SDHC "Monthly Meeting" program. Many of you have no doubt seen episodes of the popular TV series by this name. The program, which has run for the last five seasons on national TV, features a celebrity whose family history has been researched for the program. The show explains and reveals step by step what the researchers have found.

If you would like to discover who you are, here is your chance...and you don't have to be a celebrity!

We will do the research work.
You will not find out the results until the October meeting!

To make this work we need some interested SDHC member volunteers to choose from. We will first do some preliminary research on a group of volunteers and then pick one or two of them for the program. Ideally, we will look for candidates that have an interesting ancestor line[s] that extends back in this country for at least five generations.

Here are the simple requirements:

- Active SDHC membership
- You have reason to suspect (but you do not need to know) that there may be an ancestral line extending back in the USA.
- We will need, at a minimum, name, birth date and place of at least one grandparent.
- The person[s] chosen must submit to an Ancestry.com DNA test - the cost is one hundred dollars. This test will reveal your ethnicity and possibly help us in our research. An interesting idea is that the chosen person can gift the DNA test and results to a child or grandchild.
- You must plan to attend the October 11, 2017 meeting.

If you are interested, send either of us an email or a phone call indicating your interest. We will be in contact and are anxious to start our research!

Jack Sheridan:
269 857-7144
jack.sheridan@gmail.com

Chris Yoder:
By Jack Sheridan

FIND OUT WHO YOU ARE!
LEARN MORE IN THE ARTICLE ABOVE

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!

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 March 16
Thursday March 30
Thursday April 6

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

Garden Happenings
"The garden of the world has no limits, except in your mind." ~Rumi

This beautiful, spring-like weather makes us all anxious to get outside and work. Go outside and enjoy! Hopefully the buds and bulbs are too smart to fall prey to our unpredictable Michigan weather. This summer our gardens will be very busy hosting weddings, camps, programs and visitors. Our very own John Migas will be teaching a Pruning and Fertilizing Seminar on June 17th from 10-12pm in the OSH garden. The seminar will teach about the beautiful, but somewhat fussy, broad leaf evergreens and the best way that they should be cared for. There is no need to reserve a spot, as there will be plenty of room for everyone.

The Back-in-Time Garden tour on the mobile app is also going to get a little more informative,
thanks to our intern Kayla Britten. She sat with us in our monthly landscape meeting, and we were able to share with her all of the "Secrets of the Garden." This exciting new addition will enhance the visitor's experience of the garden and we look forward to sharing it with you all.

The date and teachers are set for **Root Camp 2017**! Camp will be held June 26th thru June 29th. Like last year, we will be having both a morning session and an afternoon session. This year the campers will spend a day learning about Saugatuck's very own Big Pavilion, stepping back in time to the days of ballroom dancing, roller-skating and jazz. Campers will also experience new science experiments and a critter day, learning about some very special farm animals. On Thursday we will have a special guest teaching the campers about Native American history in the area. We cannot wait! Please feel free to support Root Camp by sending the children in your life to our camp or through a Root Camp Sponsorship. The funds we receive will go to scholarships, the different programs, and the all-important daily snacks. If you have any questions, please contact Ruth Johnson at ruthannj@frontier.com. Thank you so much for supporting us. We look forward to summer and a great week with the kids.

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

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**Board Bio**

**Bill Hess, Vice President**

*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 currently serving as Vice-President of the Board.

**What other aspects of SDHC are you involved in?** I am the chair of the SDHC Programming Committee. This committee's members develop and coordinate our Monthly Presentations and Tuesday Talks.

I also am the Volunteer Coordinator for the Museum Hosts and serve as the Communications Liaison for the History Center. *(An aside: If you would be interested in volunteering to greet Museum visitors this summer, let me know. You only have to commit to two hour "shifts " based on your schedule. You will meet at lot of great people and learn more about our history.)*

**What interests you most about Saugatuck-Douglas history?** I am very interested in the stories of how Saugatuck became the summer visitor destination it is today.

**What is your background?** I spent my entire 33 year career with Montgomery Ward in all aspects of Human Resources - college recruiting, employee relations, training, communications and policy development. I started my career in California, was transferred to Orlando and finally to corporate headquarters in Chicago.

My partner, Mike, and I visited Saugatuck for two weekends during the Summer of 1981. (Ironically, we stayed at the cottage next to museum at Mt. Baldhead Park. An omen?) The following winter we purchased a cottage where our current home now stands. Since making Saugatuck our full time home, in addition to a number of different roles with the History Center, I have also become involved in Saugatuck city government serving on the Historic District and
Planning Commissions, the City Council and three terms as Mayor.

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From the Archives

Fish Sculpture with a "tale" donated

This fish sculpture created by Bill Brinka has quite the story. It was given to Jean Palmer for her birthday. The story goes that it was tied to a fishing pole and that Jean "caught" her gift in the Ox-Bow Lagoon. For years it sat on the mantel in the Mary Kay Cottage, Jean's summer home on the Ox-Bow Campus. The sculpture was recently given to the History Center by Chris Spencer in memory of Jean, who was a very close friend.

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Fun fact from the archives:
In the year 1884, Saugatuck ships carried 5,379 passengers to and from Chicago. In those days, water was THE method to easily get to and from Saugatuck and western Allegan County. The railroad had arrived, but trains were still fairly slow, not to mention a citizen of Saugatuck or Douglas would need to first make the journey by horse to either East Saugatuck or New Richmond to board the train! Sailing ships were quickly giving way to steam-powered vessels propelled by paddles or propellers. The number of steamship passengers coming and going from Saugatuck would continue to increase through the 1910s. Click on the photo to the right from the SDHC collection of passengers boarding a steamer at the Municipal Pier Dock (now Navy Pier) in Chicago in the early 1920s. See more photos from this era at Municipal Pier from Getty Images at this link.

With this method of transportation so vital to the viability of the community, shipping made a serious effort to continue year-round, despite the whims of Mother Nature. Witness the steamer Argo, of the Graham & Morton Line, hard aground on the sandbar just north of the Holland Harbor entry in November, 1905. Significant wind and ice action later pushed the vessel high up on the beach, and it was later sold and converted to other uses. Read more about the Argo calamity at this link courtesy of Maritime History of the Great Lakes.
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:

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

Send check payable to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to: PO Box 617, Douglas, Michigan 49406. Click HERE for a printable 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 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 closed for the winter season. It will re-open with an all-new exhibition on May 28, 2017! 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** is open to the public as weather permits. Admission is free to the public 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.

![Facebook Logo](image)

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