The mission of the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center is to preserve local history and inspire learning to inform and improve our community.

THE PUBLICATION OF THE
SAUGATUCK-DOUGLAS HISTORY CENTER
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OCTOBER 2017

Volunteer Thank You
Sunday, October 22nd
4:00 - 6:00 PM
at the Museum

If you volunteered for the History Center this year, please join your fellow docents and volunteers for wine, nibbles and discount shopping. All museum merchandise will be sold at cost plus 20%! (Except for Kit Lane publications)

It'll be a great way to stock up on unique holiday gifts for the Saugatuck-lovers on your list. Hope to see you there!

P.S. Bring your ideas about how to make next year's Cold War | Hot Towns exhibit even better.

B&C Directory
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"Pieces" Unveiled

Does this image key up your interest? Visit the new exhibit to see what this object is! (click for full-size)

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Center is getting focused on its collection. As part of this...
**Monthly Programs this Fall**

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.

**October 11, So who do you think you are?**
Family History researchers Jack Sheridan and Chris Yoder will uncover the genealogy of two pre-selected History Center members and discuss tools and resources for researching your own family lineage and stories.

**Sponsored by Maury Decoster and Sunny Hill**

**November 8, Growing the Collection:**
**Documenting Summers in Saugatuck-Douglas**, a joint program with Grand Valley State University's Kutsche Office of Local History.

The History Center's collection is the foundation from which we are able to tell the fascinating stories of local history and give them meaningful context and interpretation. Join us for this program as we discuss the current state of the SDHC collections and an exciting partnership planned for 2018, and how you can help!

**Still looking for a sponsor, could it be you?**

Thank you to those above who have sponsored one of our programs! Multiple sponsors for each program are welcome and encouraged. If you would like to sponsor the November 2017 program, 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 year!

**150th Celebration weekend a warm success**

Entitled "**Pieces of our Past,**" the exhibit focuses on six unique objects from our collection and share their interesting stories and facts through brief text and photos from the History Center collection. This look into the 3-D archive inspires visitors to walk around these objects, inspect them up close, and connect with them in a way that cannot be done through a book or computer screen. In addition to their stories, their scale may surprise you.

Thanks to Vic Bella, Steve Hutchins, Erik Kirchert, Nathan Nietering, Jack Sheridan, and Sally Winthers for the creation and installation of these 'pieces.' The bookstore which formerly occupied this entire space has been reconfigured but you can still buy one of our award-winning publications here!

Take a tour through the Pieces exhibit before or after one of our upcoming Monthly Programs! (schedule in left column)

*It's all on the level - photos from our collection add context to each object in the "Pieces" exhibit.*
(click for full-size)

**Welcome New Members!**

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

- Ken Fischang, Saugatuck, MI
- Paula and John Hoffman, Douglas, MI and Canyon Country, CA
- Brian Peterson and family, South Haven, MI
- Carol and Fred Stuckwisch, Ashburn, VA
- Ryan & Richie Venhuizen and family, Saugatuck, MI
It's been a hot summer - starting with Cold War | Hot Towns in May and capping off with a hot weekend as members and friends gathered to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of our iconic Douglas Union School.

We exceeded our goal of 150 attendees at the Saturday evening 150th Celebration gala event. Guests dined on delicious hors d'oeuvres provided by The Kirby and enjoyed live music provided by Al Weener and Ensemble on the front lawn before moving to the back yard beneath lit tents for a full dinner and delightful conversation. We can't thank the evening's sponsors enough, led by Premier Sponsor Liz Engel & Family/Century 21. Our one fundraising ask of the evening was beyond successful as we raised $11,000 toward growing the History Center's college intern program, which was then generously matched with an additional $5,000 by Renee Zita.

This was immediately followed the next afternoon by Family Fun Day, an affordable afternoon for folks of all ages to enjoy old fashioned games, crafts, prizes, music, and more. Thanks to the afternoon's sponsors and to the 14+ Saugatuck High School students who came to volunteer. Although attendance was hampered somewhat due to the July-like heat, the kids and families who came to Fun Day had a great time, and the History Center was able to increase awareness of its children's programming with this demographic.

Thank you one and all who planned, prepped, and attended these special events. Find more photos of the Gala and Family Fun Day near the end of this newsletter courtesy of photographers Richard Donovan and John Peters.

Congratulations, Tracey and Steve!

Tracey Meagher and Steve Bruigioni were married on the front steps of the Old School House and had their reception in the Back-in-Time Garden on a beautiful Saturday, September 9. Congratulations to you both!

SMILE, and support the History Center with Amazon!

Support the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center when you shop early for the holidays or anytime throughout the year. Simply log in to your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com/ch/38-3010564 and Amazon donates a portion of your purchase dollars to SDHC! What could be better than that??
Saugatuck Woman's Club building fundraiser

The Saugatuck Woman's Club is showing a special production of *The Cat Screamed at Midnight* this month as a fundraiser to help fund continued repairs to their historic building in downtown Saugatuck. A limited number of tickets are available for the show on October 14 at 7pm. Call Dotty Houser at 269-857-1095 or click here for more information and tickets.

Tuesday Talks available on Youtube

Knowing that Tuesday Talks are frequently filled to capacity, we video recorded them this year and put them on Youtube for everyone to watch from the comfort of their living room. The link in last month's newsletter didn't work quite right. Go to https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1YcGrrPyAV0Ck8tzDTbJzA to see the full season!

By Jack Sheridan

All things come to an end sooner or later. So the August issue ended the *Bill Simmons Scrapbook* feature in this SDHC newsletter. See last month's newsletter for the kick off of *ASK JACK*.

In case you missed it last month, and don't want to look it up, here is the plan: You "alert readers" out there will send me the starting point for a feature such as a historical question, a photo, a suggestion etc. I will consider your submissions, pick the best among them and respond with a feature on the subject.

To produce the response, I will search and reproduce from our vast archival database a relevant and interesting monthly ASK JACK column. And believe me, we have a vast database of *REMEMBERING WHEN*, newsletter articles, *HISTORY MYSTERY*, S-D History Center books, presentations, Museum exhibit features and of course, photographs.

From alert reader CZ (my cousin-in-law) I received the following query: **There were a number of wealthy ship builders and lake captains that called Saugatuck home. Who was the most successful?**
I must confess I put CZ up to asking this question and that made it easy to come up with an interesting answer.

So, click the image to the right to enjoy this Remembering When reproduction.

And please, you alert readers, (though I do have numerous cousins) hit me with ideas for next month at jack.sheridan@gmail.com or 269 857-7144.

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**Executive Director to attend Michigan Museums Conference**

In our effort to learn more about what other museums are doing around the state with a special focus on best-practices and advocacy, History Center Executive Director Nathan Nietering will be attending this fall's Michigan Museums Association annual conference. The conference is a core educational opportunity directly in line with MMA's mission: *With an emphasis on face-to-face collaboration, the Michigan Museums Association shares expertise and resources to promote standards and practices that make the Michigan museum community thrive.* Knowledge gained should help improve programming, outreach, and provide concepts for how we can be a better resource to our community. Attendance at this conference is supported in part by a professional development mini-grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, administered by the Holland Area Arts Council.

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**Roll Out The Barrel!**

**Come to the Dedication October 20**

*It’s a Celebration!*  
The City of Douglas is excited to announce the completion of both the  
根Beer Barrel and  
the Beach to Bayou Trail

Meet us at the Barrel on Friday, October 20th,  
at 1:00 p.m. for ribbon cutting ceremony,  
speech by Mayor Wiley, root beer floats,  
hotdogs and trail mix.

Click text above for more information.
Garden Happenings

"A garden isn't meant to be useful. It's for joy." ~ Rumer Godden

I respectfully disagree with you, Ms. Godden.....a garden is for joy, but according to our Old School House 150th birthday celebration, gardens are pretty useful too! Unfortunately not all of us were able to attend the celebration, but rumor has it, a good time was had by all. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make this event and our Family Fun Day a complete success. It certainly does "take a village".

We will be adding to our Daffodil Trail again this year! If you are interested in purchasing a bunch of bulbs, please send a check for $30.00 made out to Saugatuck-Douglas History Center, attn: Daffodil Trail, or stop by the office and give your payment to Nathan. The landscape committee will dig the holes and install the bulbs, all under the watchful eyes of our daffodil designer, Lee VerSchure.

Our Root Camp and landscape committees were asked to host the Holland Horticulture Club's October meeting at the Old School House. They are very interested in learning more about our garden and Root Camp, of which they have been a sponsor since the beginning. We are looking forward to talking with them and thanking them personally for supporting us for so many years.

Until next month,
-The Landscape and Root Camp Committees

Board Bio - Renee Zita

[After taking a busy summer off, in each issue this year we continue to feature a quick bio of a member of the SDHC board of directors.]

What is your role on the board?
I champion the History Center in the community by helping the Center grow our connections with other organizations and individuals in the area of sponsorship.

What other aspects of SDHC are you involved in?
I am involved as a regular sponsor each year of a Tuesday Talk, volunteering at the Pump House Museum and sitting on different subcommittees. I also co-chaired the Old School House 150th Anniversary committee this year.

What interests you most about S-D history?
My interest in local history is the importance of historical legacy. My children are the fifth-generation to summer here in
Douglas/Saugatuck. My family first came here to Saugatuck in 1930 to spend there summers on the Lake Michigan lakeshore.

What is your background?
I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Valparaiso University, raised my three sons in Darien, Illinois and moved to Saugatuck/Douglas full time in 2009. I sat on the Saugatuck Yacht club board from 2008 to 2016 and substitute for the Saugatuck Public Schools. My passion for history and legacy is what brought my interest to the SDHC.

Bon Ami makes history

By Nathan Nietering

The December, 2016 issue of this newsletter featured a photo of the small lake steamer Bon Ami relating to the grave of Saugatuck resident Edward Arends, who was a wheelsman of this vessel until his passing in 1898. A few years later, the Bon Ami (built in Saugatuck in 1894 by Rogers & Bird) made history at an iconic location on the Great Lakes.

Duluth, Minnesota is considered the "head of the lakes," located at the western edge of Lake Superior. As the era of moving goods to market across the lakes became more economical with the perfection of the marine steam engine in the second half of the 1800s, Duluth quickly rose to prominence as a major port for metal ores and grains which could be found in the nearby "iron range" and interior fields of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

In Duluth the harbor area is protected by a narrow but lengthy spit of land called Park Point stretching southeast from the town's center. To facilitate more direct shipping access to the harbor, the Duluth Ship Canal was excavated in 1870-71. This allowed for faster and easier access by vessels but added a further encumbrance for folks living on Park Point to get to the center of town. Several methods were tried to facilitate easy transport, but none were very successful.

Completed in 1905, America's first transporter bridge solved this problem. A huge structure, nearly 150 feet tall and spanning the 250-foot wide channel, provided a moving gondola platform which could quickly move 350 individuals plus wagons, automobiles and streetcars across the canal. It would be safely tucked on one shore when any vessels passed by, eliminating collisions with an earlier swing bridge and various ferries.

The Bon Ami made history as it became the first vessel to pass under the newly-finished aerial transporter bridge on April 7, 1905. It had departed Duluth harbor via the longer Superior Channel but a large ice pack on Lake Superior caused them to turn back, returning via the Duluth Canal under the newly completed bridge.

The transporter style construction solved the problem but limited the bridge capacity. By the 1920s, autos and streetcars would back up for an hour or more during busy times to get across. In 1929, the
The Duluth Aerial Transporter Bridge in operation in 1907. Image courtesy Shorpy.com. Click for full-size.

aerial bridge was reconstructed and enlarged to remove the moving platform and replace it with a moveable lift deck, which reopened in 1930.

Today, Duluth is still one of the busiest commercial ports on the entire Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway system, shipping out large quantities of iron ore, coal, and various grains. The Aerial Lift Bridge continues to open an average of 5,000 times each year to allow vessels to pass beneath and is a popular tourist destination as pedestrians can view the giant ships up close and hear the freighters and bridge each signal each other with a special horn sequence.

Learn more about the Duluth Aerial Lift Bridge and see current photos of it here.

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!

We are busy preparing for the show entitled "WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE". The presentation is based on the researched family histories of members Judy Anthrop and Win Ryder. We will show the research methods and tell the history stories discovered. Plan to attend the show - Wednesday October 11 meeting at 7pm - this will be fun!

Not sure where to begin with your own family history research? That is what we are here for! Call or email Chris Yoder or Jack Sheridan for information, and note the Family History Group's meeting schedule below:
Thursday, October 19
Thursday, November 2

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.
Photos from the 150th Celebration weekend

Click each image for full-size.
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.

Send in your 2017 membership with payment today or click HERE to renew online.

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 Saturdays and Sundays thru October 29, 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. The Old School House is open to the public from 11am-3pm Thursday-Saturday. The adjoining Back-in-Time Garden and Surfboat Exhibit are open daily through the end of October. 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

History Center main phone: 269-857-5751
Museum phone: 269-857-7900
Tech Center/Archives direct phone: 269-857-7901
www.MySDHistory.org

Follow us and learn more history on Social Media! Click the logos below.
Again this year, the SDHC newsletter is being underwritten by a generous donation from the late Life Member, Frances Vorys.