

# 'Saving' history, clearing space ahead

By SCOTT SULLIVAN  
EDITOR

The value of a community newspaper is no more than its community. Which is why The Commercial Record was thrilled Saturday, upon leaving our brick-and-mortar offices in the Douglas Professional Building — to transfer 150 years of archived newspapers to the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center and District Library.

No one in business needs to have it explained — especially given the Covid-19 crisis — we now face tough choices. The good news for us has been that, despite this and the demise in ad revenues print papers have now faced for decades — The Commercial Record's support and readership have stayed strong.

We would like to think hard work and dedication to people we love are factors in this. But there's no question we've faced changing markets and times as well.

Last October we moved from our longtime office at 3217 Blue Star Highway — which Maria Metcalfe has done a beautiful job renovating into her Massa Body business — to the professional center.

Then came the pandemic. Our 15-year editor — me — isn't so young anymore and a Type-1 diabetic. Three surgeries in five months last year got me listening to doctors better.

I started writing at home — I can do that anywhere — driving here as often as possible to take pictures and be with people, masked of course and as much as safe social distancing allows it.

Optimal? No. But doable? Yes. We have not been alone facing compromise. Then



Shown with some of 152 years of Commercial Record archives are (from left) library director Ingrid Boyer, history center director Eric Gollanek and his son Willem.

came the money part. Cut brick-and-mortar costs or make other changes at the expense of quality our readers and advertisers deserve and expect? No brainer.

Hence Saturday's archive transfer. We are grateful library and history center directors Ingrid Boyer and Eric Gollanek, mustering a volunteer corps that included family, were able to find space in their facilities, room in their

vehicles and strength in their arms to help us relocate the heft of our history into local facilities to which all who are curious have access.

An office is an office; The Commercial Record has been in and out of many. A computer, desk, typewriter, printing press, linotype, staff, editor ... all those also are interchangeable. What matters is our community and its stories.

We convey them differently now. My hope is, in time, that those physical volumes — many comprised of yellowing, aging paper — can be digitalized (or whatever the latest means of transmitting will be) and indexed to make research easier.

My hope is I too can adjust. At age 65, I am used to physical things — not just books, magazines and newspapers I can see on shelves,

touch and carry with me, but contacts with other people. There is a virtue in such directness that the "virtual" world can't have.

I will still be in town ... a lot. Look for the camera-sad-

dled beast of burden smiling despite — maybe even because of — it. Get the picture?

Email editor commrec@allegannews.com or call our office phone, (269) 857-2570. They know how to reach me.

## SAUGATUCK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



The  
**Lake Shore Chapel**  
Our 116th Season!

### 2020 Summer Schedule - Canceled

As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Board has made the difficult decision to not hold services this year. The Chapel building will open from 10:00 to 12:00 for meditation and prayer on Sundays in July and August.