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S/D HISTORICAL SOCIETY JULY 9 PROGRAM
VISITS FENVILLE ORGANIC BLUEBERRY FARM

JUNE 27, 2014 -- A "field trip" to Fennville's Pleasant Hill Blueberry Farm will highlight the next monthly Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society program on Wednesday, July 9. The program begins at 7pm, on-site at 5859 124th Ave. (M-89). Admission is free and the public is welcomed.

Hosted by farm owners Joan Donaldson and John Van Voorhees, and sponsored by SDHS member Carolyn Richards, the program will review the history of local fruit growing and the disciplines and benefits of organic farming. They also will discuss the design and "green" reproduction of their 1850s Andrew Jackson Downing house, along with the farm's timber-framed barn and other outbuildings. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own portable chairs for presentation seating, and will have an opportunity to tour the farm's blueberry groves, large kitchen garden and animal barn, then enjoy home-baked treats and home-made cider.

The farm is approached by a half-mile-long driveway entered northward off M-89, between 58th and 59th Streets, east of downtown Fennville. Visitors wishing to carpool are invited to gather by 6:30pm at the Old School House History Center, 130 Center Street in Douglas.

For close to 40 years, Joan and John have grown organic blueberries at Pleasant Hill Farm, one of the first certified organic blueberry farms in Michigan. John is a third-generation farmer who cultivates bushes planted by his grandfather in the 1940s. He represented Michigan at the first conference to discuss national organic standards in 1989, and has presented at organic events sponsored by Michigan State University. Joan, his wife, is the granddaughter of a Michigan fruit farmer, and an award-winning author who writes essays about farming and records features for their local NPR station.

For more information about the Saugatuck/Douglas Historical Society, its Museum and Old School House History Center, or its activities planned for 2014, visit www.sdhistoricalsociety.org.

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Joan Donaldson and Jon Van Voorhees show two features of their Pleasant Hill Blueberry Farm...its working oxen team and 1850s Andrew Jackson Downing house reproduction.