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ROCHESTER

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Historical Society offers third annual cemetery walk and tour

By Mary Beth Almond
 C & G Staff Writer

ROCHESTER — The Rochester-Avon Historical Society is once again giving the community the opportunity to learn about the past during the third annual Mount Avon Cemetery Walk and guided tour 1-5 p.m. Sept. 27 at the cemetery.

RAHS member Deborah Larsen said there is an incredible amount of local history connected to Mount Avon Cemetery — which is not only the oldest in Rochester, but the oldest platted cemetery in Oakland County, platted in 1826.

The theme of this year's tour is "Heroes in the Stones."

"People who are going to be portrayed during the walk lived through tough times and harrowing circumstances. They made sacrifices for their families and their communities. We think their stories deserve to be told and remembered, and we've selected some really interesting people. We have a Revolutionary War patriot in the group, a Civil War soldier, a woman defense worker from World War II who was killed on the job and more, so everybody will have a chance to sort of meet these people and learn their stories," Larsen said.

The timed tours will depart from the municipal parking lot at Third and Walnut streets. Ticket holders should park at the municipal parking lot, and they will be transported to and from the cemetery via shuttle van.

Larsen noted that the family-friendly event is a great way to learn a lot more about the community and connect with the past while enjoying a bit of theater.

"It combines community theater and local history education in kind of a fun way ... as opposed to just reading the story off of a page of a book somewhere," she added.

Led by tour guides, visitors will walk through the Mount Avon Cemetery, listening to stories of the lives of a few of the people buried there. The stories will be told in first person by re-enactors dressed in period costumes.

"We will have live actors portraying various characters, so as the group is led through the cemetery, they'll encounter these characters in full costume who will talk about how they lived and what they were involved with," said Brian Dunphy, RAHS president.

Tickets, which are nonrefundable, are \$15 per person. The proceeds will fund the Rochester-Avon Historical Society's local history and preservation projects.

"The cemetery walk is one of our fundraising events for the historical society. Since we are a private organization, we don't receive tax money or government funding or anything, so anything we want to do has to be funded through our own initiatives," Larsen explained.

Tours will be held rain or shine, but in the event of severe weather, the tours will be canceled and money will be refunded. If there is just rain, the show goes on with umbrellas.

Advance tickets may be purchased at the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce office, 71 Walnut St., Suite 110, or online at www.rochesteravonhistoricalalso ciety.org by clicking on the online store link. Any tickets not sold in advance will be available for walk-up sales on the day of the event at the shuttle stop in the municipal parking lot at Walnut and Third. The number of tickets is limited, so advance purchase is recommended.

"I definitely would not wait to buy tickets and try to walk up on the day of the event, because chances are there will not be any. We had very few last year, and this is our third event. Word of the event is starting to grow, so there is a very good possibility that we will sell out all of our 220 tickets," Larsen said.

Rochester Hills Chrysler Jeep Dodge, Pixley Funeral Home and Potere-Modetz Funeral Home are sponsoring the Mount Avon Cemetery Walk.

For more information, email rahsupdates@gmail.com or call (248) 246-5440.

You can reach C & G Staff Writer Mary Beth Almond at malmond@candgnews.com or at (586)498-1060.

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