

RELIVING

The Rochester Era

November/December

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2012

Our Christmas Gift Has Arrived Early — Some Assembly Required

The iconic Surrey with the Fringe on Top is back in town — almost. Recently, it was donated to the Rochester Avon Historical Society by RAHS member Roger Knapp and his brother, Butch. The s Surrey gained much attention in the 1950s, after it was acquired by Roger and Butch's father, Red Knapp.

Of course, it was helpful that the Broadway show Oklahoma had featured the song "Surrey with the Fringe On Top." The show made its debut in 1943, and had a ten year run on Broadway—the many songs in the musical became popular hits. In 1955, the film, Oklahoma, fanned further enthusiasm: singing, dancing, dresses, romance. How could it miss. The musical continues as a staple of school and community theatre. The song "Surrey with the Fringe on Top" remains one of America's best loved. How delighted we were when Red Knapp brought out the s Surrey for public enjoyment. It had been either sold to him or donated from a local farm estate. The s Surrey quickly became a feature in our parades and events. Sometimes it was brought out just for fun and delight.

In this 1997 photo, Lynn and Jon Palmitier (children of RAHS member Leslie Palmitier) ride in the s Surrey with Red Knapp, and with their great grandparents: Wm. Pierce Dalrymple and his wife Elsa. The occasion is the Dalrymple's 65th wedding anniversary. The first s Surrey (named for Surrey, England) was introduced in the US in 1872. Delicate and pretty, it was called a "pleasure carriage", seating two to four persons.



Barb Barber, a member of the Oakland Township Historical Society, has graciously offered the use of part of her barn for storage. Next spring we will start on the s Surrey's restoration. If you would like to join the restoration project, please contact our RAHS President, Jim Hopkins (contact information is on page 3)

What's Inside This Edition:

See page 7 for details regarding our wonderful November and December speakers:

Radford Jones — Nov. 1, RHPL

Donnalee Lanktree — Dec. 3 Brown Bag

Michael Hauser, Dec 6 RHP Library

Page 5: Shop from home at our online store — buy something special to enhance the holidays — a time of story, homecomings and goings —

Let the Stories begin —

RAHS Wins Its Second Major State Award from Historical Society of Michigan —

Of course we are all very pleased!

The Rochester Avon Historical Society recently earned recognition by the Historical Society of Michigan in the category of “Communications: Newsletters and Websites.” The award was given for the Oakland Regional Historic Sites — a major project of RAHS that involved the cooperation of a number of Oakland County Agencies: The Rochester Hills Historic District Commission, the Rochester Historical Commission, The Oakland Township Historical Society and The Oakland Township Historic District Commission and The Rochester Avon Historical Society.



Jim Hopkins, RAHS President and Debbie Larsen, RAHS Director of Research for RAHS and Ma-

If you have not visited this site yet, please do so soon. It is online at . What you will find is a map of the areas mentioned above, and in addition clickable markers on specific historic homes and places — that open to give detailed histories of the featured map locations.

This is a boon to historic education as well as a benefit to realtors and others who are interested in history and area locations.

Researching and building the website was a labor intensive task to gather all of the information and shepherd the website through to completion. What a fun way to engage us in history, through mapping, text, and photography. The honor presented is the highest to be awarded by the state’s historical society. Visit: oaklandregionalthistoricsites.com

Oral History Committee Needs Volunteers!

If you are a good listener, typist, idea person, or just interested in oral history - our committee needs you! We have great ideas and leads of those who need to be interviewed but we do not have enough people to do the interviews. Everyone has other things that get in the way, so if you are able, even for a little while, to join this committee and help anyway you can, for as long as you can, it would be appreciated.

Come to one of our committee meetings for more details or email Chairperson Ginger Ketelsen at ginger@edictfamily.com. The committee meets on Saturday morning at 9:00a.m. at the Dairy Barn at Rochester Hills Museum, any and all are welcome. We do not have a committee meeting in December but we meet in November on November 10th. In 2013 the meeting dates are: January 12, February 9, March 9, April 13, and May 18. Please join us.

From the President Jim Hopkins

The Holidays are going to be here before we know it. So to help all of you celebrate I mention our On-line store..

Your Historical Society has been busy creating new merchandise for you and your friends. We have our very first calendar available along with a great mouse pad. Debbie Larsen’s new book, “Vanished Rochester” is the second book in the series “Remembering Rochester” and will be a great addition to your collection on Rochester History.



On Thursday morning, October 25th our Society was awarded the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce’s Sunrise Pinnacle Paint Creek Center for the Arts & Cultural Award for our Oakland Regional Historic Sites

<http://oaklandregionalhistoricsites.org/>.

This is our second award in two months. The other award being the State History Award of the Historical Society of Michigan for the Outstanding Historical Website. I want to thank the members that have dedicated numerous hours of their time to help make this website an award winning site that is putting RAHS on the map!

I invite all of our members to get involved in some aspect of RAHS. We are a group of volunteers and there are many places for you to do something to help us out. See a Board Member or a Committee Chairman.

I hope all of you have been able to keep up with RAHS on our Facebook page. Dave Gifford has been doing a stellar job of keeping current events posted there. It is a great place to see and read what is going on as it relates to our history in and around Rochester..

Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas.

See you at the meetings.

Contact Information for RAHS Board & Committees

RAHS Board of Directors

James Hopkins, President 248-254-2520
 Brian Dunphy, Vice President 248-656-5968
 Mary Howarth, Treasurer 248-375-0206
 June Hopaluk, Recording Secretary 248-652-9242
 Janet Potton, Corresponding Secretary 248-652-7296
 Leslie Mack, Member at Large 586-852-9015
 Carol Tough, Member at Large 248-375-0084
 Rod Wilson, Past President 248-651-6178

Appointed Board of Director Positions

Gail Kemler, Historian 248-651-0907
 David Gutknecht, Membership 414-364-7998
 Public Relations — unfilled for the moment
 Bea Catherino, Rochester ERA Newsletter . 248-375-0808
 David Gifford, Media 248-941-7587

Committee Chairpersons

Deborah Larsen, Research 248-375-2974
 Janet Potton, Oral Histories 248-941-7587
 Internet Genealogy Group, unfilled for the moment
 Rod Wilson, Rochester Heritage Days..... 48-651-6178
 Jim Hopkins, Rochester Heritage Days 248-254-2520
 Carol Tough, RAHS Appraisal day Unavailable
 Jim Hopkins, Sidewalk Sales Booth, 248-254-2520
 Jo Ann Bourez, .Great Everything Sale 248-651-7526

Let the Stories Begin!!

Tis the Season for Home Town Visitors

I met them in Miss May's kindergarten class at Rochester's Harrison Elementary School, 1947. I met them again recently at Knapp's Dairy Bar and we talked. On the other side of Knapp's front windows, Main Street was undergoing a massive re-construction, complete with billowing dust and heavy equipment sounds. Knapp's was fairly quiet, even so. Mike LaFave was visiting from New Mexico, in Michigan to celebrate his mom's 91st birthday. Dwight Hughes and his wife Gail met us there as did Marve Kipp's wife, Maxine. (Marve was away for the day). It doesn't take long for Knapp's Dairy Bar to turn into old home week no matter how long you've lived in Rochester. Janice (Singles) Ellis, someone else we remembered from school, came in for coffee. The stories began: growing up in Rochester in the late 50s and 60s.

Work started young for many kids. Mike LaFave's first job was to paint the fence posts at the Great Oaks Stock Farm. Mike's mother was secretary to the farm manager, Mr. Williams. Mike (age 13) spent the summer of 1955, painting the fence posts. The posts were white, with a distinctive green post cap—spaced about 15 feet apart. There would have been more than a square mile of fence posts. Mike remembers there were about 652 Million fence posts.. This was, as far as I know, the last time the fence posts were painted. Today, Great Stock Farm exists in memory only.

When many kids turned 14, the first order of business was to get a working permit from the school office. The working permit allowed teens to work up to 20 hours a week. At 14, Mike and Dwight were hired by the A&P store, a popular in-town employer for boys. They bagged groceries, rounded up carts, swept floors and stocked shelves. They were promoted to the produce department, presided over by produce manager, who was the only one allowed to use the store PA system.

Then there was a break through. One afternoon, Mike was allowed to announce a produce sale over the speakers. His voice carried well enough over the shopping din. And it was fun! A favorite story is the Saturday night before Christmas when Mike announced the “Bunless rump roast” and the whole place froze at attention: “What did he say!!” And the grocery boys collapsed in laughter. Oops.

There were other oopses, as the boys also helped unload trucks and stock shelves at the back of the store. Shelves were about six feet high and made of 2x4's and plywood. One afternoon the produce manager asked the boys to throw down a case of raisins. The manager didn't move fast enough and was knocked out cold. The boys' future flashed before their eyes, charged with homicide by raisins – but happily the manager recovered himself and if all was not “forgiven”, at least life went on.

By 1958 Mike had saved enough money to buy a 1958 red Chevrolet convertible, not a bad for a kid who was going to graduate high school in 1960. Meanwhile, Michigan State University Oakland (MSUO) had opened in 1957, offering college opportunity close to home. He and Dwight Hughes, among other local kids, went to MSUO. Even so, adventure called. Mike dropped out of college in his first year, joined the US Navy, and spent the next years in service.

When he returned to MSUO (by then re-named Oakland University), it was with a different frame of mind and a focus on college. He graduated OU in 1968. Dwight Hughes and wife, Gail (Tower) Hughes; Mike LaFave and wife Carla; and Marv Kipp and wife Maxine are retired now. The friends keep in touch. Meeting at Knapp's Dairy Bar, always bring back the best of stories. As for Knapp's Dairy Bar, please don't change a thing!

Note: For 10 years now, Mike LaFave has been the man you hear but do not see at the Westminster Dog Show each February in New York City. He announces the dog breeds as each dog enters the arena. Those of us who know Mike don't miss the dog show—which is televised. Did he sharpen his announcing skill at the Rochester A&P Store produce department? Rochester is pleased to think so. BVC.

Home is where your heart is . . .

Take this opportunity to share Your Home Town with Others

Meaningful Gifts for Family and Friends from our online store:

Payment by check or Pay Pal —

Visit: <http://rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org>

Now Available: A New Debbie Larsen Book — Vanished Rochester

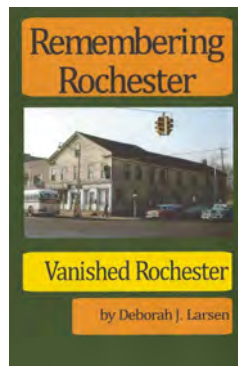
Do you remember the St. James Hotel, Rochester Paper Company and Whitey's restaurant? Just in time for Christmas, we are pleased to release *Vanished, Rochester*, another collection of Deborah Larsen's stories from her blog, *Remembering Rochester*. The new book shows us buildings that have disappeared from our local landscape and shares their stories. *Vanished Rochester* sells for \$9 and will be available at **Lytle Pharmacy** or may be ordered through **our online store**



This is Hudson Market — a family run grocery that is part of Rochester that has vanished. This store once occupied the S/E corner of University Drive (formerly, named Fifth Street) in downtown Rochester . . . Small independently owned stores were the only stores available and while selections might have been limited, customers received personal attention. If our online store were bricks and mortar — it would look like this. Actually, it can look any way we want it to — so we chose the Hudson Market and its friendly staff.

Vanished Rochester

There are new stories and photos of what is no longer “there”. But you will not be able to locate these sites without remembering their past. Share some history this holiday season!



Visit us at the online store:
<http://rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org>

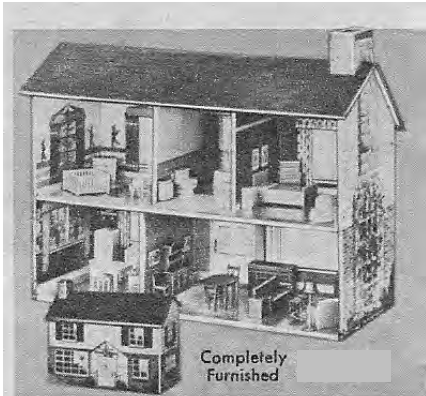
Ok, Well — you can't order a pony from our online store. But we thought this 1956 Sears Catalog ad for a Christmas Pony was too good **not** to share! Maybe someone did get a Christmas pony — but more likely they received some thing else from the Sears 1509 page “wish book.” (Yes, 1509 pages, really).



Here is What We Can Sell You at our online store . . . A Completely Affordable Mouse Pad



Available at our online store, for a gentle cost \$7.00 — The DUR Trestle (South Hill)
What a bargain — buy one for everybody
On your list — Add a Calendar for \$15 more
<http://rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org>



Still, much loved — 1956 Sears completely furnished Doll House



Lincoln Logs were invented patented by John Wright, a son of architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The notched corner design was traditional for Swedish log houses. The concept was brought to Spring Green, Wisconsin by Swedish immigrants.

The architecture can best be seen at Spring Green, Wis., a preserved Swedish village not far from Frank Lloyd Wright's famous Taliesin East, a worthwhile day trip if you are ever in Madison, Wisconsin. Worth the time and trouble to visit Taliesin and Spring Green Village.



Model trains were a major interest in 1956. This photo from the 1956 Sear's catalog (train not available) shown here for your memories.

Join the Rochester Avon Historical Society Today!

Bi-monthly newsletters-monthly meetings with guest speakers-downtown Rochester historical walking tours-monthly lunchtime talks by long-time area residents-oral history projects-book projects-research projects-and much more!

Rochester Avon Historical Society Membership Application

___ New ___ Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail Address: _____

___ \$10 Student ___ \$18.00 Individual ___ \$25.00 Family ___ \$35.00 Contributing

___ \$75.00 Institution ___ \$250.00 Patron

Areas of Interest – How would you like to participate?

___ Historic Research ___ Genealogy Research ___ Special Project Volunteer ___ Antique Appraisal Day

___ Annual Picnic ___ Oral History ___ Historic Walking Tour Guide ___ Fundraising ___ Heritage Days

___ Sidewalk Sales ___ Refreshments at Meetings ___ Publications ___

Other _____

Mail to: Rochester-Avon Historical Society, P.O. Box 80783, Rochester, MI 48308-0783

Thurs. Nov. 1st, 7-8:45 pm at Rochester Hills Public Library

**Radford Jones Presents:
Presidential Travel and the Secret Service**

Jones retired from the US Secret Service in 1983, as a Special Agent. During his 21 year career, he was in charge of several field offices and was assigned to Presidential, vice Presidential and foreign dignitary details. He was responsible for security coordination during the 1976 Presidential inauguration and for three political conventions. He was also assigned to the White House and security during the Kennedy years. **Join us to hear this wonderful speaker.**

**Tues. Dec. 4th Noon to 1 pm,
Rochester Community House —
Brown Bag Lunch**

Donnalee Lanktree (Local Resident)

Presents:

Rosie the Riveter —

**Women and girls worked in war-time
production while men were away at war....
After the war, many females were sent home
But others stayed — It's a story not to miss!**

Donnalee is President of The American Rosie the Riveter Association



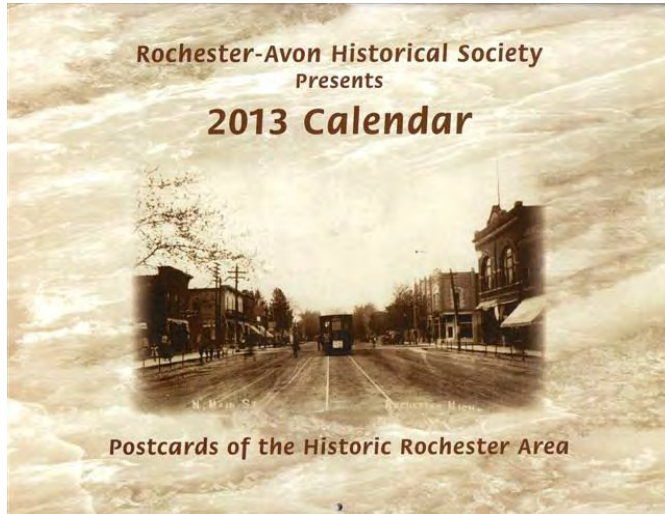
Thurs. Dec. 6th, 7-8:45 pm at Rochester Hills Public Library

Michael Hauser Presents:

J. L. Hudson's: The Grand Dame of Detroit Retailing

How can we miss this talk about THE department store in the big city. Many of us still cherish the thrill of the green J.L. Hudson truck delivering our purchases, so people knew we shopped there. So many wonders at that store!

Hauser is the Marketing Manager of the Detroit Opera Theatre and Detroit Opera House — also author and co-author of several books about J.L. Hudson's. He promises also to bring many artifacts and saved treasures from Detroit's major department store. **Don't miss this!**



The Rochester Avon Historical Society Calendar for 2013 is available through the RAHS online store. It features vintage post cards of the area, some of which have not been widely circulated. The photo quality is clear and well defined.

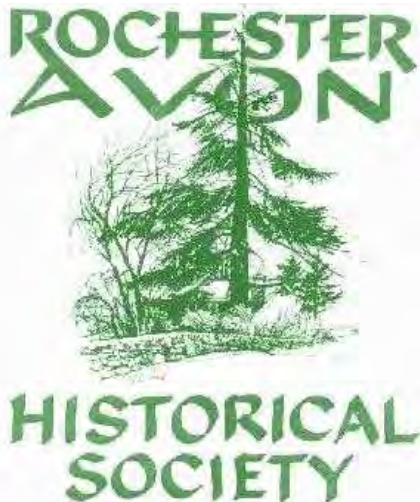
From the Editor

Write or phone the editor if you have something you wish we would cover.

Time and place photos are welcome. May accept memoir from readership. Payment is a mailed copy of newsletter.

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**Pride in
Preserving
the Past**