

RELIVING

The Rochester Era

January/February

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2013

Beat the Winter Doldrums — Two Great Events — Jan. and March

RAHS Antique Appraisal Day!

At
Rochester Community House

Sunday, March 3rd, Noon to 4 pm

This will be the 20th year RAHS has hosted this fun event for our community. If you have ever watched the TV program “The Antique Road Show” — that is what the afternoon is like!!

We will have **10 Appraisers** waiting to meet with you. They have expertise in books, manuscripts, first editions, coins, clocks, glass, pottery, collectibles, china, lighting, furniture, guns, military items, antique weapons, dolls, Teddy bears, jewelry, eastern art, engravings, needlepoint, samplers, art: oil, prints, pastels, **Native American art and artifacts: paintings, bead work, jewelry, baskets, arrow-heads. **Native American items appraisal only available from Noon only until 2 p.m.

If you have an item too large to transport, bring a photo of it, as well as any provenance or maker’s marks, and that should enable the appraiser to identify, and most likely value your item.

Admission Free. Verbal appraisal \$5/item. No charge for items appraised under \$20. Get the word out early!! Tell your friends, neighbors, co-workers to mark their calendars! Start gathering items you want appraised. **Join us for a fun-filled afternoon.**

Great Everything Sale

At
Rochester Community House

Friday, January 27, 9:00 am to 6 pm

Saturday, January 28, 9:00 am to 12 noon



The biggest house in town hosts its annual indoor garage sale! Fine great deals on household items, small appliances, furniture, strollers, toys, games, cds, videos, books, and clothes. A high-end boutique area sells special collectibles, designer clothes, china, art



Lustre Ware
Elephant Tea Pot,
made in Japan, distributed by coffee/tea company door-to-door sales, to Mrs. A. LaForge, Grant Street, Avon Twsp.

MI— 1930s, pre-WWII

Rochester Avon Historical Society, Library Lectures to Resume First Lecture: February 7, 2013 — at RHPL Auditorium



Library Lecture Series Resumes February 7, 2013
Hosted by Rochester Avon Historical Society
Place: Rochester Hills Public Library, Auditorium

We are delighted to announce that our first lecture of the year will be presented by Tom Berlucci, chairman and co-founder of the Historic Fort Wayne coalition, and David Jamroz, co-author with J. Conway, of the book: *Detroit's Historic Fort Wayne*. Arcadia Publishing, 2007, ISBN 978-0-5112-8/Ft.

Fort Wayne has been an historic site for at least 1,000 years. According to information on the Fort Wayne Coalition website, Native American burial grounds were present at the mouth of the Rouge river over 1,000 years ago. The last remaining burial mound at Fort Wayne contains human remains dated over 900 years ago. The Pottawatomie Indians lived at the fort's site before vacating for less populated areas.

Fort Wayne was originally called Spring Wells for the freshwater springs found along the waterfront of the Detroit River. Over the years, land surrounding the Great Lakes has been occupied by Native Americans, the French, the British, and finally the Americans. Before roadways, canals, or railways, the waterways were the fastest mode of travel. You will learn much about Fort Wayne, its long life,

its prime importance, and decline--and restoration with the assistance of the Fort Wayne Coalition. Come to the lecture February 7th to learn and see the life of Fort Wayne.

Rochester Avon Historical Society Library Lectures are Free and open to the public.

* * *

Ray Henry to Speak at February 5, Brown Bag—Public is Welcome

We so much enjoyed Historian, Ray Henry's Brown Bag presentation in 2012 about Tomb Stone Iconography, that we have asked him to return and deliver a Part II presentation and lecture. Rochester Community House, noon to 1 p.m. Ray will delve into the further mysteries and symbolism associated with American burial customs. **Admission Free.**

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 10:00a.m. at the Dairy Barn at Rochester Hills Museum, any and all are welcome. Our next meetings are February 9, March 9, April 13, and May 18.

Please join us.

From the President Jim Hopkins

Well, Spring is just around the corner, and in no time we will be starting our Downtown Walking Tours, a sure sign that Spring is here, and we will be gearing up to work on our many other projects. We are hosting the Rochester Inter-club Annual Dinner on April 17th. We have arranged for Matt Cullen, President of Rock Ventures, to be our speaker.

We also just received notice that we have been awarded the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Historic Preservation Recognition Award given by the Stony Creek Chapter, NSDAR of Rochester, Michigan. We are to receive the award formally on March 2.

We will be starting to refurbish the Surrey this Spring and we are hoping to find interested members with the skills to help out with the upholstery and wood/paint restoration. If you have the slightest interest in finding out more please contact me.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Great Everything Sale and at Appraisal day.

Sledding at Korff’s Hill

By Jim Hopkins



When I was growing up on Highland Street one of the great places to play was over at what we called Korff’s hill. Behind their property was a big ravine that we used in the winter for sledding. Since it was a steep two sided ravine, we would slide down both side at once and see who turned first as our Western Flyers careened down the slopes. This, as you can imagine, resulted in some spectacular tumbles and flips as we fell off of our sleds at the last second to avoid crashes. If we weren’t doing this, we would see who could travel up the opposite slope the farthest. This would give bragging rights to the fastest sled that day. All of that area has been filled in and flattened into Howlett Park.

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 . . .
- Tiffany Stozicki balen1970@gmail.com
- Bea Catherino, Rochester ERA Newsletter . 248-375-0808
- David Gifford, Media 248-941-7587

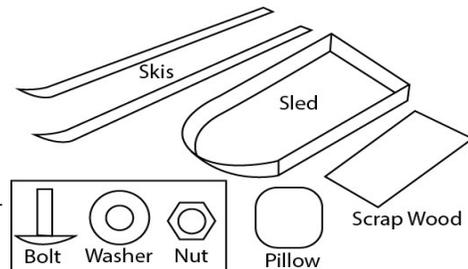
Committee Chairpersons

- 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. 248-651-6178
- Jim Hopkins, Rochester Heritage Days 248-254-2520
- Carol Tough, RAHS Appraisal day 248-375-0084
- Jim Hopkins, Sidewalk Sales Booth, 248-254-2520
- Jo Ann Bourez, .Great Everything Sale . . . 248-651-7526



Manual plans for building a sled

1890s



2013 Downtown Walking Tour Dates Announced.....

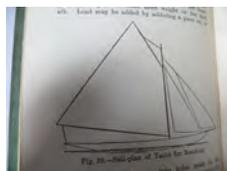
Rod Wilson has announced the Downtown Walking Tour dates for the 2013 season. They will kick off in May with the last one in October. The Walks are scheduled on a different day of the week from the previous month so that everyone that wants to take the Tour can work it around their schedule. All Walks begin at the northeast corner of the Western Knitting Mill Building which is located at Fourth and Water Streets. RAHS members can enjoy the walk at no cost. If you would like to be a tour assistant please contact Rod Wilson at 248-651-6178 or send him an email at rodandsue@comcast.net. We also do prearranged Walking Tours for organizations, family reunions and school class reunions. Hope to see you at a future Walking Tour. Look for the man in the Top Hat.

2013 Walking Tour Dates

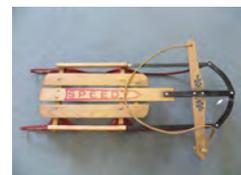
- May 14, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
- June 19, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.
- July 18, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.
- August 9, Friday, 7:00 p.m.
- September 21, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.
- October 6 Sunday, 1:00 p.m.



L. Real Model of Sailing Ship



R. Instructions for sails and reaching..
Building Model Boats,
1900s..



Past President's Comments.....Rod Wilson

As we move into 2013, it is time to look back on the last six months. Congratulations to Jim Hopkins and the Board of Directors for an outstanding start of their two year term. All Board members deserve a big thank you for the many hours they give each and every month to make sure this organization remains as the number one historical society. Many awards have been received for our Oakland Regional Historic Sites website and the placement of the QR Codes on downtown businesses is underway.

We have published a new book by Debbie Larsen, *Remembering Rochester – Vanished Rochester*, produced two mouse pads and published our first calendar.

RAHS also has many other projects going on such as helping the Community House with their Great Everything Sale, our own Appraisal Day, involvement in planning and operation of Heritage Days and the list goes on and on. You are the one that makes this all possible. Please continue to support our projects. Your ideas for new projects are welcome. We hope to see you at our next meeting.

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

By M. Jerry Stone

I met 'Lil Donny on the 1st day of school entering the 4th grade. I had graduated the 3rd grade from Woodward school (Magna Cum Laude as I remember it) and was now attending the "Big School" on Wilcox and 5th St. There was a rumor that 'Lil Donny was the only kid in the history of Rochester Community Schools who had started late. The "Lil Donny" stemmed from the fact that he was a head taller than most of us and a little older. His uniform of the day consisted of engineer boots, threadbare blue jeans (stylish now, not so much then) and a leather jacket with all the necessary straps and zippers. He always sat in the corner at the back of the classroom, stretched out for comfort. I always thought that his only reason for attending school was to catch up on his sleep which he could do with his eyes half open. I don't think he had a very happy home life. One day after missing the bus, his dad had picked him up yelling "Get in the damn car Peckerhead." I didn't think that was a term of endearment.

In the 40's and 50's, Rochester had two movie houses. The Avon Theater was located on the East side of Main St. up toward 5th St. It showed B movies, mostly Westerns and was a little on the rowdy side. Rips and tears in the screen could be seen where an unhappy customer had shown their displeasure. Across the Main St. and a little South was the Hills Theater. (Now a Mini Mall) The Hills showed 1st run movies and double features with a shorter B type film. The Hills was a class operation under the guidance of Mr. Paul Hines, who was a professional movie theater manager. He wore a suit and tie and patrolled the aisles with his little pen light, his due diligence assuring his patrons an enjoyable night at the movies.

It's a Saturday night now in the Village of Rochester. It's the middle of the winter and promises to be a big night for the Hills Theater. The movie being shown is an Archie and Jughead thriller. One showing at seven and another at nine. The 1st showing is for the younger audience and is sold out. (It's 1951 and Television is just getting a foothold) As the crowd settles in, the coming attractions are being shown, followed by the Movie Tone News Reels and finally a Tom and Jerry cartoon. As the movie begins, Archie, Jughead, Betty and Veronica are discussing some newly discovered caverns that have been found just outside of town and although it's late at night, they decide to go exploring. Inside they find some torches to light and they enter and by now it's getting real scary. The background music sets the mood and along with the flickering flames and some eerie sounds, the theater is seriously quiet and all at once it's Fright Night in Rochester. The kids are literally on the edge of their seats, and the tension is building beyond belief. As Archie and the gang round a bend, everyone knows that death and destruction await. Just at that critical moment, from the back corner of the theater, a beautiful soft tenor voice begins singing the old gospel song "Bringing in the Sheaves." By the time the voice gets to the sheaves part, the tension has snapped like a giant thunderbolt and the audience has collapsed in laughter. Mr. Hines crashes thru the entrance doors, his flashlight frantically searching for the source of the outbreak. The house lights come on and the movie stops, which causes more disruption. Finally Mr. Hines finds the source of the trouble and we see he has someone by the neck of his leather clad coat and is escorting him from the premises. Yes, you may have guessed. The culprit is no other than 'Lil Donny. Who knew. I had never heard him talk, let alone sing.

I've taken a few liberties with this story. I hope 'Lil Donny doesn't read this. He may come back and beat me up. (Ed. Note: 'Lil Donny is not a real name . . . Peace be with you :-)

Help Wanted: Merchandise Director

RAHS is looking for a merchandise director. We need someone to coordinate all the items we have for sale. That coordination includes finding a location to store our merchandise (currently the items are at a couple homes with the majority of them at the Wilson's), and work with other people who are having merchandise produced. This also includes having a location that is accessible to members to distribute to various locations. At this time, this is not a Board of Directors position. Contact Jim Hopkins or Rod Wilson if you are interested or want more information.

Help Wanted: Antique Surrey Restoration Volunteers

Do you have painting skills? Upholstery skills? Interest in antique buggy restoration? There will be plenty of opportunities for sanding, light carpentry, and work as yet to be identified. Come join the fun — Contact Hopkins or Wilson!

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

Rochester Kids in Winters 1940-50

By Susan Wilson

Here are some things that I remember from many, many, many years ago, during the late 40s - early 50s. The names of some of the kids in our neighborhood were: Chuck Sterns, Tom Mitzelfeld, Paul Siewert, Susie Bridge, Gary Bridge, Howard Hinkle, Monty Clute, Barbara Willsey, Bruce Willsey and Jimmy Littel (and of course me).

I lived on Glendale on the corner of N. Pine St. all my growing-up years. Across the street, to the North, lived the Mitzelfeld family. Across Pine from them lived the Sterns family. Pine St. ended at the back of their lots. Beyond that was a vast field of hills that rambled all the way to Tienken and West to Paint Creek. All the neighborhood kids would spend their spare time out sledding. We had a toboggan and there was one spot on our favorite hill that when you went over it you would go air bound. Nobody ever got hurt by going over it, but we always were thrown off into the snow. We would also use cardboard, sleds and whatever else we could find to go down that hill.

The other place that we went almost every night, was to the skating rink where the Jaycee Little League Park is today on Woodward St. There was a “shanty” that we could use to change into our skates. Inside there was an old potbellied stove that was taken care of by Tony Bolger. He was the nicest man and always helped us lace up our skates and kept the fire going. He always had a big scarf around his neck, and wore a big, warm hat.

I heard somebody say that the “shanty” was an old building (very small) that was moved there from somewhere along the DUR tracks and that it had been used as a pay station.

Ed. Note: The Duck Pond at Rochester Municipal Park — A new skating place — with loud speakers for music, replaced the old Woodward Street rink. Rochester’s first hired Village Manager, Robert Slone,,

loved to skate and wanted the kids to have a nice place. The “duck pond” is a man-made restoration of a lost mill pond. The brick warming house with fireplace was built by the local LionsClub and replaced the old warming shanty that had been was moved there.

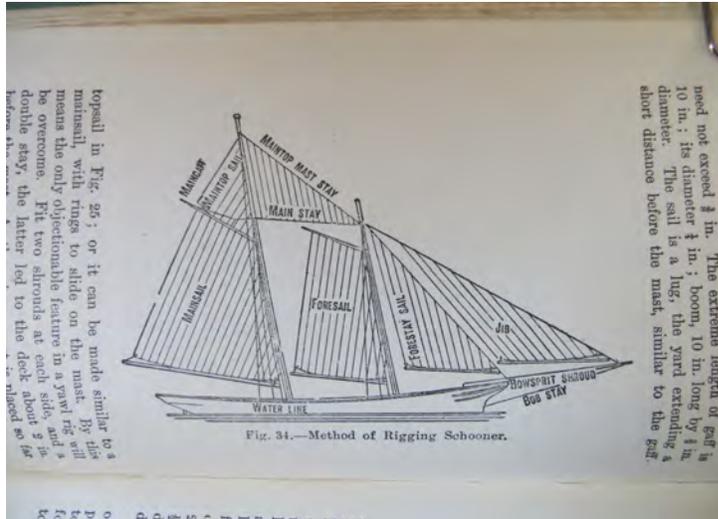


Vintage Sleds

Hanging : Flexible Flyer, Water Street Antiques, Marine City & Speedy Sled — D&L Antiques, at the Antique Warehouse, Marine City, MI

The Skating Pond at Rochester

In the 1960s, a lot of us who were “older kids” worked and by the time we came home from our jobs, there wasn’t much to do. The skating pond closed at 9, but we were allowed to stay later. A bunch of us met there, just a mish mash of kids who were done with high school and who were “older”. We met other people our age from out of town, and people we knew from town. We were the age that people used to settle down: 19, 20, 21. I loved to skate and met a guy who was the older brother of a girl I slightly knew. He was a wonderful skater. I had a crush on my friend’s brother. He and I had worked out a few skating routines, so it was fun. One night he didn’t show up as planned. Everyone was kind of “down” about it.. Someone finally explained to me that he had moved to Canada; it was supposed to be a secret. That’s history too, I guess. The 60s brought a lot of changes. Anon. by request



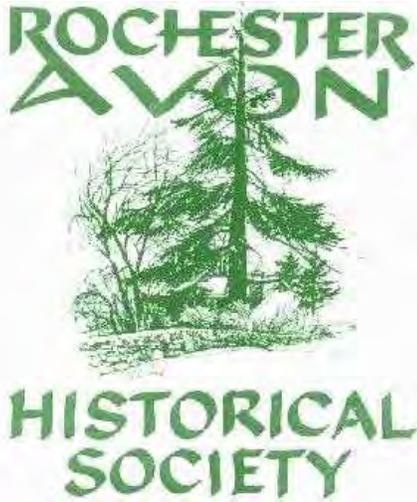
Beautiful Winter — a time for sledding, on the hills, ice skating, reading, model building — and making plans. Happy New Year, Happy Valentine's Day to all from the Rochester Avon Historical Society. (pix from Building Model Boats, Handicraft Series of Practical Manuals, abt. 1906).

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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If you are not receiving your newsletter online and would like to — please contact me. .



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**Pride in
Preserving
the Past**