

RELIVING

The Rochester Era

July/August

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2014

Surrey Update from Carol Tough, Project Manager

On April 17th Debbie and Jerry Larsen, Roger Knapp and Carol Tough transported the surrey to Martin's Buggy Shop in Napanee, Indiana for restoration. There they learned the extent of what needed to be done to bring the surrey back to the way it would have looked and functioned in 1900. This is a partial list of work involved: The fenders and dash will be covered in leather, the top will be covered in leather and lined with fabric to match the seats, new fringe, new fabric for the seats, new floor carpeting, shafts and team pole repaired, four new one inch channels, one wheel rebuilt with new spokes, rubber on the wheels, replace/make two missing tails and two candle caps for the lamps, replace broken glass in one lamp, and completely prime and paint all parts. The target date for the completion of this project is September 1st.

Fund raising for the surrey has been a total success. With an anonymous donor matching dollar for dollar up to \$1500, and all the generous donations from our members, we met our goal of \$4,000. Thank you so much for your support! Look for the surrey in this year's Rochester Christmas Parade on December 7th.

The RAHS Downtown Sidewalk Sale Days photos Are last year's event. ID of folks in the pictures is on page 3. Next year, your picture could be here.



This could be you — being cool — at the Rochester Sidewalk Sales—July 10, 11, 12. Volunteers needed to work at the booth.



Rod Wilson, Past President

It is that time of year again. The Rochester Downtown Sidewalk Sales are back. RAHS will have a booth at the Sidewalk Sales, July 10, 11 & 12. If you would like to help, please go to the link below and sign-up for the time you would like to work. Your help is needed and by using this method you will save someone from having to call you.

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f48aba722a02-rahs>

Or phone: Dorothy Stratford at
248-652-8637

**REMINDER.... REMINDER.... REMINDER**

Find and remind all alumni, attended or graduated, from RHS of the yearly all alumni reunion at Mr. B's Restaurant, AUGUST 4th, Monday.. from 6 PM -10, (or come earlier to eat in peace, as it gets VERY BUSY with alumni from 6 on). Last year we had 250 alumni, plus their guests, attend, with much sharing of memories, and comparing of each person's memories, and lives, "back in their day", at RHS, and how much our high school grew, and all the changes with updates. Fun was had by all. Plan to stay and grab a bite to eat, as they put on extra waitresses for us all. We meet in the big dining room, and even watch DVD's of fellow class functions, and alumni trips. Come join the fun!

**Rochester-Avon
Historical Society****RAHS - 2014 Walking Tour
Dates**

All tours begin at the Western Knitting Mills, Water Street, NORTHEAST corner of the building. Tours will last approximately 2 hours.
Reservations not required.

Look for the man with the top hat.

2014 Walking Tour Dates

June 18, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.

July 17, Thursday, 7:00 p.m.

August 22, Friday, 7:00 p.m.

September 20, Saturday, 1:00 p.m.

October 12 Sunday, 1:00 p.m.

Invite your friends and neighbors to join us.

If additional information is needed, please call

Rod Wilson 248-651-6178

All RHS Alumni—Reunion Questions

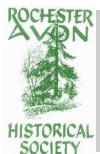
Call: Sharon Dodman Kachinski,
Class of '60 - [727-365-2074](tel:727-365-2074), or
email: sharondodman@msn.com

Contact Information for RAHS Board & Committees**RAHS Board of Directors**

Brian Dunphy	248-656-5968
Carol Tough, VP Operations	248-375-0084
Rod Wilson, VP Finance	248-651-6178
Janet Potton, VP Development	248-652-7296
June Hopaluk, Recording Secretary	248-652-9242
Mary Howarth, Treasurer	248-375-0206
Tiffany Stozicki, Dir. Communications....	248-650-0415
Leslie Mack, Dir. Membership	586-924-4961
Margaret Bartos, Dir. of Programs	248-759-4768
Cary Downer, Dir. Special Projects	248-652-1854
Gail Kemler, Dir. Historical Preservation .	248-651-0907

Committee Chairpersons

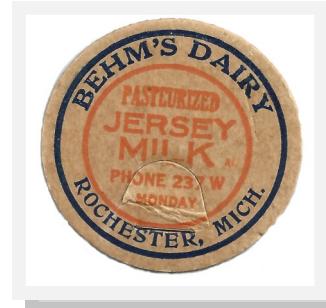
Deborah Larsen, Research	248-375-2974
Beatrice V. Catherino, Editor, Rochester Era Newsletter	248-375-0808
David Gifford, Media	248-941-7587
Dorothy Stratford, Membership Chair	248-652-8637



Mystery Photo Identified!!

Remember last year when the Era misidentified the photo of a dairy bar establishment — and then struggled to find out what and where it originally was? Was it Avon Dairy? No! Was it Behm's Dairy? No! Knapps Dairy Bar — absolutely Not! — it looked vaguely familiar but — not familiar enough.

TA, da — here it is! Clare Bebout's Village Grill — at 406 Main Street. Its opening was featured on the front page of The Rochester Era newspaper, Friday, July 22, 1949. The establishment offered a modern marvel — air conditioning! Debbie Larsen's online Blog Site, which can be found at the web address at the bottom of this page, will tell you more about Village Grille. Better yet, buy Deb's book: On sale at our online store anytime or at the sidewalk sales, RAHS booth, July 10, 11, 12. A vintage milk bottle cap from Behm's Dairy is on the cover of the book. The photo upper right, on this page is definitely, absolutely — nowhere else — but The Village Grill circa, 1949.



Debbie Larsen's newest book: **Remembering Rochester: Bygone**

Businesses will tell you much more. Published in 2014, this is the third collection of stories from Deborah Larsen's blog, Remembering Rochester, focuses on our town's bygone businesses from the mid-20th century. USD \$9.00.

People in Our Front Page Photos

1. Upper Right: Jim Hopkins, Leslie Mack, Brian Dunphy — view reflected in Holland Florist shop window
2. Lower Right: Jack and Gail Crighton behind table, Jim Hopkins standing, talking to unknown person

Our sidewalk sales photos from last year were generously and skillfully taken by RAHS member, Leslie Mack who contributes her skills as a photographer, videographer, and cheerful RAHS member. Thank you Leslie.



Rochester Fourth of July, 1947—a Memoir

In 1947, my parents moved to Village of Rochester from out in the township long before Avon Township became the City of Rochester Hills. In 1947, the 4th of July was on a Friday. My parents met their good friends at Avon Park for the fireworks that night. The Laphams, the Dills, and the Ogdens were with us. In later years, I understood that a long war was over, service people were home, jobs were becoming plentiful, and families were having children. Fourth of July 1947 was the beginning of an era of recovery and prosperity. People lined the banks around the swimming pond at Avon Park and laughed and talked. There were picnics beneath the beautiful old trees. This was part of an enormous celebration: a circus, a parade, a float competition — a community picnic at the park and fireworks!

The fireworks were staged on the other side of the old foundry on Woodward Street, an area that is Halbach Field now. The anticipation grew from late afternoon through lengthening shadows to twilight. Children ran and played: the whirl-a-gig spun us dizzy, while the swings squeaked and eeked as we swung. Kids poured sand on the metal slides, hoping to slide faster. We waited with excitement for fireworks to begin. There would be glittering sequins of light, showering toward earth in joy and not in war. If this brought back battlefield memories, to newly returned veterans, I would not know.

As twilight began, the children were called to join adults on quilts they had brought, spread out on the hard ground. Finally, the first flash bangs soared up over the trees from Halbach Field across the creek. Then the real fireworks began — falling like glittery sequins, as only fireworks can. These were my first fireworks, I had turned five in April.

The Park echoed with laughter and cheers and murmurs of ooh and ahh. My friend Al Frink remembers wading in the shallows of the swimming hole, with other kids, dancing with glee on reflections of fireworks. At each new burst, there was the soft murmur, as old as time, of humans gathered under trees, beside water. And when it was over, a friend or parent, picked up sleepy kids and carried them to the cars. It was the warmest, safest feeling in the world – to be looked after, safe in the company of good adults. Our parents loved us, their friends cared about us. We had been dazzled to sleepiness: as secure as we would ever be. Was ever there a fireworks more extraordinary than the community fireworks at Avon Park that night? Somehow the community had arrived through it all to that splendid night.

Tell me anything you want to: tell me I have the dates wrong. Tell me I was too young to remember anything so vividly. Tell me it rained that 4th of July; tell me you remember it differently – nothing breaks the spell. I think of it every fourth of July, and I cannot be the only one who does.

America, America – for my father a naturalized citizen, a half orphan, raised in Philadelphia in a household of cousins – a product of the Philadelphia Public School System, apprenticed to a picture framer at 16 – to work at Independence Hall -- the Fourth of July was always, always – the best day of the year. Happy Fourth of July America!! **By Beatrice Catherino**



President's Message — By Brian Dunphy, *RAHS President*

New by-laws, Officers Will Help Us Move Forward

By Brian Dunphy, President

If you've been following the historical society's progress for the past few years, you know how many new projects we've taken on: the Rochester theatre, the surrey restoration, the Oakland Regional Historic Sites website, the cemetery walks, our Facebook page and so much more. These all are in addition to our long-standing activities, such as our publications, evening educational programs and downtown walking tours.



To manage these programs and initiatives most effectively, RAHS needed a new and improved Board structure. In particular, we needed to increase the number of vice presidents – from one to three – to provide additional support for managing our many projects. We also wanted to change our director positions so that each reports to a vice president and has a specific area of responsibility.

At the RAHS annual meeting June 11, members voted to approve changes to the historical society by-laws, including changes to our Board and officers. As the next order of business, members voted to approve the new slate of officers and directors for the next two years. With this structure in place, and with the outstanding people elected to fill these positions, the historical society is well-positioned to continue our leadership in local historic preservation and education.

These are exciting times for us. We also still have a need for volunteers and committee chairs for our many other projects, programs and events. To volunteer for one our projects, just call 248-266-5440, or email rahsupdates@gmail.com. You'll work with great people, and you'll know you're helping to preserve and protect our local history.

See Page 6 for our new organizational chart, Effective July 1, 2014

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society (RAHS) was founded in 1969 to help preserve, collect and interpret the history of the greater Rochester area for present and future generations. For more information, including a list of upcoming events, visit online at www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org/



Organizational Chart for RAHS 2014

6 Officers and 7 Directors

President – Brian Dunphy

Secretary, June Hopaluk

Treasurer- Mary Howarth

First Vice President – Carol Tough

Director Communications – Tiffany Dzuirman Stozicki

Director Membership – Leslie Mack

Director Programs – Margaret Bartos

Second Vice President Finance - Rod Wilson

Director Merchandizing – Open

Director Fund Raising – Open

Third Vice President – Janet Potton

Director Historical Preservation – Gail Kemler

Director Special Programs – Cary Downer

Members — Don't Forget —

The Annual Dues are Due — July 1st, 2014.

Mail to: Rochester-Avon Historical Society, P.O. Box 80783, Rochester, MI 48308-0783
RAHS is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization

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
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Theatre Project is Alive and Well and Moving Along

By Katharine J. Burns

A short SUMMER UPDATE! Yes , the committee for the Rochester Theatre project has taken another big step. We have expanded our vision to view, explore, and review all possible sites for the establishment of an Art House Movie theatre for the Rochester community. The committee in fact is looking at other buildings that would be appropriate for a movie house, like the building that the old Avon Theatre was in, as well as vacant lots upon which a theatre building could be constructed. The review process is in place and discussions will be an on-going process at committee meetings until such time that a decision is made, which involves of course **THE RIGHT DECISION FOR THE RIGHT REASON FOR THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF MONEY!**

Of course this item on the agenda is also accompanied by a very serious and active discussion about securing a fund raiser to begin raising money for the purchase of a building/lot and the restoration of a theatre (probably about \$6 million). We have interviewed several people as new names are added to the list.

Yes, the committee has been very busy and excited about the expansion of possibilities. The architectural designs and the business plan documents, which had been submitted to and approved by the city council and the DDA, are still perfectly appropriate for any of the sites which may be the final selection. The Architect and the writer of the business plan both reported that the documents may or may not need some very minor adjustments but that both will remain very relevant for the completion of the "**THEATRE PROJECT FOR THE COMMUNITY OF ROCHESTER.**"

And lastly, stay tuned in for special details on an anonymous donation of a "four speaker electric organ." It is really beautiful. The old theatre also had one of these and thus in the Third Chapter of the life of a Rochester Theatre we will also have one. There can be music before certain movies, little concerts, and a long list of other possibilities. Won't that be a wonderful moment of nostalgia, just like the theatres of yesteryear!

SO STAY TUNED IN FOR THE EVOLUTION OF THE THIRD CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF THE THEATRE PROJECT FOR THE ROCHESTER COMMUNITY!



Rochester-Avon Historical Society —
Wishing You a Beautiful and Happy Summer
Blue Heron, Lake Michigan, August 2013, Beatrice Catherino

From the Editor to Members

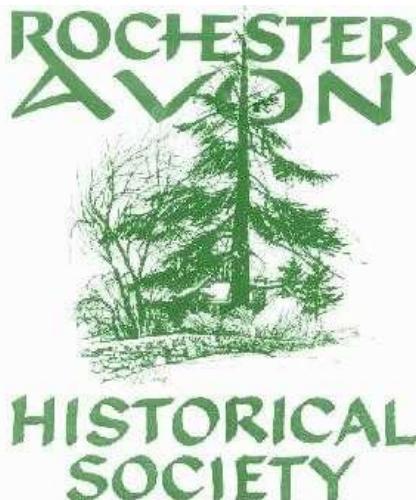
If you are not receiving your newsletter online and would like to — please write to or phone the editor —

Beatrice Catherino, Editor
bvcather@gmail.com
(248) 375-0808

Also, write or phone editor if you have something you want us to cover. Time and place photos are welcome.

May accept memoir from readership. Payment is a mailed copy of the newsletter and your byline. History related pieces, please.

*Note: The online newsletter is, of course, in full color, enlargeable, printable, downloadable, easily send-able to your online friends. The print version is black/white only and arrives by US Mail.



Pride in
Preserving
the Past