



RELIVING The Rochester Era

March/April

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2016

In this issue:

Annual Antique
Appraisal Day

President's Message ...
Contact Your
Legislators—
Historic Preservation
Law at Risk

Upcoming Programs
For March and April

Remembering
Rochester:
This Month in History

Mark Your Calendar
for our
Upcoming Events

Meet Two of
Our New Members

Update on
Social Media



YouTube



Find us on
Facebook

One Day. Once a Year. Four Hours Only.



Be here.

Rochester Community House
Sunday
March 6th
Noon to 4:00 p.m.



Antique Appraisal Day

President's Message ...

Contact your legislators—historic preservation law at risk



Brian Dunphy, President
Rochester-Avon
Historical Society

Historic resources in Michigan are threatened by bills to amend [1970 PA 169](#), the state's enabling legislation for historic districts. That's why I'm asking you to tell your legislators why these amendments critically jeopardize adequate protection for Michigan's historic resources.

The full impact of these bills is far-reaching. Here are a few key ways the proposed bills will negatively affect the existing enabling legislation:

- Local Historic Districts are the ONLY way for a community to protect areas of historic significance from insensitive development, inappropriate alterations and demolition.
- Community landmarks would be made vulnerable.
- Dismissal of approved Standards and Guidelines, used nationwide, that historic district commissioners base their reviews upon would leave the current processes open to interpretation.
- These bills aim to eliminate local historic districts in Michigan systematically and over time by requiring a local legislative body vote to reinstate each district, even those long-standing, every 10 years.
- Not only would the bills create a sunset clause on local historic districts, but they also would dispose of the current process for dissolving historic districts.
- Appeals would be heard at the local level, where political and development pressures could affect the outcome, rather than at a neutral state board of appeals.

Historic districts have served our state and community well, protecting historic resources with minimal burden on property owners. Rochester Hills has had a historic preservation ordinance and a [Historic Districts Commission](#) since 1978, when it was Avon Township. The city of Rochester is currently creating historic districts.

The Detroit Free Press has come out against the proposed legislation in a great editorial:

<http://www.freep.com/story/opinion/editorials/2016/02/09/leave-michigans-historic-districts-alone/80022168>.

The Michigan Historic Preservation Network provides more information:

http://www.mhpn.org/?page_id=919.

I urge you to contact your state representative and senator and let them know that you oppose [HB 5232](#) and [SB 720](#) and support [1970 PA 169](#) in its current form. Let's stand together to protect Michigan's historic resources!

We've made it very easy to voice your opposition ...

Just a few mouse clicks, or a stamped envelope containing a printout of the sample letter provided (link below) mailed to your legislators will convey your opposition to these proposed bills.

1. Find your Michigan representative:

www.house.mi.gov/mhrpublic

2. Find your Michigan senator:

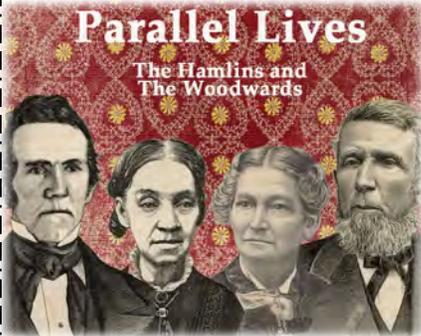
www.senate.michigan.gov/fysbyaddress.html

3. Sample letter to legislators:

http://www.mhpn.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/letter_to_legislators-1.docx

Upcoming March Programs ... Brown Bag and Monthly Library Lecture

Brown Bag Meeting
Tuesday, March 1, Noon
Rochester Community House
816 Ludlow Street



**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**

Bring your lunch! Free coffee,
tea and cookies provided.

“Parallel Lives: The Hamlins and the Woodwards”

Deborah Larsen, an illustrious RAHS member, will look at the parallels in the lives and legacies of two of Rochester's prominent pioneer

families. Learn how the paths of John F. Hamlin and Lysander Woodward intersected and shaped the history of our community.

Deborah J. Larsen is a third-generation resident of the Rochester, Michigan area and currently resides in Rochester Hills with her husband, Gerald. Larsen holds a B.A. in history from Oakland University and a master's degree in library science from Western Michigan University. She is the assistant director of Mount Clemens Public Library and also has served as the institution's local history librarian since 1984. Larsen is the research chairperson for the [Rochester-Avon Historical Society](#) and a member of the [Historical Society of Michigan](#). She also served as a member of the [City of Rochester Historical Commission](#) from 1986 to 1995.



Deborah Larsen

In 2006, Deborah Larsen co-authored the book, "[Selfridge Field](#)," published by Arcadia Publishing, with Lt. Col. Louis J. Nigro. Her subsequent books include "[Home Town Rochester](#)" (2008) and "[Legendary Locals of Mount Clemens](#)" (2012). Most recently, she published a 2013 feature article in [Michigan History magazine](#) entitled, "[When the Stars Came to Mount Clemens](#)."

Larsen is the proud recipient of the City of Rochester Hills Historic Districts Commission's 2009 Earl Borden Award for Historic Preservation Leadership for her authorship of "Home Town Rochester."

RAHS Library Lecture
Thursday, March 3, 7:00 p.m.
Rochester Hills Public Library
500 Olde Town Road

**FREE AND
OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC**



William B. Stout

“Lost to Time: Twenty Famous Detroiters You’ve Never Heard Of”

Joel Stone will introduce 20 Detroiters whose names have been lost to time.

When they were alive, everyone in town knew their names. They were heroes and geniuses, teachers and merchants, drunks and scoundrels. Each played a notable role that was recognized locally, nationally and even around the world. Yet today, most Detroiters don't know of their fame. Discover the unknown "Who's Who" of Detroit's 300-year history including William B. Stout, Ann Martin and Fred S. Stone.



Ann Martin



Fred Stone

In his position as senior curator for the [Detroit Historical Society](#), Stone oversees the [Detroit Historical Museum](#), the [Dossin Great Lakes Museum](#) and a quarter million artifacts in the City of Detroit's collection. Raised in the Detroit area, he has studied journalism, history, archaeology and archival management, focusing on Early North American and maritime cultures. He supports a number of regional history organizations and is a board member of the [Association for Great Lakes Maritime History](#). The University of Michigan Press recently released his latest book, "[Floating Palaces of the Great Lakes](#)," a history of passenger steamships on the inland sea.



Joel Stone

Upcoming April Programs ... Brown Bag and Monthly Library Lecture

Brown Bag Meeting
Tuesday, April 5, Noon
Rochester Community House
816 Ludlow Street

**FREE AND OPEN
TO THE PUBLIC**
Bring your lunch! Free coffee,
tea and cookies provided.

“Unmentionables: The History of Lingerie”



Local historians Gail Kemler and Colleen Barkham will discuss undergarments that have helped define what it means to look beautiful or handsome while at the same time revealing a great deal about a society’s cultural and political values. They will take you from the earliest references to undergarments to the silky lingerie of today’s Victoria’s Secret. Many examples of vintage undergarments will be on display.



Gail Kemler

Gail Kemler is a long-time Rochester resident and community activist. She is a past president of the [Rochester-Avon Historical Society](#), currently holds a position on the RAHS board and has been involved in many community organizations.

She helped organize the local food pantry that started 31 years ago with the First Congregational Church and is now part of [Neighborhood House](#). She was appointed, and then elected, a member of the Rochester School Board. Her first job was with the [Rochester Woolen Mill](#) making mittens for the [Civilian Conservation Corps](#).

Colleen Barkham, a descendant of early settlers, grew up in Oakland Township. She became a high school biology teacher and counselor for the Troy School District after earning a B.A. and M.A. from Oakland University. She has been a member of the [Oakland Township Historical Society](#) for



Colleen Barkham

over 20 years and served on the board numerous times. She has co-chaired three successful exhibits for OTHS and currently is serving as President.

RAHS Library Lecture
Thursday, April 7, 7:00 p.m.
Rochester Hills Public Library
500 Olde Town Road

**FREE AND
OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC**



“Arsenal of Democracy in Rochester: The Story of National Twist Drill”

Howard McGregor built the company’s Art Deco style administrative offices and factory on the site of the former Barwise farm at Rochester Road and Tienken in 1940. During World War II, [National Twist Drill](#) supplied approximately 95% of the U.S. Navy’s high-speed metal-cutting tools, and it was one of a few companies in the country that machined armor plates for battleships. By the 1950s, it employed more than 1,500 people and was the largest employer in the area. National Twist Drill closed in 1983 after a series of sales and plant relocations.

Local historian and author, Deborah Larsen, will describe the history of one of the Rochester area’s biggest employers and how it played an important role as part of the “[Arsenal of Democracy](#)” during World War II.

Larsen holds a B.A. in history from Oakland University and a master’s degree in library science from Western Michigan University. She is the assistant director of Mount Clemens Public Library and also has served as the institution’s local history librarian since 1984. Larsen is the research chairperson for the



Deborah Larsen

[Rochester-Avon Historical Society](#) and a member of the [Historical Society of Michigan](#). She also served as a member of the [City of Rochester Historical Commission](#) from 1986 to 1995.

Remembering Rochester This Month in Rochester History

By Deborah Larsen

Originally Posted Wednesday, April 1, 2015

Fifty years ago this month, Rochester area residents were thinking about traffic. Specifically, they were concerned about the intersection of Rochester and Avon



Photo courtesy of Rod and Susan Wilson

Roads, which only had a blinker as a traffic control device—not a stop-and-go signal.

Leader Dogs for the Blind, located on a corner at that intersection, expressed

concern for pedestrian safety and asked for a regular traffic light to be installed.

The state highway department initiated a study of traffic passing through the Rochester/Avon intersection and issued a report a few weeks later. According to state officials, a blinker light was all that was required, as the intersection had insufficient traffic to warrant the installation of a regular signal.

Local residents persevered, however; four months later, the highway department reversed its earlier decision and ordered a stop-and-go traffic signal installed at Rochester and Avon.

Editor's note: In light of RAHS President Brian Dunphy's "call to action" (refer to page 2 of this issue), this blog post reminds us of the need for local residents to accept responsibility and take action to shape our community.

In the case of the proposed changes to our historic district designation process, protecting our history requires acting today with an eye toward the future.

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

Don't Miss these Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendar now!

MARCH						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, March 1
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Evening Program @ Library
Thursday, March 3
7:00 p.m.

Antique Appraisal Day

Rochester Community House
Sunday, March 6
Noon to 4:00 p.m.

Daylight Savings Time Begins
Sunday, March 13

Reminder to register for, or renew,
[Kroger Community Rewards account](#)

Kroger Community
Rewards enrollment
Friday, April 1

Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, April 5
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Evening Program @ Library
Thursday, April 7
7:00 p.m.

APRIL						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fr	sat
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Brown Bag Lunch
Tuesday, May 3
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

Evening Program @ Library
Thursday, May 5
7:00 p.m.

Historic Downtown
Walking Tour
Monday, May 16
7:00 pm

MAY						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

Greater Rochester Heritage Days

Rochester Municipal Park
Saturday, May 28 - 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 29 - 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Meet Some of Our New Members

By Carol Tough

Prepare to be Inspired



Barbara Markham

Barbara Markham moved to Rochester in 1971. A graduate of Central Michigan University, she taught elementary art education in Utica until 14 years ago. That was when her world changed.

During summer break, she suffered an aneurism which left her barely able to walk or talk. For the

next 18 months, she took classes to learn words, sentence formation, math and even how to walk again. She had to retire from teaching, but her love of watercolor painting ultimately provided a new career.

Initially, she painted as a hobby and gave her paintings as gifts. When a local bank held an event called, "Greater Rochester Emerging Artists," Barbara's paintings were exhibited. It was then that Sheri Heiney of the [Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce](#) stepped in to introduce Barbara to our community.

Today, Barbara's watercolor paintings and note cards can be found at [Arts & Apples](#), [Birmingham Community House](#), [Village Fine Art Gallery](#), [Mistletoe Marketplace](#), Art in the Park and at many other venues.

She gives back to the community by volunteering at the [Crittenton Hospital gift shop](#), [Rochester Symphony Guild](#), [Assistance League of Southeast Michigan](#) and, now, the [Rochester-Avon Historical Society](#).

She loves to learn about the history of our area and the people in it. She says, "Because of every second I'm here, I'm thankful. I love where I am. I love life."



A Passion for Local History

Our newest member, Melinda Whiting Renshaw, is passionate about Rochester. In 1928, Melinda's grandparents, Isabel and Earl Shaver, moved to Rochester, where her grandfather ran the farm and trained horses for Art Dillman.



Melinda Renshaw with grandbaby, Harper

Some of Melinda's best memories include visiting her grandparents' farm, going to the [D&C](#) and having lunch at the [Club Rochester](#).

She laughed telling how her first boyfriend gave her his ID bracelet at The Hills Theater—that was a big deal in those days.

Some of her most valued treasures are those of her mother's photos of downtown Rochester from the 1930s.

Melinda's interests include interior design, antiques, restoring furniture, historical preservation and gardening. She also is an animal advocate—her backyard is a certified wildlife sanctuary.

For years, she thought about joining RAHS because of her passion for history—especially at the local level. Melinda believes history should be preserved, and she looks forward to getting involved with our historical society. She's off to a great start having attended a board meeting already and volunteering to work our upcoming [Antique Appraisal Day](#).

Welcome, Melinda! We look forward to your input and to working with you.

Contact Information for RAHS Board of Directors and Committees

RAHS Board of Directors

Brian Dunphy, President	248-266-5624
Carol Tough, Vice President, Operations	248-375-0084
Janet Potton, Vice President, Development	248-652-7296
Holly Bledsoe, Corresponding Secretary	248-923-2602
June Hopaluk, Recording Secretary	248-652-9242
Cary Downer, Treasurer	586-201-2285
Tiffany Stozicki, Director, Communications	248-650-0415
Leslie Mack, Director, Editor, Era Newsletter	586-924-4961
Bree Boettner, Director, Membership	248-515-0881
Mary Howarth, Director, Merchandising	248-375-0206
Margaret Bartos, Director, Programs	248-759-4768
Tom Bledsoe, Director, Special Projects	248-923-2602
Gail Kemler, Director, Historical Preservation	248-651-0907

Committee Chairpersons

Deborah Larsen, Research	248-375-2974
David Gifford, Media	248-941-7587
Samantha Lawrence, Oral History	586-255-1883

Volunteer Areas of Interest

How would you like to participate?

- Annual Picnic
- Antique Appraisal Day
- Historic Research
- Historic Walking Tour Guide/Assistant
- Fundraising
- Genealogy Research
- Heritage Days
- Oral History
- Photography/Videography
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- Sidewalk Sales
- Special Project Volunteer
- Other _____
(Feel free to suggest. If we don't offer it, we may consider adding it!)

<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
\$15 <input type="checkbox"/> Student	
\$20 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual	
\$35 <input type="checkbox"/> Family	
\$50 <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	
\$100 <input type="checkbox"/> Business	
\$250 <input type="checkbox"/> Patron	

Join the Rochester-Avon Historical Society Today! Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Volunteer Areas of Interest

How would you like to participate?

- Annual Picnic
- Antique Appraisal Day
- Historic Research
- Historic Walking Tour Guide/Assistant
- Fundraising
- Genealogy Research
- Heritage Days
- Oral History
- Photography/Videography
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- Sidewalk Sales
- Special Project Volunteer
- Other _____

(Feel free to suggest. If we don't offer it, we may consider adding it!)



Mail completed form with check payable to:

Rochester-Avon Historical Society

P O Box 80783

Rochester, MI 48308-0783

Update on Social Media



You may recall that last year at this time we started a [Facebook](#) campaign called “1,000 ‘Likes’ in 1,000 Hours.” Having attained 891 ‘Likes’ already, we explained that social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter allow us to increase “awareness of our nonprofit and the events and benefits we offer our membership and the community in general” at no cost to our organization. However, just having a presence on Facebook is not enough. “Our audience grows exponentially with each and every ‘Like’ we receive on Facebook, because our name and information become available to every contact of every person and organization giving us that ‘thumbs up.’” We’re pleased to report that we anticipate exceeding 1,120 ‘Likes’ by the time this issue reaches our membership.

In addition to the events and activities we’re able to share with our friends on Facebook, we continue to expand our [YouTube](#) channel offering by uploading a selection of videos from our Brown Bag lunches and monthly evening programs, as well as a few miscellaneous videos of our special events and projects. We invite you to enjoy this resource. Please note, too, that subscribing to our channel will generate email alerts, so you’ll never miss new uploads.



We extend our sincere thanks to our members who encouraged family and friends to “Find us on Facebook” and ‘Like’ us. We hope that you’ll continue to do so. With a single mouse click, we can reach hundreds of new ‘Faces!’

A 501 (c)3 Non-Profit Organization



P O Box 80783
Rochester, MI 48308-0783



"Pride in Preserving the Past"