

Here's the latest
issue of the...

Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE

Ionia County Historical Society
P.O. Box 1776
Ionia, MI 48846

www.ioniahistory.org



BECOME A MEMBER!

If you'd like to help us preserve the area's heritage, please fill in the form below and send it, with check or money order, to the ICHS Treasurer, care of Box 1776, Ionia, MI 48846.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City, St, Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-mail: _____

Please Check Your
Membership Type:

- ☐ Regular = \$20
☐ Sustaining = \$35
☐ Corporate = \$250
☐ Life = \$1000
☐ Gift = \$ _____

Please Share a
Little Information:

- ☐ Renewing Member
☐ New Member

If you're a new member, how
did you hear about us?

☐ Free Honorary Membership for Students under 18

If you are already a member (thank you!), please
pass this membership form on to a friend.

AVAILABLE AT THE BLANCHARD HOUSE "GIFT SHOP"

A FEW OF THE ITEMS ON SALE
and suggested donation for each:
History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties
by John S. Schenck, 1881 (over 500
pages!)...\$52

Meredyth Jones Lithograph,
"Ionia County Court House"...\$10
VHS Videos of Ionia Historical Subjects...\$10

Headlight Flashes 1896 (a publication of the
Detroit, Lansing and Northern Railroad featuring
28 pages of Ionia information)...\$10

Ionia, 1907 Souvenir Book reprints...\$10

City of Ionia Centennial booklet...\$5

3 Blocks of Historic Downtown Ionia...\$3

The NEW **Family Histories of Ionia
County**...\$58.30

... and more souvenirs and information!

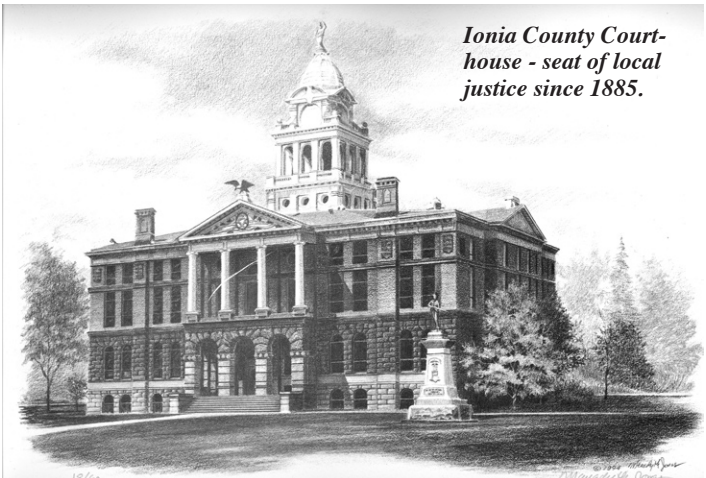
THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST AND SUPPORT!

Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE

The *Almost* Monthly Publication of the Ionia County Historical Society — January 2007



It's The Law Hereabouts



*Ionia County Court-
house - seat of local
justice since 1885.*

The guest at the January 2007 meeting was Patrick Duff, Attorney at Law. (Introduced by ICHS Treasurer Hank Knoop as a fellow distance runner, Mr. Duff noted that he was always challenged to keep up with Hank.)

Our guest began with a memorial tale about the recently departed Gerald R. Ford, his fellow alumnus from U of M. It seems Mr. Ford was commencement speaker at Mr. Duff's graduation ceremony - but Mr. Duff opted not to attend.

Mr. Duff was a teacher for some years before pursuing his law career. Some time ago he opened an office in Portland, and most recently merged his practice with long-time Ionia lawyers McNamara, O'Keeffe and Chadwick.

From his many friends in the local law business, he collected some stories to share, and (stemming from his classroom experience) he came well supplied with hand-outs for everyone. These hand-outs included a reproduction of a tableau of portraits and signatures of the members of the "Ionia Bar - 1874." Many familiar names were seen there, not the least of which was John C. Blanchard.

Pat also related some information about Allan B. Morse, local attorney from Ionia, once Michigan Supreme Court Justice and U.S. Ambassador to Scotland in the 1890s. He also had a list of all the Circuit Court Judges that served the Ionia County area beginning in 1833 - the year Ionia was first settled by the Dexter party - and Probate Judges from 1837. To this he added a definition of each Court's role in the judgement of legal cases.

Mr. Duff received many stories and anecdotes for his presentation, and noted that it was difficult to pare them down to a select few. He did succeed in sharing stories from John MacNamara and Rex O'Connor. He said also that he'd had a very good story from Bill Davis, but he somehow misplaced it.

Our thanks to Mr. Duff for his lighthearted story telling and historical accounts!

Minutes of the January Meeting.

President Linda Ciangi called the meeting to order at the Blanchard House at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 3rd, 2007 with a "Happy New Year."

Secretary David McCord appologized for the lack of a December Chronicle, but noted that (thanks to stand-in note-takers) the minutes of recent meetings could be copied if anyone requested them. Hank Knoop delivered a Treasurer's report, most significantly that \$200 was collected as donation through December visits to the Blanchard House, and \$600 was generated from the "Indoor Yard Sale." With thanks to Bob Nixon's grant-writing and membership drives, and various committeepersons, he reported that income from fundraisers, memberships, and interest have kept the organization "solvent."

President Ciangi commented on the recent passing and funeral of Gerald R. Ford, and members shared a few stories of the former President. (At least 6 local Eagle Scouts participated in the ceremony, including ICHS Vice President Gerry Perry. See story on page 2.)

Thanks to all who helped out with the Christmas open house, decorations and so on. The decorations will come down on January 8 at 10:00 a.m. and everyone is invited to help.

A Home Tour meeting is planned for January 11 at noon at the Commission on Aging. Bring a sack lunch and your ideas for the event. (See story on page 3.)

Under "new business," due to the success of the recent "Indoor Yard Sale," dates for another are being considered, probably in the spring. Member suggestions are always welcome.

The Board is committed to recording of gifts to the Society, and of careful consideration of artifacts offered. That is - not to accept items into the collection which we are not prepared to take care of. Case in point is the crystal collection, for which we have not yet prepared a suitable display.

Bob Nixon reported that he expects progress soon with the grant he's applied for to help purchase materials for the preservation of clothes in the house.

It was also noted that a computer will soon be donated to the Society capable of many tasks, and that Jerry Adams of Grand Rapids has promised to donate some software for cataloging the Historical Society collections, etc.

Finally, it was announced that Barb Ehlerth will be assuming a position on the Board vacated by Hank Knoop, who wishes to dedicate his time solely to the Treasurer's office.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45, with thanks to the Knoop's for their contribution of refreshments for the evening.

Minutes of the January Board Meeting.

The January Board Meeting was held at Ionia Burger King on January 18 at 10:00 a.m.

President Linda Ciangi reported that the Blanchard House had been undecorated and decorations taken care of inside the house. There was a report of plans for next Christmas decorating. The Committee took great advantage of the sale at Hobby Lobby in Grand Rapids for some new things. The theme for 2007 Christmas will be Santa Claus. We are hoping to have a Christmas Tea in 2007. Tentative date for the Tea is December 8th.

We did experience some vandalism in the yard at the Blanchard House. Someone turned the flag upside down, turned over the sleigh and tried to remove the fence garlands. There was slight damage to the sleigh. Dennis Ehlert and Hank Knoop took care of putting things right. Joe McCord called the City Police for some extra watch on the grounds.

Our sidewalks have been taken care of during the storms by the Sheriff's office. We really do appreciate the Community Service help we receive.

The invitation to the Chamber of Commerce dinner was presented to the Board. The cost is \$25.00 each.

The Appraisal for March 21st, 5pm to 9pm at the Commission on Aging is being advertised.

It was voted for Joe McCord to contact Dan's Key Shop and have a padlock for the new shed. The padlock will be keyed to our other locks.

Hank Knoop and Dennis Ehlert have proposed the idea to build a "Gazebo" structure in which we will put the School Bell from Benedict School, similar to the one at the Saranac

Historical Depot. It was suggested that the bricks we have from the old Main Street might be used for the base of it. Hank has received word from Ionia Lowe's that they will be happy to help with projects we may plan.

Barb Ehlert, Doni Knoop and Doni's sister-in-law, Judy Fedewa have undertaken the job of photographing the Quilt Collection at the Blanchard House. These pictures will be put on a disk for the record.

Home Tour report was updated. The next meeting for all of those interested in helping on this "Community Event" is February 8th, at noon at the Commission on Aging. Things are beginning to take shape for the Event. Joan McCord is Chairman on Advertising.

The Society received a check for \$1,000.00 from Ionia WalMart due to the efforts of Bob Nixon.

Three of the prints of Spud Jones' sketch of the Courthouse were sold to the Board of Commissioners for the retiring Commissioners. The check for \$45.00 was given the Treasurer.

Our Member Katie Lincoln is having a 90th Birthday Party on January 27th from 2 to 4 pm at the First Methodist Church. Come and wish Katie a Happy Birthday or send her a card.

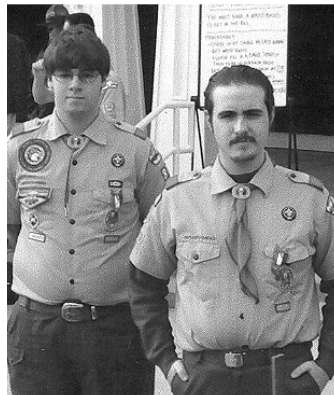
Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring Expo at Ionia High School on March 10th. We shared a booth with BPW last year and are hoping to do it again this year.

President Linda Ciangi proposed having a Mail Box at the Blanchard House with information in it for passers-by and visitors when no one is at the house.

Spring Cleaning was discussed. Date to have it done before the Home Tour will be the first part of May.

A Group of Cub Scouts toured the Blanchard House with the McCords on January 16.

Gerald R. Ford, U.S. President and Eagle Scout. 1913-2006



Left are fellow Eagle Scouts from the Ionia area, Joe McCord and Joe Bignell, at the DeVos Center for Scouting the day of the Funeral.



Ionia Historical Society Vice President Gerard Perry was there, standing proudly with over 400 other Eagle Scouts to honor one of their comrades. Gerry Perry, a "Scouter" since the 1930s, summed up the day with one word: "Awesome." He recounted the day's activities for the ICHS members at the January 3rd meeting. "They really wanted me there," he said. "So after three calls, I conceded...and I'm glad I did." The Scouters assembled at the DeVos Center for Scouting in Walker, and were bussed to downtown Grand Rapids. As the funeral procession approached, they lined the Pearl Street entrance to the G.R. Ford Museum to salute the passing motorcade. The Eagles were the first allowed to view the casket at the museum, and each one was greeted with a handshake from Steven Ford, the former President's son. "It was cold and windy," Gerry continued, "and a few folks lost their hats. But it was a great experience." There were at least eight Ionia area Eagle Scouts there to pay their respects.

Check for the rental of the house for an evening this month, was given the Treasurer. This event was hosted by President Linda Ciangi. Announcement of a wedding that may be held at the Blanchard House May 4th or 5th and another wedding to be hosted by the McCord's to be held at the house on August 11th.

If ever you have some interesting tidbit, story, or photograph that you think Chronicle readers would enjoy — particularly as it pertains to Ionia's colorful past, please don't hesitate to let me know. I will be glad to publish it in the Chronicle!

— D. McCord, Editor

The Ionia County Historical Society is planning a rebirth of our

Annual Home Tour to be held 9 am to 5 pm on Saturday, May 19, 2007

We hope that everyone will enjoy participating in this great day in Ionia!

The starting point will be the Blanchard House 251 E. Main St. and from there Dial-a-Ride transportation will be available to take you on your journey.

Tickets will be \$10.00 each to view some 10 Historic Homes on the program

For advance tickets please write to: Ionia County Historical Society P O Box 1776, Ionia, MI 48846

The Ionia County Historical Society is sponsoring an

Appraisal Road Show

on Wednesday, March 21, 2007 at Commission on Aging 115 Hudson St. Ionia, Mi. 5 pm to 9 pm with

Glen Rairigh of Americana Auctions

Donation of \$5.00 per item valuations will be oral only - no written appraisals Please refrain from bringing jewelry, coins or stamps

Proceeds benefit the Ionia County Historical Society Commission on Aging or ICHS will not be responsible for lost or damaged items Contact ICHS for more information 616-527-3369

The Chronicle is the official publication of the Ionia County Historical Society. It is written, edited, and published by David McCord, Secretary. Any comments, suggestions, or contributions should be directed to the editor care of the ICHS at P.O. Box 1776, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via www.ioniahistory.org.

Upcoming Programs and Events

Wednesday, February 7, 6:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting will be held at the Blanchard House
Program: "Civil War Weapons & Tactics" presented by Henry Knoop.

Wednesday, March 7, 6:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting will be held at the WION Radio Station (Haynor Road)

Wednesday, March 21, 5 to 9 p.m.
THE APPRAISAL ROADSHOW
comes to Ionia again at the Commission on Aging!
(See ad, this page, for details)

Wednesday, April 4, 6:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting at the Blanchard House
Program: "Prehistoric Settlers of this Area" presented by Gary Schlueter.

Wednesday, May 2, 6:30 p.m.
Regular Meeting at the Blanchard House
Program: Farrel Beach speaks on his experiences as interpreter at the Neurenberg War Trials.



Cub Scouts from Pack 3185 toured the Blanchard House this past month, guided through the mansion by Joan McCord in this photo. Scouts are often welcomed guests of the ICHS!

2007 Home Tour Plans Progress!

There are now eight homes and half a dozen public sites signed on for the Home Tour, to take place May 19th, reported Committee Chairman Bob Nixon. But there is still much to be done. Any interested persons or organizations are invited to help with ideas, labor,

activities - and money.

Publicity efforts have begun, and fliers will be available soon for ICHS members to distribute wherever they travel over the next few months.

The plans for the renewed event promise a grand time for visitors and volunteers alike! Come by the next meeting, February 8, to find out how you can join in!