

Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE

The Almost Monthly Publication of the Ionia County Historical Society — August 2008



*Below you see "Destiny"
- a bald eagle who made her
appearance at the August meeting.
Thanks to Brenda Malokofsky for
her outstanding photography!*

It's For The Birds!



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, corrections (of course), or contributions should be directed to the editor c/o the ICHS at P.O. Box 1776, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via www.ioniahistory.org.

**BE SURE YOUR DUES ARE PAID BY OCTOBER
FIRST SO YOU CAN CAST YOUR VOTE FOR TWO
NEW DIRECTORS!**

Our guests at the August meeting were Destiny, a Bald Eagle from Alaska, Sully, a horned owl from Iowa, and their friend Greg Brooks. "The bird man" explained that he has had quite a career with the wild, being a professional in wildlife and parks service, and a registered caretaker for "raptors." It is during this far-reaching career that he encountered these birds, rescued them, and developed a life-long relationship.

First we met Sully, the great horned owl. He was picked up by kids in the wild and raised as a pet for too long – he could not be let loose and expected to survive. The great horned owls, with their intense stare and legendary silent flight, are winter nesters, and mate for life, with an average lifespan of around 10 years (although they have lived up to 30 years in captivity). They lay 3 to 4 eggs, sometimes more, over a period of days...sometimes weeks. Because the young do not hatch all at once, there is a natural competition for the late-hatchers to survive even in their own nest. The owls are very territorial, and rely very much on their acute "asymmetrical" hearing when hunting. They can consume 20 to 30 mice in a night – bones and all. In fact the bones are essential to their nutritional needs. Greg feeds Sully quail, bred specifically for the purpose.

Then came forth the eagle Destiny. Found with a broken wing in Denali State Park, Greg (ehem) "took her under his wing". As the ICHS audience looked on in awe at this impressive creature, he shared a few facts about the species. They are born black, and in 4 to 5 years gradually take on their trademark coloration. Though eagles have lived nearly 100 years, they average nearer 30 years. With eyesight 8 to 10 times better than humans, they are very accurate, effective hunters. They live primarily on fish, but will eat most any small animal they can catch. Occasionally they will eat carrion, sometimes domesticated animals, sometimes surprisingly large animals, too. Destiny also eats road kill – whenever Greg can bring it home. Eagles mate for life, and participate in exotic in-flight mating rituals, locking their talons and spinning towards the earth. They also nest for life, eventually constructing the largest nests in the animal kingdom. The nests can be over 3,000 pounds over the years, and can bring down the trees they're in!

More on page three...

Minutes of the August '08 Meeting

The August 6, 2008, meeting of the ICHS commenced at 7:05 p.m. with a welcome to guests and new members by President Linda Ciangi. The meeting was held in the barn at Knoop's homestead in Ionia.

The president asked for any comments or corrections to the Secretary's reports as published in the July Chronicle. Gerry Perry moved to accept the report as published. This was supported by Mike Gallagher and passed.

The Treasurer's report was delivered by Hank Knoop (copies available on request, as usual). This was a combined report for June & July, one of the highlights being final deposits for the guitar raffle of nearly \$750. Moved by Mike G. and supported by Barb E., the report was accepted into the record by vote of the membership.

Under "old business", reports on the events related to the Free Fair were given: The Fair Queen's Reception was once again a success, the "Duel of the Decades" float earned a First Place trophy (in the non-professional category, with thanks to Bergers for the truck and Marilyn Nash for the design and construction). The Antique Village display impressed visitors also (thanks to Doni & Hank Knoop, Barb and Kathleen, and Brian Quinn). Also thanks to our judges representing the ICHS in the Art Department.

The Duel of the Decades fund raiser is just around the corner and looking good. Chairperson Linda Ciangi expressed thanks to all who have helped, specifically to Kitty's Café and the Sentinel-Standard. Volunteers are welcomed to help August 7 as well as the follow-up concert on August 21 (Beatles).

Christmas Photos at the Blanchard House have been publicized with over 500 cards and fliers distributed at the Free Fair, as well as hand-outs elsewhere. Becca Usher, the photographer, is accepting appointments now (see advertisement in this issue).

The Upstairs Downtown event progresses, with committee meetings scheduled for August 16 and Sept. 9. Eight buildings will be on the tour, \$2 per building or \$10 for the day. Staff is still needed to host the various buildings, so any interested members please contact the Chairperson, Joan McCord, at 527-3369.

Doni & Barb have now received the preservation supplies purchased with the County Foundation Grant and Guitar Raffle income. Upcoming Thursday evening workshops will be everyone's opportunity to help with this essential preservation project.

Under new business, Hank Knoop reported on the upcoming Duck Race >quack< at the annual Fall Festival at Bertha Brock Park to be held September 20th. Volunteers are needed, and a schedule will be established as we get closer to the event date.

President Ciangi reported that the board has voted to postpone the Calendar Fund-raiser project until next year. The time is just too tight to do it right for this year, and it's too big a risk to invest in at this time.

Joan McCord did some research into the partial headstones which have been in the Carriage House for some time. She's found that one of them belongs in a Cemetery in Saranac, the other is still being investigated.



Sessions Schoolhouse was constructed in 1847 on Alonzo Sessions' farm from local building materials. The building's cobblestone construction reflects a type of stonework brought to Michigan from the State of New York. This one room schoolhouse is one of the oldest in the state. It is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places and on the State Register of Historic Sites. The schoolhouse was used for over half a century until closing in 1898.

On August 19, 2008, Ionia area residents and dignitaries welcomed Sessions' descendants from the Ionia area and Ohio, to a "rededication" ceremony. (The fan at left is a souvenir of the ceremony.)

Have your family portraits taken at one of Ionia's most historic and beautiful homes! Photographer Becca (Bales) Usher will take your portraits and create unique holiday cards, or you may choose to order prints.

Portrait Sitting: \$40

50% will be given to the Ionia County Historical Society.

A variety of custom holiday cards available.

Prices start at \$18 for 24 cards!

PRINT PRICES:

4x6 = \$7 10x10 = \$20

5x7 = \$9 11x14 = \$70

8x10 = \$15 16x20 = \$92

October 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th.

Evening and daytime appointments available. You may schedule by contacting Becca directly at 616-560-5530 or beccausher@yahoo.com

Visit Becca's website at www.photosbybecca.com

Visit the ICHS website at www.ioniahistory.org to see photos of the Blanchard House and the many

Minutes of the August Board Mtg.

The Board of the Ionia County Historical Society met at the Blanchard House on Tuesday, August 19. Called to order at 7:10 p.m. by president Linda Ciangi, the meeting was also attended by Hank & Doni Knoop, Barb Ehlert, Stephanie VanderMolen, Joe & Joan McCord, and yours truly.

The first thing on the agenda was the president's report on the "Malt Shop Memories" fund raiser, which was very positive indeed. Over \$2000 was earned and a good time was had by all. A "thank you" will be published in the Sentinel-Standard to those who made the event go smoothly. The 60s show is coming on Thursday the 21st and volunteers are needed (proceeds to the March of Dimes).

The Nominating Committee Report was delivered as an apology by the chairman David McCord for having done very little thus far. Two positions are open this year, and three candidates have been nominated so far: Barb Ehlert, Doni

The board is scheduling programs for next year's meetings, and all members are encouraged to make suggestions for the types of programs they'd like to see or places they'd like to visit.

August hosts are needed for Summer Sundays through the Labor Day weekend. Please contact Linda to get on the schedule.

David McCord noted that nominations are open for two Board positions this year. If anyone is interested in serving on the Board, please contact him or Dave Cook. Also note that DUES ARE DUE before the October Annual Meeting if you want to vote for those positions.

It was also noted that letters should be written to our "business buddies" to encourage them to renew their annual support/donation for the upcoming year.

Gerry Perry moved that the meeting be adjourned, which was supported by Barb Ehlert and passed. The members then partook of refreshments provided by Annette McCord, Linda Ciangi, and the Knoops before the program for

Knoop, and Bonnie Klingbeil. All nominations need to be in by the September meeting. Any interested parties please contact the editor!

Computer training for our museum software is tentatively planned for Saturday September 13th in the morning. This has yet to be confirmed, but all interested members are welcomed.

ICHS will again be running the Duck Race >quack< at the Fall Festival on September 20, chaired again by Hank Knoop. Ducks are \$1 each, or 6 for \$5, and proceeds go to the ICHS. Shifts are set up for 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and volunteers are needed. We also have an opportunity to arrange a display at the park, if anyone is interested in putting something together.

The floor was opened to discussions of programs for the next year's meetings. It was decided that each Board Member would take a month to program, and a few other members were suggested as monthly chairs for the other months. The plan thusfar is:

November: Joe McCord, Library; January, Joan McCord, Episcopal Church; February, Joe McCord, Steve Waterbury at the Courthouse; March, David McCord, presentation on R. Buckminster Fuller; April, Kathleen Perrin, Master Gardeners (Victorian Subjects); May, Stephanie VanderMolen, Cemetery Tours; June, Linda Ciangi, WWI Battle of the Phillipines; August, Joan Nixon, Quilts and Quilting; September, Hank Knoop, Ben Merchant Antique Autos.

Arrangements for Christmas photos procedes well (see adver-

tisement). Decorations for the season will be coordinated to accommodate the photography — date to be announced. November 1 will be the next Appraisal Road Show at the Commission on Aging with Glenn Rairigh. More details will be available soon.

A letter was received from Amy Smith at the Ionia Free Fair Art Dept. thanking the ICHS for our support. A letter was received from the Commission on Aging asking if we would be participating in the Mrs. Claus Bazaar. The board has decided to wait a while longer to make the decision based on potential upcoming events. Info was also received from the Genealogical Society regarding their book of WWII histories. McCord's said that they would be donating a copy to the ICHS as a Christmas present (surprise!).

A large loom has been donated (via Doni K.) which is unassembled at present. Discussion ensued regarding the use of the Carriage House, specifically the possibility of a display of fabric arts and related machinery.

Joan McCord then reported that the Theatre Window presently holds a display of photos of Ionia homes "then and now" and will be decorated to coordinate with future activities of the Society.

She also reported on the progress of the "Upstairs Downtown" tour to be held October 11 (see more info elsewhere in this issue). Eight buildings are on the tour now, and staff is still needed for several of them. The committees will be meeting again on September 6, and all interested parties are welcomed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

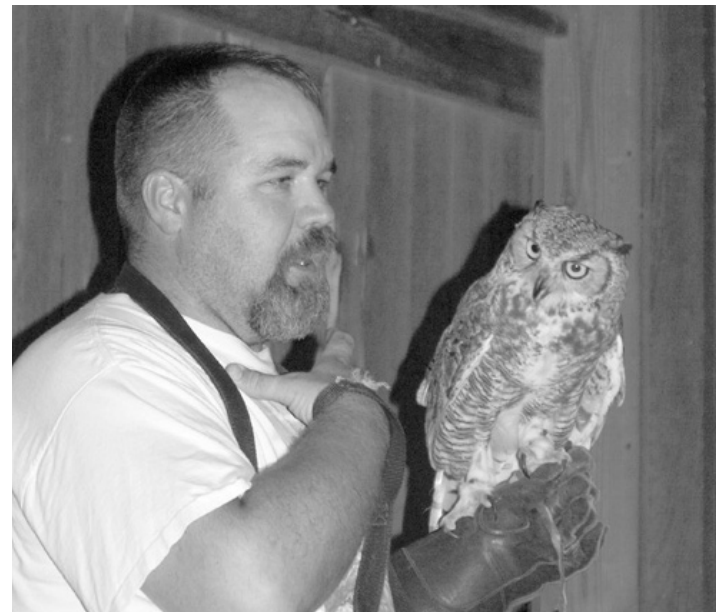
For The Birds...

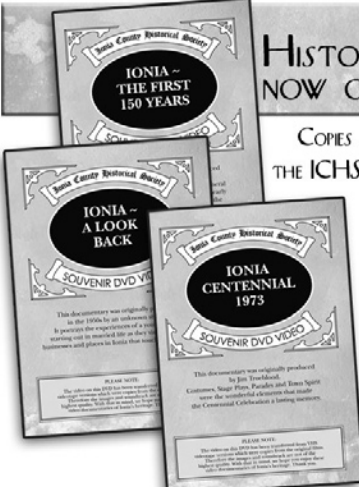
When the young are about to hatch, the father eagle will bring shiny objects into the nest — possibly to orient the chicks with shiny targets (fish) as early as possible in their lives.

Eagles are still an endangered species, although they are prospering in some areas. DDT killed off much of their prey decades ago, and caused their egg shells to be quite fragile. Fortunately, the population is increasing healthily.

Being a protected bird, special permits are required to keep them. In fact, even the feathers are very carefully accounted for (it's illegal to own one without the proper paperwork!) through a national clearinghouse in Colorado.

Greg obviously cares very much for his feathered friends, and they allow him to be very close to them as well. Petting an eagle or an owl is normally a risky business! We thank Greg for his work with these magnificent birds, and for sharing with us at our meeting.






HISTORIC IONIA NOW ON DVD!

COPIES AVAILABLE FROM THE ICHS SOUVENIR SHOP, OR BY CALLING 527-3784.

A TOUCH OF HISTORY FOR YOUR OWN VIDEO LIBRARY, ONLY \$15 EA. GET YOURS TODAY!



What's Up There?

The "Upstairs Downtown" tour in Ionia's historic business district will include nine second and third floor sites. You can see what wonders are generally hidden from the sidewalks, and learn some fascinating facts about "What's up there."

Tickets are priced at \$2.00 for each location, or a package deal for the entire tour \$10.00. There will also be a door prize, and more! Mark your calendar now: Saturday October 11, 10:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m. This event benefits the ICHS in cooperation with the Ionia Area Chamber of Commerce observation of the "Rediscover Downtown" program.

Find Out on

Here's the latest
issue of the...

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

www.ioniahistory.org

**BE SURE YOUR DUES
ARE PAID BY OCTOBER
FIRST SO YOU CAN
CAST YOUR VOTE FOR
TWO NEW DIRECTORS!**



JOIN TODAY!

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
- Business Buddy = \$40
- Corporate = \$250
- Life = \$1000
- Free to Students under 18
- Gift = \$ _____

Please Share a
Little Information:

- Renewing Member
- New Member

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

Thanks!

Upcoming Programs and Events

*INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE ICHS
BOARD OF DIRECTORS?* Contact
David McCord, Nominations Chairman - 527-3784

Wednesday, September 2, 7:00 p.m.
Membership Meeting at the Blanchard House
A Special Program on Aprons!
**EVERYONE IS INVITED TO WEAR
YOUR FAVORITE APRON!**

Tuesday, September 16, 7:00 p.m.
ICHS Board Meeting at the Blanchard House

Saturday, September 20, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
FALL FESTIVAL AT BERTHA BROCK PARK
We'll be Duck Racing for fun and prizes!!!

Wednesday, October 1, 7:00 p.m.
ICHS Annual Meeting at the Blanchard House
Voting in two new Board Members!

*For additional events and activities, please read the
minutes, and refer to the website. Thanks.*