



the CHRONICLE

www.ioniahistory.org

Ionia County Historical Society
P.O. Box 176
Ionia, MI 48846

The Chronicle is the official publication of the Ionia County Historical Society. It is written, edited, and published by David McCord, Secretary. Any comments, corrections (of course), or contributions should be directed to the editor c/o the ICHS at P.O. Box 176, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via www.ioniahistory.org.



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 176, Ionia, MI 48846.

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Please Check Your
Membership Type:

- Regular = \$20
- Sustaining = \$35
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- 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!

THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST ISSUE!

If you have not paid your annual dues within the past few months, your membership will EXPIRE. If you do pay your dues before the election at the October meeting, you can vote. We will be trimming our mailing list for 2017.

You want to be on it!

Ionia County Historical Society 2016 Board of Directors & Officers

Kathleen Cook, President — 616-527-2626
Linda Ciangi, Vice President — 616-527-4945
Patty Simpson-Gokee, Director — 616-527-0676

Ally Cook, Director — 616-821-1406
Gordon Wright, Director — 616-902-3876

David McCord, Secretary — 616-527-3784
Annette McCord, Treasurer — 616-527-3784
Barb Ehlert, House Rentals — 616-522-0844

For information on your long-lost relatives in Ionia,
please contact the Ionia County Genealogy Society.
<http://ionia.migenweb.net/ICGS/icgshome.htm>

September 2016



the CHRONICLE

The Almost Monthly Publication of
the Ionia County Historical Society



A Theatrical Reading



Members and guests at the September 7th meeting were entertained by members of the Actors Del Arté Ensemble of West Michigan.

In cooperation with the Ionia Community Library, they performed a rendition of "The Alchemist" written by Brazilian author Paulo Coehlo. The cast, costumed by accessories to evoke their characters, read from an adaptation created by one of their members.

Thanks again to the performers and to Dale Parus from the Library for making these arrangements.

Minutes of the Sept 7th Meeting

The meeting was called to order at approx. 7:00 p.m. by President Kathleen Cook. She began with a general "thank you" to all the volunteers who hosted our season of Summer Sunday tours at the Blanchard House, and to all the folks who worked behind the scenes to keep the house ready for our visitors.

Next on the agenda was preparations for the 2016 Fall Festival at Bertha Brock Park scheduled for September 17th. The annual Hank Knoop Memorial Duck Race will be staged again by ICHS volunteers. Boy Scout Troop 85 will walk the creek ahead of time to clear out major obstacles along the course of Bellamy Creek, and there are volunteer "duck herders" ready to keep things moving. Mark Workman will be supervising at the finish line, and the usual ICHS shop will be set up at the starting line.

The "Spirits of Ionia" Cemetery Tour is also coming along nicely.

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THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST ISSUE!

...and a Duck Race!

The annual Hank Knoop Memorial Duck Race took place on Saturday, September 17th at the Bertha Brock Park Fall Festival. The morning rains and competition from other events scheduled the same day, put a bit of a damper on the Fall Fest. But, as usual, everyone there had a great time.

Pictured below is one of our dedicated volunteers (whom we all thank for helping this year). This is Phil Kahl, who also happened to back the winning duck this year. Congratulations, Phil!



Photos on this page, courtesy of Mark Workman.

ly. (See the enclosed poster for event details). As always, more volunteers are always welcome, even if you can only help for a little while. Linda C. said that the Ionia Sentinel-Standard offered to publish a "Street Names Puzzle" before the vent to publicize our theme for this year's tour.

The Annual Meeting is coming up on October 5th, and candidates for the three openings on the Board of Directors are Dave White and Goose Elliot. Ally Cook will run for another term. Many, many thanks to Patty Simpson-Gokee who has served on the Board for six years now, and to Gordon Wright for his service as well. The election will be held at the October meeting, and please BE SURE YOUR DUES ARE PAID. ONLY PAID MEMBERS ARE ABLE TO VOTE FOR OUR BOARD CANDIDATES. David M. will provide ballots and administer the election process as usual.

In addition to the elections and other business, the presenters from our Cemetery Tour will recreate their performances from the "Spirits of Ionia" for the members who might have missed the event, and talk about their experience.

Tuesday, October 11, several of our members will be joining the Tri-River group on a museum tour in the eastern part of Michigan. Expect a report at the November meeting.

On October 13th at 7:00 p.m. there will be a group of 50 visiting the Blanchard House for a quick tour.

Tuesday the 18th at the Blanchard House will be a presentation by Ron Rademacher entitled "The Oddities and Rarities of Michigan—Mysteries and Legends of Small Michigan Towns." This special event is brought to us by the Ionia Community Library.

The new Superintendent of Ionia Public Schools contacted Kathleen to mention that the Spaulding School on Stage Road will soon be put up for sale. The school has been abandoned for some time now, and the idea that there may be some items of historical interest there needs to be discussed. More to come.

The Treasurer's Report was delivered by Annette McCord, noting that another 36 Ionia Free Fair books had been sold since the last report, as well as a number of memberships paid and more souvenir sales. The treasury is looking fairly good right now, looking forward to more memberships, business buddies, and fund-raisers that are coming.

On a related note, our membership list is sorely out of date, and after this season's influx of memberships and renewals, the list will be updated and expired memberships cleared out.

Bryan Kimble reported that he had sorted through hundreds of 35mm slides and found quite a number of slides of historical interest - as well as quite a few that were not. A collection of images of wildlife will be offered to the schools or other interested parties, but many others will be disposed of in keeping with the donors' instructions.

Kathleen reported that Greg Cook had cleaned the gutters on the Blanchard House, and had some concerns about the roof to be reviewed by the Build and Grounds Committee.

Linda Ciangi mentioned that she would put up purple ribbons on the front fence to signify the ICHS support of the Ionia County "Purple Week" for cancer awareness. She also noted that we'd

received our award certificate for winning the "Best Non-commercial Float" in the 2016 Free Fair Parade. Phil Kahl suggested that we display the award in the Blanchard House until next year's parade, which was heartily supported by the members.

The September 21 Board Meeting

The meeting was called to order at approx. 7:10 p.m. by President Kathleen Cook. Present were Secretary David McCord and Directors Gordon Wright, Linda Ciangi and Ally Cook.

In the absence of the Treasurer, Annette McCord, the Secretary noted that there was little change in the financial situation since last month's report. Linda C. submitted some income from souvenir sales, and a few checks for memberships came in, to be handed over to the Treasurer. This included \$48 from the recent Duck Race.

Several budget issues came up. The Tri-River Museum Group will be publishing the 2017 directory soon, where we have had an advertisement in past years. Joan McCord has funded this ad in the past, but can no longer do so. Linda C. made the motion that we purchase an ad from ICHS funds based on the proven value of the ad to us and to the Tri-River group. The motion was supported by Gordon W. and passed; Kathleen will follow up with the publisher. David M. noted that he would like to boost sales of the Ionia Free Fair book for the holiday gift-giving season by purchasing some paid ads on Facebook. They offer a package for \$50. The board agreed, and will put it to a vote at the November business meeting. In addition, the Treasurer, Annette M., said that she hoped to have a preliminary budget for 2017 ready for the Board meeting on October 17th.

Kathleen reported that the Cemetery Tour is pretty much ready except for the need of a truck to pull the tram. There are several possibilities she will follow up on over the next week. Volunteers are still needed to help with parking. David M. will check with Scouts.

Ally Cook brought up the idea of the ICHS sponsoring a bus trip as a fund-raiser. The success of the Tri-River trip coming in October (sold out very quickly) encouraged the Board to consider it. The idea of a pre-holiday shopping trip to Chicago was considered, as well as a Greenfield Village excursion to see their holiday decorations. Additional research will be done, and a possible springtime trip considered as well. The Board noted that a decision must be made soon for a pre-holiday trip.

Michigan One Credit Union encourages their employees to volunteer for non-profit groups, and the ICHS was approached to see if we could use some help on a monthly basis. Kathleen and Linda will respond with some suggestions.

Kathleen, Linda, Gordon, Mike Gallagher and Barb Ehlert will host the tour group on October 13th.

Ally C. suggested that the Board designate specific ICHS members as liaisons to the City Council and County Commissioner meetings to take notes and report back to the board on subject of historical interest. She volunteered to represent the ICHS at the City meetings, and suggested that Goose Elliott might be able to do the same at the County meetings. Linda C. also attends the DDA and Chamber meetings, so we're well represented there. The Board decided to try the idea for a while, and Ally will get in touch with Goose to see if he's interested.

Linda C. reported that a "smoker chimney" (a contrivance for disposing of cigarette butts) has been donated to us by the Ionia Theatre

for use in the Cornell Alley. Since the ICHS has volunteered to keep that alley cleaned up, and butts are a big problem, all that needed is someone to chain the thing down. Linda is pursuing that. In addition, she's checking on getting the sign changed in the alley that credits the Lions Club as caretakers there, and also working on the murals for the round windows facing the ally.

Regarding murals, Linda also is pursuing the idea of having murals painted on some of the city's buildings. The City, DDA, and several building owners have expressed support for the project.

Linda also discovered a way to create commemorative Shelby auto T-shirts by imprinting Ionia information on the back of licensed T-shirts that are purchased at retail. The shirts can be purchased in several styles and, with the imprints, will cost \$12 to \$14. She will fund the project herself, and if they can be sold at a profit, she will donate that to the ICHS.

Secretary David M. presented the Board with copies of the new Docent's Guidelines - a summary of information to help tour guides at the Blanchard House with a room-by-room description of the house, its history, and its contents. These are now ready for anyone interested in learning how to give tours at the house. He also submitted copies of the new booklet about John C. Blanchard, and will research the cost of producing a quantity of them to have available at the house for sale or as handouts.

Merrilee Morrison-Cotter donated frames for a three-piece sectional built by Ypsi-Reed. It's an unfinished. After some discussion, the Board concluded that there is simply no room to store it or display it. David M. will contact her to either take it back or give permission to the ICHS to sell the artifact to help with ICHS expenses.

Notice was received from the Ionia County Genealogical Society that their Vietnam Veterans Directory is now available. Gordon moved to purchase a copy for the ICHS archives, which was supported by Linda C. and passed.

Rose Scheller will be hosting an event on December 10 at the Blanchard House to benefit a youth choir trip to Europe. This would be a rental. Linda C. said she will plan to address the group about some of Ionia's historic ties to Europe.

Dave White continues to keep up with the lawn work at the ICHS (with the Board's thanks), and Greg Cook with the condition of the building. Gordon pointed out signs of leakage around the west chimney, especially in the dressing room. There was some question about the chimney and its use as vent for the heating system. Linda will check with Wilson's to see if it can be closed off.

David M. delivered a report from the recent Tri-River meeting conveyed by Joan McCord. (There are many events coming up this fall from Tri-River members museums!) The monthly Tri-River meeting will be held at the Blanchard House on November 15th.

David also noted that the next Chronicle will emphasize that "dues are due" and that a set of postcard reminders will be sent out. This postcard will be the last mailing to the full list, and by the end of the year the membership list should be pretty accurate once more. The Board supported this effort, and the postal expense as well.

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 9:30 p.m.

— D. McCord, Secretary

P.S. BE SURE TO PAY YOUR DUES!

Upcoming Programs and Events

Sunday, October 2

"Spirits of Ionia's Past"

Our annual Cemetery Tour.

(Watch for more details coming soon!)

Wednesday, October 5, 7:00 p.m.

Annual meeting at the
Blanchard House, 251 E. Main St.
including the election of new Directors.

ARE YOUR DUES PAID?

Tuesday, October 11 (all day!)

Tri-River Museum Group's Annual Bus Trip
Exploring Michigan Museums

Tuesday, October 18

Presentation at the Blanchard House
by Ron Rademacher with information on
unique Michigan destinations.

Wednesday, October 19, 7:00 p.m.

Business Meeting at the Blanchard House
Open to all interested parties.

Wednesday, November 2, 7:00 p.m.

Presentation at the Blanchard House
by author Allen Naldrett on
"Lost Car Companies of Detroit"

Wednesday, November 16, 7:00 p.m.

Business Meeting at the Blanchard House
Open to all interested parties.

**Don't forget to visit the
Blanchard House and Museum,**

Sundays, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. through August

Check www.ioniahistory.org and
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