



# the **CHRONICLE**

The Almost Monthly Publication of  
the Ionia County Historical Society



## On the web: [ioniahistory.org](http://ioniahistory.org)

The ICHS website has been around for several years now, and has become a link with our community here in the Ionia area and far, far beyond. We've even gotten visitors from as far away as Korea and Argentina! We receive requests from people about local properties, businesses, family records, and other historical tidbits. If you'd like to help respond to these requests, please let me know (David M) and I will get your e-mail address into the system.

AND SPEAKING OF E-MAIL ADDRESSES — be sure you get yours to me so that you can get all the latest ICHS news electronically. Beginning with the January 2010 issue, many of you will receive an e-mail notice of the new Chronicle when it becomes available on-line. You can read it on the web, or download it for your own use, from the website. In addition, past issues for the last three years are already posted on the website for your reference and convenience.

If you don't have e-mail access, not to worry. We will still be sending out paper copies to those folks who would prefer that. But e-mailing to even half of our membership will save the ICHS over \$300 a year in copy and postage costs.

We also hope to enhance our "Image Gallery" and other resources over the next year. If you have any suggestions, please be sure to let me know and we'll get it on the wish list.

Here you will find information about our organization, the communities which we serve, and the events and activities which we are involved in. We invite you to [contact us](#) with your historical inquiries, check out our [calendar of events](#), and be sure to get involved when you can!

**JOIN US**  
at our regular membership meetings on the first Wednesday of each month. Meetings are usually held at the Blanchard House, but you should check the calendar to be sure. We have special programs each month, and would love to see you there!

[Click here for more information on the "Tri-River Group"](#) - an association of local museums and historical organizations in Mid-Michigan. They'll be hosting the annual "Spring into The Past" event May 2 and 3.

And don't forget our **Thursday Morning Travelogues** at the historic Ionia Theatre! [Click here for schedule.](#)

[Return to the ICHS Home Page.](#)

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### MINUTES of the October 7, '09 Mtg.

The Ionia County Historical Society met at the Blanchard House on Wednesday, October 7, 2009. The meeting was called to order by President Linda Ciangi at 7:05 p.m. with a welcome to several guests as well as a good turn-out of regular members. She thanked those present for their hard work and continuing support of the Society - the Board, the Committees, the Business Buddies, and the members at large.

President Ciangi noted that during the recent Thursday evening work session, some artifacts were discovered behind drawers in the china closet, including many cigar boxes and several bottles of wine dating approximately from the 1960s. What more treasures will be found in the Blanchard House, we wonder!

It was moved by Mike Gallagher, supported by Doni Knoop, and passed by the membership to accept the

Secretary's report as published in the September Chronicle.

#### Old Business:

Hank Knoop reported that the Duck Race at the annual Fall Festival was a great success, having sold 330 ducks this year. Thanks go out to Hank & Doni, Dave Cook (event chair), Gerry Perry, Joe & Joan McCord (for apples), Patty Simpson, Barb Ehlert, Mike & Carol Gallagher, Stephanie & Hayden VanderMolen, Jim & Kathleen Laroch, and the Scouts of Troop 85 for all their help in the creek.

The "Buckaroo Ball" was held at the Ionia Theatre on Sept. 26. Our donation of a free rental of the Blanchard House was won by Ron Brownell, resulting in \$325 for the fund raising. The ICHS got a Shopper's Guide ad in the auction for a very good price.

The "Upstairs-Downtown" tour took place on Saturday, Oct. 3. After a rainy start, the day cleared up and attendance was up over last year. 98 tickets were sold, netting (with an additional donation) \$985 for the Society with NO expenses incurred. Ruth Benjamin

won the door prize for the day - a wreath of 50 dollar bills donated by Joan McCord.

Kathleen P. reports that the Accessions Committee is still trying to schedule a meeting, members being otherwise very busy. David McCord donated several clip-boards and also has a scanner to donate (if it proves to work OK with our computer system).

Kathleen also reported on the topic of Lawn Care. The Garden Club has submitted several suggestions for consideration regarding flower beds and lawn treatments. These will be on the agenda for next spring.

The "repurposing" of bookcases in the "east parlor" is underway, moving Ionia-specific resources into that room to make them more easily available to visitors doing research. This is just one of several projects being worked on during Thursday evening sessions. All interested members are invited to join in!

Hank Knoop delivered the Treasurer's Report verbally, noting that

*Continues on page 2*

he hadn't a chance to print out copies for distribution. Mike G. moved that it be accepted as read, supported by Cal Smith and passed.

The Society is seeking fund raising ideas for the upcoming year. Please relay your ideas to the Board of Directors for consideration.

The ICMH Health Advocates (formerly the Hospital Auxiliary) will meet at the Blanchard House on October 8. They are reorganizing the group and invite any interested members to attend.

The 2009 Chili Dog Challenge is coming up on October 29. Once again, the ICHS will set up a booth with Kitty's Café - she supplies the food and we supply the staff. This is a fun event with very good public participation. Two teams are needed for the event to set up and take down the canopy and equipment. If you're available, please contact Doni Knoop.

Area merchants will be installing Holiday decorations at the Blanchard House in late October/early November. The Eclectic Gallery, Keeper of the Crows, Sid's Flower Shop, and Ionia Floral will each be decorating a room.

The decorating will be done in time for the Chamber of Commerce "Business After Hours" on November 17. This gathering will be hosted by the ICHS at the Blanchard House beginning at 6:15 p.m. We will provide refreshments planned and prepared by Cal Smith.

The Tri-River Group will also meet here at 10:00a.m. on the 17th (the ICHS will provide tea and biscuits), and the Chamber Ambassadors later that afternoon. (Busy day at the Blanchard House!)

Joan McCord has volunteered to be in charge of the schedule of hosts/tour guides for the 2010 "Summer Sundays" program.

David McCord reported that the S.C.A. will be holding a medieval recreation event at Bertha Brock Park on the 10th, if anyone's interested in that kind of history.

David also reports that the website is up to date (again) with the latest Chronicle and calendar entries (thanks to Stephanie V.).

Doni Knoop reported that Jim Metzen's recent surgery went well and he is on the road to recovery.

President Ciangi extended thanks to Joan Nixon for her help with the refreshments schedule for the past year, and hoping that she will be able to continue in that role for 2010.

Stephanie V. informed the membership regarding the Boyce School Nature Trail "Harvest Fest" event coming up on October 23, asking anyone interested in helping to talk to her, and inviting everyone to attend. The proceeds will support the Nature Trail.

Future workshops will include sorting, matting, and framing historic photocopies which we will offer for sale. David McCord has a matte cutter and some matte material to donate, and is looking into a vinyl cutting mat as well.

Barb Ehler is in charge of staffing

for the Holiday Open House schedule. The House will be open for guests on November 29, December 6, 13, and 20. All interested parties please contact her. The House will be decorated by local merchants, and we want very much to show it off! Please spread the word, and give a couple hours if you can spare them.

Paul Frost, ICHS member and local teacher, noted that we should pursue opportunities to share local history with area students. He invites other interested members to discuss the possibilities.

A donation has been received of a number of postcards approximately 100 years old of Ionia area communities. The ICHS will keep the Ionia-specific subjects, and the others will be distributed to the appropriate communities by way of the Tri-River Museums group at their upcoming meeting by Joan McCord.

Joan McCord is also planning another Appraisal Roadshow for March of 2010. More information will be available as the date approaches.

President Ciangi is working with the Ionia Theatre for another fund raiser concert for the summer of 2010. She will be doing some research and report to the members as details become available. She has high hopes for a Johnny Cash tribute concert, which has a very successful track record.

The Ionia County United Way is sponsoring a donation program with local restaurants between October 4 and 10. A percentage of purchases will be donated to local charity programs during that time.

Linda Ciangi has donated 12 new table covers for our folding tables. Thank you, Linda!

The November meeting will feature a presentation by Duane Todd, a descendant of John C. Blanchard. He will be sharing some family stories and showing some artifacts as well.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m., immediately followed by the convening of the 2009 Annual Meeting (see minutes in this issue).

## MINUTES of the Oct. 7 Board Mtg.

The newly elected Board Members and their fellow Directors, along with the Secretary and Treasurer, convened a brief meeting following the Annual Meeting for the purpose of election of their officers and other miscellany.

Nominations from the Board for the upcoming year were: President, Linda Ciangi; Vice President - Kathleen Perrin; Treasurer, Hank Knoop; Secretary, David McCord. It was moved by Kathleen and supported by Kris Haskins to elect the slate as nominated, and the motion passed unanimously. Kathleen also noted the title of Ambassador Emeritas for Gerry Perry, which was unanimously supported by the Board.

It was noted that the Blanchard House is to be rented on Thanksgiving Day by Brian Quinn and Matt

Tomanica, and David McCord will be in charge of the hosting duty for that day. Also, December 23 the house is rented to Pat Simpson.

Cal Smith then presented the board with his proposed menu for the refreshments at the Chamber "After Hours" for November 12. The Board approved, anticipating that the expense would not exceed \$100.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15p.m.

## MINUTES of the Oct. 21 Board Mtg.

The Board of Directors of the ICHS met at 7:00 p.m. on October 21 at the Blanchard House. Present were Stephanie VanderMolen, Linda Ciangi, Hank & Doni Knoop, Kathleen Perrin, Kris Haskins, Barb Ehler, and David McCord.

The first order of business was the Chili Dog Challenge event. There had been some discussion of the new Hospital Auxiliary being involved, but that group declined, being too soon after their reorganization efforts. The canopy needs to be set up at 2:00 p.m. on the 29th at Kitty's Café - volunteers needed! Sellers are also needed for the event between 5:00 and 8:00 p.m. Doni Knoop will be supplying roasters for warming and other accoutrements, as well as some decorations. Other decoration ideas were discussed as well. The Chamber has offered a display table for the ICHS, and Joan McCord offered to staff and stock that table during the event. It was moved by Barb and supported by Stephanie to support that effort; the motion passed. Rental fliers and brochures will be passed on to Joan M.

Discussion began regarding monthly program schedule for 2010, and several suggestions were put forth. Dave Hess has been approached about doing a program on the Free Fair in June, and Barb noted that there is a woman who does a presentation on BermaShave Signs that we might contact. The Secretary noted that the topic had been discussed last month, but he did not have those notes for this meeting. It was decided to table the topic until those notes could be retrieved.

President Ciangi reported on the progress of the benefit concert for next summer. She has attended a Johnny Cash tribute concert, and she and Gary Ferguson from the Theatre had talked to the promoters. They are interested in working with us for next August 14th, and terms are being negotiated. The cost is in the neighborhood of \$4500 plus some other arrangements (food and lodging). The Theatre wants to share the planning, expense, and proceeds equally with the ICHS. Some discussion was had regarding ticket pricing, higher costs for premium seating, and some promotional possibilities. More to come on this at a later date.

Other events discussed for fundraising in 2010 included the next Upstairs-Downtown Tour, Appraisal

Roadshow, and Duck Race. Also under consideration are: a Murder Mystery event, Mourning Tea/Cemetery Tour, Scavenger Hunt/Ice Cream Social with lawn games and entertainment. The Board is seeking other ideas and volunteers to help make them happen.

Other community events will include the Free Fair, Community Yard Sale, Business Expo, and other such events. Mention was also made of our "educational outreach" and that this should be discussed with Paul Frost to get some kind of plans in place.

The Board then reviewed various upcoming events on the ICHS calendar, among which Stephanie V. reported that the Boyce Nature Trail event had been cancelled.

President Ciangi asked the Board about digitizing historical records, specifically books such as "History of Ionia County" by E.J. Wright, 1891. David M. said he has some digital versions of these old books, and would look into it.

David also noted that the website is seeing some reasonable traffic, and offered some statistical reports showing an average of 15 visits per week from a small sample. Also, over 30 member e-mails have been collected and he will be testing our e-mail options to notify members by that method of future events, special needs, and the availability of future issues of the Chronicle by e-mail. (More to come.) Linda C. also asked that the 2010 "All-Class Reunion" be noted on the website in some way. Kathleen and Stephanie also suggested that we make links to other historical resources in the area more obvious, to help visitors find answers to their research questions if we can't help them directly. Also on this subject, recipients of e-mails from our website (Stephanie, Kathleen, Doni, and yours truly) were reminded to copy the others when they do respond, so that we can be sure a response is made.

Barb Ehler noted that she will be the contact for staffing the Blanchard House for the December Sundays, and seeks volunteers.

Hank K. and Linda C. will collaborate on the update of our annual Business Buddies campaign, and it was suggested that the new rental flier be included in the letter.

Hank noted that Larry Tiejema, our accountant, will attend the November meeting to deliver the annual financial summary to the membership.

He also reported that a \$100 donation was received from the Hospital Auxiliary.

The ICHS was invited to participate in the annual Christmas Parade, but the Board declined the opportunity this time.

The Garden Club has reported that a tree in the Blanchard House lawn has contracted a disease, and that it should be cut away to see if the tree might be saved, or if the entire tree should be taken out. The Board will contact Joan McCord to see if that tree had any donor-specific significance to be considered. Meanwhile, it was moved by Kathleen P. and supported by Linda

C. to remove the diseased limb in any case, and the motion passed.

Joan McCord passed along to the Board that the Ionia County Genealogical Society will be hosting a program on the CCC on November 14th.

Hank K. presented the Board with a document from the State of Michigan which requires some signatures and records of funding requests and solicitations for the past year. He will (with the Board's approval) pursue the completion of that paperwork with President Ciangi.

Hank K. also reports that the roofing project for the Carriage House is not so urgent that it can't wait until Spring - giving us time to further investigate funding sources.

Some discussion was had regarding the designation of donated funds for specific projects, and how that is recorded and tracked. The question arose about dedicated accounts and project-specific fund-raisers. No decisions were made on the subject.

Baker Painting is working on the Blanchard House windows, doing some caulking to prepare for the winter months.



## Upcoming Programs and Events

### Thursday Evening Workshops at the Blanchard House.

*This is a great way to get involved.  
Stop in - 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.*

Wednesday, November 4, 7:00 p.m.  
**VERY SPECIAL VISIT** and presentation  
by a descendant of the Blanchards!  
Family memorabilia and stories to share.  
at the Blanchard House

Thursday, November 12, 6:15 p.m.  
The ICHS hosts the Ionia Chamber  
**BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**

Wednesday, November 18, 7:00 p.m.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
at the Blanchard House.

Sunday, November 29, 1 - 4 p.m.  
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE  
at the Blanchard House!  
**BRING THE FAMILY TO SEE OUR  
VERY SPECIAL HOLIDAY DECORATIONS**  
(Call Barb Ehlert to Volunteer!)

Wednesday, December 2, 6:30p  
Regular Meeting and Holiday Pot-Luck  
at the Blanchard House

Sunday, December 6, 13, & 20  
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE  
at the Blanchard House.

Wednesday, December 16, 7:00 p.m.  
Board of Directors Meeting  
at the Blanchard House.

*For other upcoming events - visit the ICHS  
website at [ioniahistory.org](http://ioniahistory.org).*

To receive the Chronicle via the Internet,  
please be sure that the Secretary,  
David McCord, has your e-mail address!  
This will save us money  
each month, and you may get your  
Chronicle quicker, too!



# the [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org) **CHRONICLE**

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 1776, Ionia, MI, 48846 or via [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org).

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



## 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!

**Join Us at the Ionia Theatre at  
9:30 a.m. every Thursday for  
FREE ICHS Travelogues!**

*October 29 — Hawaii*

*November 5 — Elis Island*

*November 12 — The Presidents, Harry to George W.*

*November 19 — "A Special Presentation"*

*December 3 — The Great Smokies*

*December 10 — American Castles #3*

*December 17 — "Christmas Special"*

### **Ionia County Historical Society 2008-09 Board of Directors & Officers**

Linda Ciangi, President — 527-4945  
 Kathleen Perrin, Vice Pres. — 616-675-4618  
 Kris Haskins, Director — 527-????  
 Stephanie VanderMolen — 616-755-0731  
 Barb Ehlert, Director — 522-0844  
 David McCord, Secretary — 527-3784  
 Hank Knoop, Treasurer — 527-3130