

Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE



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

Some major events in 1908:

- Earthquake and resulting tsunami kill 70,000 to 100,000 in southern Italy and Sicily.
- Petroleum production begins in the Middle East.
- Mysterious Siberian explosion levels hundreds of square miles of forest. Explanations include a comet, meteorite, natural atomic explosion, or crashed UFO.
- President Roosevelt holds White House Conservation Conference, which leads to establishment of the National Conservation Commission.
- Federal spending: \$0.66 billion
- Unemployment: 8.0%
- Cost of a first-class stamp: \$0.02
- Henry Ford develops the first Model T automobile, which sells for \$850.
- Gabriel Lippmann (France), received Nobel Prize in Chemistry for method of reproducing colors by photography
- Chicago Cubs beat Detroit in the World Series (4-1)
- The fourth modern Olympic Games held in London - perhaps the wettest and most controversial of games.

Born in 1908:

Avery, Tex (26 February)	Johnson, Lyndon (27 August)
Berle, Milton (12 July)	Kabibble, Ish (19 January)
Blanc, Mel (30 May)	L'Amour, Louis (22 March)
Davis, Bette (5 April)	Marshall, Thurgood (2 July)
Fleming, Ian (28 May)	McCarthy, Joseph (14 November)
Hampton, Lionel (20 April)	Merman, Ethel (16 January)
Harrison, Rex (5 March)	Murrow, Edward R. (25 April)
	Stewart, Jimmy (20 May)

MINUTES of the December 2008 Meetings

The December 3rd meeting of the ICHS was our annual Holiday Pot-Luck, and was well attended with the usual fun and food. Members and guests enjoyed the season's decorations about the house, specifically the donated

and decorated Christmas Trees, Fr. Mason's Victorian Doll House, and Fred Haight's Christmas Village in the parlor. (No business was conducted during this meeting.)

The ICHS Board Meeting of December 16, 2008, was called to order by president Linda Ciangi at approx. 7:00pm in the dining room of the Blanchard House. Also pres-

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



ent were Directors Barb Ehlert, Kathleen Perrin, and Stephanie VanderMolen, as well as Secretary David McCord, Treasurer Hank Knoop, and former director Doni Knoop.

This "year-end wrap-up" agenda included the following under "Old Business":

The family of Ralph Bartelt had offered a \$200 donation to use for programs for youth. David M. and Stephanie V. met on Saturday, Dec 13, to discuss some interactive ideas, and rough examples were handed to the Directors. This included a "scavenger hunt" with photos which children could check

off or write in the identity of historical items that can be seen in the house. Also were lists of questions that would require more detailed answers about the house and museum for older youth or adults. Also, some "awards" were discussed for kids who complete the challenge, including souvenir pencils, stickers, ribbons, etc. These ideas will be tested and refined in the coming months and the results submitted to the Bartelt family for their consideration.

These discussions also included some ideas about youth-oriented souvenirs – coloring book, simple wood toys, etc. – and McCord

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.

and VanderMolen will continue to research these ideas.

President Ciangi reported on the City Christmas Tree project for the Blanchard House's front yard. The project was cancelled due to the issue getting too complicated in working with the City. This prompted discussion about planning more outdoor decorations for next year.

Gerry Perry was to report on research into electric space heaters for the house, but was not present. David M. reported that his discussion with several friends indicated that an inexpensive quartz room heater might be more appropriate for our need to heat one room at a time for winter meetings, etc. There is \$50 from a donation from WalMart to be used for this purchase, and Barb E. and Linda C. will do some shopping after the Holidays.

Kathleen P. has edited the Blanchard House rental agreement, and copies of her edits were shared with the Board. Some suggestions were forthcoming during this review, and Directors were encouraged to take the revisions home and make further comments to be considered at the next Board Meeting (January 7). Stephanie V. also noted that she is going to be putting together a promotional flier specifically for House Rentals, and will be collecting photos for that project.

January 15th is the date for taking down Christmas decorations at the house — volunteers gratefully welcomed, as usual. Linda C. will contact Fred Haight and Fr. Mason.

Also, an electrical anomaly was discovered during our Christmas Sunday Open Houses — the lights in the west parlor and master bedroom would go dim, or off completely, with no apparent cause. This was discovered to be a minor fault in the wiring behind the switches, and was easily fixed, with thanks to Rene Simon and Hank Knoop.

David McCord (wearing the “webmaster” hat) reported to the Directors the traffic for the ICHS website (ioniahistory.org). In January of 2008, a set of Domain Names were registered for the ICHS to test the effectiveness of each, and see how it improved our “findability” on-line. Recent statistics have shown that a sub-set

of 10 names are the most common “search terms” used by our web visitors, and those domains will be renewed this coming January (moved by Linda C., supported by Kathleen P., and passed). David M. will submit paperwork for reimbursement when the renewal takes place.

Coming in 2009:

Our Thursday evening work sessions will continue, sorting archives, cataloging collections, and cleaning. All interested parties are welcomed. Part of this process will be tagging photos for our 2010 Calendar project.

Coming in March is the Community Expo at the High School (date TBA) where we will be sharing a booth with the Friends of the Library, and will feature a guest Caricaturist to entertain the visitors. Some discussion was had about management of those wanting their caricature drawn, calculating that the 3-hour session would accommodate only 20 patrons. Chairs for a waiting line, taking numbers, setting up “waiting period” signs were all talked about. A final decision will be made as the date grows closer.

Also in March is another opportunity for an Appraisal Road Show — Joan McCord will be contacted. The notion was discussed of having a wine-and-cheese bar at the event also.

In April will be another Indoor Yard Sale at the Armory, and members are encouraged to collect items to sell to raise funds for the ICHS. The booth costs \$32.00, and has proven well worth it in years past.

In Early May, the Tri-River Group will host Museum Tours again. We will put together a dedicated display for the event, which theme is “Honoring Those Who Serve.”

May 16 is the working date for a Spring Church Walk; Joan McCord has been working on this event and will be reporting details as they become available.

June, July, and August will bring the usual Summer Sunday open houses, and special displays and suggestions are welcomed to make these activities special for our guests. Recently, hosts and hostesses have been donning period costume to conduct tours, and this has definitely enhanced the

experience for all involved. More outdoor activities, the enhancement of displays and activities in the Carriage House, and other special programs are being discussed as well.

Additional fund raising opportunities are being discussed for the summer months as well, but details are still to be determined. Any suggestions from the membership are also welcomed.

The Fall Festival in September will be the site of another Duck Race >quack< and Hank K. has graciously accepted the chairmanship again. It has also been suggested that the ICHS host the Chamber After Hours meeting during September.

In October, by popular demand, will be another “Upstairs Downtown” event, chaired again by Joan McCord, and featuring a different set of buildings for the tour. October also brings the annual Chili Cookoff, as well as our Annual Meeting and election of officers.

The ICHS will offer to host the November Tri-River meeting, and Barb E. will plan to organize a Tea for the event.

Plans for next December (in addition to the previously mentioned outdoor decorations) include the possibility of “guest decorators” — inviting certain

local retailers to decorate a room of the Blanchard House as a promotion for their wares as well as the ICHS. President Ciangi passed around a sample letter inviting a local merchant to participate, emphasizing the exclusivity of the opportunity, and outlining the rules (specifically, décor in keeping with our Victorian Christmas theme). There was also discussion of more December tour hours, and possible scheduled activities such as live music or demonstrations.

In other business:

Hank K. passed out the most recent membership list, and noted that \$1200 has been received so far for the “Heat the House” fund-raiser (most of it from Sarah Hamilton — for which we are extremely appreciative!) Also, Hank expressed thanks to Larry Tiejema for his donations of time and expertise as Accountant, as well as being a “business buddy” member and making other donations, too. Finally, Hank asked that the Treasurer’s Report be moved to the end of the agenda for regular membership meetings. The report being a summary of results for other items on the agenda, he suggests that it will be more logical in the process.

The meeting was adjourned shortly after 9:00 p.m.



HELP HEAT THE HOUSE!

To make a contribution to the fund to heat the Blanchard House for the coming winter, you may send a check or money order to the Historical Society. Independent Bank will also accept contributions at their offices. THANK YOU

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

Jan 8 = Jerusalem

Jan 15 = New Zealand

Jan 22 = Lost Worlds

*Jan 29 = Within These Walls (a visit to the
White House) + American Highways.*

*Feb 5 = The Expedition of Lewis & Clark +
The Grand Canyon*

Feb 12 = A Valentine Surprise!

Feb 19 = Touring Australia

Feb 26 = The Hackley House

March 5 = Voices of Grand Rapids

March 12 = A Tour of Ireland

March 19 = Iceland

*March 26 = South Dakota - The Corn Palace
and Mt. Rushmore*



Upcoming Programs and Events

REMEMBER!

**Thursday Evening Workshops
at the Blanchard House.**
If local history is of interest, this is a great
way to get involved. Stop in!

Wednesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting at the **Parish House**
behind St. John's Episcopal Church
PROGRAM: The Church's History
with SubDeacon Justin Gregory

Tuesday, January 13, 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting — Location TBA

Wednesday, February 4, 7:00 p.m.
At the Ionia Court House - Courtroom
PROGRAM: Steve Waterbury on the
Construction of the Court House

Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting - Location TBA

Wednesday, March 4, 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting - Place TBA
PROGRAM: David McCord presents
"Bucky Fuller - Crackpot Genius"

Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting - Location TBA

Saturday, March 14
Community Expo at Ionia High School

and
Annual Spring Appraisal Road Show
(Date yet to be determined)

For other upcoming events - visit the ICHS
website at ioniahistory.org.

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

Linda Ciangi, President — 527-4945
Kathleen Perrin, Vice Pres. — 522-0018
Gerry Perry, Director — 527-4572
Stephanie VanderMolen — 616-755-0731
Barb Ehlert, Director — 522-0844
David McCord, Secretary — 527-3784
Hank Knoop, Treasurer — 527-3130

Here's the latest issue of the...

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P.O. Box 1776
Ionia, MI 48846

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 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!

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!

This documentary was originally produced in the 1960s by an unknown filmmaker. It portrays the experiences of a young woman who married in Ionia, and the businesses and places in Ionia that were there at that time.

PLEASE NOTE: The video on this DVD has been transferred from VHS. There are some minor imperfections which were copied from the original. However, we think you will find it a most enjoyable and useful video. With that in mind, we hope you will find this documentary a most enjoyable and useful video. Thank you.

This documentary was originally produced by Jim Trachsel. Costumes, Props, Plans, Paraphernalia and Town Spirit were the wonderful elements that made the Centennial Celebration a lasting memory.

PLEASE NOTE: The video on this DVD has been transferred from VHS. There are some minor imperfections which were copied from the original. However, we think you will find it a most enjoyable and useful video. With that in mind, we hope you will find this documentary a most enjoyable and useful video. Thank you.

Please note that "Ionia - A Look Back" and "Ionia Centennial 1973" do not a vocal narration.

Other souvenirs are available from the Ionia County Historical Society as well! Please inquire on your next visit.