

Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE

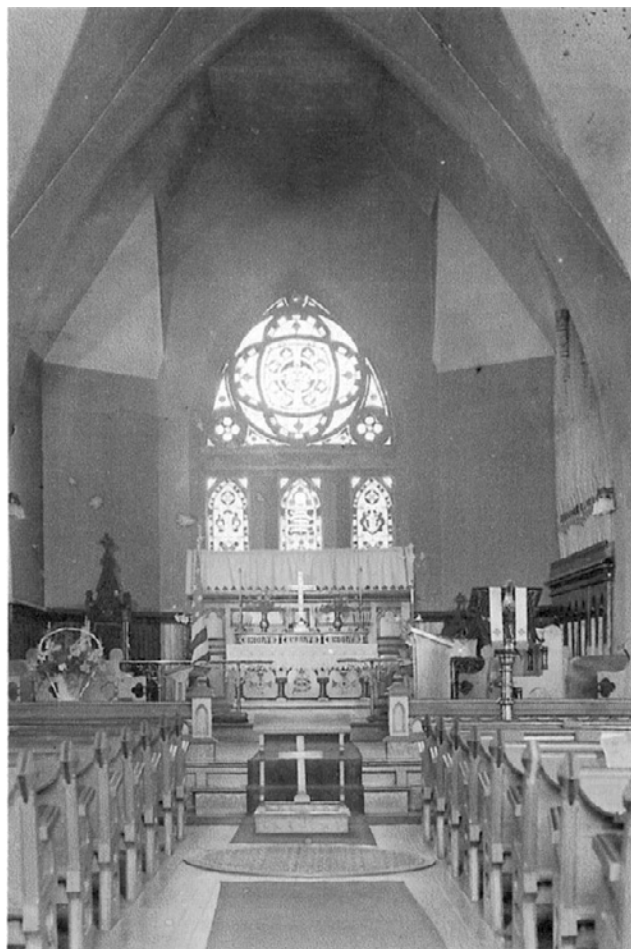
The *Almost* Monthly Publication of the Ionia County Historical Society — January 2009



St. John the Apostle Episcopal Church

A presentation was made by Justin Gregory, sub deacon of the Church, assisted by Julia Sharp.

The Parrish House (where our meeting was held and our tour began) was originally built in 1841, the building then faced Kidd Street (known then as Norville Street.) Many of the city founders were parishioners – recognizable names such as General Kidd, the Osmond Tower family, the Dexters, and more. To pay for its construction, the sixteen pews of the original church were auctioned off, with the highest amount paid being \$16.00. The total amount received was \$136.50. Traditional plaques were placed on the pews identifying these owners per the auction. This building was moved to its current location in 1881 to allow for the construction of the current



church building. (The original and current church buildings face west – an Episcopal tradition.) The original building remained essentially unchanged until 1963 when the formal kitchen was added, replacing a lean-to addition of many years before. (It remains the oldest building in the City.)

In 1843, the church's doors were closed due to pressing financial issues. Mrs. Dexter then used the building as a school. The church was restarted about 1860 by Reverend Mitchell. The reopening of the church was accomplished through the filing of a law suit which forced Mrs. Dexter to relinquish her hold on the property. Mr. Gregory shared pictures with the members of the original church / parrish house (some of which are reproduced here).

The new church was built in 1881 at a cost of \$7,000, constructed of VanderHayden brick. Its pews were "borrowed" from the First Baptist Church, and finally replaced with the existing pews in 1971. The "Bishop's Chair" behind the altar is believed to have come from the original church. The original communion rail is now in the rear of the church with a brass communion rail installed in the outer area of the sanctuary.

The church remains essentially unchanged except for rewiring of

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MINUTES of the January 2009 Meetings

The January 7, 2009, meeting was called to order by Vice President Kathleen Perrin at approx 7:00 p.m. amid snowy roads and threatening weather! The meeting was held at the Parrish House of the St. John's Episcopal Church in Ionia.

The Secretary's report was accepted as published (as moved by R. Nixon, supt. by M. Gallagher).

Kathleen noted that Stephanie

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VanderMolen has taken on the task of maintaining the ICHS Calendar of Events. Anyone with events or activities, please contact her with your information. (This includes the website calendar.)

Thursday night work sessions at the Blanchard House continue to be very effective. On January 15, the mission will be to un-decorate the house, taking down and packing away the holiday decorations.

The rental contract for the Blanchard House continues to be refined by the Board – membership input is welcomed. We hope to present the new document at the February meeting. Stephanie V. is also working on a brochure to promote the House for rent.

Under old business, a review of the Christmas “open house” Sundays were “especially joyful” with the hosts and hostesses dressed in period costume. We hope to continue the “dressing up” for our summer Sundays as well. A special thank you to Fred Haight and Father Mason for their contributions to our Christmas finery. And a “big hug” to Wilma Ackerson for playing the organ at the open houses and to Phyllis Lobdell for her donation toward the cookies.

Thanks to Joe & Joan McCord for Christmas gifts given to the society, including a copy of the WWII Ionia Veterans book published by the Genealogy Society. Also to Hank and Doni Knoop for the folding table – it will be used for many projects and activities.

Joan Nixon asked if someone would volunteer to back-up Jessica Roach for refreshments at our April meeting.

David McCord reports that the development of a Youth Program continues. The prototype “scavenger hunt” for kids was tested on some Cub Scouts in late December and was a hit. Revisions are under way, and research continues on possible prizes/give-aways for children to remember their experience at the Blanchard House.

Hank Knoop presented the Treasurer’s Report, reviewing the highlights of the past two month’s financial activity. Despite generous donations, funds are still needed for the “Heat the House” account to get us through the winter. Donations can be made to the Treasurer or at Firstbank of West Michigan. Hank also acknowl-

edged the contributions of Larry Tiejema, our accountant. Other details are available on request, as usual. Also noted that Joan McCord has submitted the latest membership list to the Treasurer, which continues to be updated as new members are acquired.

Under the heading of “New Business” – V.P. Perrin noted that the next Board Meeting would be on the 13th at Knoop’s house, due to other scheduling conflicts. She reported to the members the Board’s plan to invite area businesses to decorate rooms of the Blanchard House for the next holiday season. More information will be forthcoming as the plan is refined.

The overall agenda for the year is being put together, and now is the time to share any input from the membership regarding fund raising, community events, and especially historical programs and activities. Among these are the March 7 Chamber Expo, an Appraisal Road Show in March (the “Eclectic Gallery” has offered to host), the “Indoor Yard Sale” at the Armory in April, and the Church Tours and Tri-River Tours in May.

Dave Cook then moved to adjourn the meeting, supported by Carol Gallagher, and Joan McCord introduced our guides for the evening’ program, Justin Gregory & Julia Sharp.

January 2009 Board Meeting:

The January Board Meeting was called to order at 7:10pm on January 13th at the home of Hank & Doni Knoop, President Linda Ciangi presiding. Others present were Stephanie VanderMolen, Barb Ehlert, Kathleen Perrin, and David McCord.

Winter maintenance at the Blanchard House was the first order of business. Workers from the Sheriff’s Dept. have done a great job, but with sub-freezing temps of late, the sidewalks and steps are still mighty dangerous. It was suggested that a warning sign be posted, or perhaps even a chain across the gate. Suggested sign wording was “Caution – May Be Icy” and possibly a footnote to call Linda Ciangi’s number for information. No decision was reached but the idea will be considered further.

Thursday the 15th will be the “un-decorating” session, then the 22nd will be the beginning of copying the Hilborn photo collection for future exhibition. It was also suggested that we invite Sue and Brad Garrison (paint and finish experts) to a Thursday evening session to evaluate repairs and interior décor needs.

The Tri-River Group will be meeting in Lowell on January 20th.

The Ionia Expo at the High School is scheduled for March 7. (Past info and a Sentinel article say the 14th, but the fliers mailed out by the Chamber say March 7.) Linda will clarify this ASAP as this will affect the engagement of the Caricaturist for the event. Based on his suggestion, we will employ a “Take a Number” process, and hope to use the PA system to call the numbers at the event. Hank K. suggested that we consider revising our display of information to focus on major upcoming events or topics to attract attention from passers-by more effectively. More to come on this subject, as well as the decision about a door prize. And, contrary to earlier report, the booth may still be shared with the BPW and Girls Night Out groups. The Friends of the Library are only sharing the expense of the Caricaturist for the day. Stand by

for information – volunteers are welcomed.

It was noted that the artist asked for a copy of an ICHS logo that could be printed on each drawing done at the event. Well – we don’t have a “logo” per se. So, David McCord was asked to give it some thought and bring some ideas to the next meeting.

The idea of calling off meetings for the winter months was brought up. Some organizations do this, but it was decided that it would interrupt the routine too much and was rejected.

Stephanie created new pages for the Guest Book at the Blanchard House which included spaces for e-mails. A deliberate effort will be made to collect e-mail addresses in the future to keep in touch with our members, supporters, and guests. She also shared a preliminary brochure layout for House Rental, which led to...

Review and discussion of the new Rental Contract; options were considered and edits suggested throughout, and many details decided upon. A new revised document will be produced by Kathleen P. and presented at the next meeting for general review.

President Ciangi will follow up with the Lawn Care people to arrange a contract for the coming year. She will also sign up the



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. First Bank will also accept contributions at their offices. — THANK YOU

ICHS for the April "Indoor Yard Sale" to be held at the Armory in April.

The next meeting will be February 4th at the Ionia County Court House; the March 4th meeting will be held at the Commission on Aging.

**Laying Corner Stone,
ST. JOHN'S CHURCH.**

We lay this stone to-day,
And on it build a house,
Where man can go and hold
Communion with his God.
Can go and ask for needed grace,
Of Christ his Lord, and righteousness.
We plant this stone in faith,
We'll raise the walls in hope,
We'll crown the whole with love;
A temple most complete.
A house in which sinners can meet,
With Christ beside the mercy seat.
The temples man doth raise,
Are only for a time;
The church that God hath built,
Is for eternity.
Its corner stone in Zion laid,
The risen Christ its living head.
Ionia, Sept. 4, 1882. P. H. TAYLOR.

St. John's

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the lights and moving the altar forward to allow the Priest to face the people. In addition, in 1963 the basement was constructed under the church, including a school, the Guardian Angels Nursery, offices, and a hallway (also called an "undercroft").

During the presentation, there were questions asked by ICHS members. Mr. Gregory entertained us with anecdotal stories and pictures. Joan McCord suggested that the ICHS speak with other area churches with hopes of arranging as interesting a presentation with them.

Thanks to Justin and Julia for their interesting and entertaining program, and to the members of the church for allowing us to tour their facilities. Thanks particularly to Mike Gallagher for taking notes in my absence.

— D. McCord, Secretary.

Congratulations!

To ICHS member Jim Carlyle of WION,
voted Chamber Member of the Year
and

ICHS President Linda Ciangi, honored as
Ionia's Citizen of the Year!

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

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, February 4, 7:00 p.m.
At the Ionia Court House - Courtroom
PROGRAM: Tour of the Court House
by Joe McCord.

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

Wednesday, March 4, 7:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting - Ionia Commission on Aging
PROGRAM: David McCord presents
"Bucky Fuller - Crackpot Genius"

Saturday, March 7
Community Expo at Ionia High School

Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 p.m.
Board Meeting - Location TBA
and
Annual Spring Appraisal Road Show
(Date yet to be determined)

Wednesday, April 1
Regular Meeting (No Foolin'!)

*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

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.

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!

Candlemas is the feast of pancakes!

At our house, we've inherited the French tradition of making crêpes on Groundhog Day. For many people worldwide, Candlemas (February 2) means more than the scent of lighted candles, but also the fragrance of pancakes being cooked for family and friends. Everyone takes a turn to flip the pancake with a neat flick of the wrist, deftly manoeuvring the pan with the right hand while holding a gold coin in the left. It mustn't fall, stick to the ceiling, or come back down in shreds. They say that if you achieve this little acrobatic feat successfully, it will bring happiness - and the promise of money - for the coming year!

While the tradition is carried on from one end of France to the other, some regions celebrate with doughnuts: in the Berry region they make apple fritters, in Franche-Comté they are called "beugnets" and in the Yonne they serve "roubigneaux" made from flour and milk, fried in oil and butter.

The ancient celebration was called Imbolc, the mid-point between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox. Pope Gelasius I decided in 472 to Christianize it as the "Feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple", symbolized by light. On Candlemas, candles are brought to the church to be blessed, to be lit later during storms to provide protection from lightning, as well as in the bedrooms of the dying to keep away evil spirits.

(Do they have pancakes in Punxsutawney on February 2?)