

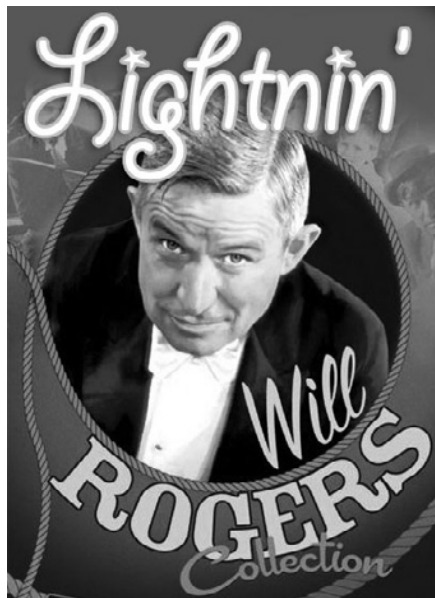
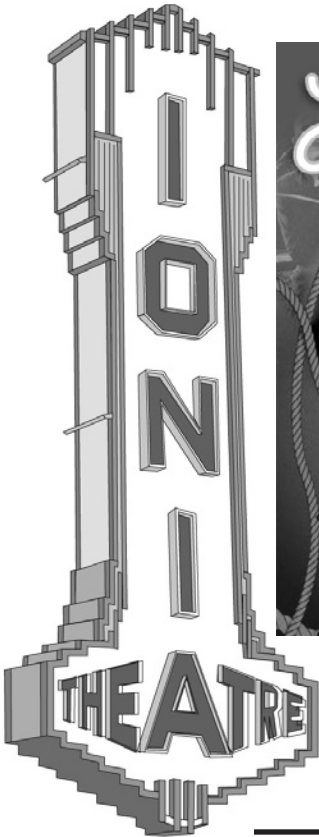


The Almost Monthly Publication of
the Ionia County Historical Society

the CHRONICLE



June 1931, Ionia Theatre Premier Moving Picture!



The January meeting of the ICHS was held at the Ionia Theatre, where we watched the first movie ever to be shown in the facility!

The Ionia Theatre was constructed by the Butterfield Company in 1930-31 (on the site of the former Bailey House five-star hotel). The theatre was built to accommodate live shows - reviews, burlesque, and concert performances, as well as moving pictures with sound. With its 1,000-seat capacity, the gleaming new art-deco theatre was the crown of Ionia's downtown. Through the efforts of our community of volunteers, this historic theatre remains as impressive as ever, and still a center of entertainment in our town.

Will Rogers was a top-selling performer in 1931, having made his mark in the entertainment industry as a wry commentator and humorist with columns published internationally. He had been a stage performer for many years, and his down-home wit was a natural for the silver screen. Although "Lightnin'" was not one of his better works, it still was a successful release in his illustrious career.

"Lightnin'" was based upon a very successful Broadway play, which had held box-office records for several decades, having debuted in 1918. A 1925 silent version had been made, directed by John Ford.

This 1930 sound film co-starred Louise Dressler as wife to Will Rogers's lead as Lightnin' Bill Jones. His daughter was played by Helen Cohan (daughter of George M. Cohan), and her love interest by Joel McCrea.

According to a modern reviewer, "The film has some interest as a film record of a popular stage play, but Lightnin' does strike twice. I can't see any great reason to recommend this film to anybody except die-hard Will Rogers fans."

Nonetheless, the film has its laughs and charm, and the members enjoyed the evening's entertainment. Many thanks to Gary Ferguson for the use of the theatre, and to Amy and the Theatre for their assistance.

MINUTES of the January 2010 Mtg.

The ICHS monthly membership meeting commenced at 7:05 p.m. on Wednesday, January 6, at the Ionia Theatre. Called to order by President Linda Ciangi, members and guests were welcomed. Thanks were expressed to Hank Knoop and Kris Haskins for clearing the snowy sidewalks on the weekends, and to Barb Hogan who is working on the inventory of the Blanchard artifacts recently donated.

The Secretary's report was published in the recent Chronicle. It was moved by Bob Nixon and supported by Jim Metzen to accept the minutes as published, which passed. Thanks were expressed to Joan McCord for her inserts into the newsletters with additional event information, and recognition of the local businesses who had decorated the Blanchard House for the holidays.

The booth at the Mrs. Claus Bazaar was well received and gave attendees opportunity to ask about the society, our mission and activities. Sales at the event brought in \$111.00 - thanks to the volunteers who set up and staffed the booth.

Thanks to members who staffed the house for Holiday tours, and to Wilma Ackerson for entertaining staff and guests with organ music in the east parlor. Costumed hosts again added to the atmosphere for visitors, including Barb and Kris Haskins, David and Annette McCord, Barb Ehlert, and others.

President Ciangi also acknowledged the great contribution from Sid's Flower Shop, Eclectic Gallery, Ionia Floral, and Keeper of the Crows for the holiday decorations. All have expressed interest in doing so again next season. Celia Jackson also volunteered to continue her participation by decorating for the spring season as well.

The Blanchard House was rented for several parties, a wedding, a funeral luncheon, and a baby shower. Thanks to members who hosted and assisted in these events, particularly Barb Ehlert for her extra efforts.

Congratulations and thanks are also due to Alice Whorley who has accepted the position of chair for the Refreshments Committee. Her role is to coordinate volunteers for monthly refreshments (not to provide them all!). Thanks to Joan Nixon who had per-

Continues on page 2

formed the role last year.

Hank Knoop then delivered his Treasurer's Report, including the following notes: Hank acknowledged the Sheriff's Dept for manpower in keeping the walks cleared of snow. He pointed out the need for ongoing fund raising efforts as we enter into the coldest months of the year. He noted that corporate and business contributions are being pursued in earnest as well. In summary, the months of November and December closed the year with more income than expense. It was moved by Kris Haskins and supported by Alice Whorley to accept the report, which passed. As usual, the detailed Treasurer's Report is available on request.

Under new business, President Ciangi reported on the progress of the upcoming February 14th "Elvis for Everyone" party. The event will be at the K of C hall at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday the 14th, and admission will be \$10 per person. Fred Wolf will entertain with Elvis love songs, and desserts will be provided. Tickets are available at Keeper of the Crows and Kitty's Café. Donations of chocolate will be appreciated. (Doni Knoop offered to mold some candies if the chocolate gets donated.) Alice Whorley suggested that members might make monetary donations to the effort as well, and Dave Cook is donating items for a Silent Auction as well.

The Antique Appraisal Roadshow originally suggested for March will be on April 24th instead. More information will be shared when the date approaches by chairperson Joan McCord.

The "Spring Into The Past" museum tours will again be in May, and the Blanchard House will again be on the tour. It's an opportunity to showcase some of our local history to visitors from around the state. Member participation is encouraged!

A Yard Sale fundraiser is planned for early June to center around the Carriage House and Grounds. This is to heighten awareness of the need for a new roof and continued use of the Carriage House, as well as general funds. The Garden Club will join in with a flower sale, and other activities may be included as well.

On June 7 there will be a book signing at the Blanchard House by Richard Hamilton, author of a Civil War book (among others).

The Johnny Cash tribute show is set for August 14. There will be reserved seating areas of the Theatre, which worked well for the recent Gallagher show. To make that work, ushers will be needed. President Ciangi lead the discussion of ticket prices, and the range of \$20, \$25 and \$30 met with support. Tickets will be available at the Theatre & on line. A V.I.P. sponsor package is being discussed, and (as this event is a cooperative venture with the Theatre), all these ideas will be taken to the Theatre board by Linda C.

Stephanie VanderMolen, David McCord, and Kris Haskins are all discussing plans for Summer Sunday activities - from music on the lawn to

ice cream socials, games and special displays, and more. Again, any member interested in helping with these activities are welcomed to come forward with their contributions.

On a community note, Cal Smith mentioned that Goodwill is asking for contributions of winter coats which are suffering a shortage this season.

Linda asked again that any members with fund raising ideas please bring their suggestions and ideas and potential plans to the Board for consideration.

Finally, the Board Meeting scheduled for January 20 will be held at the home of Cal Smith (1985 Aspen Valley Lane) at 7:00 p.m.

With thanks to the Theatre man-

agement and staff, the meeting was adjourned for the evening's program.

MINUTES of the December Board Meeting

NOTE: Thanks to Stephanie VanderMolen for taking these notes at the December 20 meeting in the absence of Secretary D. McCord.

Attendance: Linda Ciangi, Kris Haskins, Barb Elhert, Kathleen Perrin, Stephanie VanderMolen, Hank Knoop
Cal Smith hosted the board meeting. Delicious chicken salad and chili

w/corn bread

Valentine Show

- Stephanie VanderMolen will be sending Valentine Show poster to Sentinel Standard for a free Ad in the paper!

- Linda bought souvenirs for Valentines Show silent auction as well as decorations.

- Linda & Doni are working on getting donations for the silent auction. IF YOU HAVE ANY DONATIONS LET US KNOW. i.e. time shares, goodies, lessons.

- Barb & Linda met Ryan at K of C Hall for a walk through of the Hall.

- Joanne Jackson w/Ss. Peter and Paul is hosting the MardiGras party at the KofC Hall on Feb 13th and

Ladies & Gentlemen

You are invited

A Valentine's Day Party!

Sunday, February 14th

with

Fred Wolfe
"The Voice of the King"

\$10 per person
Includes Desert Table

♥ Be a sweetheart and purchase your tickets at
Kitty's Cafe or Keeper of the Crows

Ionia K of C Hall
115 S. Steele St.

Doors Open 1:30 p.m.

Show time 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

♥ Photos & Autographs after the show! ♥

ELVIS For Everyone

Dancing



Dessert



Door Prizes

Questions? Linda Ciangi, ICHS President 616.527.4945 or visit www.ioniahistory.org

Not responsible for any damages, accidents or loss. No Refunds.



is delighted to share in some of the expenses of decorating, promoting both shows. Win win :)

- Rich at the Lamplight has agreed to donate 2 pans of peanut butter brownies.

- Kathleen & Stephanie will be helping to run the silent auction, Barb & Cal will be on Kitchen Duty. Kris has agreed to setup and take down. Kris' wife Barb Haskins will be making a chocolate cake. Linda will be getting door prizes and setting up decorations along with Barb. Hank is getting a cash box.

Chamber Expo, March 13:

- Hank and Doni will chair this event.

Johnny Cash Show:

- Tickets are on sale at \$25 and \$20. Tickets will be sold at the Theatre only.

- Mary Cusack is going to work on getting a "Carter Family Girls" perfor-

mance together for show.

- Rotary will be hosting the alcohol beverage station.

- Need 14 volunteers for show! This will save us \$1,000. (maybe make us \$1000)

By-Laws:

- Add the wording by email/electronic transmission (where applicable).

- Article IV: Change paid member only to vote.

- Article VIII: Add business Buddies.

Summer Sundays:

- Joan McCord is coordinating summer Sunday VOLUNTEERS.

- Joan would like board approval on BirdMan, Bag Pipes and old cars for Summer Sunday events. The Board has approved these events with coordination continuing with master schedule. Stephanie and Kris will be pursuing the 21st Michigan CO H Infantry reenactment troop for future events.

Of St. Valentine the Martyr — from "The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints" compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, 1275:

Saint Valentine, friend of our Lord and priest of great authority, was at Rome. It happed that Claudius the emperor made him to come afore him and said to him in demanding: What thing is that which I have heard of thee, Valentine? Why wilt thou not abide in our amity, and worship the idols and renounce the vain opinion of thy credence? Saint Valentine answered him: If thou hadst very knowledge of the grace of Jesu Christ thou shouldest not say this that thou sayest, but shouldest deny the idols and worship very God. Then said to Saint Valentine a prince which was of the council of the emperor: What wilt thou say of our gods and of their holy life? And St. Valentine answered: I say none other thing of them but that they were men mortal and mechant and full of all ordure and evil. Then said Claudius the emperor: If Jesu Christ be God verily, wherefore sayst thou not the truth? And St. Valentine said: Certainly Jesu Christ is only very God, and if thou believe in him, verily thy soul shall be saved, thy realm shall multiply, and he shall give to thee alway victory of thine enemies. Then Claudius turned him unto all them that were there, and said to them: Lords, Romans, hear ye how wisely and reasonably this man speaketh? Anon the provost of the city said: The emperor is deceived and betrayed, how may we leave that which we have holden and been accustomed to hold sith our infancy? With these words the emperor turned and changed his courage, and St. Valentine was delivered in the keeping of the provost.

When St. Valentine was brought in an house in prison, then he prayed to God, saying: Lord Jesu Christ very God, which art very light, enlumine this house in such wise that they that dwell therein may know thee to be very God. And the provost said: I marvel me that thou sayest that thy God is very light, and nevertheless, if he

may make my daughter to hear and see, which long time hath been blind, I shall do all that thou commandest me, and shall believe in thy God. St. Valentine anon put him in prayers, and by his prayers the daughter of the provost received again her sight, and anon all they of the the house were converted. After, the emperor did do smite off the head of St. Valentine, the year of our Lord two hundred and eighty. Then let us pray to St. Valentine that he get us pardon of our sins. Amen.



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, February 3, 7:00pm
Regular Meeting - at Saints Peter & Paul Church & School (enter the school through the door at the northwest corner of the parking lot).

Sunday, February 14, 2:00pm
at the Ionia K of C hall
A VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY
with Fred Wolf's "ELVIS FOR EVERYONE" show.
(Watch for more information soon!)

Wednesday, February 17, 7:00pm
Board Meeting at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, March 3, 7:00pm
Regular Meeting at the Community Mental Health Building

Wednesday, March 17, 7:00pm
Board Meeting at the Blanchard House

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

Some people think that Valentine's Day was celebrated in the middle of February to remember the anniversary of Valentine's death around 270 A.D. It is also possible the Catholic Church tried to 'christianize' the pagan festival called Lupercalla. Lupercalla was a festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture. In the early days of the festival, houses were cleaned and then salt and wheat was sprinkled on the floors. Sometimes animals were sacrificed. Late in the day all the young women in the area would place their names in an urn. Later, the area's bachelors would pick a name out of the urn to be paired up for marriage.

Pope Gelasius officially declared February 14 as St. Valentine's Day around 498 A.D. The pagan system of marriage was outlawed and in time became a day of romance. Valentine's Day first became popular as Saint Valentine's Basilica in Great Britain in the 17th century. Friends and lovers exchanged notes and tokens of affection. Later, printed card replaced the notes. The oldest Valentine in existence is a poem by Duke Charles of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned.

In 1644, Bishop Saint Valentine was declared the patron saint of Terni, Italy. They dedicated him one day out of the year. Every February 14th, Terni citizens hold a feast around the Basilica in town.

The body of Saint Valentine is still at Terni where it can be seen by tourists. He was beheaded on February 14 on Via Flaminia Road at night in order to avoid a riot.

Today, around one billion Valentine's Day cards are exchanged with 85% of them by women. However, men outspend women many times over on this day because they buy flowers, chocolate, and many other items. (That is, if they know what's good for them!)

ST. VALENTINE'S GREETING





the 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.

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!**

- Jan 28 — World Wonders
- February 4 — Six Horse Hitch
- February 11 — Valentine Special
- February 18 — Gentle Giants: Whales
- February 25 — England
- March 4 — Mt. Rushmore
- March 11 — Travels with Taximan
- March 18 — Secrets of the Holy Land

Ionia County Historical Society 2009-10 Board of Directors & Officers

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- Kathleen Perrin, Vice Pres. — 616-675-4618
- Kris Haskins, Director — 989-855-3685
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