

# Ionia County Historical Society CHRONICLE

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



## Deb Dudek is No Meek “Madam Librarian”

Library Director Debra Dudek addressed the members of the ICHS on Nov. 5. Punctuated by enthusiastic gesticulation, the basis of her presentation was in the handout she passed around, reproduced here verbatim (*with a few comments from the editor in italics*).

### **Ionia Community Library Tasks, Projects, and Possibilities**

I have been asked as to what possible collaboration projects are available between Ionia Community Library and the Ionia County Historical Society. The following list contains just a few of the ideas and possibilities which may suit the educational and recreational needs of our community.

#### **1) Complete the library's microfilm collection.**

a) The library is missing several years and issues of the local newspaper. It would be a great benefit for our community to make these issues available at the library. (*Years 1917 and 1918 are missing, plus there are other gaps in the collection.*)

i) We would need to inventory the newspaper collection to see what issues are missing

ii) Ask local residents for 'loans' of their original newspapers and have the loaned copies microfilmed at the Clarke Historical Library in Mt. Pleasant. Clear deadlines and collecting times will be planned ahead of time. Newspapers will be picked up by donors, and microfilm will be available at the library.

(*A related topic is to help with resources to help with Obituary research.*)

#### **2) “If These Stones Could Speak” Project**

a) This is a program which would include the ICHS, the library, the (*Community*) Theater, and the Ionia County Genealogical Society.

i) The program would include a scripted presentation portraying Ionia historical figures at the local cemetery by the Theater Group, an accompanying cemetery tour provided by the Historical Society, fliers and handouts provided by the Library, and a possible headstone rubbing seminar provided by the genealogical society. (*This could also be adapted to a school program.*)

**3) Assist the ICHS in furthering its displays and collections with the public using quality and budget-friendly projects.**

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](http://www.ioniahistory.org).



a) Create online photo archives using TechSoup.com + Flickr accounts for \$6 per year.

b) Sign up the ICHS with a TechSoup account, then a donated Flickr account. The library could train the ICHS members to scan, tag, and store images online. The site could then be made available to a wider audience by promoting the project in the news media and through history-related websites.

**4) The Ionia County Historical Society and the library could provide book repair or item archiving class with library and historical society. Class would be open to the public with a small fee. (\$25 to \$35 was suggested.)**

5) Growing Up in 20th Century America Program – Brainstormed for the spring of 2009, would include games and chores at the Blanchard House, games and crafts at the library. (*Including demonstrations of “forgotten” skills, antique washing machines, The purpose is “Fun” – not “Funds.”*)

(*Deb also would like to put together a walking tour brochure.*)

6) Volunteers are needed to transcribe (to computer) vital records from the current microfilm archive. (*Specifically 1872-1890s baby death records, general information since 1909, and other specific records.*)

(*Deb closed her presentation with invitations to the members to computer classes and research workshops at the library, saying that: “We have the potential to do great things together!”*)

Thank you, Deb, for your exuberant presence!

## November 5 Meeting Minutes

The November 5, 2008, meeting of the ICHS was brought to order at 7:05 by president Linda Ciangi at the Blanchard House. The meeting opened with a fanfare (pre-recorded)!

President Ciangi open with a request for prayers for the new administration, and thanks to the members for exercising their right to vote.

As moved by Dave Cook and supported by Joe McCord, the Secretary's report was accepted as published EXCEPT that the dates of the upcoming Board meetings were wrongly listed; they should have been Nov 18 and Dec 16.

The Treasurer's report was delivered by Hank K. with good news — we're having a very good year financially. Larry Tiejema added positive comments about our investment portfolio, despite the dismal news from Wall Street. It was moved by Doni Knoop and supported by Gerry Perry to accept the Treasurer's report — which passed.

Under old business, the Chili Cook-off was a success again, thanks to Kitty's Café, and our volunteers. Twice last year's quantity was sold, and the scarecrow won 3rd place!

The November 1 Appraisal Fair was also a success, thanks to Joan McCord, Glenn Rairigh, and the volunteers again, \$280 were added to the treasury this time.

A \$50 gift certificate was received from WalMart as a donation, and was used for cleaning supplies.

Thursday evenings are accomplishing a lot at the house. Again, all interested parties are invited to help.

In the New Business category:

The Christmas Party is set for Dec. 3, 6:00 pm, with pot-luck at 7:00. In the spirit of the season, please bring CANNED GOODS to donate to the local food pantries. Dave Cook also noted that the "Kids Club" is doing shoe-box gifts for kids at Enrich, if anyone would like to donate small children's gifts to that project as well.

The Blanchard House will be open Dec 7 and 14 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm for tours. Please invite friends and family to see Fred

Haight's Christmas Village and Fr. Mason's Doll House display. Refreshments for these afternoons will be purchased from the SSPP youth at the Mrs. Clause Bazaar. Cash donations will be appreciated.

Kathleen Perrin has agreed to be our Accessions Chairman and plans are being put into place for handling donations to the Society. Please advise if you would like to be a part of this endeavor. NOTE: Ms. Perrin has also followed through on her campaign promise and brought chocolate to the meeting!

There are some programs in the works by the DDA for next year which the ICHS may be involved in. President Ciangi will keep us informed.

Dave Cook tells us that Lowe's donated some shelving to Enrich and there will be extra that can be used by the ICHS if interested.

Linda showed the members one of the new "pocket planners" being offered at Ionia OfficeWorks with images of historic Ionia on them. They are selling for \$5.00 each, and \$1.00 of each sale will go to the ICHS.

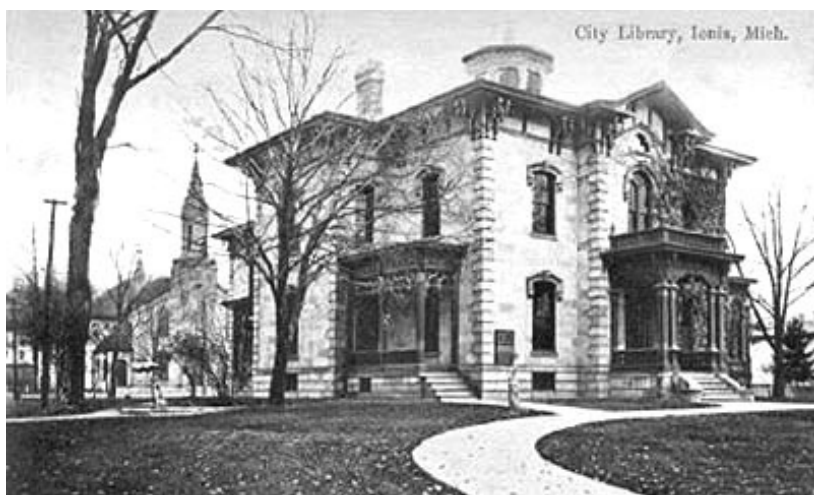
Tina at the Chamber of Commerce has a collection of memorabilia from the Chamber Ambassadors which could be on display at the ICHS sometime.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45, and our guest — Deb Dudek from Hall-Fowler Library — was introduced to give her presentation.

## November 16 Board Meeting

The November 18 meeting of the ICHS Board was brought to order by president Linda Ciangi at 7:20 p.m. at the Blanchard House. The first order of business was that gift cards had been presented to Fred Haight (for his Christmas Village display) and to Kitty Cole (for her support of the Chili Cook-Off).

The Christmas tree for the front yard of the Blanchard House to be placed there in partnership with the City is being installed.



*The Hall-Fowler Home in a turn-of-the-century post card. Fortunately, not much different than today!*

Miss Dig has left her markers on the lawn (though some difficulty was encountered getting it straight), and the City will not be helping with the decorations. Barb has some lights to donate, and Hank Knoop will try to arrange Greg Cook's cherry-picker to put them up.

The annual ICHS Christmas Potluck meeting will be December 3. It was suggested that we invite C&C Lawn Care in thanks for their work on the grounds this year. Mary Esther Daddazzio will be asked to play piano for some caroling.

Copies of the rental contract were handed to the Director's for review with the objective of revision (if necessary).

Director Stephanie VanderMolen will be the primary contact for the ICHS Calendar. She will be compiling all the events into one calendar. This will then be the guide for the web-site calendar, and the Chronicle, and the Chamber website and various community calendars.

Regarding the Chamber of Commerce, David McCord reported that the newly launched Chamber website offers the ICHS some opportunity which he will pursue, and that the ICHS membership is listed correctly.

Hank reported that the membership list will soon be updated and available. Kathleen Perrin asked if there could be some indication on that list of who's who regarding their special interests or involvement to help organizers of events and activities in recruit-

ing help. (Especially the newer members.) It was also noted that most organizations like ours publish their Board of Directors and contact info in their newsletters. The Board then approved the same for the next Chronicle.

Hank K. also asked about our website's "domain names" — all the various www addresses that lead to our website. The question is: which of these are most effective and which not? David M. will look into the subject.

The annual reports were presented by Hank K. as compiled by Larry Tiejema. Copies are available on request. On a related subject, the resolution of the Greenview Point account is being researched with the idea that the County can administer those funds.

Hank and Gerry Perry will look into the possibility of electric space heaters for the house to help reduce the overall heating bills this winter. The status of the "Heat the House" fund was brought up. Barb E. said she would contact Jim Carlyle at WION about their participation, and an ad will be put in the Chronicle to ask for donation from the subscribers.

President Ciangi also noted that we need to promote our resource room and other information at the Library — that people seeking historical information there are not being directed to the ICHS also. She will talk to Deb Dudek and the Library staff about what we have to offer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 — the next Board meeting will be December 16th.

**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

## Hear those bells on Christmas Day

Tragedy struck the home of American's most popular poet. On July 9, 1861, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's wife, Fanny, was near an open window sealing the locks of her daughter's hair in a packet, using hot sealing wax. It was never known whether a spark from a match or the sealing wax was the cause, but suddenly her dress caught fire and engulfed her with flames. Her husband, sleeping in the next room, was awaked by her screams. He desperately tried to put out the fire and save his wife. He was severely burned on his face and hands.

She, tragically burned, slipped into a coma the next day and died. His grievous burns would not even allow him to attend her funeral. He seemed to lock the anguish within his soul. Because he continued to work at his craft, only his family knew of his personal suffering. They could see it in his eyes and observe his long periods of silence. His white beard, so identified with him, was one of the results of his tragedy-the burn scars on his face made shaving almost impossible.

Although a legend in his own time, he still needed the peace that God gives to His children. On Christmas Day, three years following the horrible accident-at age 57-he sat down to capture, if possible, the joys of the season. He began:

"I heard the bells on Christmas day.  
Their old familiar carol play,  
And wild and sweet the words repeat  
Of peace on earth, good will to men"

As he came to the third stanza he was stopped by the condition of his beloved country. The Civil War was in full swing. The Battle of Gettysburg was not long past. Days looked dark, and he probably asked himself the question, "How can I write about 'peace on earth, good will to men' in this war-torn country, where brother fights against brother and father against son?" But he kept on writing-and what did he write?

"And in despair I bowed my head:  
'There is no peace on earth', I said,  
'For hate is strong, and mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good will to men!'"

It seems as if could have been writing these words for us today! Wadsworth then turned his thoughts to God, the only One who can give true and perfect peace, and continued writing:

"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good will to men."

As so we have the marvelous Christmas carol "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day". A musician, J. Baptiste Calkin, wrote the musical setting that has helped make this carol a favorite.

## 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, December 3, 7:00 p.m.  
Regular Meeting at the Blanchard House  
PROGRAM:

**Holiday Potluck & Christmas Stories!**

Sundays, December 7 & 14, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.  
Blanchard House open for Tours

Tuesday, December 9, 7:00 p.m.  
Board Meeting — location TBA

Wednesday, January 7, 7:00 p.m.  
Regular Meeting at the Parrish 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

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



**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**

Here's the latest issue of the...

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Ionia County Historical Society  
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.

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 appreciate the high quality. With this in mind, we hope you will find this documentary a lasting memory.

PLEASE NOTE: This documentary was originally produced by Jim Trachsel. Costumes, Props, Props, 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 appreciate the high quality. With this in mind, we hope you will find this documentary a lasting memory.

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.**