

HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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Inside this issue:

Cemetery Walk 2

Hats Off To... 2

Home Tour 2

History's Nuggets 3

Room Sponsors 3

Sponsor 3

Contact 4

LETTER FROM A BOARD MEMBER

Dear Society Patrons,

My name is Charlie Van Buren and I serve on the Board of the Crawford County Historical Society. I was born in Jackson, Michigan. I have a son, Jason, and my wife, Michelle, and I have a daughter, Monica.

In 1987, we moved to Grayling and I began working for Camp Lehman as a work camp supervisor in charge of an inmate crew at Camp Grayling. I also supervised crews at Elmwood Cemetery and the Historical Museum for five years. Camp Lehman continues to be my place of employment.

Michelle and I live on the Au Sable River in Grayling

where the old dam sat for the power plant. The dam, which supplied electricity for the city of Grayling, was built at the turn of the century and used until the twenties or thirties. Photos of the dam and power plant are displayed on the main floor of the Depot.

When we bought our home in 1992, the project of refurbishing it began, as it needed many repairs. Fifteen years have gone by and I am still working on the house. Actually, it is a hobby which I enjoy.

I have always been interested in history and the way things used to be so I decided to join the Board of the Society in 2005.

It is my goal, not only to see the Museum remain open, but to flourish so that as many people as possible can have the opportunity to see the original artifacts we have and experience the history of Crawford County.

One of the things that interests me most is the lumber industry that thrived in the area for so long. I invite you to stop by the Museum and see the great lumber display we have, filled with artifacts, history of the logging era and a visual representation of a logging site.



THE BARN

The Historical Society would like to thank Gene Rauch for replacing the fascia on the farm building and Charlie Fick for providing the finances to do so.

We would also like to

thank Bob Young for becoming the caretaker of the barn. He will paint the new fascia and provide the upkeep of the structure.

Come by the museum and take a stroll through the complex. The barn holds

old farm implements, a 1949 tractor on loan to us by Robert & Billie Squanda, a beautiful cutter also on loan by Bob & Fay Bovee that is more than 100 years old, photos of farmhouses and more.

CEMETERY WALK



The Historical Society will host a Cemetery Walk on September 8th from 5 to 7 p.m. at Elmwood Cemetery in Grayling. The purpose of the Walk is to connect the town's history with its citizenry. There is no charge; however, donations will be accepted.

Visitors on the walking tour will enter the cemetery off of North Down River Road and follow the signs to proceed to the designated parking area.

There will be no cars allowed to park on cemetery roads during the tour hours.

Visitors will be given a map of the featured sites where docents will be stationed to tell the stories of the people buried there.

The Walk will begin at Rasmus Hanson's mausoleum. It will continue across North Down River Road to the old cemetery

where visitors will see the gravesites of Ernest Salling and Civil War veterans. The tour will proceed back across North Down River Road where several more sites will be visited, including veterans of other wars and Chief Shoppenagon.

Come join us for a leisurely stroll through the cemetery grounds and learn about the lives of the people and the contributions they made.

HATS OFF TO. . . JAY STEPHAN!

*Jay was born into
one of the founding
families of
Grayling.*

Jay Lewis Stephan was born on October 7, 1925 to Ted and Ruth Stephan. Jay has a sister, Yetive, and a brother, Ted Jr. Like Jay, his parents and siblings were born 8 miles east of the city of Grayling and grew up on the Au Sable River.

Jay's paternal grandparents are Lydia (Nettie) Cook who was born in Sanford, Michigan and raised in El Dorado and Henry Stephan who came to the area

from France at age 11 with his family. Jay's great-grandfather, Peter, came to Grayling alone in 1875 to earn money to bring his family here. They lived in Nice, France while they waited and came to Grayling in 1879.

Jay attended Feldhauser school through 7th grade, then took the bus to the Grayling school. He graduated in 1942. It was the Air Force for Jay during World War II; he returned home in

November, 1945. Jay married Marge Baker in 1949 and they had 4 children. They divorced and Jay remarried. He had 3 children with his second wife.

When Jay was 7 or 8 years old, his father gave him and his siblings a riverboat to go up the Au Sable 3 or 4 miles to visit their cousins. They played in that boat all summer and lived in the water.

To be continued . . .

HISTORICAL HOME TOUR



Our home tour was a hit! The weather was perfect for a stroll down Peninsular to see four historic homes of Grayling. Ninety people toured each home, eager to see the Victorian houses. We have had requests for another home tour next year.

One of the homes included in the tour was the Nels Peter Olson home. Not only did the great-granddaughter and great-great granddaughter of Mr. Olson see the house for the first time but they also met. That was a special moment.

The members of the Board

would like to express their appreciation to Dave and Jill Wyman, Dr. David and Cherie Hunter, Tex and Terry McGregor and Juana Essmaker and her family for opening their homes and sharing a piece of history with the public. It was an experience to remember.

HISTORY'S NUGGETS

In 1913, J.R. and Bertha Skingley also owned a hotel near Higgins Lake on Oak Street. People came from Detroit with their steamer trunks, having booked a room for three months. J.R. picked up the visitors with a horse and wagon in Roscommon to transport them to the hotel. Bertha served the meals.

The visitors played baseball and enjoyed picking apples from the orchard. Harold took the vacationers in his launch (it held 10 people) from the hotel to the island for pic-

nics and returned them in late afternoon to the hotel. Spats livery stable was up on a hill from the hotel. Mrs. Spats gave horse riding lessons; at one time she was a bareback rider in the circus.

Bertha was very staunch and did not believe in listening to the radio. One day, her son Harold was playing the radio while Bertha was in another room. Suddenly, Bertha said, "That's Big Ben. I know that bell anywhere!" She believed in the radio then.

John Robert died on January

13, 1930 and Bertha died on August 12, 1936. Both are buried in Pere Cheney.

In 1982, Mary Hopkins, granddaughter of the Skingleys, commissioned an exact reproduction of the farmhouse which took 6 months to complete. During this time, Mary traveled the country and even went to England to obtain the correct materials for the items displayed. The appraised value of the replica in 1989 was \$15,600 which Mary graciously donated to the Museum. Detailed descriptions of items are provided for visitors to read.



ROOM SPONSORS

Originally, the rooms upstairs in the Depot were used by railroad crews who spent the night while waiting for new orders. Now, the rooms reveal aspects of historic Crawford County life through various displays.

Shown are old-fashioned entertainment, a general store, women's occupations and gar-

ments from the turn of the century, a saloon, a bunk room for the crew, a one-room schoolhouse, life for a trapper's wife, a seamstress's room with beautiful dresses and a medical room. We also have a sheriff's display and Fred Bear memorabilia.

The following organizations

and businesses sponsor the rooms: American Business Women's Association, Au Sable Alumni Association, Grayling Youth Booster Club, Grayling Promotional Association, Kiwanis Club of Grayling, Knights of Columbus, Mercy Medical Association, Rialto Theatre, Rotary Club of Grayling and Spike's Keg O'Nails.

*We are sincerely
thankful for your
continuing support
and interest in our
history.*

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The Crawford County Historical Society would like to express its gratitude to Airway Automation for sponsoring this month's newsletter.

**Crawford County
Historical Society**

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P.O. Box 218
Grayling, MI 49738

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Help your museum continue to grow. We need your help today and any donation will be accepted. Memberships are good for one year, May through April. Any dues paid now will be good for the museum year of 2007. We look forward to adding new members.

DUES:

\$5.00 Senior Citizen
\$10.00 Single
\$25.00 Family
\$50.00 Supporting Member
\$100.00 Memorial Plaque (one

or two names inscribed)

Please make checks payable to:

CC Historical Society

P.O. Box 218

Grayling, MI 49738

Our telephone number is:

(989) 348-4461

Our website is:

grayling-area.com/museum

Our e-mail address is:

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