

## Winter and Early Spring Newsletter

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January-February-March 2022

*The Saugatuck-Douglas History Center preserves local history and inspires learning to inform and improve our community.*

As the saying goes: *March comes in like a lion and out like a lamb.* The spring equinox arrives this month. It's also a month when we witness some key transitions between winter and spring.

While things may appear quiet in the depths of winter in Douglas, this is the season when plans take shape for new exhibits, programming, grants and fundraising, as well as art and archival collection work. I'm excited to share some of these exciting projects with you now. Other details will come in the next few weeks.

Taking in the bigger picture, this is also a time of renewal as the work of the last several months prepares to bud and blossom in the months ahead. Borrowing (and paraphrasing) from this week's State of the Union address, my report is this: the State of the SDHC is strong—thanks to the strength and generosity of our members, our volunteers, and our community.

We are all living through extraordinary times. Yet we are stronger today than we were a year ago as a community-centered cultural organization. And we will be stronger a year from now than we are today.

Eric Gollanek  
Executive Director



### You're invited to an open house at the History Center School House!

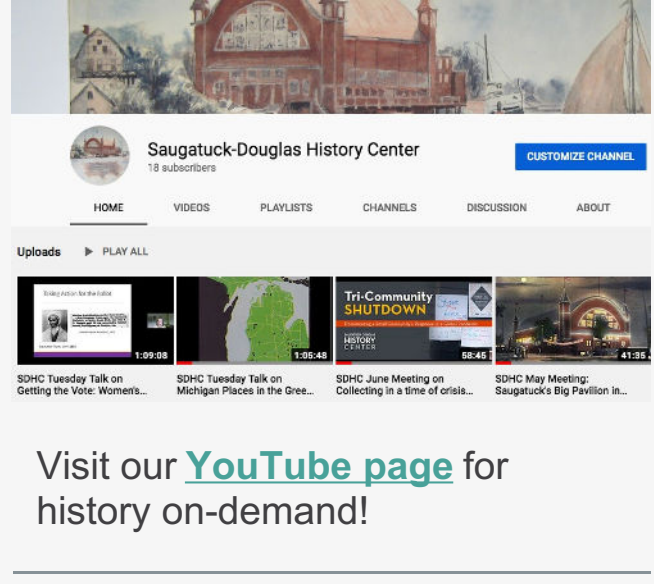
We will gather in-person for our first **Monthly Meeting** of the year on **March 16th at 7 PM**. Join us for drinks and good company as well as a preview of upcoming programs and volunteer opportunities.

This event is free to all so please consider bringing friends or neighbors to show them the exhibits *A Century of Progress: 100 years of LGBTQ History*, the *Curator's Choice* art exhibit, and the *David Csicko History Book* exhibit.

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***Did you know you can revisit past programs on the SDHC's YouTube channel?***

Click here for partial 2022 calendar of events



Visit our [YouTube page](#) for history on-demand!



## Root Camp returns with new format

### Save the Date! Root Camp 2022 is back!

This year we are offering a new evening program running from 6:00-8:30 PM Monday through Thursday (June 20-23) where campers ages 6-12 will learn about the ghost town of Singapore and Summer Solstice: the shortest night and longest day of the year!

Same great Root Camp traditions with songs, snacks, history, and science/nature programs now in an evening format.



Registration opening soon! Watch this space and other SDHC channels for more information coming this week at <https://sdhistoricalsociety.org/current/rootcamp/index.php>

## In Memoriam



*The SDHC recognizes members who have passed away since the last newsletter.*

**Norman Deam, lifetime member**

Norm pictured from 2007 when he gave a Tuesday Talk on the history and experiences of living at the 1859 Saugatuck lighthouse.


## History Lives Here: Historical Markers Project

**The Saugatuck-Douglas History Center has launched a new program to celebrate history where it happens across our communities.**

*The History Lives Here: Historical Markers Project* gathered momentum in the fall of 2022 with a team of volunteers laying plans to erect six permanent historical markers across Saugatuck and Douglas this summer. This is planned as the first phase of a multiyear, ongoing SDHC project to share local history in our Lakeshore community. The team comprised of **Julie Bizzis, Bill Hess, Elizabeth Jones, Ken Kutzel, and Bill Underdown** worked through site selection, agreements with the cities of Saugatuck and Douglas, full program sponsorship, and historical interpretation. The team of volunteers is supported by project historian **Anna Minnebo**, 2020 SDHC intern and SUNY-Cooperstown Museum Studies graduate.

Supported by a V-shaped steel structure fabricated locally by Jeff Shashaguay, the interpretive markers stand 7' tall by 2' wide. Full color interpretive panels (2' by 4') designed by veteran SDHC designer Sally Winters use historic photos and text developed by the team to bring history to life for visitors and long-time residents alike.

Saugatuck markers at Wicks Park interpret the history of the Saugatuck Chain Ferry and shipbuilding; a marker at Cook Park recalls the history of the Big Pavilion and the steamship tourism it attracted, and a Coghlin Park marker explores the importance of the fruit



**HISTORY LIVES HERE  
HISTORICAL MARKER PROJECT**

The Saugatuck-Douglas History Center is launching a new historical marker program, placing permanent interpretive markers across Saugatuck-Douglas in the spring of 2022.

From logging to ship building to the Big Pavilion, each seven-foot tall steel marker will be erected on the spot where history happened. Rich in images and interpretive content, the markers will engage residents and visitors alike.

- V-shape design to minimize footprint, maximize area site lines, withstand wind, and allow ease of clean out by grounds crew.\*
- Concrete base with bolt-on structure for easy ground crew mowing/trimming, and ease of replacement in future years.
- Two affixed history graphic panels on the two outer walls, 24" wide by 48" high, 35" off the ground for ease of reading.

\*design and placement input provided by City Manager and DPS/DPW

Douglas markers are approved for Wade's Bayou interpreting the history of the Basket Factory and the Bayou itself; while a second marker at the Old School House will present the story of the Douglas Union School and home to the History Center and gardens since 2005.



industry in the region as well as remembering the Fruit Exchange building on that site.



Thank you to the generous sponsors who have fully underwritten this project: **Elizabeth Jones and Karen Todd, Dawn Schumann, Bill Underdown, Steve Hutchins, Matt and Cindy Peterson, Bill Hess and Mike Mattern, Cathy North and Marcy Weston, Jen Roe, Beth Stefanchik, and Michael Alto and Rob Naumann.** For those interested in sponsoring a marker in future years please contact SDHC board member Julie Bizzis at [jkbizzis@gmail.com](mailto:jkbizzis@gmail.com) for more information.

## Century of Progress Exhibit returns through 2022

We are excited to announce that both *Century of Progress* and the related art exhibition, *History Book: LGBTQ Portraits* will reopen this spring and remain in place through fall of 2022. Covering over 100 years of history, the exhibit shares the stories of people living in the margins at the Lakeshore in a timeline format with local, state, and national LGBTQ developments included for context. Interpretive panels identify factors that have contributed to the diverse and inclusive nature of these two small Lake Michigan coastal villages alongside historical artwork and artifacts from SDHC collections. The exhibit showcases not only the progress made by the LGBTQ community, but also the challenges it has faced and the setbacks it has endured.



Coinciding with the *Century of Progress* exhibit is a related art exhibition, *History Book: LGBTQ Portraits*.

This exhibit includes more than two dozen stylized portraits of LGBTQ pioneers—some local—by acclaimed Chicago artist and designer David Lee Csicsko. Biographical and historical information for the exhibit was developed by LGBTQ historian and author Owen Keehnen. Both Csicsko and Keehnen are inductees of Chicago's LGBT Hall of Fame.

The exhibit is housed in the second floor gallery space directly above the *Century of Progress* exhibit.

***Opening parties and special programming in the month of June is in the final planning stages. We look forward to sharing those details with you in the weeks ahead.***

## News from the Friends of the Mt. Baldhead Radar Station



A Friends of the Mt. Baldhead Radar Station group has worked tirelessly over the last two years in advocating for the historic site as well as doing the work of painting and securing the building. The mission of this group is to share information about the effort to protect, preserve and promote the Mt. Baldhead Radar Station in Saugatuck, MI.

You can read more about their efforts on their [Facebook group page](#)

### Wanted: Pieces of History

The Mt. Baldhead Preservation Work Group wants to find any "souvenirs" that may have been taken from the Radar Station over the last several decades so we may include them in our historic archives. We are offering full amnesty to anyone who wants to anonymously return any item(s) that originally belonged to the facility.

Do you have historic artifacts you would like to donate for future preservation? Contact the group at [mtbaldheadradarstation@gmail.com](mailto:mtbaldheadradarstation@gmail.com).



*Here's a Radar Station item returned recently. We're not exactly sure what it is or what it was used for. Join in the conversation online!*

### Local History Feature

#### Six more weeks of winter? The countdown is on!

### Mr. Groundhog says "Six More Weeks of Winter"

-contributed by Chris Yoder

One hundred years ago, the Feb 3, 1922 Commercial Record announced a much welcomed bit of Ground Hog's Day news:

**"Mr. G., who is the hereditary chief of the world's weather forecasting bureau, states positively that spring is just around the next corner. He laughed scornfully at the raging blizzard, and pronounced it merely the last bluff of an old winter, a monarch loath to abdicate his throne."**

**Wish this were true this year! The furry prognosticator reports that our 2022 winter will stay around for another six weeks. Bah, humbug!**



In keeping with our recent weather and the thoughts of what may still come, I present from the History Center archives a photo of a snow filled Saugatuck Town Square from long past. You can see the old playground equipment and the memorial cannon which was fired at the Bicentennial and before that at big celebrations like the Battle of Santiago, the end of World War I, the end of World War II, as well as the Centennial of the nation in 1876. Said cannon was purchased and donated to the city by Stephen A. Morrison, grandfather of local historian May Francis Heath.

You can also see the Christian Science Church Building in the background, built in 1924. The church web site indicates that services were held before that starting in 1910 in the local Interurban Railway Station, then from 1912 to 1915 in the homes of local members. Beginning in 1916 they rented a hall over Koning's Hardware (later Wilkins) adjacent to the square. In 1921 the Society purchased the present site of the church building and the structure was completed and ready for use in the summer of 1924.

*PS Can anyone tell the year of the picture based on the cars shown?*

## SDHC Family History Group

Come and join the Family History Group on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 3:30pm for a discussion about researching your family history. We are meeting via Zoom for the March 15th meeting.

If you are not on our mailing list, please send a request to [sdhsfamilyhistory@gmail.com](mailto:sdhsfamilyhistory@gmail.com) and a link will be sent to you for the meetings. Hope you can join us. John Mayer and Judi Thomas

The Board of Directors approved a simplified membership structure in 2021.

- **Individual \$40**
- **Household \$60**
- **Business Partner \$250**
- **Lifetime Member \$1,000**

Membership runs through March 31 each year. Renewal information will be mailed in April.

***Become a lifetime member!*** No annual renewals and special invites to Lifetime member only events!

**Click here to renew or make a donation with PayPal today!**

## About the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center

The Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society was founded in 1986 by a group of charter members interested in preserving and sharing the unique history of Saugatuck, Douglas and the surrounding area. In 2016, the Society was renamed the Saugatuck-Douglas History Center to celebrate its growth and to recognize the development of the History Museum and Old School House sites.

We are a vibrant non-profit 501(c)3 history organization with nearly 700 members residing in nearby communities and across the country.

Members are the lifeblood of our volunteer organization.

To renew or join as a member, [visit our website](#) for more information.



The Saugatuck-Douglas History Museum is located at 735 Park Street in Saugatuck, in the historic Saugatuck Pump House building.

The History Center -- Old School House and Francis Surfboat Exhibit are located at 130 Center Street in Douglas.

The adjoining Back-in-Time Garden and Surfboat Exhibit are open daily.

The History Center Archives are available for research by appointment. For more information, e-mail the archives directly at [archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:archives@sdhistoricalsociety.org)

History Center main phone: 269-857-5751  
Archives direct phone: 269-857-7901



The SDHC is supported with a grant from **Michigan Humanities** and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic stabilization plan.

The SDHC also receives operational support from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

**Saugatuck-Douglas History Center**  
[www.mySDhistory.org](http://www.mySDhistory.org)

*Follow us on social media for photos and real-time updates*

