

## RELIVING

# The Rochester Era

March/April

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2011

### Bob Lytle featured April speaker

The Rochester – Avon Historical Society and the Rochester Hills Library will present author, Bob Lytle, for their April 7 meeting. Although Bob's books are written for the 10-14 year old age group, many adults enjoy them because of their content. The two defining periods of Rochester's history were the pioneer stage of the 1820s and the Civil War era. It is between each of these two periods that his books revolve.



Bob is our local downtown pharmacist, a storyteller, a learner, and a teacher...with the talent and the patience to research and write about some of the local history of Rochester, Michigan. Lytle Pharmacy is in the historic old Opera House...the tallest building in the oldest town in

Oakland County, Michigan. Bob works with the local schools which use his material in their teaching of local history.

Come join our resident author telling stories related to his wonderful books. The meeting will be held at the Library, 500 Olde Town in Rochester on Thursday evening, April 7, from 7:00p.m.-8:30p.m. The public is invited and there is no charge. For more information call Rod Wilson [\(248\) 651-6178](tel:248-651-6178).

#### **The Internet Genealogy Group,**

sponsored by RAHS, will be meeting in the 2nd floor conference room at the RHPL on April 19th, from 1 to 3 PM. The program will be "DAR, Daughters of the American Revolution, and SAR, Sons of the American Revolution" and how to become members!

The speakers will be Twila Helferich (DAR) and Rod Wilson (SAR).

[momfischer@comcast.net](mailto:momfischer@comcast.net)

### **Brown Bag—Tuesday April 5**

**THE HOUSE AT 1470 WEST TIENKEN ROAD**

Tuesday, April 5, from 12 noon- 1:00p.m. at the Rochester Community House, 816 Ludlow Street in Rochester. The historical House at 1470 West Tienken Road is connected with many well-remembered people from the Rochester area. McCullough, Kiekbusch, MacGregor and many others.

Guest speaker, Ed Rice, present owner, will guide you through the interesting history of this house and the stories connected with it.

Bring your lunch if you wish. Cookies and coffee will be provided. There is no admission. For more information call Rod Wilson [\(248\) 651-6178](tel:248-651-6178).

## From the President...

Rod Wilson



Thank you for your prayers and thoughts with the passing of Susan's father Kenneth Siewert. He is what everyone referred to as "a gentleman's gentleman". He lived to age 92, one week short of his 93 birthday and was born in Rochester, Michigan. Ken was always active with playing golf until he was in his late 80's, driving until a year ago and planting his own garden as late as last spring. He will be greatly missed.

During the past few months we have been busy. We had another outstanding Appraisal Day with proceeds around a thousand dollars. Thank you to Colleen Barkham and all the people who helped make this a success. Congratulations to LaVere Webster who received the PCCA Cultural and Arts Award for his restoration work on the 1938 Marvin Beerbohm Mural. Susan and I along with Penny Reddish have been working with the City of Rochester to identify photos that could be enlarged and displayed throughout the Municipal Building. So far they have enlarged four photos that are now available for viewing in the City Council Chamber. We continue to be part of the planning for this year's Heritage Days on May 28 and 29, the Research Committee is busy researching and finalizing applications for historic sites to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Oral History Committee continue their work of capturing the stories of old Rochester area. Many other members are busy with other projects including your Board of Directors with their daily responsibilities. Thank you to all for making this the best Historical Society.

**The Civil War and Oakland County** is the theme of a free workshop to be held Saturday, April 16 from 8:30 until noon. Topics to

be covered include The Underground Railroad, the county Civil War Mapping project (presented by RAHS member Melissa Lugenski) and county communities and their participation in the Civil War Sesquicentennial. More information is available at oakgov.com/historic/ or from Rod.

**Annual Rochester Area Prayer Breakfast** — This year's Annual Prayer Breakfast is on Thursday, May 5 at 7:00 a.m. at the Shotwell-Gustafason Pavilion at Oakland University. Tickets are \$20 each. RAHS will be buying tickets for at least one table allowing our members to sit together. You may buy your ticket from us. These are on a first come first served basis. If you have never  
**President** continued on Page 5

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## Webster honored by PCCA

LaVere Webster was honored March 24 by the Paint Creek Center for the Arts during their first annual regional Mayors' Arts and Culture Awards.

The event, held at the Royal Park Hotel in downtown Rochester, recognizes those who are fostering arts and culture in significant ways within their communities. The participating municipalities are representative of PCCA's region and nominated a distinguished individual or group to receive the award for fostering the arts in their respective communities

LaVere was honored for his work on the Rochester Community Schools mural in the Harrison Room.

**Heritage Days** are coming up on Memorial weekend and again this year we will have two booths. One will be our regular booth where we have our products for sale. The other will be the picture information booth that we set up last year. This extra area, dedicated to historical pictures of Rochester, was a smashing success. We will be needing extra helpers this year to cover both areas, especially since Rod will be out of town. I hope many of our **Heritage Days** continued on Page 6

## Antique Appraisal Day a Success

Colleen Barkham, Chairperson

Our Antique Appraisal Day on March 6<sup>th</sup> was a fun day for many of our members. If you worked with an appraiser, you probably learned a few things about antiques! We had a steady flow of customers to keep our appraisers busy. We usually net \$1000-1200 for the event and this day was in the ballpark!

Thank-you to our appraisers: Todd Cunningham, Bill Lynch, Sue Kane, Fred Fleming, LaVere Webster, Bob Krug, Bill Pietrzyk, and Paul Haig.



Thank-you to local businesses for gift certificates and food donations: Knapp's Donuts, Golden Eagle Restaurant, Penny Black/Hills Bar and Grill, Royal Park Hotel Restaurant, Mitchell's Fish Market, O'Conner's Public House, Rochester Mills Beer Co., Bravo Cucina Italiana, and Gordon Food Service. Thank-you to all our volunteers that greeted visitors, managed the kitchen, worked with appraisers, and helped to keep things moving smoothly. A Great Day!

## Join the Rochester Avon Historical Society today!

Help to keep what is significant...

Refurbish what is historic ...

Maintain what is well-known.

- Bi-monthly newsletters
- Monthly meetings with guest speakers
- Downtown Rochester historical walking tours
- Monthly lunchtime talks by long-time area residents

Dues: Individual \$18, Family \$25, Contributor \$35. Mail your check made payable to the Society with your name, address, telephone and email address to:

Rochester Avon Historical Society, P O Box 80783, Rochester, MI 48308-0783.

Request electronic delivery of the *ERA* from [tenormary@wowway.com](mailto:tenormary@wowway.com)

## Elevator Granted National Historic Status

From *Rochester Patch*, January 25, 2011, Tiffany Dziurman Stozick rochesterpatch.com

The Rochester Elevator, which stands at the corner of East University and Water streets in downtown Rochester, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

“The Elevator being placed on the National Register of Historic Places is a great accomplishment,” said Rod Wilson, president of the Rochester-Avon Historical Society. “This building is an icon in downtown Rochester. Over the years it was the hub of activity in the city as farmers frequented this location.”

Created under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is administered by the National Park Service and is a program that supports “public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect historic and archaeological resources.” The website for the National Register noted that listings include structures, buildings, districts, sites and objects that are considered “significant to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture.”

The Rochester Elevator was listed on the National Register of Historic Places because of its economic significance to Rochester, the surrounding communities and the state of Michigan.

In the nomination form it's noted that the elevator “provided a crucial transportation mechanism for shipment of crops and allowed farmers to store their grain until it could be shipped to market at a time when it would command the most advantageous price.”

It's also stated in the nomination form that the “grain elevator was responsible for positioning Rochester as an agricultural marketplace within Oakland County, which led the State of Michigan in wheat production at that time.”

In the 19th century, wooden grain elevators, like the one in Rochester, were important centers of activity in the community, as farmers brought their grain to elevators for storage and eventual shipment. The term “elevator” is associated with the structure’s mechanism for scooping up, cleaning and depositing grain in storage units – such as silos or bins. The mechanism that elevated the grain could be run by steam, horsepower or, in later years, gasoline and electric power.

“These types of buildings started popping up throughout the Midwest after the Civil War,” [Deborah] Larsen said, “as the railroad lines made their way into the interior and started connecting small towns and rural areas with the bigger cities.”

Brothers Charles and Albert Griggs built the Rochester Elevator in 1880 along the Detroit and Bay City Railroad (later known as the Michigan Central Railroad). Construction of the grain elevator was big news in Rochester. Larsen’s research points to a Nov. 8, 1880, report in the *Rochester Era* that predicted the elevator would make Rochester “one of the most important business points in this portion of the State.”

## In Memoriam

### Daune "Toni" O'Brien Hopper



Donations in memory of Toni Hopper have been received by the Society. Toni grew up on 4th Street and attended all her years of schooling at the Harrison building, the current home of the Rochester Schools Administration. Toni was a member of the Eastern Star #165, Descendants of Founders of Ancient Windsor (CT), Michigan Sesquicentennial Pioneer and Rochester-Avon Historical Society.

### Kenneth A. Siewert

The father of Susan Wilson, Ken was born in in Rochester in 1918. He graduated from Rochester High School in 1936 and was employed by National Twist Drill & Tool Co. until his retirement in 1981. He was a member of St. John Lutheran Church and of the Historical Society.



### Margaret Rottschaefter Norton

Margaret was born August 16, 1913 in South India to Dr. Bernard and Bernice Rottschaefter, Dutch Reformed missionaries. Her early education was at the Kodaikanal



International School. She earned her B.A. from Hope college and her Masters from WSU. she was a librarian at Mount Clemens high School and a long-time member of the Rochester Historical

Commission, the Mt. Avon Cemetery Board, and of the Historical Society.

### Mary Jean Myers

Mary Jean was a friend of RAHS and volunteer as an appraiser at our Appraisal days. She served on the Rochester Historical Commission and was a docent at Meadowbrook Hall. Her childhood "little log cabin" is still in use at Dinosaur Hill Nature Preserve having been presented to them a number of years ago.



**President** continued from Page 2 attended one of the Annual Prayer Breakfasts, you will be pleased with the program that morning and eating breakfast with about 800 guests. This year's speaker is Kirk Cameron, a television and film actor. This event is sponsored by the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce. Contact Rod Wilson, 248-651-6178 if you interested in purchasing a ticket.

### 2011 WALKING TOURS

Look for the smiling man in the top hat at the Western Knitting Mills, South side of Water Street. Tours last about 2 hours and reservations are NOT needed.

- Thursday April 28 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday May 17 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Monday June 20 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Friday July 22 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Wednesday August 17 @ 7:00 p.m.
- Sunday September 18 @ 1:00 p.m.
- Saturday October 8 @ 1:00 p.m.

## Have you read these books by Bob Lytle?

*Three Rivers Crossing*, takes Walker Morrison, the great-great-grandson of Lemuel Taylor, back to the settling stages of Stony Creek. There he meets 12-year-old Danny Taylor, his great-grand uncle. The two manage to keep Walker's time-travel a secret while attempting to get him back to his own time. To earn his keep Walker must adapt to the activities being conducted at that period. Walker helps build a mill, plant crops and deal with local Indians. Then, just as suddenly as his arrival, he is thrust back into his 20<sup>th</sup> century home, a much wiser boy and more appreciative of his past.

*A Pitch In Time*, has Mack Dugan, a recent baseball-playing transplant from Georgia, whisked back into 1864 Rochester. Again, as with Walker, Mack's secret must be kept as he attempts to fit in with the culture and conditions of the day. He is taken in by John Norton, the local drug-

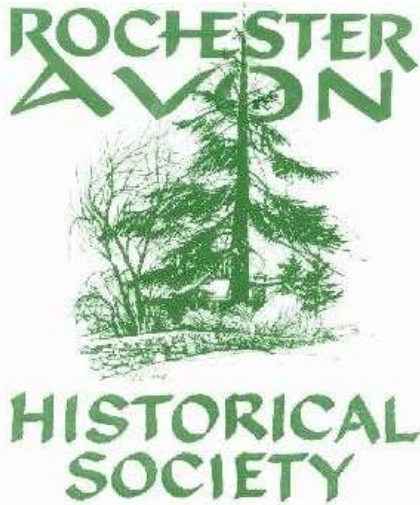
gist, and his family. Pharmacist Norton's son has just returned from a Rebel prison camp, missing one leg and angry at anything Southern—such as Mack's unavoidable drawl. Mack's natural baseball ability lands him on the local baseball team where he finds the sport a very different one from the modern game.

*Pitch* is more a commentary on life in Michigan at that time than it is about baseball, but the hook has brought a solid group of readers for many reasons.

**Heritage Days** continued from Page 3

members and readers will volunteer to help staff the booths. There will be sign up sheets available at all upcoming RAHS functions. Also you can E-mail me at: [nark1non@gmail.com](mailto:nark1non@gmail.com) and I can let you know the available times and days that we will need helpers.

**James Hopkins**



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*Pride in  
Preserving  
the Past*