

# RELIVING The Rochester Era

March/April

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2015

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## 'You Like Us ... You Really Like Us!'



### "1,000 'Likes' in 1,000 Hours" Campaign

[View on www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

We've been working to increase our social media presence, and it appears to be working beautifully.

Exposure on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter can really drive public interest in an organization. We rely on social media to provide awareness of our nonprofit and the events and benefits we offer our membership and the community in general, while requiring absolutely no monetary investment for these services.

Our audience grows exponentially with each and every "Like" we receive on Facebook, because our name and information become available to every contact of every person and organization giving us that "thumbs up."

Facebook is a valuable resource for 501(c)3 organizations when used strategically.

- Free event announcements can be posted and, for a small, optional monetary investment, these postings can be "boosted" to a much larger audience.

- The public is able to indicate planned attendance at events we post. Although, historically, only a small percentage actually post their intention to attend, those who do increase RAHS' visibility within their own circle of contacts which increases "advertising" for us.

- Timely interaction occurs with viewers of our Facebook page. Our Facebook administrators are able to field questions and respond to comments, practically instantaneously.

So, let's aim for 1,000 *new* "Likes" in 1,000 hours. Ask your family and friends

with Facebook accounts to ["Find us on Facebook"](#) and  us!

## President's Message ...

### So Many Good Things Happening

RAHS is on a roll.

The historical society held another successful Antique Appraisal Day in March, led by project chair Carol Tough. This event – one of our major fundraisers of the year – drew visitors from all over the greater Rochester area and beyond.



Brian Dunphy, President  
Rochester-Avon  
Historical Society

We've also expanded the RAHS Board of Directors and added a new director. The Board has made the ERA newsletter editor, a role now filled ably by Leslie Mack, a directorship position on the Board. The Board also has elected a new Membership Director, Bree Boettner, to fill the position vacated by Leslie. Congratulations to Leslie and Bree, and best wishes to them in their new responsibilities.

More good things are coming in the weeks and months ahead. Speakers and topics for our March and April Brown Bag Lunch and Evening Programs at the library are locked in and detailed on page 5 of this newsletter edition.

Coming in May, the ever-popular downtown walking tours will resume, and Greater Rochester Heritage Days will again focus on local history. You'll see more information about these soon.

We publicize our events in a variety of ways. One of the most visible and effective ways is through Facebook. The more people who see our Facebook posts, the more effectively we can promote our programs. As you saw in this issue's front-page story, we're looking to expand our Facebook presence through "1,000 'Likes' in 1,000 Hours." Please join us in this effort by asking your family and friends to "Find us on Facebook" and "Like" us!

As always, the efforts of dedicated volunteers make possible all of our programs and projects. We have a need for volunteers for our many activities. Please watch your email for a message detailing our volunteer opportunities. To volunteer, call **248-266-5440**, or email [rahsupdates@gmail.com](mailto:rahsupdates@gmail.com).

## 'Help Wanted!'

### Help Needed in Finance Area

By Rod Wilson

Do you want to have some fun and be an active part of the Rochester-Avon Historical Society? You do? Well, we have many opportunities.

We're looking for two directors in the Finance Area: Director of Merchandising and Director of Fundraising.

The Director of Merchandising would take care of the items we have for sale and would enlist the help of others in making things like new postcards or collectible cups picturing historic local buildings.

The Director of Fundraising would have the responsibility for enlisting members to be in charge of various fundraising events, such as the RAHS booth at the Greater Rochester Heritage Days event on Memorial Day weekend, our booth at the Downtown Sidewalk Sales in July and Kris Kringle Market in December.

Two other projects currently have project chairs: Appraisal Day, chaired by Carol Tough, and the Mount Avon Cemetery Tour in September, chaired by Deborah Larsen.

We all have some type of resource that we can personally share to help our Society grow and flourish. Please call me at **248-651-6178**. I would be happy to discuss your options.

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society (RAHS) was founded in 1969 to help preserve, collect and interpret the history of the greater Rochester area for present and future generations.

For more information, including a list of upcoming events, visit online at:

[www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org)

## Opening Night: Another Step! Theatre in Downtown Rochester ... A Dream in Progress

By Katharine J. Burns



The Committee has completed its work on interviewing professional fundraisers, and at the January, 2015, meeting there was a unanimous decision to not go forward with hiring of a full-time person. At our November meeting, we had a two-hour seminar by one of the fundraisers, *pro bono*, on *The Essence of Fund Raising*.

Two of the persons interviewed, who had extensive experience, stated that the committee was ready to begin its work of fundraising and that, in the future, we could hire someone as a consultant/coach to advise on specific issues.

The committee has also organized two separate smaller committees. One group, called "The Funky Pop-Up-Movie Theatre Committee" will be working on creating a pop-up-movie theatre in downtown Rochester over the next weeks/months to show interesting movies for the community. Details will be advertised when the schedule of venues and movies is completed. The second committee, the Promotion Committee, is writing up the documents related to fundraising, such as tax benefits for donors and how to honor donors at all levels of giving. Also the legal documents have now been signed at the Community Foundation of Greater Rochester, where all donations will be deposited.

We are continuing our fundraising and currently have \$10,000 in our venture fund (for website, flyers, etc. expenses). The Rochester-Avon Historical Society gave a \$5,000 donation in November 2014, and there was also a \$5,000 anonymous donation. The Committee will soon be ready to actively fundraise to purchase a building in downtown Rochester and to restore it.

**Do you know the history of theatres in Downtown Rochester?** Well, there has been a theatre on Main Street since 1913 to 1984, and the community supported two of the theatres simultaneously for a number of years and through World War II. **This project's mission is to restore the history of a theatre in Downtown Rochester.**

Lastly, the Committee has welcomed two new members from the community who asked to participate in the project, and we also have two students from the Oakland University Cinema Studies Program. They had started a movie club on campus called "The Classic Movie Club." Welcome to you all and thank you for your creative ideas and contagious enthusiasm. A very big thank you goes out to all of the Committee members for their amazing dedication and work on this wonderful project.

**Don't forget to check out our new website:  
[www.theatregrouprc.org](http://www.theatregrouprc.org)**



## Great Everything Sale



(Pictured L to R:  
June Hopaluk,  
Dr. Richard  
Stamps,  
Colleen Barkham,  
Carol Tough,  
Donna Cherry)

Once again, we enjoyed the company of some of our friends from the Oakland Township Historical Society, this time during the last week of January, working side by side to unpack, sort, organize, distribute, clean, arrange and price items for sale during the "Great Everything Sale" at the Rochester Community House on Ludlow.

Since we are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we must be ever mindful of our fiscal responsibility to our members. RAHS' involvement with this event serves to reduce the rental fees charged for our use of this venue to host our Brown Bag and Annual Potluck Picnic functions held at the Community House. Thanks to all of those pictured—and some who weren't available for the photo—who volunteered to help.

## We Welcome These New RAHS Members

Raised in Rochester and a graduate of Rochester Adams High School, **Holly Bledsoe** moved to Macomb Twp. and raised three children from a previous marriage. **Thomas Bledsoe**, originally from Ft. Wayne, Indiana, moved to Rochester in the early '80s as a VP at General Dynamics and resided here



for 20 years before relocating for the next five years to Madrid, Spain.

Returning to the U.S. after taking an early retirement, Tom and Holly lived in

Macomb until her youngest son graduated from high school. They then built a home in Rochester Hills and moved into it in September 2014. Being here also brought Holly nearer to relatives in this area.

The couple enjoys a blended family of five children and four grandchildren. As empty nesters (aside from those occasions when Holly's college-aged son returns home from school), Holly and Tom enjoy traveling, especially via cruise ship, which affords them the opportunity to see many destinations. On a more local scale, they enjoy golfing, bicycling and recently have discovered kayaking. "We both really love Rochester and use the bike trails in the summer for biking and walking," says Holly.

Holly says that she and Tom enjoy the downtown feel that Rochester offers. "Since we moved to Rochester Hills in September, we have joined the Rochester-Avon Historical Society, Neighbors and Newcomers group, enrolled in dance lessons at Rochester Ballroom and joined a gym (ugh!) ... oh, and the OPC (sure wish they would have picked a better name for that place). We really love this area and think it's important to be a part of the community by getting involved in the community."

We extend a warm welcome to Tom and Holly and look forward to offering plenty of opportunity for involvement within our organization.

Originally from Clarkston, **Brooke Collins** and her family moved to Mio, Michigan, in 1990 after her father's retirement. The family purchased acreage and relocated from Clarkston what is today the 20-acre Lazy C Livestock Farm where they previously bred and registered Alpine goats, and currently house registered Overhasli goats, donkeys, chickens, cats, dogs and a horse. They also maintain vegetable and flower gardens on the property.



Brooke joined the RAHS to expand her family's knowledge of their genealogy. Her mother, Joan (Dobat) Collins, was a member of the first graduating class (1957) of the current Rochester High School, and the Dobat roots trace back 100 years or more in the Rochester area as land and orchard owners and local business owners (namely, Dobat Pools, Dobat TV Repair once located near Fifth and Main Streets and a buggy paint shop located "under the bridge"). With family members still residing on a portion of "Glenwood Acres" farm near Dutton and Brewster Roads, and with ancestors laid to rest in historic Mount Avon Cemetery, the family retains a connection to our community.

While attending Mesa Community College in Arizona, Brooke immersed herself in technical theatre: costume, hair and set design, stage management, sound and lighting. She also enjoyed her stints for a couple of years as stage manager/hawker for the local Renaissance Festival while living there.

Her artistic interests are many including, but certainly not limited to, charcoal and pastel drawing, writing poetry and short stories, woodworking, ceramics, jewelrymaking, crocheting and repurposing architectural materials.

Brooke has worked as a service specialist with children with disabilities and has been employed in adult group and nursing homes.

We welcome Brooke and look forward to a long and mutually enjoyable connection.

## Upcoming Programs ... Brown Bag and Monthly Library Lecture

**Brown Bag Meeting**  
**Tuesday, March 3, 2015, at Noon**  
Rochester Community House  
816 Ludlow Street

**FREE AND  
OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC**

### "The Dodge Family"

Robert Gaylor, retired assistant director of the Oakland University Library, will take an in-depth look at the individual members of the Dodge family. In his 38 years at the university, Gaylor was in charge of Special Collections and Rare Books, but he performed every job at the library. He became very knowledgeable about the Dodge family, and he remembers Mrs. Matilda (Dodge) Wilson bringing birthday cakes to the university students.

Questions about the historic Dodge family and the early days of the university will be welcome. Gaylor is also very knowledgeable about the buildings on the Meadow Brook estate.

Bring your lunch and enjoy the free coffee, tea and cookies for this casual program.

**RAHS Library Lecture**  
**Thursday, March 5, 2015, 7:00 p.m.**  
Rochester Hills Public Library  
500 Olde Town Road

**FREE AND  
OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC**

### "Detroit City of Champions"

Did you know that the Tigers, Lions and Red Wings all won their FIRST championships in the same season? Did you know that Detroit could boast of having a world-record holder or a world champion in almost every other sport in that same season? In September of that year, Joe Louis, a young professional boxer, had just finished beating the world's finest boxers on his way to winning the Associated Press' award for "Most Outstanding Athlete of 1935." WMU graduate and Detroit resident, Charles Avison, will discuss the incredible series of events that took place in 1935, the middle of the Great Depression, and how this story still carries relevance 80 years later.

He will also discuss "Play Ball," the first baseball motion picture with sound ever made. It was filmed in Detroit during the 1934 Tiger season when baseball mania was sweeping the city. DVD copies of this movie, which had faded into obscurity, are now available.

**Brown Bag Meeting**  
**Tuesday, April 7, 2015, at Noon**  
Rochester Community House  
816 Ludlow Street

**FREE AND  
OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC**

### "Collecting Vintage Postcards: History at Your Fingertips"

Carroll Cook will discuss and present actual examples of postcards representing the Golden Age of Postcards, 1900-1920. These postcards will represent several different genres of the period including holidays, humor, patriotism, WWI, advertising and town and city life. She will reveal some of the stories and topics written on the back of the cards, as well, and discuss how they relate to the overall history of the period.

In addition to a B.A. in history and English from Oakland University, Cook earned a M.A. in Educational Psychology from Eastern Michigan University. She taught at Madison Heights Lamphere and Brighton High Schools.

Bring your lunch and enjoy the free coffee, tea and cookies for this casual program.

**RAHS Library Lecture**  
**Thursday, April 2, 2015, 7:00 p.m.**  
Rochester Hills Public Library  
500 Olde Town Road

**FREE AND  
OPEN TO THE  
PUBLIC**

### "Killing Jimmy Hoffa"

Local author, Scott Burnstein, joined forces with filmmaker, Al Profit, to produce the new documentary, "Killing Jimmy Hoffa." Burnstein will be here to dispel the rumors regarding the disappearance of the former Teamster leader who disappeared without a trace on July 20, 1975. He will show clips of the new film, as well as discuss one of the most infamous unsolved crimes in 20th-century American history.

Born and raised in metro Detroit, Burnstein has an undergraduate college degree from Indiana University and a law degree from John Marshall in Chicago. He is an author, journalist, attorney and organized crime historian who is considered the premiere authority on past and present mob activity in the Detroit area.

He has appeared on numerous television and radio shows including NPR's "Fresh Air" and the History Channel's "Gangland."

## Downtown Walking Tour Dates Announced



by Rod Wilson

Mark your calendars for the 2015 Downtown Walking Tour dates. If you have not been on one of the Walking Tours, come on along.

Members are free. On the day of the walk, while I'm collecting from the participants, please tell me you're a member, as I do not know all of you.

Bring your friends. Seniors 55+ and students are \$3. Those under the age of 55 are \$5.

We meet outside at the northeast corner of the Western Knitting Mill at Water and Fourth Streets.

If you're interested in helping by handling one of the tour books, please give me a call at **248-651-6178**.



RAHS member, Bill Williams, assists by sharing historic photos with tour participants during a Downtown Walking Tour.

### 2015 Walking Tour Schedule

May 18	Monday	7:00 p.m.
June 16	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.
July 15	Wednesday	7:00 p.m.
August 21	Friday	7:00 p.m.
September 19	Saturday	1:00 p.m.
October 18	Sunday	1:00 p.m.



"Look for the man in the top hat."

### Don't Miss These Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendar now!

- Brown Bag Lunch  
Tuesday, March 3, 2015  
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.
- Evening Program @ Library  
Thursday, March 5, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

MARCH						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

- Evening Program @ Library  
Thursday, April 2, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

APRIL						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

- Brown Bag Lunch  
Tuesday, April 7, 2015  
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.

MAY						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

- Brown Bag Lunch  
Tuesday, May 5, 2015  
12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m.
- Evening Program @ Library  
Thursday, May 7, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

- Historic Downtown Walking Tour  
Monday, May 18, 2015  
7:00 p.m.

- Greater Rochester Heritage Days  
Saturday, May 23, 2015 - 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Sunday, May 24, 2015 - 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## Contact Information for RAHS Board of Directors and Committees

### RAHS Board of Directors

Brian Dunphy, President	248-266-5624
Carol Tough, Vice President, Operations	248-375-0084
Rod Wilson, Vice President, Finance	248-651-6178
Janet Potton, Vice President, Development	248-652-7296
June Hopaluk, Recording Secretary	248-652-9242
Mary Howarth, Treasurer	248-375-0206
Tiffany Stozicki, Director, Communications	248-650-0415
Bree Boettner, Director, Membership	248-515-0881
Leslie Mack, Director, Era Newsletter Editor	586-924-4961
Margaret Bartos, Director, Programs	248-759-4768
Cary Downer, Director, Special Projects	248-652-1854
Gail Kemler, Director, Historical Preservation	248-651-0907

### Committee Chairpersons

Deborah Larsen, Research	248-375-2974
David Gifford, Media	248-941-7587

## Volunteer Areas of Interest

### How would you like to participate?

- Annual Picnic
- Antique Appraisal Day
- Historic Research
- Historic Walking Tour Guide/Assistant
- Fundraising
- Genealogy Research
- Heritage Days
- Oral History
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- Sidewalk Sales
- Special Project Volunteer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Feel free to suggest. If we don't offer it, we may consider adding it!)

<input type="checkbox"/> New	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal
\$10 <input type="checkbox"/>	Student <input type="checkbox"/>
\$18 <input type="checkbox"/>	Individual <input type="checkbox"/>
\$25 <input type="checkbox"/>	Family <input type="checkbox"/>
\$35 <input type="checkbox"/>	Contributing <input type="checkbox"/>
\$75 <input type="checkbox"/>	Institution <input type="checkbox"/>
\$250 <input type="checkbox"/>	Patron <input type="checkbox"/>

## Join the Rochester-Avon Historical Society Today! Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Volunteer Areas of Interest

How would you like to participate?

- Annual Picnic
- Antique Appraisal Day
- Historic Research
- Historic Walking Tour Guide/Assistant
- Fundraising
- Genealogy Research
- Heritage Days
- Oral History
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- Sidewalk Sales
- Special Project Volunteer
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Feel free to suggest. If we don't offer it, we may consider adding it!)



Mail completed form with check payable to:

**Rochester-Avon Historical Society**

P O Box 80783

Rochester, MI 48308-0783

## Remembering Rochester

By Deborah Larsen

Originally Posted Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2009

### Thou Harbinger of Spring, O Dairy Queen

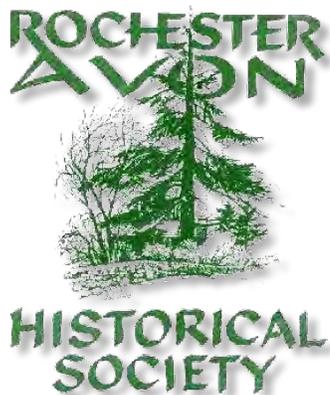
We watched for it, breathlessly, every day as we passed by on North Main St. As the gray end of February melted into March, we waited for those magical words to appear on the letterboard marquee near the street. More important than Groundhog Day, spotting the first red robin in the backyard or the opening pitch of the Tigers' exhibition season, the Dairy Queen's announcement "OPENING THURSDAY – 500 FREE CONES" was our annual harbinger of spring as kids growing up in Rochester.

And when that happy day finally arrived, we ditched our books the minute we got home from school and rushed down the block to join the line for one of those free ice cream cones. (And it was always a long line, so some of you must have been there, too!) As we savored those small vanilla cones - no chocolate dip or nuts – the last of the gray, exhaust tinted snow plow piles receded from the curbs and sidewalks, spring returned to Rochester, and summer vacation was just around the corner.

The Rochester Dairy Queen still continues this spring tradition, and although I no longer stand in line for a free ice cream cone, I can't hold back a smile when I see that announcement each March. It brings back fond memories of simpler days. O harbinger of spring, O Dairy Queen!



A 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization



P O Box 80783  
Rochester, MI 48308-0783



"Pride in Preserving the Past"