



RELIVING

# The Rochester Era

July/Aug.

The Rochester-Avon Historical Society Newsletter

2016

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## Heritage Days 2016

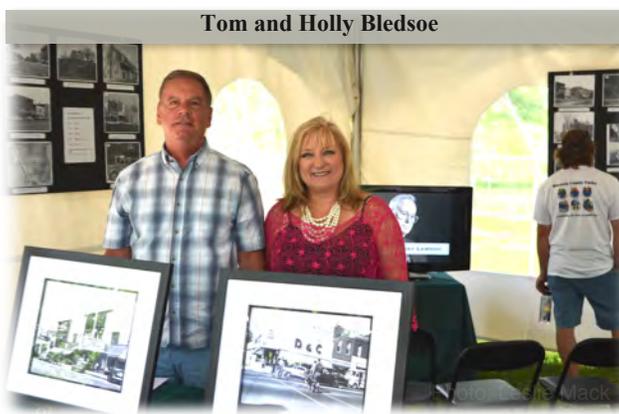


Member Volunteers Worked our Merchandise Booth

We couldn't do what we do without our dedicated member volunteers—including, but not limited to, (Top) Dolores Kuczajda, (Center L to R) Carol Tough, Debbie Larsen, (Left) Cary Downer and Judy Sloan. Our sincere thanks for sharing your time and talents to benefit our organization.

## Our Photo Booth Received a Complete Makeover this Year!

RAHS board members Tom and Holly Bledsoe developed a system to make available for purchase dozens of historic Rochester photographs from the Rod and Susan Wilson collection. These images soon will be available for purchase online through our website, with all proceeds benefiting the programs and projects of the Rochester-Avon Historical Society. Updates will be forthcoming to our membership as they become available.



Tom and Holly Bledsoe

One corner of the photo booth was outfitted with a television running a loop of our 1998 award-winning documentary DVD, "The Early Rochester Area: Our Legacy—Your Heritage." ([This item is available for purchase at booth events and through our online store at www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org.](#)) Seating was provided as a welcome respite for festival attendees to escape the heat, rest their feet and enjoy this professional production narrated by [Mort Crim](#).

## President's Message

### Election adds new Board members, others shift roles ...



**Brian Dunphy, President**  
Rochester-Avon  
Historical Society

The RAHS Board keeps getting better and better.

At our annual meeting and picnic June 8, historical society members elected an outstanding group of officers and directors for the next two years. Two new members have joined the RAHS Board, and several other Board members have changed positions.

New member Mike French has taken on the role of Second Vice President - Finance, and Barb Bates has joined the Board as Director of Special Projects. Janet Potton has stepped down as Third Vice President - Development and was elected Director of Membership. Tom Bledsoe has stepped up as Third Vice President, and former Membership Director Bree Boettner has moved to Director of Historical Preservation.

Gail Kemler, who served as Director of Historical Preservation for the past two years and in a variety of other Board positions for many years before, has been appointed to the honorary Board position of Historian.

All other Board members, including myself, continue in their current positions for another two-year term. You'll find a complete listing of the Board, their positions and their contact information on page 7.

With this election, we now have an opening for just one Board member: Director of Fundraising Events. This individual oversees the committee chairs of [Antique Appraisal Day](#), the [Mount Avon Cemetery Walk](#) and grant writing, as well as sales at Heritage Days and [Kris Kringle Market](#). It's a tremendous opportunity for a member to get more involved with the historical society, and I urge you to consider taking on this position. If you're interested, please contact RAHS at **248-266-5440** or [rahsupdates@gmail.com](mailto:rahsupdates@gmail.com).

### Member awards presented for outstanding service ...



**June Hopaluk**  
Lois Collet  
Award Recipient

Also at the meeting, we presented Year-End Awards to two very deserving members. The Lois Collet Award for the Outstanding Member of the Board of Directors went to June Hopaluk. June has done an excellent job as Secretary and Corresponding Secretary and has led and worked diligently and enthusiastically on many other RAHS projects.

We presented the Mary Eberline Award for the Outstanding Member to Samantha Lawrence, who chairs the Oral History Committee and has worked to organize and digitize a large volume of oral history tapes and transcripts.



**Samantha Lawrence**  
Mary Eberline  
Award Recipient

Congratulations to June and Samantha!

### Michigan historic districts legislation update ...

**You may already have heard** that the bill to amend the state's enabling legislation for historic districts has died in committee. The draft bill included provisions that would significantly weaken local historic district ordinances throughout the state and place many irreplaceable historic resources at risk. We have not, however, heard the last of this and still need to remain vigilant – the bill may be introduced in a different form at a later date.

## Cemetery Walk Tells Settlers' Stories

by Deborah Larsen



**Deborah Larsen**  
Writer, director and producer of the  
RAHS Mount Avon Cemetery Walk

Our 2016 Mount Avon Cemetery Walk is coming up on Saturday, Sept. 24, with tours running every 15 minutes beginning at 1:00 p.m. This year's theme is "Settlers in the Stones," and the tour will introduce our audiences to some of the people who settled and built our community. You've seen their names on streets and



buildings—now hear their stories told in the first person by costumed re-enactors. The cemetery walk is an interesting and entertaining way to learn more about our

local history as we approach the 200th anniversary of the founding of Rochester.

*Please note that this year, tours will depart from [the cemetery gate at Second and Wilcox streets](#), NOT from the municipal parking lot on Walnut Street as has been the case in past years.*

*Event parking will be available in the [Rochester Community Schools administration building lot at Fourth and Wilcox streets](#), two blocks from the cemetery gate.*



Tickets go on sale on July 18 and are \$15 each. Tours will go on rain or shine. Tickets may be purchased in person at the [Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce](#), 71 Walnut Street, or online at [www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org/our-store](http://www.rochesteravonhistoricalsociety.org/our-store). Proceeds from ticket sales for this family-friendly event support all of the programs and projects of the Rochester-Avon Historical Society.

### In Memoriam 2015-2016

Our thoughts turn to  
fellow RAHS member

**Gladys Agnes Hughes**

who passed away shortly after the printing  
of our most recent newsletter issue.

We extend our sincere appreciation  
for her memorial directive in support of the  
Rochester-Avon Historical Society.

## Brown Bag and Library Programs Return in September

**Brown Bag Meeting**  
**Tuesday, Sept. 6, Noon**  
 Rochester Community House  
 816 Ludlow Street

**FREE AND OPEN  
 TO THE PUBLIC**

Bring your lunch! Free coffee,  
 tea and cookies provided.



Fire Chief John Cieslik

### “History of the Fire Department”

City of Rochester Fire  
 Chief John Cieslik will  
 discuss the history of the  
 fire department.

**Library Lecture**  
**Thursday, Sept. 1 at 7:00 p.m.**  
 Rochester Hills Public Library  
 500 Olde Town Road

**FREE AND  
 OPEN TO  
 THE PUBLIC**

### “Lost Car Companies of Detroit”

Among more than 200 auto companies that tried their luck in the Motor City, just three remain: Ford, General Motors and Chrysler. But many of those lost to history have colorful stories worth telling. For instance, J.J. Cole forgot to put brakes in his new auto, so on the first test run, he had to drive it in circles until it ran out of gas. Brothers John and Horace Dodge often trashed saloons during wild evenings but used their great personal wealth to pay for the damage the next day (if they could remember where they had been). David D. Buick went from being the founder of his own leading auto company to working the information desk at the Detroit Board of Trade. Author Alan Naldrett explores these and more tales of automakers who ultimately failed but shaped the industry and designs putting wheels on the road today.



Alan Naldrett

Alan Naldrett is a Michigan historian with master’s degrees in Archival Science and Library and Information Science from Wayne State University. He received his bachelor’s degree from Michigan State University where he started one of the nation’s first used record stores. He was an academic research librarian at Baker College of Auburn Hills for over 10 years, where he edited the student and the alumni newsletters as well as maintaining their college’s archives.

Alan owned a comic book store and was a commercial insurance broker in California. He was a charter member of the Macomb County Historical Commission and is the Treasurer and past President of the Chesterfield Township Public Library Board of Trustees. He plays in a blues band, has written six books and writes articles for many different publications. [“The Lost Car Companies of Detroit”](#) is his latest book.

## RAHS Historic Downtown Walking Tours Educate and Entertain!

### Remaining Dates for 2016

July 20	(Wednesday)	7:00 p.m.
Aug. 19	(Friday)	7:00 p.m.
Sept. 17	(Saturday)	1:00 p.m.
Oct. 16	(Sunday)	1:00 p.m.

- [All tours begin at the Western Knitting Mills \(Water and Fourth Streets - meet at the northeast corner of the building\)](#)
- Tours last approximately 2-1/2 hours
- Rain or shine
- Reservations not required
- RAHS members tour free of charge
  - Non-member cost: \$5 Adults
  - \$3 Seniors (55+) and Students

### “Look for the man in the top hat!”



Rod Wilson  
 “Mr. Rochester”

## Benefits of Membership in the Rochester-Avon Historical Society

Free admission for RAHS members to our Historic Downtown Walking Tours



Discounts on RAHS non-sale merchandise during booth events (i.e., Heritage Days and Kris Kringle Market)



Free entrée and beverages at Annual Member Picnic/Potluck



Eligibility for annual Board of Directors' recognition awards for outstanding member contribution



Bimonthly award-winning, full-color newsletter (via first-class mail or direct link via email)



Monthly email and post card reminders for regularly scheduled and special events



**The satisfaction of supporting the many RAHS educational and preservation products, projects and programs that benefit our shared community**

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)

## Don't Miss these Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendar now!

JULY						
sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
26	27	28	29	30	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	1	2	3	4	5	6

No Brown Bag Lunch

No Evening Program @ Library

[Historic Downtown Walking Tour](#)  
Wednesday, July 20  
7:00 p.m.

No Brown Bag Lunch

### AUGUST

No Evening Program @ Library

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
31	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	1	2	3

[Historic Downtown Walking Tour](#)  
Friday, Aug. 19  
7:00 p.m.

### SEPTEMBER

Evening Program @ Library  
Thursday, Sept. 1  
7:00 p.m.

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
28	29	30	31	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	1

Brown Bag Lunch  
Tuesday, Sept. 6  
Noon to 1:00 p.m.

[Oakland Twp. HDC Square Dance at Cranberry Lake Farm](#)  
Saturday, Sept. 10  
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

[Historic Downtown Walking Tour](#)  
Saturday, Sept. 17  
1:00 p.m.

Mount Avon Cemetery Walk  
Saturday, Sept. 24  
Tours begin at 1:00 p.m.

## New Member John Mohr's Memories and Motivation

By Carol Tough

John Mohr joined the Rochester-Avon Historical Society in April of this year. Originally from Royal Oak, he moved to Rochester in 1968.

His father, John Sr., taught 5th grade in the Center Line school system for 45 years. He also volunteered to work with troubled teenaged boys and served part time as a scout master. His mother, Olga, worked for 10 years in the fabrics department at Mitzelfeld's department store, which is where John was hired for his first job while still in high school.

John has many happy memories of growing up in Rochester. He remembers seeing "The Sound of Music" at the Hills Theater. He also laughs when he shares how he and his friends liked to improvise Hardy Boy mysteries in which he always played the role of Frank Hardy. They especially liked to sneak onto the grounds of [the Haven sanitarium \(now Grosse Pines subdivision\)](#) looking for treasure or making up other mysteries. They even befriended the Haven's guard dogs by bringing meat treats so they could play without fear of the dogs or of getting caught.

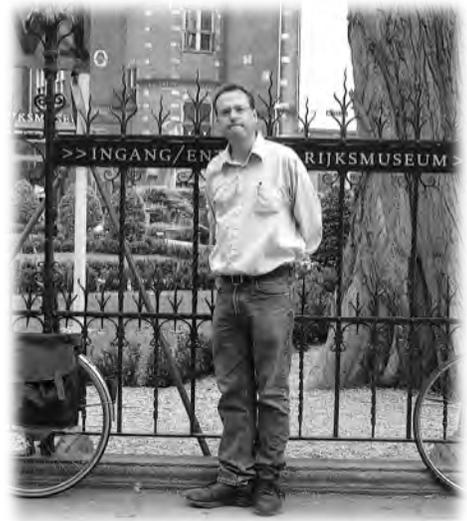


Photo courtesy of John Mohr

After earning both his bachelor and masters degrees from Lawrence Tech, majoring in finance and computer information systems, John spent the next 25 years working in various positions for MetLife Insurance Company.

When asked about his hobbies, John expressed his love of playing music ... *on the 14 different instruments he owns!* Among these are acoustic and electric guitars, bass guitar, mandolin, autoharp, lute, electronic keyboard, mountain dulcimer and Native American condor bass flute. Years ago, he belonged to a four- to five-piece band, and also spent an entire summer playing trombone as part of the [World Youth Symphony Orchestra](#) at Interlochen Center for the Arts. In addition to his music, he also paints for personal pleasure, both oil and acrylic landscapes and abstracts.

In response to our inquiry about his interest in the historical society, he said that he contemplated joining for many years and finally decided it was time to get involved and lend a hand.

Welcome to our organization, John. We look forward to putting you to work!

### Kroger Community Rewards



In case you haven't heard, your Kroger purchases can pay dividends automatically to our nonprofit, helping to support our ongoing efforts to provide valuable educational and entertaining programs and events. Simply enroll online (it's free) at [www.kroger.com](http://www.kroger.com), look for the Community Rewards section and set up your account using the **RAHS code 89584**.

**Enroll or renew today!**

**It costs you nothing to enroll, and you can be sure that we'll spend the resulting funds wisely.**  
 (\*Annual Community Rewards renewal is necessary to continue your support of RAHS.)

## Contact Information for RAHS Board of Directors and Committees

### Board of Directors

Brian Dunphy, President	248-376-3460
Carol Tough, 1st Vice President, Operations	248-375-0084
Mike French, 2nd Vice President, Development	248-373-2811
Tom Bledsoe, 3rd Vice President, Finance	586-822-2148
Holly Bledsoe, Corresponding Secretary	248-923-2602
June Hopaluk, Recording Secretary	248-652-9242
Cary Downer, Treasurer	586-201-2285
Tiffany Stozicki, Director, Communications	248-650-0415
Leslie Mack, Director, Editor, Era Newsletter	586-924-4961
Janet Potton, Director, Membership	248-652-7296
Mary Howarth, Director, Merchandising	248-375-0206
Margaret Bartos, Director, Programs	248-759-4768
Barb Bates, Director, Special Projects	248-495-6258
Bree Boettner, Director, Historical Preservation	248-515-0881

### Committee Chairpersons

Gail Kemler, Honorary Historian	248-651-0907
Deborah Larsen, Research	248-375-2974
David Gifford, Media	248-941-7587
Samantha Lawrence, Oral History	586-255-1883
Rod Wilson, Walking Tours	248-651-6178

## 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
- Photography/Videography
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- Special Project Volunteer
  
- Other \_\_\_\_\_  
(Feel free to suggest. If we don't offer it, we may consider adding it!)

- |                                  |       |                                       |
|----------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New     | \$15  | <input type="checkbox"/> Student      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | \$20  | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual   |
|                                  | \$35  | <input type="checkbox"/> Family       |
|                                  | \$50  | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing |
|                                  | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business     |
|                                  | \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron       |

## 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
- Photography/Videography
- Publications
- Refreshments at Meetings
- 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

## RAHS Nominating Committee

By Janet Potton



Janet Potton

It was my pleasure to be selected to head this year's nominating committee. I wish to thank Bill Williams and Gary Jaracz (two gentlemen everyone looks up to) for agreeing to serve on the committee. Their help was really appreciated and crucial to the success of filling the slate for all but one office: Director of Fund Raising Events. We sincerely thank all the current board members who agreed to serve another term; some previously appointed, some staying in their current positions and some exchanging positions. Their continued volunteerism is the heart and soul of this organization. Thank you, as well, to the new faces joining us this year: Mike French and Barb Bates. We welcome you and look forward to working closely together with you during the coming term.

The board will be appointing an officer to the open position, so if any of our members would be interested in volunteering to be Director of Fund Raising Events, please contact myself or Brian Dunphy. We will be happy to discuss it with you. Our goal is for all our members to be familiar with all their officers, and we are always available for any suggestions, ideas, or comments—just contact any one of us.

Working together, we can continue to grow and improve Rochester-Avon Historical Society; it is rewarding and great fun as well! Thank you for being a valuable member of it!

A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization



P O Box 80783  
Rochester, MI 48308-0783



"Pride in Preserving the Past"