Historical Barn to get electricity soon!

Electricity in the Barn has been a long time coming. Soon after the Barn construction was completed in 2018 the RAHGS Long Term Preservation Committee created a plan for how we would light the Barn. We got estimates for the work and were eager paying.

The City which owns the park property that the barn sits on is responsible for the electricity in the park. So, we worked with the City Manager to apply for the new Barn electrical service from DTE. It took longer to get going than we hoped because of the Pandemic DTE planners were working from home and the severe weather in the area recently.

We also wanted to relocate the guy wires from the old DTE pole near the barn so they wouldn’t be so close to the eastern doorway of the barn. That involved getting a planner from DTE to come out and see the situation. He was willing to allow the guy wires to be moved closer to the pole. Also, the planner discovered that the pole was from 1946 and needed to be replaced. The City Manager then had to submit more paperwork and a $1,000 fee to DTE that RAHGS split with the City. So, we had to wait until November for a crew to come out and remove the old pole, place a new one and replace the guy wires. Once the new pole project was completed our electrician, Jeff Bolen owner of Supreme Electric was able to come and begin the installation of the new electrical service to the barn.

*see more of the story on page 3*
President’s Corner

I don’t know about you but I sure am glad to see the year 2021 in the rearview mirror. It is hard to remember a year that opened with so little promise and then went down hill from there. I won’t get into a discussion about viruses, gatherings, or even talk about how much/little there seems to be on the grocery shelves. All I can comment about is how there has been a dearth of hope in our daily lives during the past year.

So let’s spread a little hope for 2022. Here at RAHGS we hope that the promise of a new year will show up in the varied events that we see on our upcoming calendar. These will be opportunities of enjoying the new acquisitions and exhibits that we find highlighted in our Village.

Where else can you milk a cow, shell and grind corn, or pet a horse that does not move? Take kids through a petting zoo that highlights mini-goats. We will be able to ride a mini-train fit for kids. We will get to see a restored tractor that is connected to a story of a family’s survival in a log cabin in our community. There will be a fiber festival with all kinds of exhibits of grown, sheared, carded, spun and woven goods. There will be venders exhibiting natural fibers grown right in our region that turn into naturally comfortable materials for wonderfully feeling clothing. You will be able to sit around the family table with docents and family members and hear how a family of so many with so little survived in a cabin so small for so long.

After this long, harsh winter the diligent gardeners will have our flower beds and grounds blooming with vibrant colors. There will be a plethora of blooms, plants exploding with color and shape. Each one will be a total remake of what were only a few months earlier dormant plants and dead sticks. Not only will we be able to witness this seasonal transition, but we will also get tutored on what is growing and how can this be replicated even in my own flower bed.

Let us hope that the various festivals, Thursday gatherings, open houses, lady’s teas, men’s cookouts, agriculture heritage festivals, log cabin days, school house openings, car exhibits, barn exhibits, and gatherings all help us reconnect with those who are important to us. It is also hopeful we will connect with a new group of friends. All of us enjoying the rich historical legacy of the Richmond area.

Hope to see you soon...
Jon Beard, RAHGS President

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Foss Brothers Photo
Now in RAHGS Collection

The Foss Brothers:
Back Row L to R: Herman, John, Albert
Front Row, L to R: Charley, Fred, William

This photograph of six handsome Foss brothers was recently donated to the Society by RAHGS member Ellyn Foss Youatt. The brothers had a “group” that played at parties and weddings in the Richmond area. Instruments played were the violin/fiddle. Ellyn’s paternal grandfather was Charley Foss (1853-1927, front row, left). Her father was Harry Foss. Ellyn is one of six siblings, and here is the lineup: Bob, Mary, Ellyn, Lola, Chuck, and Bill. Thank you Ellyn for sharing a part of your family’s history.
Historical Barn to get electricity soon! Cont.

We now have a panel and meter box installed and a trench to the new pole with the new guy wires but DTE has not yet run the wire underground from the pole to the Barn. That will come after Jon Moore sends in another application form to DTE for that part of the process with an additional $250 fee that RAHGS is paying.

Once DTE has the wire installed and inspected Jeff Bolen will come to hook up the main line and then run the wiring in conduit to all the fixtures, switches and plug locations in the Barn. After that there will be a rough inspection by the City Electrical Inspector. Once that inspection is OK’d the fixtures and receptacles will be connected. Then we will screw in the old fashioned looking LED Edison light bulbs. Lastly there will be a final City Electrical inspection before it will be all finished.

RAHGS is grateful for Jeff Bolen’s generosity to give us a low cost estimate for all the electrical work. Soon there will be light to milk the cow!

Annual Dinner Meeting
Friday, January 21, 2022

Seating is still available for the annual dinner meeting which will be held at Maniaci’s Banquet Center. Social hour begins at 5:00 pm, and dinner will be served at 6:00 pm. Cost is $16.00, and guests are welcome. This is a great opportunity to meet up with old friends and to welcome the newest members of our organization.

To ensure that you are included in this wonderful evening, make your reservation now by contacting one of the Board members listed on the front page of this newsletter, or email us at richmondareahistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Heritage Festival Planning Has Begun

Planning is well underway for the 2022 Richmond Area Heritage Festival, planned for June 25 and 26, 2022. Last summer’s event was very well attended, which generated enormous publicity for RAHGS, entertained families, and fascinated children. The Festival is a celebration of the people and machines that made this area what it is today, with special emphasis on the area’s agricultural heritage. Guests can visit popular attractions like the blacksmith tents, hosting several blacksmiths demonstrating their talents; the petting farm where people learn about the purpose and care of various farm animals; the antique tractor and car show; and the magnificently restored buildings where craftspeople will showcase their talents and products. The sawmill, corn shellers – one powered by a Model T car, shingle mill, and the huge propane fired hit and miss engine will all be operating.

New attractions this year will include the life-size milking cow, the Farmall H tractor donated by the Donley family (more on that in an upcoming Historian), new exhibits in the barn and museum, even more antique cars, and more activities for young people. Food and drink will again be available.

If you have a vintage tractor or car, we’d love to have you bring it for display. Security is provided. And if you would like to volunteer to docent, run errands, or help in a general way, we’d love to hear from you!

For more information, feel free to contact Don Graham at 586 405-4786 or dgraham5232@gmail.com.
On November 28, 1942, a crowd of about a thousand people crammed into the Cocoanut Grove supper club in Boston, Massachusetts. The swanky club, known as “The Grove,” was a popular attraction in the city. It contained elaborate decorations, including artificial palm trees, bamboo and rattan accents, and fabric draped ceilings. The club filled up to twice its legal capacity that night, and some of the emergency exits were blocked. About 10:15 p.m., a fire broke out in the basement. It spread quickly, fueled by the flammable decorations. Patrons became trapped inside and nearly 500 died. The fire ranks as the deadliest nightclub fire in American history. It also spurred new fire safety laws to prevent a similar tragedy from occurring again.

The Cocoanut Grove supper club was a single-story building with a basement that contained a bar known as the Melody Lounge. It was owned by Barnet Welansky, a lawyer with ties to the mafia. The club had become a popular place and often entertained celebrities.

On the evening of the fire, 16-year-old busboy Stanley F. Tomaszewski was working in the basement bar when the bartender asked him to replace a missing light bulb. The light bulb was in the corner of the room and was purportedly unscrewed by a young man seeking more privacy while kissing his date. Tomaszewski lit a match until he spotted the empty socket. He screwed in the missing light bulb and blew out the match. Moments later, patrons noticed a small fire near the ceiling over the palm tree. Initially, Tomaszewski attempted to extinguish the fire, burning his hands and face in the process. Other employees joined the effort to douse the flames but were unsuccessful. Tomaszewski noticed crowds pressing towards a staircase already blocked by panic-stricken patrons. He flung open a camouflaged door that led to the kitchen and guided several patrons to safety in a walk-in refrigerator. By now, the fabric-draped ceiling caught fire as well, creating a toxic gas that filled the room. Upstairs, patrons ran for the revolving door as flames and smoke quickly filled the room. The revolving door was the only source of egress in the room and became jammed with a pile of bodies as smoke overcame patrons. Some guests dropped to their knees and crawled through the darkness, looking for a way out.

The fire raged and ultimately claimed the lives of 491 victims. In the days following the fire, Tomaszewski was held for questioning. Friends and teachers rallied to his defense, defending his character as a bright, capable young man who excelled in school and was captain of his high school military battalion. Eventually, authorities cleared Tomaszewski of any charges, and owner Barnet Welansky was charged with manslaughter because three exits were locked and impassable. The tragedy led to improved building codes. Revolving doors would now be required to be flanked by stationary doors. The new laws also banned flammable materials for decorations and required well-marked exits in public buildings. The cause of the fire remains a mystery to this day.

See related obituary/story, “Ensign J. Edwards in Boston Tragedy”
Ensign J. Edwards in Boston Tragedy

(Note: The following obituary was transcribed from the Dec 4, 1942 Richmond Review)

Richmond residents were deeply grieved Monday evening to learn that Ensign John W. Edwards, 23, of the United States Navy was one of the many victims who lost their lives when fire swept through the Cocoanut Grove Night club in Boston, Mass., late Saturday evening. Captain John Edward’s father was informed Monday evening of the details by the United States Navy.

Ensign Edwards was born in Richmond Sept 20, 1919 and graduated from Richmond High School in 1937 with highest honors. He attended Wayne University for one year and transferred the following year to the University of Michigan, graduating last May with a degree in electrical engineering.

He applied for an ensign’s commission upon graduation and was sent to Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Me. For three months training and was transferred to the Massachusetts Institute of technology November 1 for further training.

“Jack” as he was known to his many Richmond friends, was of high moral character, industrious, and a friend to all, and will be sadly missed. A life which held much promise has returned to his Maker.

He is survived by his father and two sisters, Mary of Port Huron, and Mrs. D.E. Morley of California, Pa. His mother, Blanche Brown Edwards, died in May 1939.

The body will arrive in Richmond Thursday evening and will be taken to the Edwards home on Ridge Street where it will remain until 12:00 noon Saturday. From 12:00 noon until 2:00 o’clock it will lie in state in the Methodist church. Services will then be conducted at 2:00 o’clock by Rev Wm. Pryor, pastor, and burial will take place in Richmond Cemetery.

Pallbearers will all be classmates of Mr. Edwards from the University of Michigan. The local post of the American Legion will act as a guard of honor.

Posthumous Award For Ensign Edwards

Miss Mary Edwards, Ridge street, received a letter from the Navy Department last week and the World War II Victory Medal, sent posthumously to her brother, the late Ensign John W. Edwards, U. S. N. R.

The medal, according to the official explanation that came with it, “is to be awarded to all persons who shall have served on active duty in the armed forces of the United States... during the period beginning Dec. 7, 1941, and ending with the date of the termination of hostilities in the present war, and whose service shall have been honorable. The medal may be awarded posthumously.”

Ensign Edwards lost his life in the disastrous Coconut Grove Club fire in Boston, Mass., in November, 1942, when, having rescued his companion, he plunged again into the blazing structure to rescue another member of his party.

His father, Capt. Jack Edwards and his sister Mary live in Richmond. Another sister, Mrs. D. E. Morley, lives in Ann Arbor.
In just 10 weeks from the start of the New Year, RAHGS largest annual fundraiser, the 8th Historic Tea, will be held to the delight of many ladies, their friends and family. Saturday, March 12, 2022, marks the return of the Tea after 2 years pause due to COVID restrictions. Since the first Historic Tea in 2013 when 50 ladies gathered at the Richmond Community Center, the event has continued to grow to 225 ladies, moving to Maniaci’s Banquet Center, Golden Hawk Golf and Banquet Center, and this year at Solitude Links Golf Course and Banquet Center (formerly Fore Lakes) in Wadhams at 2 pm.

The Tea offers something for everyone. In addition to traditional table-served tea courses including Harney & Sons “Paris” tea, scones, petite sandwiches, and dessert with homemade cookies, there is also a unique program, a silent auction for a 4-night Cabin Getaway on Snyder Lake near Lewiston, MI, a raffle drawing of specialty gift baskets, a hat from 1952, Virginia (McWhirter) Foster dress from 1957, and Susan (Keech) Foster dress from 1963. Susan Foster’s wedding dress has an interesting connection to history – it is made of silk parachute cloth – brought back from Japan by her father Don Keech when returned from the War II. It was saved in a mason jar specifically for his daughter’s future wedding dress.

This year’s tea program will be “Wedding Dresses Through the Ages”, presented by Beth Turza, well known historical seamstress. Beth will feature her gown collection spanning from 1830 through 1947. To further set the theme, as you enter the hall three local brides’ vintage gowns will be on exhibit: Nadine (Hartway) Ballard dress from 1952, Virginia (McWhirter) Foster dress from 1957, and Susan (Keech) Foster dress from 1963. Susan Foster’s wedding dress has an interesting connection to history – it is made of silk parachute cloth – brought back from Japan by her father Don Keech when returned from the War II. It was saved in a mason jar specifically for his daughter’s future wedding dress.

As a member of our “RAHGS Family”, please consider supporting this important fundraiser while enjoying a lovely afternoon. Proceeds help to offset maintenance expenses of our Historic Village. Tea tickets are still available for $45, but normally sell out by late January.

Here are some quotations from tea attendees:

*My 3 daughters do so much for me, the RAHGS Tea is an opportunity for me to do something for them. We look forward to it every year.*

*It is a lovely event. All the special details and different china table settings takes me back to a less hectic time of life.*

*The RAHGS Tea is lovely, especially when sprinkled with fun and humor, that’s how I see this tea. I truly think getting together again will be therapy for all of us.*

To purchase tickets, please contact:
Christine Rowley phone: 810.392.0261; email: crowley50@comcast.net
or Sue Jakubiak phone: 810.305.6338; email: ejakubiak99@comcast.net
*In the event the Tea is cancelled, refunds will be available*
Cooking with Ghosts

By Ruth Reichl

During the holidays I’m never alone in the kitchen. Two weeks ago, on Thanksgiving, there was Mom, standing with me in the kitchen. “Your turkey’s going to be overcooked,” she lamented as I set the timer for four hours. “Mom,” I said, “this bird weighs 24 pounds!” She shook her head. My late mother had some extremely strange notions on cooking. Although no turkey on the planet will cook in under an hour in an ordinary oven, Mom refused to believe that. Let me just say that Mom’s turkeys were never dry.

“And what are you doing now?” she asked, peering over my shoulder. I was squeezing pomegranate juice. Nick, the grandson Mom never met, loves the sweet tart gravy I first made when he was six, and it’s been a staple on our table ever since. As I was silently explaining this to her, I was startled by a thought: what makes our ritual meals so powerful is not that we gather with our families, but that we gather with our ghosts.

My kitchen was especially crowded this year. Aunt Birdie was standing next to me as I creamed the onions. “Do you remember,” she asked, “the first Thanksgiving you ever cooked?” How could I forget? She was 100 years old, and we had to carry her up the stairs. “I don’t remember that” she sniffed. “What I do remember is that we were all thrilled when you agreed to do it. And that you were very nervous.”

Well of course I was! When the meal moved from Mom’s house to mine, it seemed like a major rite of passage. It was 1970, and the first time I really felt grown up. I fussed about, desperate to get every detail perfect. It wasn’t: as I remember, the turkey was dry, the mashed potatoes lumpy. But that was the day I learned the single most important fact that every home cook needs to know. “We didn’t come to eat,” Aunt Birdie told me gently, “we came because we wanted to be together and share a meal. We’re grateful when the food is wonderful, but it really doesn’t matter. Remember that.”

A while later, as I was scrubbing sweet potatoes, a few friends from my Berkeley years came through the door. “Remember,” Jules said, “that time we decided we were vegetarian?” I certainly did. It was 1976, and what I remember most is that preparing enough vegetables to feed fifty made us understood why so many holiday meals involve a single, giant piece of protein. Thanksgiving that year was an exhausting production, and by the time it was over our vegetarian days were too.

I roasted chestnuts, crushed cranberries, peeled potatoes; with each step some old friend was at my side. As I sharpened my knife the late Michel Richard, one of the finest chefs I’ve ever known, suddenly appeared. “So slow!” he said, watching my careful slices. The man could carve a bird in ten seconds flat. I timed him once. Each slice was perfect. That was in the early eighties, but I’ve yet to meet anyone who could beat him. And there he was, back again, making gentle fun of me.

My ghosts stayed with me, flitting in and out of the kitchen as the day went on. And even later, doing dishes, I found that I was not alone. A few years ago, when all the guests had gone, I handed Laurie a dish to dry. My old friend held it for a moment and then blurted out, “The doctors say I’ve only got a few more months. This is my last Thanksgiving.” I miss Laurie — I always will — but this year she was with me at the sink, just like always, another visitor from Thanksgiving past.

This gives me great comfort. Years from now, when I’m long gone, I know that Nick will be standing in a kitchen carving turkey. Maybe he’ll be an old man by then, cooking for his grandchildren. But it’s nice to know that I’ll be there.
Maintenance Work On The Schoolhouse

We hired Mike and Sean Buckert to paint the schoolhouse. Due to unforeseen delays work was not started until late this fall. Before the weather stopped this project the shutters were removed for repair and painting, the siding was power washed, loose paint was scraped off, and bare spots were primed. A lift was rented and the belfry was prepped and painted. The shutters have been moved to Norm’s shop to be worked on this winter. Painting will resume in the spring.

During this process when we tried to nail some loose siding back on, we discovered that part of the bottom plate and a number of floor joists were partially or completely rotted. A work crew consisting of Rich Weinert, Don Graham, Bob Kohlhagen, Mike Muskett, and Norm Gibson went to work replacing or repairing the rotted parts and installing new siding over the affected area. Mike Muskett spent several hours in a very cramped space under the building jacking up the floor joists so the other workers could insert new planks. We were unable to inspect the rest of the walls next to the footing for damage. This will be a project for next year. Pictured: Jon Beard, Rich Weinert, and Don Graham.

Recent Acquisitions

Mary Weingartz: Early 1900s Keen Culler Grinder
Early 1900s Economy cream separator

Ursula Adamson: Bob Fruin Buick Pontiac GMC emblem

Bob Kohlhagen: E G Gleason Druggist Medicine Bottle
In Memoriam

Ralph E Reins, 1940 - 2021

Ralph passed away peacefully on January 5, 2021, at the age of 80 in Scottsdale, Arizona. He was born on September 18, 1940, in Detroit Michigan to the late Erich and Florence Reins.

Ralph enjoyed a successful career in the automotive industry, which spanned three decades and achieved many notable accomplishments. He held executive positions at Rockwell International (Vice President), ITT Automotive (President), Mack Truck (CEO), Allied Signal (President), United Technologies (President) and AP Parts International (President).

He was a graduate of the Richmond High School class of 1958. He graduated from the University of Michigan, class of 1963, and was a longtime supporter of the College of Engineering, establishing the Ralph and Victoria Reins Scholarship in 1990. He was awarded the Alumni Society Merit Award in 1998 and was an enthusiastic Michigan football and basketball fan.

Ralph was a dedicated family man, board game master and world traveler. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Victoria, his sister Carol and brother-in-law Richard, and daughters Ann and Christine.

Sharlene Lu Haws, 82, of Casco, passed away at Ascension St. John Hospital. Sharlene was born July 23, 1939 to the late Charles and Norine Porrett. She is survived by her husband, Darrel Haws, children, Tom (Kathy) Weeks and Beth (Mike) Bryant, grandchildren, Jenny (Zach) Scott, Jason (Tiffanie) Weeks, Jordan and Adam. Great grandchildren, Abby, Andrew, Austin, Caleb and Jameson. Brothers, Doug (Sharon) Porrett and Richard (Jeanette) Porrett. She is preceded in death by her brother, Gary Porrett and sister-in-law, Linda Porrett. Sharlene was a long time parishioner and very involved at First United Church of Christ. She loved to have 3 or 4 projects going at once. Whether it was sewing, counted crossstitch, painting sweat shirts, or crocheting. And if you stopped by their home chances are you could put some pieces in the puzzle she was trying to finish. She cherished all the social media posts from her grandchildren across the country as she watched them grow.

Memorial donations may be made to the First United Church of Christ, 68651 S Forest Ave, Richmond, MI 48062.

Memorials & Donations

| Mike Battani                        | General Fund |
| Elsie Manchester                   | General Fund |
| Vicky Chegash                      | General Fund |
| Amazon Smile                       | General Fund |
| Bill Waun                          | General Fund |
| Christine Hensch                   | General Fund |
| Tom Hebel and Christine Rowley     | Building Fund |
| Dr. Julie Cichoracki               | Historic Tea Sponsor |
| Brian and Kris Howell              | Historic Tea Sponsor |
| Victoria Reins                     | Historic Tea Sponsor |
Sausage and Spinach Soup Recipe

I found this recipe in a blog by author Elizabeth Berg, and it has become my favorite go-to soup. It is very tasty, nutritious, and colorful. CR

10 ounces sweet Italian turkey sausage
1 c. chopped onions
1/2 c. water
1 (15 ounce) can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
1 (14.5 ounce) can stewed tomatoes, undrained
1 (14 ounce) can chicken broth
Cooked Pasta of your choice. (I like cavatappi or rotini)
2 c. baby spinach
Basil (fresh or dried)
Oregano
2 T grated fresh Romano or Parmesan cheese

1. Remove casings from sausage. Cook in large saucepan with cooking spray over high heat until browned. Stir to crumble.
2. Add onions. Cook until softened. Add water, beans, tomatoes and broth.
3. Cover and bring to a simmer. Cook for about 20 minutes.
4. Stir in cooked pasta.
5. Stir in spinach, basil, and oregano. Salt and pepper to taste.

Ladle into bowls, sprinkle with cheese, and serve with a crusty loaf of sourdough bread.

Recent Brick Orders

IN HONOR OF:
Leland James Convey
Rowan Edward Convey
Tripp

GIVEN BY:
John Donley
John Donley
Tammy Yaek

IN MEMORY OF:
Lucille Ann Adcox
Arthur E. Bentley
David A. Bentley
Danny Cornwell
Herman & Amanda Hebel
Joyce E. McCallum
Tim Nolan
Ralph E. Reins
Joanne Rybar
Laura E. Thompson
Wayne A. Thompson
Richard E. Young
Matilda A. Zentgrebe
William H. Zentgrebe

Garden Grove Estates
Sharon A. Bentley
Sharon A. Bentley
Andrea Bigelow
Rose Schroeder
Garden Grove Estates
Kris Nolan
Victoria Reins
Garden Grove Estates
Sharon A. Bentley
Sharon A. Bentley
Garden Grove Estates
Sharon A. Bentley
Sharon A. Bentley
Membership News

In early December, letters that contained important membership information were sent to everyone on the roster. The letter also provided the details of the annual dinner meeting which will be held at Maniaci’s Banquet Center on Friday January 21, 2022.

For your convenience, you may pay your dues online at our website: richmondhistoricalsociety.org. Click on RAHGS Membership. Or you may send a check to RAHGS, P.O. Box 68, Richmond, MI. 48062. To remain in good standing on the membership list, please send us your response soon. If you have any questions, or would like to make a change in your status, contact me and I would be happy to chat with you.

Thank you for your continued support of RAHGS. It’s great to count on you!
Christine Rowley
Crowley50@comcast.net
810.392.0261

Welcome New Members!

David and Renee Klarich,: Richmond, MI
Victoria Reins: Scottsdale, Arizona

Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year!
Go RAHGS
Our mission statement:

- To share with others the legacy left to us by our forefathers, the migrants from the East and the immigrants from Europe, who with foresight and conviction built a better future for themselves and their children, and for the generations that followed.
- To honor and remember those who cleared the land, grew the crops, educated the young, and to pay homage to those who fought in the wars and sacrificed their lives for something they believed in.
- To encourage our community leaders to preserve the few historical buildings remaining today.
- To provide assistance to those who turn to us for help in finding their roots.

The general membership meetings/programs, which are open to the public, are held throughout the year. The Historic Village is open during Winter Festival, on Log Cabin Day, during Good Old Days, Thursday morning work bees, special events, and by special appointment. Watch the newsletter, the website, and Facebook for dates, times, and program information.