RAHGS TO HOLD HISTORY-MAKING ANNUAL MEETING

THE 2021 MEETING WILL BE VIRTUAL.

All members and friends are invited to attend the annual meeting from their homes on Friday January 22, 2021. That’s right, even if Richmond is blanketed with deep snow on that day, the meeting will go on virtually. One of the many advantages of this plan is that our long-distance members will be able to join us as well!

The Covid pandemic has made it necessary to change the way we do many things, and our annual meeting is no exception. Instead of the social gathering we have enjoyed for many years, this year we are preparing a virtual presentation.

This program will include an introduction of the 2021 Boards, a treasurer’s report and budget highlights, Foundation business, Long Term Planning update, the museum curator’s update, plans for the Heritage Festival, and the popular Year in Review.

A “Slice of Richmond,” which was introduced at our 2020 meeting as a way of sharing the rich history of the people and businesses of our area, will be presented this year by Terry Miller of Miller Transit Mix in Richmond. Terry’s grandfather, August Miller started the business as Richmond Feed and Grain in 1924. In 1942 Terry’s dad Adelbert took over the business and changed the name to Miller Coal. In 1979 the name was changed to Miller Transit Mix Co. Today Terry and his brothers Alan and Gayl own and operate the business.

Let’s celebrate the role this family business has played in our community for nearly a century!

A link will be available before the event date. Look for an email from RAHGS that will provide a link to the video meeting. The link will also be posted on the RAHGS website’s home page found here: https://richmondhistoricalsociety.org/ It will also be on our RAHGS Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/58728425377

If it is safe to do so in the spring, we will schedule a get together so we can all convene for a bit of business and a great deal of catching up getting to know each other once again.
Passing the Gavel…

This last year has been unlike any other at the Historic Village. Major RAHGS events were cancelled: the Historic Tea, the Heritage Festival, Good Old Days at the Village, the Cemetery Walk, and the Christmas event. As we move into 2021 the challenge ahead of us is to be creative and safe as we work to get back the momentum we had in the pre-Covid days.

Moving from a personal to a virtual annual meeting will be difficult for me. I have always enjoyed greeting everyone at the banquet hall and interacting with our members as we chatted about the accomplishments and the goals for RAHGS. I will miss that. Greeting you from my home on my computer will be a new experience, and with the help of the able production crew, I will make it work.

And as the fourth president of RAHGS, this is the time when I will make my exit from that position. It has been a rewarding experience to serve as your president these past nine years. The people that I have worked with on the Boards are the best, and it has been a pleasure to serve along with these community-minded and generous folks. They are always doing their best to improve the Society and to be good stewards of the buildings and the artifacts that have been entrusted to us. I am continually amazed that these people always step up with their special interests and expertise to get the job done.

RAHGS has grown significantly over the past thirty years. The programs, the buildings, the grounds, and the collections have expanded in so many ways. I know all of the previous presidents (pictured below) would join me in celebrating the phenomenal progress that has been made.

I am incredibly proud to be associated with this group of fine people and of the work we do together. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I ask for your continued support which is necessary to meet the challenges of the future. As I turn the gavel over to the next president, Jon Beard, I promise that I will continue to be an advocate of the Society in all the years ahead.

Blessings in the New Year!

Christine

Laurel Emerson  George Fealko  Gil Orris  Christine Rowley
Donations to General Fund

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Local Teaching Sorority Donates to RAHGS

Alpha Delta Kappa is an international honorary organization of outstanding women educators. Since 1947 ADK has been inspiring lifelong learning focusing on professional excellence, leadership development, altruism, and world understanding. Beta Tau, a local chapter of ADK, is comprised of outstanding women educators from Richmond and New Haven and has been active for over 50 years. The members of this chapter recognized the work RAHGS has done to provide educational experiences in the Historic Village for students from the Richmond and Armada school districts. At the November meeting, Beta Tau Vice President Mary Ellen Shepherd-Logan, addressed the board saying,

RAHGS not only recognizes the importance of sharing and keeping history alive in the community but also the importance of enriching the lives and educational experiences of the next generation. It is with great pleasure I present to you a check for $1,400.00 from Alpha Delta Kappa Beta Tau and thank you for continuing to recognize the value of education.

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Recent Acquisitions

- **Mike Battani:** Hand operated Keystone railroad tool grinder
- **Gary Porrett:** Child's crutches, two snatch blocks, horseshoe, lunch kit, ladle, Garden tools
- **Kim Haselhuhn:** Items from various Richmond businesses
- **Elsie Manchester:** Men's collar clip bar, bone crochet hook, wooden needle case
- **Bob Kohlhagen:** Dorothy Hinckfoot diploma, school transcript, RHS Class of '44 photo
- **Stanley Merecki:** Hay trolley
- **George Fealko:** Adaline Singer's photo album, 1889 diary of Alle Gleason
- **David Chegash:** 1940s JD plow
- **Sherry Gavin:** Porrett School bell

Recent Brick Orders

- **In Honor of:** Robert & Joyce Hartway
  **Given by:** Debbi Williams

- **In Memory of:** Ronald Rybar
  **Given by:** Garden Grove Estates

- **In Memory of:** Warren Schwark
  **Given by:** RAHGS

- **In Memory of:** Rose Weeks
  **Given by:** RAHGS
Made in Michigan: Life in a One-room Schoolhouse, 1940s

By Tili

The world was an interesting and busy place in the early 1940s. President Roosevelt was attending war talks with allied forces in Europe. Large-scale production of penicillin had begun in order to meet big demands. Walt Disney had just released Fantasia and Mount Rushmore, started in 1927, was celebrating completion.

With all that the world experiencing at that time, life in the one-room schoolhouse was just as crazy and interesting. As the last Halloween pumpkin was cleaned up and put away, the first snowfall ushered in the winter season for children in the schoolhouse. “It’s snowing!” came an excited shout from one of the boys during math class. Any studying happening at that moment stopped immediately. All eyes in the room were straining to look outside as the first flakes of snow softly fell to the ground. Recess came early that day as the teacher realized that trying to continue the task at hand was impossible.

With the snowy weather came enthusiasm for the holidays that were just around the corner. Once December appeared on the calendar, nothing was as anticipated and exciting as the coming holiday season and the yearly Christmas program. It was tradition for the teacher and children to put on a lively program attended by the whole community. The night-time performance was much anticipated and would contribute to a buzz of activities in the days to come. Along with students’ regular lessons and making Christmas cards, presents for moms and dads, and decorating the school, everyone had much to do in the following weeks.

The teacher adjusted the school schedule to provide an hour or more for program practice every day. Some of the dads would volunteer and set up a little stage for the children’s performance. Gordon Fuerstenau (pictured below with his classmates) remembered attending the Hunt School on M-19 in the early 1940s and getting ready for the big Christmas performance at school. As Gordon remembered:

*We always had a Christmas program. Little school work was done in December as we prepared for it. We had curtains made out of sheets strung (across the room) on wire. Everyone took part in the songs, recitations, and the Christmas play. We always had a Christmas tree and decorated it with handmade paper ornaments. On the night of the Christmas program, the whole community came. There was standing room only. The most exciting part of the whole evening was a visit from Santa. Santa, carrying a big bag of goodies, handed out a piece of candy and a box of animal crackers to each child. Another fun event we all looked forward to was the Christmas gift exchange. We always drew names and exchanged gifts on the last day before vacation.*

With the closing of the Christmas program, people would begin dispersing. With many cheerful goodbyes and happy wishes for a Merry Christmas, holiday vacation time at the one-room schoolhouse had, at last, begun!

Sources:
Fuerstenau, Gordon. Memories of a one-room schoolhouse - personal interview.

Hunt School, 1938-39

**Top row, L to R:**
Ruth Janet Fuerstenau, Olive Evans, Mary Williams. Doris Bruger, Leonard Wheeler, ___, Erwin Schroeder, ___ Ruemenapp, Willard Pryer

**Row 2, L to R:**
Bernice Trombley, Stella Pryer, Doris Hebel, Lou Hebel, Mary Trombley, Larry Bertossi

**Bottom row, L to R:**
Stanley Bednarz, Harold Bandlow, George Trombley, **Gordon Fuerstenau**, Gerald Hebel, ___ Bertossi, Carl Trombley.
In Memoriam

Warren Schwark, June 27, 1947—November 20, 2020

A charter member of RAHGS, Warren was a Thursday morning work bee regular who always added something interesting to the conversation. He was instrumental in planning the Historic Village. He was a resourceful and willing handy-man, and recently Warren took a great interest in making the Heritage Festival successful. Warren proudly served his country in the US Army, and he was a coach for the girls’ softball team. He is survived by his wife Karen and daughter Kerry.

In Memoriam

Rose Marie Weeks, February 1, 1936—November 26, 2020

We could always count on Rose to attend the RAHGS annual dinner meeting with her husband Jim. Together they supported the Society for many years. It was delightful to see what kind of hat Rose would wear to the Annual Historic Tea, where she would sit proudly with her daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters. Besides her husband Jim, Rose is survived by her five children: Lynn, Daniel, Patrick, Brian, and Amy.
Lois had to utilize a pair of crutches to get around town you think about how amid her book loving and good deeds cheerleader for her hometown describes Lois Wagner. When taking her turn under the foot lights and being an endless than 50 years, supporting the community theater including minds long after the sales ended.

High cost of meat. These antics kept his name on shoppers wheat-fed everything He “Square Deal Miller” was such a talented salesman he soon dubbed himself propelled his bank account into the millions in the 1920’s, was such a talented salesman he soon dubbed himself “Square Deal Miller.”

He launched legendary advertisements like ‘we offer everything the big stores have but the expense’ and lots of interesting gimmicks. For example, the time he sold fresh wheat-fed rabbits for just six cents a pound in protest of the high cost of meat. These antics kept his name on shoppers minds long after the sales ended.

Managing the growth of the local library for more than 50 years, supporting the community theater including taking her turn under the foot lights and being an endless cheerleader for her hometown describes Lois Wagner. When you think about how amid her book loving and good deeds Lois had to utilize a pair of crutches to get around town every day having suffered a bout of polio at the age of 12, well inspiring to say the least.

Finally, admittedly, the story behind the Richmond City Pool, just gets to me. Realizing that the community came together to raise funds to create a place for local kids to swim after several drown in a local quarry is so touching. It was a total grass roots effort too, backed by the residents, the schools, the businesses and local non-profits who all made dedicating a large built-in pool at the Beebe Street Park in 1968 possible.

So that’s a snippet of the Richmond chapter but if some of this is old news to you, my book has 13 additional chapters featuring 33 individuals from municipalities across the county who left their mark.

The personal stories of politicians like State Rep. George Furtonand Governor Alexander Groesbeck plus inventors Thomas Edison and William Austin Burt are shared. There are also tales about soldiers, a professional circus family and ten area women who represented their hometowns in impressive ways over the years. It’s all wrapped in 142 glossy pages accompanied by six dozen historic photos.

As a longtime freelance writer and reporter, I’ve shared everything from board meetings, to police blotters from my cluttered desk but for me, it’s always been about the people. Hopefully my debut as a local author pays homage to these characters that have helped make Macomb County a great place to call home.

‘Historic Tales of Macomb County’ was published by Arcadia Press in November 2020. It’s available at local booksellers, from the historypress.com or at amazon.com.
2020 Historic Tea Committee Checks Their Lists Twice!

When the Historic Tea Committee members set Thursday, March 12, 2020, as their meeting date, the agenda was to check lists that all cookies were made, hostesses scheduled, programs printed, dishes and linens packed, etc. Members never dreamed they would be setting to work to contact 228 guests that the much-anticipated event – just 2 days away – would not be held due to COVID! So, guests were called, cookies were frozen, sold or given away and beautiful donated raffle items were put in storage awaiting the March 13, 2021 Tea.

The late October 2020 pre-planning meeting for the 2021 Tea held even MORE decisions. With social distancing, gathering limits and Governor updates, the Tea Committee voted to hold a basket drawing of donated raffle items for the 228 ticket holders in lieu of the March 2020 and 2021 teas. All ticket holders were notified of the decision by mail. On Thursday, December 10, 2020, the drawing was held at the Village Schoolhouse. Committee members then stepped up and delivered baskets to the lucky winners in time for the holidays.

A special “thank you” to the following women who donated items for the raffle: Vicky Ann Chesgash, Hannah Douglass, Dee Rakic, Louise Borkowski, Sue Dudgeon, Marguerite Little, Paulette Trombley, Audrey Goetzinger, Janice Rowley, Anita Calomeni, Jennifer Haase, Christine Rowley, and Sue Weinert.

In just a few months, we will begin preparing the for Saturday, March 12, 2022 Historic Tea which will feature “The Little Black Dress” program. It is our hope the 2022 Tea will offer our dedicated RAHGS supporters an opportunity to enjoy once again an afternoon of face-to-face conversation, crumpets and, of course, tea!

Polish eggs decorated by Louise Borkowski

Prize winner Barb Platz

Columbus Depot
Gets Face Lift

Various brick pavers in our walkways shifted and had become either trip hazards or looked bad. We also needed additional brick paving around our flagpole. A group of people, too numerous to mention here, came out and worked on the places around the museum, recognition area, flag pole, pavers in front of the school house, and the pathway to the back door of the cabin. With so many people working we were able to get the work done by lunch time. Without volunteers we wouldn’t be able to get very much done. See our Facebook site for additional photos.

Crossing Signal

Painting and fixing up the depot prompted us to get the crossing signal working. We had several people who worked on the crossing signal. Before the signal was wired Norm Gibson removed loose rust and painted it. Then three retired Grand Trunk Railroad employees, all Grand Trunk Railroad maintenance supervisors, came to wire it to a new marine battery that was provided by a donor. Shown left to right, Wayne Fuller, Phillip and Joe Maranzano. Also helping were Don Graham and Robert Kohlhagen. Now with the turn of a railroad key the gong swings back and forth with a light in the middle of it as a bell on top of the pole rings. Joe Maranzano donated the depot and the railroad equipment to the Richmond Historical Society. Additional photos are can be found on our Facebook site, including a short video of the signal working.
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.