

# LANSING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER MAY 2019

### *From the President . . . Tony DeLaurentis*

With the installation of our officers in May, we close another year at the Lansing Historical Society. With the help of many Historical Society volunteers, it has been a very productive year.

Barb Dust and her museum volunteers did a great job as usual with the various displays and especially with the “Festival of Lights” at Christmas. Many visitors came throughout December to view the beautifully decorated trees and displays.

We were also able to enjoy many quality programs. A big thank you to Dan Bovino and Barb Dust for their hard work in always managing to get such entertaining and informative speakers.

We also can't forget to thank the many volunteers who donated their time each month to be museum guides. They are a very vital part of being able to have the museum open three days a week.

I have enjoyed being your President these past three years. I want to thank everyone who helped make my time as President a rewarding one. In May, Bill Benne, presently our director, will begin his tenure as LHS President. I know he will do a great job.

I look forward to seeing you all at our May banquet. Don't forget to also be a part of the “Walk on Ridge Road” with Paul Schultz in June. Every year we learn something new about our town!

Since this is our last newsletter until September, I wish everyone a safe, happy, and healthy summer!

*Tony*

2018 ~ 2019

#### **Officers**

Tony DeLaurentis, President  
Richard Dust, Vice President  
Phyllis Drewno, Treasurer  
Marilyn Kooy, Secretary

#### **Directors**

Bill Benne  
Herb Krumm  
Dan Bovino

**Advisor** ~ Paul Schultz

**Museum Curator** - Barb Dust

#### **Committee Chairmen**

Marilyn Kooy ~ Membership  
Richard Dust ~ Historian

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

April 22 ~ General Meeting

May 20 ~ Annual Banquet

June 24 ~ Historical Walk on Ridge Road

July and August ~ No Meetings

#### **ATTENTION:**

**ALL FUTURE LHS GENERAL MEETINGS  
WILL BE HELD IN THE LIBRARY UPSTAIRS  
NOT IN THE MEETING ROOM  
DOWNSTAIRS.**

## Happy Spring

Newsletter Publisher and Editor  
Toni DeLaurentis  
Newsletter Committee  
Marilyn Kooy  
Jennifer Saia  
Marti Benne



## GOOD NEIGHBOR DAY PARADE MAY 4, 2019

This year the parade, held annually on the first Saturday in May, happens to fall on May 4th, so, of course, the chosen theme is "MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU"! With "Star Wars" as a theme, it was a little hard for the Historical Society to come up with a float idea.

We asked for someone to lend us a vintage car to drive in the parade instead. We are very pleased to say that Tim and Carol Dionne came forward to share with us their beautiful 1929 Ford. We then seized on the chance to alter the theme slightly to say "MAY THE FORD BE WITH YOU!"

We played up Lansing's history with Henry Ford building his historic hangar here to further his vision of the public accepting air travel as wholeheartedly as they had accepted his automobiles.

You may have already seen Tim and Carol Dionne's beautiful dark blue Model A Ford because it was used in the 2002 Tom Hank's movie "The Road To Perdition".



### We appreciate all you do!

Thank you to all the many volunteers throughout the year that have helped make the Lansing Historical Society the very active, integral Lansing organization that it is. There is a tremendous amount of work that goes into planning and executing the many activities that are sponsored by the LHS, and without member participation it wouldn't be possible!

A special thank you to Barb Dust who continues to do a wonderful job keeping our Fallen Heroes' memory alive with her displays each and every year. Many family members, police officers, friends, community members and leaders take time to visit the museum to honor their memory.



## LANSING'S FALLEN HEROES



On April 8th, "Fallen Heroes Day", the LHS museum continued its tradition of honoring Officer Ken Novak, LCPL

Phillip Martini, Ronald L. Beuster, and Nurse Pam Wilkening, all from Lansing. Each year, Barb Dust and her volunteers set up a display for these fallen heroes. On April 8, 1992, Officer Kenneth Novak became the only Lansing Officer to be killed on duty.

He was just 27 years old. April 8, 2006, LCPL Phil Martini became Lansing's only marine to be killed in Iraq. He was only 25 years old. Ronald L. Beuster, a Marine Corporal, was the first Lansing soldier to be killed in Viet Nam. Ronald was a helicopter gunner and mechanic. He died in a helicopter crash on February 4, 1966 at the age of 24.

On July 13, 1966, Pam Wilkening who graduated from T.F. South, was one of 8 student nurses that were murdered in a South Chicago townhouse where the nurses lived. She was only 20 years old.

Our display features photographs and memorabilia of these four heroes, showing them as real young people who went to school, lived, and played here in town. We wanted to show how they lived and not just how they died. We also wanted to show how the village remembers them. We again had a great many visitors on April 8th. Sections of the exhibit will remain part of a permanent display. The exhibit will be on display until the end of April.



LCPL Phillip Martini



Marine Corporal  
Ronald Beuster



Student Nurse  
Pam Wilkening



Kenneth Richard  
Novak  
Born: January 17, 1965  
End of Watch: April 8, 1992

## MARTIN KRAEGEL

Martin Kraegel, whose father was a long time teacher at Trinity Lutheran School here in Lansing,, was a manager at American Steel Foundry. Martin, Herb Krumm, and many other Lansing residents were also employed there.

Martin Kraegel was born in 1917 in the village of Oak Glen In 1936. He was valedictorian of Thornton Fractional High School. Upon graduation, he became an engineering co-op at ASF. As a co-op student, he alternated semesters of study at Illinois Institute of Technology with semesters of work at the Hammond Plant. Upon his graduation from IIT, he was appointed Assistant Works Engineer at the Hammond Plant with responsibilities of planning, procurement, installation, and maintenance of buildings and equipment. He was also in charge of the Tool and Die Dept.

In 1950 he received the unusual recognition of being one of a few young men selected from throughout the nation given a "Sloan Fellowship". This postgraduate study was done at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. There he earned his M.S. in Business and Engineering Administration. Upon his return to the plant, he was promoted to Assistant Works Manager. In 1953, he was promoted to Works Manager. In 1965 he was made Assistant Vice President in charge of Manufacturing for ASF. A few years later, he was promoted to Vice President and as Vice President, he directed and coordinated all ASF Plants and the ASF Manufacturing Laboratories.

He was very active in civic and community affairs. He was President of the Munster School Board for 12 years, Director of the Hammond Chamber of Commerce, Director of the Lake County Hospital Development Corporation, member of the Munster Community Hospital Board, member of the Town Plan Commission, and a member of the Purdue Calumet Advisory Board.

Upon his retirement from ASF in 1974, he became Deputy Supt. Of the Bloomfield Hills Michigan School District. He was there for seven years, and then retired to Fort Wayne, IN where he became involved in an organization whose members are retired executives offering free assistance to small business owners.

Martin, after living an active full life, passed away at the age of 92 on March 11, 2010.

## Our Sympathy . . .

We extend our sympathy to the Schmueser family on the passing of Shirley Schmueser. Shirley passed away on March 15. Shirley was a member of the LHS, a life member of the Munster Historical Society, South Suburban Genealogy Society and retired after 26 years as Deputy Clerk Treasurer of the Town of Munster. Shirley will be missed.



Barb Dust ~ Museum Curator

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The month of March was designated, "Women's History Month". At the Lansing Historical Museum, the month was spent doing research and gathering stories that will help us mark the accomplishments of women in Lansing and beyond.

Because Lansing has a history of being at the forefront of early aviation, we used the stories of two pioneering women aviators to set the tone for our exhibit. Charmayne Biddings researched Amelia Earhart and Bessie Coleman and found that both women had ties to the Chicago Southland. Amelia Earhart definitely once piloted a Ford Tri-Motor and possibly even landed once at our airport. Charmayne then engineered a beautiful display honoring these women, while Barb Dust set out gathering the stories of women who ran businesses at a time when women rarely got credit under their own names.



(contd on page 4 - Women . . .)

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

### May

4 Floyd Fairfield  
7 Joe Saia  
8 Paul Orich  
15 Elayne Young  
22 Bud Eidam  
23 June Cole  
28 Bill Benne  
29 Karen Klein

### June

4 Herb Krumm  
7 Nancy Highland  
8 Sharon Murphy  
22 Mary DiGrispino  
26 Daniel Bovino  
28 Bill Knight  
30 Frank Trichak

### July

4 Helen Guadagno  
10 Marilyn Kooy  
18 Mary Alice Sylvester  
19 Carol Schultz  
24 Donna Brum  
28 Barb Dust  
31 Mary Clark

### August

2 Mildred Ogborn  
5 Carrie Steinweg  
7 John Cole  
8 Gerri Besse  
8 Margaret Darlington  
17 Tommie Laidlaw  
27 Marti Benne



## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH - contd from p. 3

Even into the 1960's women were referred to in newspapers under their husbands names, i.e. "Mrs. John So & So". Even so, Lansing seems to have been a place that fostered women entrepreneurs.

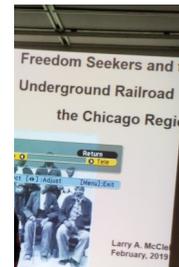
Our display entitled "Influential Women of Lansing", includes Mayor Patty Eidam, Lena Erfert, Jackie Protsman, librarian Winnie Edwards, and Patti Leach to name a few. Stories of other enterprising ladies and also women's organizations are in the works. We ask all of you to contribute ideas for more. This project will be on going!

We invite you to now take a little quiz to test your knowledge of the ladies who helped shape Lansing into what it is today. Visit the museum display to find the correct answers.

(Quiz found on page 5)

## Lansing Historical Society Programs

On February 25th, Dr. Larry McClellan of Governor State University presented a program that featured "The Underground Railroad in the Calumet Area. Many little known, interesting facts were revealed and discussed. Tom Shepherd joined Dr. McClellan adding to the presentation with his report on his effort in leading a movement to have an Underground Railroad monument installed at the site of the Jan Ton farm on the Little Calumet River



It was standing room only for our February meeting

**At our March general meeting,** David Jahntz portrayed a revolutionary surgeon and Jim Nawrocki portrayed a revolutionary soldier. They shared with us some of the tools and equipment that were used to treat soldiers during the War of Independence.

**The April 22nd program** will focus on the history of our Lansing Schools with a special look at Coolidge School. Come join us for an interesting and informative evening.

**May 20** will be our annual banquet at the Knights of Columbus. It is always a great time, with dinner, entertainment and great prizes.

**On June 24,** another future event not to miss is our annual "Historical Walk on Ridge Road" with Paul Schultz. Paul will narrate a tour down Ridge Road as he walks you down memory lane and submerges you in what was along Ridge Road.

## LANSING WOMEN'S HISTORY QUIZ

1. Which woman got her pilot's license earlier . . . Amelia Earhart or Bessie Coleman
2. What kind of business did Lena Erfert run in the 1920's, a time when few women ran a business in their own name?
3. What did early Lansing librarian, Winnie Edwards, have to use to find books in the old pump-house library?
4. Who co-founded Lansing Girls' Softball and also the schools' 5th grade basketball teams?
5. Who took over her mother's hosiery shop, expanded it to women's wear and is still running it after 50 years?
6. Over what issue did Julia Gault sue Thornton Fractional H.S. District 215?
7. Who was Lansing's first female police officer?
8. Who ran a dress shop in Lansing's historic Busack Building?

Visit the museum display to find the correct answers to the quiz.

*Welcome*

We welcome new  
Lansing Historical  
Society members Margaret Evans,  
Tommie Laidlaw, Rashon Henderson and  
Tom Shepherd

### MAY BANQUET

Invitations will be sent out by April 20, if you do not receive yours, please call Toni at 708-895-0993 or email Toni at [tdelaurentis@comcast.net](mailto:tdelaurentis@comcast.net)

We welcome members and non-members as well.

## Good News!!

*Marilyn and Butch Kooy: Our granddaughter, Emma Phillips, has committed to attend Northwestern University to play soccer. So happy for Emma that she will be able to attend such a great school to play soccer, a sport that she loves. Our other granddaughter Erin Wilkens is a freshman at La Crosse, WI. She plays volleyball and got a honor of being a scholar athletic and she also made the deans list. So proud of Emma and Erin.*

*Bill and Marti Benne: Twins (Evelyn and Liam) were born to Bill and Marti's son, William and daughter-in-law, Amanda. They were welcomed home by sisters, Alexandria, Elizabeth, and Amelia! The twins made grandchildren # 6 and #7 for Marti and Bill.*



## Things To Know . . .

Coolidge School has a History Hall that captures the original arches of the old building, pictures, and other memorabilia.

Gayety's, a family business for over a hundred years is set to reopen soon.

LHS t-shirts are being designed for members. More information will be forthcoming.



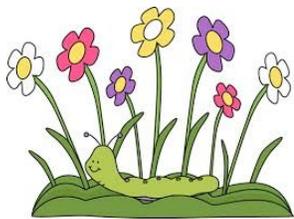
Just for laughs . . .

What do you call a chicken looking at a pile of lettuce? A chicken sees a salad!



What do you call someone who can't stick to a diet? A desserter!

Lansing Historical Society  
Post Office Box 1776  
Lansing, IL 60438



### **MUSEUM HOURS**

**Monday 6:00 ~ 8:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday 3:00 ~ 5:00 p.m**

**Saturday 11:00 ~ 1:00 p.m.**

**Lansing Historical Society meetings and programs are held the fourth Monday of most months.**

**No meetings are scheduled in June, July, August, December or January.**

**We welcome new members to come to our first meeting in September**

**to come see what we are all about!**

**HAVE A SAFE, RELAXING, AND FUN SUMMER!**

