



## **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

*Fred Liimatta*



The Irish, like many immigrants, were not always welcomed with open arms. They arrived determined to make a better life for their offspring or die trying. They came to America on coffin ships when their native land was devastated by the potato famine. These hardy folk made sacrifices of heroic stature and by working

together made the impossible happen. In hostile, desperate situations, they somehow found a way to survive. The traditional ballad "Green Grows the Laurel of Ireland" reminds me that, in the spirit of the Irish, there are no wimps at Wisner!

Throughout Oakland County the legacy of the migrant workers from Ireland is evident in their stone work: Rock walls, fieldstone fireplaces and foundations. My guess is many of our members can trace their ancestry to these hard-working, God-fearing, family-oriented non-wimps. I've lived next door to the Pine Grove campus for over 30 years. My daughter Ingrid had her wedding reception here, and now I pull the grandkids (up to 15 at last count) over in a wagon to enjoy the splendid greenery and wildlife; my little piece of Ireland, in a way. Ingrid married into an Irish family, and I can see it in my granddaughters!

For those unable to join us last month for our Annual Meeting & Election, you were sorely missed! There was good food, fellowship among new faces and old friends, and much laughter. Our Executive Board all agreed to serve another term in their respective positions. We have been blessed with such good volunteers and a valuable piece of real estate right in the middle of Oakland County. It might do us well to remember, when the Internet is down or we're stuck in traffic, the

commitment to a better tomorrow on the parts of those from our past, who never allowed minor setbacks to deter them. Lord willing, Wisner will always be a reminder of how things were and what it takes to make a better today!

## **HERE TO SERVE YOU!**

**OCPHS is pleased to announce the addition of two office assistants...**



**Call or stop by on a Tuesday or Wednesday and you will be greeted by Breanna Koehler! Breanna is a resident of Pontiac and serves her city through the Micah 6 Community, an organization dedicated to providing physical**

**and spiritual nourishment for hurting citizens.**

**She has a deep love for Pontiac and looks forward to growing that love further through learning about and promoting its history here at Pine Grove.**

**She's back! Our dear friend Sara Cote has returned to oversee the office on Thursdays, and will handle various tasks at home throughout the week.**

**Sara has enjoyed catching up with her Pine Grove family since moving back to Pontiac,**

**and will continue to be an active participant in and advocate for all of our endeavors!**



## "I LOVE A PARADE!"

Anne Liimatta (Board Member)

That's how the old song goes, and I know most of us still do. This traditional summertime event in small-town America was fun for all, especially kids. It may have centered around a holiday, historical event or the circus coming through. I can still see the celluloid kewpie doll with pink and yellow feathers tied to the top of the long, pointy stick which my mother worried about me poking my eye out with! Dangerous, yes, but quite the prize for a ten-year old girl back in the 50's!

One of our area's best remnants of those days is the Waterford Memorial Day Parade, which has been running now for 50 years. One of the largest parades in the state right here in Oakland County, it is sponsored by Heart of the Lakes VFW Post #1008. Hardy, enthusiastic members of OCPHS have been marching up Dixie Highway in this show for five years now, representing the Wisner Home and publicizing our annual Summer Ice Cream Social. We can't praise your efforts enough!!! Here's a rundown of this short 8/10 of a mile walk – which you readers are invited to be a part of next year:

At 9:00 am the gang convened in Burke Lumber's parking lot at Sashabaw and Dixie, along with many other organizations decked out in red, white and blue; the atmosphere in the lot was festive with music, classic cars, balloons, colorful flyers and candy. We society folk were dressed in historical personas, which included a very impressive Colonel Moses Wisner (alias Brian Golden) and a rugged, authentically-dressed Union soldier popularly known as Larry Hathcock. Thank you to Tim Telisky, Rodger Zeller, Nik Karaguleff and Nelson Haynes who portrayed artisans and professional men of the period, each with his own distinctive look. God bless Fred Liimatta, walking in his Green Beret fatigues. Dressed beautifully as women of the period were Linda Porter, Jane Karaguleff, Laree Telisky, Catherine Haynes and Yours Truly. Our group moved steadily up the road, distributing event flyers and tossing an assortment of wrapped candy to the polite and expectant children along the curb. Traveling along with us was the Quigley family, whose three precious girls walked and carried signage, rode a decorated bike with training wheels and got pulled along in a wagon by their proud father. Mother Ingrid was invaluable in keeping things rolling along smoothly. Our stock of 1,000 flyers and 1,000 pieces of candy hung on until the final corner was

turned near the Drayton Plains Cemetery at Williams Lake Road. A traditional service in memory of our fallen soldiers was conducted there at the burial ground. May they rest in peace!

In closing, all I can say is thanks so much to all you fine people who participate in the work of this society in so many ways...by your yearly membership renewals, your donations of used items for auctions and sales, your attendance at monthly historical talks and the major advertised events which continue to draw larger crowds every year, and most important of all, your prayers. We can't say enough about the importance of the roles all 360+ of you play in helping us preserve the amazing and courageous history of Oakland County, keeping it available to the public for generations to come!



(Enthusiastic walkers for Wisner before...)



(...and after the parade!)

## A WELL-DESERVED PROMOTION!



At this year's Annual Meeting & Election, OCPHS honored long-standing Board member Guy Duffield with promotion to our Emeritus Board. Board members must serve a minimum of 10 years to be eligible for Emeritus status. In addition to his Board service, Guy has put his heart and soul into maintaining Pine Grove's facilities and grounds for many years. Because of this, a new landscaping team currently being formed will be affectionately called "Guy's Gang" in his honor!



## HATS OFF TO THE GRADS!

OCPHS congratulates these young ladies on their college graduations...

Office assistant Breanna Koehler has received her Bachelors degree in Linguistics from Oakland University. She plans to pursue a Masters degree in Speech Pathology from Wayne State University and go on to work as a children's speech therapist.

Board member Linda Porter's daughter, Paula, has graduated from Eastern Michigan University with her Bachelors degree in

Literature. She is unsure where the future will take her, but we wish her well in her endeavors!

## IN REMEMBRANCE...

In March, OCPHS lost a cherished friend and advocate; Annalee Kennedy of Sylvan Lake passed away at the age of 93. Annalee was born on July 4, 1921 at Pontiac General Hospital. She graduated from Pontiac High School in 1939 and went on to receive her teaching degree, serving the Pontiac School District for 31 years. In addition to her involvement with OCPHS, Annalee was active in the Daughters of the American Revolution. OCPHS member Helen Jane Peters had this to say about her friend Annalee: "She always had time to chat about Sylvan Lake, Pontiac, Whitfield School (where she taught), former students and her family. She was a walking history book and I often called on her for a story, picture, book or her memory of a person or event. Annalee will be missed for her sweet spirit and love of people."  
(*Oakland Press*, 3-20-15)



(Annalee Kennedy)

OCPHS also extends our love and condolences to member and docent Evelyn LeDuff, who lost her daughter Leonna in a house fire back in April. Leonna was just 30 years old and left behind her husband and three children. In an *Oakland Press* article dated 4-3-15, Evelyn, who in addition to her involvement with OCPHS is a Pontiac Public Library Trustee, said the following about her daughter: "She cared about her kids and their education. I raised her that way. I exposed her to a lot of things, and then she exposed her children to a lot of things." At the time of her death, Leonna had her own event planning business and was working to form her own non-profit dedicated to providing college scholarships and mentoring to Pontiac youth. Evelyn, your beautiful daughter was a chip off the old block!

**2015 SUMMER ICE CREAM SOCIAL...  
SEE YOU THERE!**

The 2015 Summer Social planning committee is hard at work preparing another spectacular gala for you and our community! Have you marked your calendar for Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>?

If not, have a look at some of this year's exciting activities and entertainment; we bet this will be all the convincing you need to join us!

- \*Docent-guided tours of Wisner Mansion
- \*Quilt display & raffle in Carriage House
- \*Kids' Krafts tent
- \*Curiosity Sale
- \*Ice cream & cake served by DAR
- \*Peace Jubilee Brass Band
- \*Men of Grace
- \*Golden Griffon Stringtet
- \*Dan DelMastro on piano
- \*Historian Dr. Willie Payne
- \*North Oakland County Storytellers
- \*Pontiac High School JROTC under the command of Sgt. Wilbur Jones
- \*Tom Berlucchi (Historic Fort Wayne Coalition) & John Gibney (Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission)

If you cannot join us, perhaps you would consider sponsoring our event? Sponsorship forms are available at the Carriage House and can be mailed/emailed upon request!

**CALLING ALL MEMBERS! WE NEED YOU!**  
The 2015 Summer Ice Cream Social is THE place to volunteer!

Your Name:  
Phone:  
Email:

Yes! I will...

**Bring a cake or case of bottled water**  
At least 30 single-layer cakes are needed, homemade or store-bought.

**(Please label nut content)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of cakes

\_\_\_\_\_ Cases of water

**Donate items for resale**

Let us find new homes for items you no longer need at the Curiosity Sale Friday 11 am-5 pm or at the event on Saturday. Drop off items at the office T-W-Th 11-4 or call Fred Liimatta for pickup of large items at 248-931-3583.

**Help with Set-Up and/or Tear-Down**

Set-up begins at noon on Friday 7/24 and tear-down immediately follows the event on Saturday at 5:00.

**Help with Parking & Safety Patrol**

2-hour shifts

\_\_\_\_\_ Preferred time

**Help Where Needed**

\_\_\_\_\_ Inside \_\_\_\_\_ Outside

To volunteer, call **248-338-6732** or email **office@ocphs.org** with your choice of jobs, or circle the area (s) you'd like to help and return this form to:

OCPHS

405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue  
Pontiac, MI 48342

**\*IMPORTANT: ALL DAY-OF-EVENT VOLUNTEERS MUST REGISTER IN ADVANCE! CHECK IN AT THE CARRIAGE HOUSE ONE HOUR PRIOR TO YOUR ASSIGNED SHIFT. THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!**

## OUR OFFICE MAKEOVER!

OCPHS recently received a most generous donation of office furniture and equipment from Cranbrook Bloomfield Insurance Agency in Bloomfield Hills! The new furniture has made our space more aesthetically pleasing and efficient, with rave reviews from the office staff! Items that we could not use were offered for sale at deep discount prices on Tuesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> with other goodies supplied by Fred Liimatta. The sale brought in over \$600 for OCPHS! Many thanks to Cranbrook Bloomfield Insurance Agency and everyone who came and shopped!



(An example of the beautiful furniture donated)



(Fred Liimatta and his assistant Steve love a successful sale!)

## WISHES ARE COMING TRUE...THANKS TO YOU!!!

In the last issue of the *Gazette* you were introduced to OCPHS' new "Dream Team," a trio of ladies dedicated to making our society's wildest dreams (and more practical goals) come true! Our board of wishes in the Carriage House is getting full, but we've no reason to worry; as wishes are added, others are being removed!!! The generosity of our members and friends has been overwhelming! Here is what you have helped us accomplish over the past few months:

*\*Several women's long black skirts and men's tuxedo shirts have been donated...we can always use more!*

*\*Thanks to the donation of an anonymous individual, we were able to purchase a male mannequin to use for clothing displays and a hand-held clothing steamer.*

*\*The Pontiac Garden Club purchased a lovely garden bench for our campus.*

These items have gotten us off to a terrific start, but the sky is still the limit! Here are some wishes that we would love to see fulfilled very soon:

*\*A record number of volunteers for our Summer Social*

*\*Construct restrooms on back of schoolhouse*

*\*"Adoptive parents" for the garden beds around our campus*

*Wish Granted!*



*thank you!*

Pontiac Garden Club

OCPHS is pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since our last publication:

**Blackwell, Christine (Bloomfield Hills)**  
**Cahill, William (Rochester)**  
**Currin, Terrence (White Lake)**  
**Davis, Kevin (Pontiac)**  
**Dinger, David, M.D. (Bloomfield Hills)**  
**Koehler, Sean & Breanna (Pontiac)**  
**Lamberson, Greg (Mount Vernon, IL)**  
**McClure, Arden (Northville)**  
**McPhail, John (Royal Oak)**  
**Nicholson, Jill (Clarkston)**

#### AROUND THE COUNTY

Can't get enough Oakland County history? Check out a few of these events hosted by other local historical organizations...

*Waterford Historical Society*  
Log Cabin Days @ Fish Hatchery Park  
Saturday, June 27 / 10 am-5 pm  
Sunday, June 28 / 10 am-4 pm  
**More info:**  
**[www.waterfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.waterfordhistoricalsociety.org)**

*Farmington/Governor Warner Mansion*  
Porch Party-Gov Warner's 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday Bash  
Thursday, July 9 / 7-9 pm  
**More info:** **[www.farmgov.com/warnermansion](http://www.farmgov.com/warnermansion)**

*Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society*  
Archaeology for Adults  
Saturday, August 8, 15, 22, 29/ 9 am-noon  
**More info:** **[www.gwbhs.org](http://www.gwbhs.org)**

*Birmingham Historical Museum & Park*  
"History's Highway: The Story of Woodward Ave"  
Ongoing Exhibit  
Wednesday-Saturday 1-4 pm  
2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of month 1-8 pm  
**More info:**  
**[www.bhamgov.org/history/museum](http://www.bhamgov.org/history/museum)**

Does your organization have an event coming up that OCPHS can help you advertise? Please email event details to [kari.robert.vaughan@gmail.com](mailto:kari.robert.vaughan@gmail.com) for inclusion in our next *Gazette* or to post on our bulletin board at Pine Grove!

## Membership and Donation Form

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Send my *Gazette* via:  U.S. Mail  Email

**Please Make Me a Member!** (indicate level):

- \$15 Student
- \$20 Individual
- \$20 Non-Profit Organization
- \$35 Family (two adults & minor children)
- \$100 Patron
- \$200 Benefactor
- \$500 Friends
- \$500 Corporate Sponsor
- \$Gift Membership (provide recipient's name & contact info):

**Please Accept My Donation!** (indicate preference):

- \$ Annual Giving (general operating costs)
- \$ Fill In the Gap (expanding hours & services)
- \$ Preservation (historic buildings & contents)
- \$ Where Needed or Other (specify):
- \$ In Memory of / Honor of (provide name):

**What Prompted Your Support?** (check all that apply):

- Interest in Oakland County History
- Invited/Introduced by Member/Friend
- Received Copy of *Gazette*
- Attended Event or Tour
- Research Library / Archives
- Newspaper / Magazine Article
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Website / Facebook
- Other (specify):

Mail this form with check payable to OCPHS to:

**Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society**  
**405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue**  
**Pontiac, MI 48342**

For your convenience you may also join or donate online at [www.ocphs.org](http://www.ocphs.org). Thank you for your support!

We are a 501(c)(3) organization  
Donations are tax deductible in accordance with applicable law

**FROM THE GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**

**TEAM**

*Bill Clink (Co-Chair)*

Students have completed their school year, graduates have graduated and summer adventures are upon us, but OCPHS continues to work hard! Our "vintage rescue" auction in April was a terrific success; gross sales came to \$4000, exceeding our goal of \$2500. Your support as a result of our annual appeal letter and membership drive have kept the budget in the black to date. We're constantly moving forward, thanks to all those who have contributed their time, money and support. It is wonderful to have paid staff now covering the day-to-day office operations. Let me extend my heartfelt thanks to all of you dedicated volunteers who manned the office, the computers and the phones during the last few months; we are truly grateful for your ongoing committed support of history and our society.

On Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> of June we were delighted to host an open house in the mansion for our neighbor to the north, Lee Contracting. Thanks to quick volunteer action we were able to conduct tours for over 75 Lee employees and friends attending its company picnic. We look forward to an ongoing relationship with the Lee organization. Thanks to OCPHS Vice President Mike West for allowing this to be possible by keeping the lines of communication open!

(con't page 8...)



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events...

**Friday, July 24 -**

Curiosity Sale  
11:00 am – 5:00 pm

**Saturday, July 25 –**

Summer Ice Cream Social  
"When Johnny Comes Marching Home"  
11:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Admission: \$5 per person/\$10 family of five

**Sunday, August 16 -**

Small Talk - "Moses Wisner's Older Brother, George"  
*Presented by Wisner descendant & OCPHS Board member Ann Johnson*  
2:00 pm / Admission: \$5

**Sunday, September 27 -**

Small Talk - "World War II Letters"  
*Presented by OCPHS member Helen Jane Peters*  
2:00 pm / Admission: \$5

***OCPHS Officers and Board of Directors***

***President***

Fred Liimatta

***1<sup>st</sup> Vice President***

Rodger Zeller

***2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President***

Mike West

***Secretary***

Kathy Davis

***Treasurer***

Amy Annett

***Directors***

Bruce Annett, Jr  
Charlotte Cooper  
Bill Grandstaff  
Ann Johnson  
Greg Kowalski  
Anne Liimatta  
Charlie Martinez  
Linda Porter  
Kari Vaughan

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(From the Growth & Development Team con't)

Meanwhile, the Summer Social team is moving forward at lightning speed and we encourage you to start rounding up your friends and family to bring along with you to that exciting event. Those of you who haven't had a chance to renew your membership...get that check in the mail so you can keep up with everything going on at OCPHS. Contact the office if you have an interest in getting involved with the Summer Social or any area of our organization. In addition, we are working to pull together a display featuring Pontiac and automotive-related activities at the Pioneer Pop-Up Museum at 7 North Saginaw in Downtown Pontiac for the August Dream Cruise; support for this endeavor is appreciated as well.

To sum it all up, it's been a great quarter and we're excited about the prospects on the horizon. We can't wait to get you involved, be it with your time, financial support or encouragement of our activities. See you soon, and thanks again for everything!



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*Twitter.com/OCPHS*



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