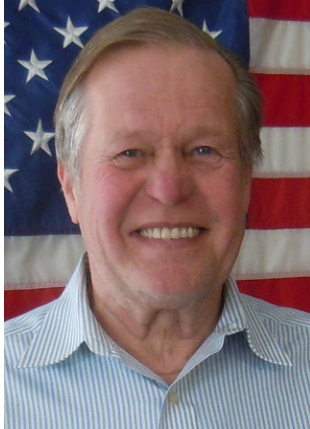




## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

*Fred Liimatta*



There are three things to be said about this notoriously successful year...**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!** Thousands of dollars and thousands of hours given by many talented and generous volunteers is what keeps the dream of Oakland County's pioneers alive. Over 140 years later and OCPHS is still very much

alive. Our two big annual events, the Old-Fashioned Summer Ice Cream Social and Victorian Open House, consumed the greatest number of man hours. The Wisner Mansion and Pine Grove campus consumed the bulk of our budgeted funds with its maintenance and insurance, not to mention the salary of our terrific office manager. Amy keeps a tight hold of the purse strings as our treasurer; it is safe to say we wouldn't have near the amount of success this year without her stingy...I mean frugal...ways! Small Talks, auctions, gift shop sales, community meetings, parades and the work of the Board and committees were all supported by an assortment of dedicated volunteers. These efforts are reminiscent of the volunteers that marched off to fight in the Civil War. A cowbell carried by those adventurous dreamers is part of our collection. We can't do this without your continued prayers and support...we need more cowbells! - Freddie



OCPHS was represented in Pontiac's Holiday Extravaganza Parade! (Courtesy Fred Liimatta)

## OCPHS WELCOMES HISTORY CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS



On September 18<sup>th</sup>, three busloads of participants in Oakland County's 18<sup>th</sup> annual Heritage Conference visited the Pine Grove estate, most for the first time. In less than 90 minutes, approximately 100 guests were fed lunch, entertained, and taught history by enthusiastic OCPHS volunteers. Thanks to the promotion of our beautiful campus by 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Mike West, the county made Pine Grove its lunch stop for this year's "mobile" event. With a theme of "Tracking & Transforming Our Routes," conference participants enjoyed visiting sites of historical significance along the former Saginaw Trail; known today as Woodward Avenue and Dixie Highway, the route runs for about 40 miles and connects 14 communities in Oakland County. Governor Wisner surely watched travelers along the Trail from the front windows of his home!



Feedback from guests was positive and relationships with local historical societies were strengthened. In a letter to OCPHS, Ron Campbell, Preservation Architect for the county, wrote "we noticed that some chose to linger there rather than stay on agenda." Thanks to Oakland County, particularly Ron Campbell and Bret Rasegan, and a special thanks to these OCPHS volunteers for an educational and enjoyable day: Rodger Zeller, Kathy Davis, Amy Annett, Bill Grandstaff, Fred Liimatta, Tom & Mary Connell, Nik Karaguleff, Ray Lucas, Sheri Morgan, Linda Porter & Barb Hudalla.

(Photos courtesy Mike West)

**A GRANDE NIGHT TO REMEMBER II...**  
**HATS OFF TO HISTORY!**

*Fred & Anne Liimatta, auction coordinators*

It is impossible to limit a description of this wonderful evening to the space allocated here; why not let the smiles on the faces of our guests do the talking?



Thank   
 You

In deepest gratitude to the sponsors of our fall auction who truly made it a "Grande" night!

- Avon Donuts – Pontiac**
- The Birdfeeder – Clarkston**
- Calabrese's Pizzeria – Waterford**
- Carl's Golfland – Bloomfield Hills**
- Earth 2 Earth – Pontiac**
- Goldner Walsh Garden & Home – Pontiac**
- Lee Industrial Contracting – Pontiac**
- Professional Instant Printing – Waterford**
- Quality Brake Specialists – Waterford**
- Saginaw Street Consignments – Pontiac**
- Spinning Jenny's Antiques – Clarkston**
- Take Away Trash Service – Pontiac**
- Vintage Press – Pontiac**
- Waterford Hill Antiques – Clarkston**
- Waterford Hill Florist – Clarkston**

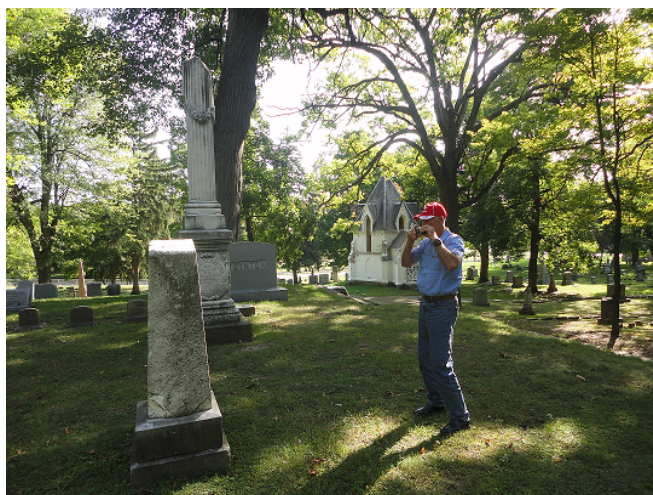


(Photos courtesy Wesleyann Johnson)

**THE RIPPLE EFFECT**  
*Fred Liimatta, President*

We have all tossed a stone into a still pond and watched the ripple travel the entire water surface. Tsunamis can travel the entire globe!

This fall we had the pleasure of meeting a globe-trotting individual by the name of John Cross. He traced his roots all the way from his home on the shore of the Indian Ocean in western Australia to Oakhill Cemetery in Pontiac. The surveyor's transit in the Wisner Mansion was first owned and used to survey Chicago and Michigan's Upper Peninsula by Hervey Parke, his direct ancestor. John's enchanting Aussie accent, good humor, love of genealogy and abundance of good stories hit everyone he met with the force of a tidal wave. OCPHS member John Scholl and I had the distinct pleasure of spending two days escorting him to the cemetery and around Pine Grove. He was especially impressed by our library volunteers and their willingness to assist him in his research. Upon his return home, he sent three Australian Army hats; one for me, one for John and the third for a disabled veteran we met at a VA breakfast. He was conscripted during the Vietnam War; his exploits building roads in North Borneo and the recovery of an American whaling ship are jaw-dropping. How his family ended up in Australia is a story you must hear for yourself! We have extended an invitation for him and his bride to return. Oakland County history is creating a "ripple effect" across the world!



(John Cross snaps a photo of the Marquis Wellington Kelsey's tombstone, an ancestor buried in Oakhill Cemetery. Courtesy John Scholl)

**SOMETHING DIFFERENT THIS HALLOWEEN...**

*Barbara Frye, program coordinator*

In October OCPHS hosted its first *Haunted Mansion Tour*. The first four weekends in October the Wisner mansion was set up as it would have appeared for a 19<sup>th</sup> century funeral and guests were taken on a historical tour of the first floor. The event was designed not to terrify but to educate guests about the traditions practiced by our ancestors when they bid a final farewell to loved ones. The primary focus was to honor the five Wisner family members who perished at Pine Grove and to highlight the mansion's history. Our guests were suitably impressed and our docents are eager to stage the event again in 2016!



(Courtesy Barbara Frye)

**2016 CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE!**

Filled with delightful full-color images of vintage Pontiac postcards, these calendars are going fast! Stop by our office or gift shop, or order online. \$15 each (add \$5 for postage if mailed). Enjoy looking back at Pontiac's past while keeping track of your present and future!



## VOH 2015...FROM THE SCHOOLHOUSE

*Barbara Frye, VOH Planning Committee*

This year, OCPHS added a puppet show to its activities at our annual holiday Victorian Open House!

Our schoolhouse was modestly decorated, as a one-room school should be, so to keep the pupils' concentration! Green and red candles glowed in each window and the display of Ice House Dig artifacts was accented with sprigs of holly and a red and green paper chain. Other display cases held a delightful array of children's toys and books from our collection. There was, however, one thing missing...in place of the teacher's desk there was a purple-draped puppet stage! Master Puppeteer Robert Papineau of Pippin Puppets brought his stage and whimsical creations to Pine Grove to entertain kids and adults alike with his renditions of "Fun Cake" and "Rudolph Lost His Nose." The puppets took on life and interacted with the audience, including the children in the play. For a time, guests were lost in the world of a chef baking a cake with impossible ingredients and a search for Rudolph's lost nose. After the performance, children had the opportunity to make an elf or reindeer paper bag puppet of their own. Rudolph had many cousins roaming the grounds of Pine Grove!



(One of the delightful characters of Pippin Puppets.  
Courtesy Barbara Frye)



(St. Nick as portrayed by Bo Young.  
Courtesy Colete A. Fukuzawa)

# Thank You

To all who exhibited the spirit of generosity this holiday season in support of our Victorian Open House...our deepest appreciation!

### Individual Sponsors

Bruce & Amy Annett  
Catherine Jo Dixon  
Gaylor Forman  
Barbara Frye  
Reida Gardiner  
Bob & Joan Hayes  
Margaret Ann Jackson  
Anne Liimatta  
Ray Lucas  
Linda Porter  
James Slezinski  
Charles & Marion Steeber  
Skip Upcott

### Business Sponsors

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Lee Industrial Contracting - Pontiac  
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R7 Laundry - Pontiac

**INTRODUCING OUR 2016 "SMALL TALK"  
LECTURE SERIES**

You're sure to learn something new at our informative presentations! Here is a look at the upcoming topics...

**"Behind the Mic"**

Sunday, January 17 @ 2:00 pm  
Presented by Robert Dustman

*From CMU's campus radio station, to sportscasting in Cadillac, to a distinguished career in Detroit...Bob will talk about his book and his work in radio and television broadcasting, from which he is now retired.*

**"Octagon House in Washington Township"**

Sunday, February 21 @ 2:00 pm  
Presented by William Grandstaff

*Bill will discuss Loren Andrus, builder of Macomb County's "Octagon House" in 1860, as well as the Andrus Family and a brief history of the Underground Railroad in Michigan. Bill is an OCPHS board member, president of the Israel B. Richardson Civil War Roundtable, and portrays Loren Andrus at the Octagon House.*

**"Water Walkers-Experience the Journey"**

Sunday, March 6 @ 2:00 pm  
Presented by Carol Ann Trembath

*Carol is a teacher, librarian and media specialist who enjoys weaving the past and present. She will present her children's book entitled "Water Walkers," the story of a Native American girl who raises awareness of the damage being done to the Great Lakes.*

**"RMS Titanic"**

Sunday, April 17 @ 2:00 pm  
Presented by Larry Hathcock

*Larry will examine the various circumstances that led to the sinking of the Titanic in April 1912, resulting in the death of over 1500 passengers and crew. Larry is an OCPHS member, avid historian and former US Navy radio operator.*

**"Kit Homes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century"**

Sunday, May 1 @ 2:00 pm  
Presented by Ron Campbell

*Oakland County's Preservation Architect takes a look at the kit homes constructed from 1890 through the 1940's. Kit homes were sold by Sears, Montgomery Ward's and Aladdin in Bay City.*

**All presentations take place in the  
Carriage House**

**\$5 admission per person - includes light  
refreshments**

**OAKLAND COUNTY FAMILY HISTORY  
CONTEST!**

*Rodger Zeller, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

The focal point of our Carriage House is an 1853 map of Oakland County which shows the names of each resident at that time. OCPHS is holding a contest to find out who can locate the most relatives on the map!

From now until March 1<sup>st</sup>, you may submit a list of names to our office along with any information you have about these relatives. You just may be contributing info that will give us a more complete profile of Oakland County's early families!

The winner will receive a \$25 certificate which can be redeemed at our gift shop.

Stop in soon and have a look at this special artifact; it is a favorite of mine!

**IN REMEMBRANCE**

OCPHS is sad to report the passing of these members and dear friends:

\*Fredric "Fritz" Saunders Troff of Auburn Hills passed away on September 16<sup>th</sup> at the age of 86.

\*Opal Clark, formerly of Pontiac, passed on October 11<sup>th</sup> at the age of 97.

\*Joan Mountford of Canton passed on November 14<sup>th</sup> at the age of 74.

\*Evelyn LeDuff of Pontiac passed on December 4<sup>th</sup> at the age of 69.

We extend our deepest condolences to their families.

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

**Telisky, Tim & Leree (Pontiac)**

**AROUND THE COUNTY**

Can't get enough Oakland County history? Check out these upcoming events hosted by our partners in preservation...

**Sunday, January 10 -**

“Sylvan Lake Inn and Pewabic Pottery Connection”

1:00-4:00 pm

Learn about how the Sylvan Lake Inn, designed by William Stratton in 1839, is connected to Pewabic Pottery. This interesting connection and the history of the building, now the Sylvan Lake Community Center, will be explored at the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society's January open house. No charge.

More info: [gwbhs.org](http://gwbhs.org)

**Saturday, January 30 -**

GWBHS Annual Meeting & Presentation: Historic Area Photos

10:00 am-Noon

Photo presentation of 1900's West Bloomfield area by Dave Walls (also an OCPHS member). \$15 admission includes brunch. Reservations by

Jan 26 at [gwbhs.org](http://gwbhs.org)

**We want to hear about YOUR upcoming event and help promote it! We use the activities happening at local historical organizations to fill our “Around The County” section and enjoy hearing about what our friends throughout Oakland County are planning.**

**Please email details to [kari.robert.vaughan@gmail.com](mailto:kari.robert.vaughan@gmail.com) for inclusion in our next *Gazette* (timing appropriate) 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 add \$5 to cover cost of printing and postage if sending via U.S. Mail)**

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

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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)*

Another year draws to a close...as we look back over that year, it is clear OCPHS is growing and moving forward! We've added new volunteers in the library, new docents in the mansion, improved our grounds and developed the friendships that are part of what makes OCPHS such a wonderful place. We have added new events such as the "Haunted Mansion" tours, a volunteer appreciation reception and a float in Pontiac's Holiday Extravaganza parade.

There are so many more steps forward we'd love to make if the funding was greater and the volunteers more numerous. Part of our balancing act with growth & development is to chart a course that we can travel with the resources at our disposal.

Our Victorian Open House was once again a delightful winter event. Though we had no snow, Pine Grove was festively decorated. We had smiles on the faces of both young and old in a schoolhouse full of puppet fans. We had highly skilled docents showing guests through the mansion. We had a gift shop full of bargain hunters. We had cookies, hot chocolate and fellowship in the Carriage House. Everywhere you looked there was holiday spirit and love of history.

It really has been a great year. We came a long way, yet there's so much more to do. It's that time of year when we make our final appeal for your support. If you've already been writing checks or supporting us with your time, we want to say a profound "Thank You!" for your good deeds. You are what makes this place possible. For over 140 years those who came before us have kept the lights on for Oakland County history and you can be a part of that storied legacy. We are so grateful for our members and wish you a delightful and wonderful holiday.

Best regards!

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

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

### **Sunday, January 17 -**

Small Talk - "Behind the Mic"  
2:00 pm / Admission \$5

### **Wednesday, February 10 -**

Appreciation Reception  
Time TBA

### **Sunday, February 21 -**

Small Talk - "Octagon House in Washington Twp"  
2:00 pm / Admission \$5

### **Sunday, March 6 -**

Small Talk - "Water Walkers"  
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  
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## SAVE THE DATE!



**As we look forward to Valentine's Day, OCPHS wants to show its dedicated volunteers and supporters how much we love you! Plan to join us at the Carriage House on the evening of Wednesday, February 10th for finger foods, fellowship and a big dose of our appreciation! No matter how you served our organization this past year...you're invited!**

**Details coming soon!**

Find us on Facebook.com/Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society 

 Follow us on Twitter  
*Twitter.com/OCPHS*

*Oakland Gazette* is a publication of the Oakland County Pioneer and Historical Society. Submissions, content suggestions or comments are welcome.

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Editor: Kari Vaughan

Contributors: Bill Clink, Barbara Frye, Anne Liimatta, Fred Liimatta, Kari Vaughan, Rodger Zeller

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