Historical Perspective: Brighton's Altruistic Fire Department (Part 5)

December 22, 1941, the Brighton Argus reported, "Brighton experienced one of its largest and most hardy fought fires Monday evening when fire, caused by an overheated stove pipe, broke out in the Karius Electric Shop on West Main Street, shortly after nine o'clock" (north side, 400 block). The approximately 20-year-old wood structures, which housed the businesses of E.J. Kehoe, Gus Karius, Harold Jarvis and A.C. Stewart & Son, were destroyed. Hartland and Howell fire departments were called to assist. Within a week plans were underway by Kehoe to rebuild. The other businesses found alternate sites.

With the onset of WW II, many firemen were called to service. An auxiliary fire department was organized for local youths aged 17 and older who were anxious to help. Ervin R. Hynie was in charge. Rigorous training, similar to that of the firemen, assured they'd be ready in an emergency. This group disbanded in the late 1940s to be revived in 1951. It is known as the earliest Junior Department in the state.

Several major fires occurred during the war. October 15, 1942: "Despite the best efforts of the Brighton Fire Department, fire completely destroyed the 43 room Inland Lake Hotel." The 20-year-old structure had long been a landmark in the area. In November 1944, a fire in the Hynie woods north of Brighton resulted in the loss of about 400 cords of wood. Even during a war, local fire departments continued.

In 1943, members of the department were involved in the construction of an Honor Roll listing all local members of the armed services. Constructed of seven white 4x8 Masonite panels, it was installed on the vacant lot located at the southwest corner of Grand River and Main.

In 1946, with the end of WW II, there was an enthusiastic desire for a real celebration. A four-day Brighton Victory Homcoming was spearheaded by the fire department. This welcome home event properly commemorated the return of the area's service members.

Fire department veterans immediately resumed the many tasks awaiting them: the July 4th fire works and carnivals, Thanksgiving turkey dinners, Halloween and Christmas celebrations, and fire fighting duties.

By that September, remembering their high school football days, these firemen raised $8,000 for a lighting system which was installed at Sloan Field (east of the school at 125 S. Church Street). This brought an end to daytime football. The quality of the system was compared to that of Wrigley Field and other major league parks. As it wasn't enough, they installed a public address system for $5000 and took the lead in building new bleachers and stands.

The purchase of new fire fighting equipment emphasized the desperate need for a new fire hall. The question remained as to how to afford it and where to build it. The whereabouts was again provided by the firemen themselves with a wide variety of community-sponsored fund raisers. In 1948, Mr. & Mrs. Robert Graham donated property, a 60-foot by 132-foot lot, on the south side of Main Street at 209 W. Main.

Compiled by Marianna Bair from newspaper clippings. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.

Successful Saturday Cleanup At Old Village Cemetery

October 10th was a gorgeous Saturday morning to be working on improving the appearance of Old Village Cemetery. Approximately 35 people enjoyed the cool air while working under the blue skies as they traversed all areas of the cemetery. Weed trees were removed on both the millpond and alley sides. Headstones reappeared as sumac was chopped down. Many horizontal headstones were freed from encroaching sod. Several hidden headstones reappeared near the edge of the millpond bank as sod had totally covered them for several decades.

Thanks needs to be given to volunteers from Rolling Thunder, Saint Paul's Episcopel Church, Brighton Area Historical Society and community members. Volunteers were treated to a wonderful lunch consisting of rollup sandwiches and chili, compliments of Sharon and Bert Kiskel of the Yum Yum Tree. Saint Paul's opened up their restrooms and community room for warming and lunch.

May 1, 2010 is the final cleanup before the rededication of Old Village Cemetery. This ceremony will occur four weeks later during the Memorial Day weekend. Please reserve these dates so that you can participate in these important civic activities.

Pictured at left: Mercedes Ferreyra works at uncovering overgrown grave markers.

Key Dates to Remember for November 2009

- Scanning and Archiving
  - Nov 5, 12, 19
  - 9:00 am - 12:00 noon
  - Your help is needed with this ongoing archival project!

- General Membership Mtg
  - Nov 15
  - 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
  - The annual election of 2010 officers will take place at this 1:00-4:00 PM meeting. Potluck lunch will take place from 1:00-1:45 PM. The formal meeting will start at 2:00 PM. All members that are current in their dues may vote at this meeting.

- BAHS Board Meeting
  - Nov 25
  - 6:30 pm
  - This monthly meeting is open to all that are interested. If you would like to get involved in the BAHS, please attend. We need more of our members to get involved.
Recent and Future Happenings

Annual Membership Meeting
Elections And Reports Of Officers
November 15, 8pm - 10pm, Lyon School
To assure BAHS continues to meet its objective of preserving and disseminating our local history, it is necessary for our members to step up and help out. Serving on the Board of Directors or as committee chair is a great way to help.

Also, you can help with administration and Lyon School maintenance, volunteer at the Old Town Hall as host and for setting up displays, schedule Oral History interviews with long-time area residents, scan photos and documents, help at the BAHS Farmers’ Market, etc.

It is critical that those most actively involved receive sufficient support to not 'burn out'. Any of our readers can determine what they can do to assist. Contact a board member to learn more.

Thanks and Recognition

THANKS TO...
The BAHS recognizes the following people for volunteering their time and energy to support the BAHS.

- Eda Bair and Suzanne Skwarski for their help with mailing the October issue of Trail Tales
- Carole Scott for her donation to BAHS projects with her ducks
- Jackie Bennett, Heidi Commoner and Jackie Damm for giving the Lyon School a good fall cleaning. We encourage our members of the Plank Road Quilters who've taken this job.
- Dan McDermott for using his computer skills in enhancing early photos of the Brightwood area
- Brenda Moline for her dedication to the scanning of BAHS archives.
- The 30+ people who participated in the Old Village Cemetery fall cleanup, the Yum Yum Tree for their hearty lunch, and St. Paul's Episcopal Church for use of the hall.

Membership Renewal

It is time of year again to renew your BAHS annual membership. Your dues are an important contribution to the BAHS and a primary source of our funding. Your ongoing support is appreciated. Please take a moment and send in your check for your 2010 membership renewal. Thank you!

To find out what year your dues are paid through, check the address label on your newsletter. The two-digit number in the upper right corner is the year you paid for. In the example below, this member's dues are paid through Dec 31, 2009 and should be renewed at this time.

- Mindy Kinsey and Sue Walters-Stenacker for hosting the BAHS Halloween Open House at the Lyon School last month.
- Advance Craft Home Builders, Inc.
- Archer-Huntley Financial Services*
- Jagielka Bookkeeping
- Lawrence Autobody*
- Masonic Lodge #247*
- Patrick Financial Group, LLS*
- Promess*

*Special thanks to these Life Members

BAHS Gift Shop

The Brighton Area Historical Society maintains an inventory of commemorative and Brighton history memorabilia for sale as society fund raisers. 100% of all sales proceeds go to fund ongoing organization budget needs of BAHS, including local history projects and Lyon School maintenance.

Our product offering includes BAHS apparel (shirts, hats, etc.), home decor (puzzles, calendars, picture frames, etc.), postcards, craft items, and the like. To see in detail our full offering, please visit our online gift shop on our web site at www.brightonareahistorical.com.

Product Spotlight

From Settlement to City
Brighton, Michigan 1832 - 1945
by Carol McMacken
450+ pages
Over 300 pictures
$65.00

BAHS Leadership

Executive Board
President
Jim Wichich
Vice President
Susan Walters-Steinacker
Secretary
Thomas Reineke
Treasurer
Jindy Kinsey

Director
Dave Ball
Director
Jim Miller
Past President
Marieanna Bair
Education Liaison
Judith Coeby
Education Liaison
Sue Skwarski

The BAHS is a 501(c)(3) tax deductible organization. Help out the BAHS and yourself with a contribution.

The BAHS accepts monetary support and donations of historical artifacts.

Support BAHS - Become a Member or Donate

The BAHS relies on participation of its members and the generosity of its patrons. If you would like to make a donation or become a member, please visit our website at www.brightonareahistorical.com or mail in the following form below.

Name: ___________________________ Phone: (_____ ) ______
Address: ___________________________ City: ________ State: ______ Zip Code: _______
E-Mail: ___________________________

Friend of Lyon School: _______ BAHS Projects Fund: _______
New $10 $100 ________
Business $15 Individual $25 $250 ________
Renewal $50 Patron $50 $250 ________
Personal $2 Student $25 $250 ________
$50 $50 ________
$25 Family $25 Other $ ________
$25 Other $ ________
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2009 Business / Professional Members

The support of our professional members is deeply appreciated. We encourage our members to patronize these local, independent businesses who are sustainers of the BAHS.

- Advance Craft Home Builders, Inc.
- Archer-Huntley Financial Services*
- Jagielko Bookkeeping
- Lawrence Autobody*
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Executive Board
Director Dave Ball
Vice President Susan Walters-Steinacker
Secretary Thomas Reineke
Treasurer Mindy Kinsey

More About BAHS

If you would like to contact us, please use the following options:

E-Mail: info@brightonareahistorical.com
Phone: (810) 250-7276
US Mail: Brighton Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

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Address: ________________________
City: ___________________________ State: ______ Zip Code: ______
E-Mail: ________________________

Friend of Lyon School: BAHS Projects Fund:

[ ] New [ ] Business [ ] $500 Life [ ] $10 [ ] $100
[ ] Renewal [ ] Personal [ ] $15 Individual [ ] $25 [ ] $250
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[ ] $25 Family [ ] Other $ [ ] $50 [ ] Other $ ______

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