Brighton Area Historical Society
Brighton, Michigan
BrightonAreaHistorical.com

Trail Tales

Volume XLV No. 8 August 2026

As the saying goes: "It Takes A Village!"

We count so much on our volunteers and donations from all of you that I wanted to explain what we accomplished in July with your help.

July started with our entry in Brighton's 4th of July parade… we had our volunteers Steve & Denise Black, Lee & Deb Gough, Mindy Kinsey, Tom Reinke, Lynn Strong, Ed & Joyce Vitez, along with Tom Kinsey driving the float. We love being part of this parade and supporting the Brighton Fire Department.

We are using funds to do a few **BIG** updates at Lyon School. With the help of board member Tom Reinke, we painted the inside and outside of the school, fixed a major issue with the bell tower, and repaired a hole in the roof made by a pesky squirrel. We are also looking to fix the entry steps in front of the school.

A Kids Day was held at CoBACH to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the United States with about 100 people attending. Mindy Kinsey led this activity along with volunteers Lynn Strong, Pat Tucker Ed and Joyce Vitez and Peg White.

Other activities during July included a cemetery tour led by Mindy Kinsey and Jim Vichich held during the Taste of Brighton event. Steve Black and Lynn Strong volunteered at the BAHS booth at the farmers market. We also hosted 20 people at Lyon School for a box lunch and a presentation about one-room schoolhouses.

As you can see it takes a village but let me also thank John and Deb Armstrong. The BAHS is accepting a child's rocker from the Prosser family in Indiana. We are accepting this from Mary Roth who is sending it along with an extensive history of her family. The cost would have been huge to ship this so I put my detective hat on and threw the net out to see who I knew that had connections to Indiana. I had a few options, but John and Deb Armstrong stepped right up to make this happen.

So again each and every one of you are important to us and we consider you all part of our village. Let me know if you have any interest or time to help by serving as a board member, or help with fundraising. I have lots of ideas!

Nancy Fredenburg
President — BAHS
517-304-5044

SAVE THE DATE
Bonnie Armstrong Corrigan — Lyon Schoolhouse Fence Dedication
Sunday, September 20, 2026 Time: 1—3pm
Location: 11455 Buno Road, Brighton Township

Please join us as we dedicate our new fence in honor of Bonnie.

FREE CoBACH Exhibit

August — October
"Grand River Trail"
"Detroit to Lansing"

CoBACH Summer Hours
August — October
Wed. — Friday 5—8pm
Saturday 11am—5pm
Sunday 2—5pm
Closed Mon and Tues

Archiving at Lyon School on Buno Road
Every Thursday
9 until 12nn

CHECK OUT FACEBOOK
Frequent postings regarding Brighton History.

Brighton Area Historical Society

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
To all those celebrating in August!

Thanks and Recognition

MEMBERSHIPS: Thank you to all of our members who have renewed their membership for 2026 and beyond. We appreciate your support.

IND/FAMILY: Howard & Syndy Bisoski (2027), Charles & Lois Cheney, Jacqueline Damm, Marlene Fonseca, Bob & Shirley Knight, Rosemarie Oldford, Scott Selesky (2027), Roberta Sweetman

PATRON: Karen Goss, Haig Stoddard

MILITARY: Lois Tobias

SPONSORSHIP: **Platinum:** John Cameron, MD

Want to join BAHS or renew your dues? —You can still renew your 2026 dues or become a new member. Please use the form on Page 3 or click on the QR code. Through your dues and donations we are able to continue the work of preserving Brighton's history. Thank you again for your support of BAHS.

- To our members who have renewed their dues for 2026 and beyond.
- Wallflower Mercantile for their 2026 Platinum Plus Sponsorship.
- John Cameron, MD, Jerry/Carole Damon, Lake Trust Credit Union, Livingston County Convention & Visitors Bureau for their 2026 Platinum Sponsorship.
- Scott Selesky for his donation to Pleasant Valley Cemetery in honor of Hannah Crout along with his 2027 dues.
- Larry & Edie Millen for their donation to the Society.
- Collin Smailley for his donation to the Larry Lawrence Scholarship Fund.
- Jacqueline Damm for her donation to Friend of Lyon School along with her dues.
- Karen Goss for her donation to Pleasant Valley Cemetery, Larry Lawrence Scholarship Fund, Friend of Lyon School, CoBACH and Friend of Old Village Cemetery along with her dues.
- Howard & Syndy Bisoski for their donation to Pleasant Valley Cemetery along with their 2027 dues.
- Janice Beach for her donation to Pleasant Valley Cemetery Restoration.

We were sadden to hear of the recent passing of

Robert Veik

Robert was a long-time member of the Society.
Our condolences to his family and friends.

Dates to Remember

PLEASE SEE PAGE 1 FOR SUMMER CoBACH HOURS

CoBACH Center: FREE Exhibit: August—October: "Grand River Trail — Detroit to Lansing"

Every Thursday; 9am—12nn: Lyon Schoolhouse Open for archiving & tours.

August 8; Brighton Farmer's Market: BAHS will be at the market the 2nd Saturday of each month through October. Drop by and say hello!

August 26; Wednesday; 6pm; CoBACH: BAHS Board Meeting.

Sept. 20; Sunday; Lyon Schoolhouse: Bonnie Armstrong Corrigan Fence Dedication — See Page 1 for details.

Life — Business — Professional Members

Life Members:
Kathleen Alrubaiy (CO) — Tom Archer — John & Deb Armstrong — Paul & Kathryn Bair (MI) — Tim & Kerry Bennett
Sharrell (Munce) Blakeley (CA) Janice Beach — Donald & Shari Black (FL) — Steve & Denise Black — Marilyn Campbell (IN) — Jack Collett
John & Jenny Conely — Kelsey Corrigan — Timothy & Giannine Corrigan — Michael Craine — Jerry & Carole Damon — Patricia LewAllen DeFoor (GA)
Frank & Jo Del Vero — Bill & Margaret Dixon — Nancy LewAllen Dresden — Joan Engel — Rebecca LewAllen English — Tony & Beth Ferreyra
Nancy Fredenburg —Dave & Jacque Fuller — Lee & Deb Gough — Stephen & Marilyn Harrington — William & Lenore Harris — Betsy & Bob Herbst
Jason Conrad Huntley, CFP — Kathy Jacoby (OR) — Claire & Aaron Jusino — Kate Lawrence — Jim Leith (IN) — Stephen Leith
Seth & Shannon Lemke (TX) — David LewAllen — Ray & Bessie Maltby — Jere & Kay Michaels — James & Janis Miller
Randy & Linda Veno Needham — Roland Owens — Greg & Pamela Park (OH) — John G. Park & Madeline Kingston-Park — Richard Park (IL)
Kathy Lueker Pearson — David & Marilyn Pettigrove — Bob & Donna Phillips — Douglas & Carole Rearick — Brigette Ritsema
Tom & Bonnie Riutta — Pauline Schaffer — Anne Stratigos — Lynn Brady Strong — Jim & Vicki Vichich — Michael & Jennifer Vichich — Karen Wirth
Alice Wyland

Business /Professional Members: *(** Indicates Life Members)*
Brewery Becker** — Brighton Area Women's History Roll of Honor** — Brighton Area Chamber of Commerce (2026)
Brighton District Library ** Brighton Lions Club (2026) — Brighton Veterans Memorial Comm.** — Buckley-Jolley Group ** — Call Mike (2026)
Griffith Realty (2027) — Kimble Appraisal Group, Inc.** — Lindhout Associates** — Lawrence Auto Body **
Livingston County Convention & Visitors Bureau (2026) — Masonic Lodge No. 247** — Patrick Financial Group, LLC ** — Promess, Inc.**
Refrigeration Research ** — Serra Brighton Automotive (2026) — Tee-Bone'z Tavern (2026) — Wallflower Mercantile**

2026 Sponsorships:

Platinum: John Cameron, MD, Jerry/Carole Damon, Lake Trust Credit Union, Livingston Cty. Convention & Visitors Bureau
Platinum Plus: Wallflower Mercantile
Gold: Judith Coebly/Gary Reutter
Silver: Patti LewAllen DeFoor, Kathy Lueker Pearson, Pauline Schaffer
Bronze: Pamela Bell, Margaret Bowland, Tony/Beth Ferreyra, Caitlyn Perry-Dial, Norma Pless, John/Linda Rawcliffe

Support BAHS: Become a Sponsor, 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, become a member or a sponsor, please mail your check to the address provided on the form below.

Mail check payable to:
Brighton Area Historical Society
P. O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip Code:** _____

E-mail Address: _____

I would like to receive Trail Tales via: E-Mail_____ US Mail _____

Type of Membership Plan: ___**New** ___ **Renew**

___ $5 Student ___ $15 Military/Veteran ___ $20 Individual

___ $30 Family ___ $50 Patron or More

___ $75 Business/Professional ___ $500 Life

BAHS Sponsorship Program:

The BAHS sponsorship program has the following levels with the associated annual funding gifts. Sponsors will receive recognition through the Trail Tales newsletter and through the sponsorship placard located at the City of Brighton Arts, Culture and History (CoBACH) Center (aka Old Town Hall).

___Platinum — $1,000+ ___Gold — $500+

___ Silver — $250+ ___Bronze — $100+

We are looking for volunteers: If you would like more information, please contact **Nancy Fredenburg at 517-304-5044.**

Additional Donation to — Check as Desired:

___ Pleasant Valley Cemetery Restoration

___ Larry Lawrence Scholarship Fund

___ Friend of Lyon School

___ BAHS CoBACH Events

___ Friend of Old Village Cemetery

Amount of Additional Donation:

___ $10 ___ $100

___ $25 ___ $250

___ $50 ___ Other $_____

Donation in memory /honor of:_____

For Membership, donation, or sponsorship via PayPal, scan the QR code which will take you to the BAHS website.

The Brighton Area Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit AND a 509(a)2 Public Charity Organization . All donations are tax deductible.

Current BAHS Leadership

President
Nancy Fredenburg

Vice President
Lynn Strong

Secretary
Thomas Reinke

Treasurer
Steve Black

Webmaster
Debbie Armstrong

Directors
Tony Ferreyra
Mindy Kinsey
Jim Vichich

Trail Tales Editor
Jerry Damon

The BAHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit AND a 509(a)2 public charity organization. Please help us fund our mission while also helping yourself with a tax-deductible contribution.

The BAHS accepts monetary support and donations of historical artifacts. Please consider supporting us with your generosity.

BAHS: How to Contact Us or Find Us

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

E-Mail:
info@brightonareahistorical.com

Phone:
(517) 304-5044

US Mail:
Brighton Area Historical Society
P. O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

Lyon School
11455 Buno Road, west of Pleasant Valley Road. The 1885 Lyon School is a fully restored, barrier-free one-room schoolhouse and serves as our organization headquarters.

CoBACH Center
202 W. Main Street, in downtown Brighton next to the Millpond. CoBACH is formally known as the City of Brighton, Arts, Culture and History Center. It is located in the historic 1879 two story brick building, also known as the Old Town Hall.

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 481
Brighton, MI 48116-0481

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #303
Brighton, MI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Plank Roads — Part 1

(Our next display at CoBACH Center will be about the Grand River Trail — Detroit to Lansing)

Brief History of Plank Roads:

The first plank road in North America was constructed near Toronto Canada, in 1836. Reports of its popularity and smoothness for transportation contributed to a plank road craze in the State of New York. The first plank highway in New York was completed in 1846 near Syracuse. Pennsylvania passed a general plank road act in 1849. Indiana also passed an act in 1949 authorizing the construction of plank roads. In 1850 the state of Indiana had about 400 miles of plank roads completed, at a cost of $1,200 to $1,500 per mile. An interesting comparison, 212 miles of railroad was in operation in Indiana in 1850.

The *Manual of Road Building 1873* by W.H. Gillespie (U of M Library) described the basics of Plank Roads: "In the most generally approved system two parallel rows of small sticks of timber (called sleepers, stringers, or sills) are embedded in the road, three or four feet apart. Planks, eight feet long and three or four inches thick, are laid upon these sticks, across them, at right angles to their direction. A sidetrack of earth, to turn out upon, is carefully graded. Deep ditches are dug on each side, to ensure perfect drainage, and thus is formed a Plank Road."

Plank Roads in Michigan:

In the late 1840's, Michigan underwent a "plank road craze." During that time, the state legislature chartered over 200 private corporations to build and operate wooden toll roads. These roads were seen as a salutation to Michigan's swampy, and often impassable dirt trails at a time when the state lacked funds for public infrastructure. Sort of an answer to "FIX THE DAMN ROADS."

The Plank Road Act of 1848 was Michigan's first general law designed to standardize the chaotic private toll road industry. It replaced the need for the legislature to issue individual charters for every company, instead providing a uniform legal framework for the toll road industry.

The Act established strict engineering and operational standards to ensure the roads were somewhat uniform across the state.

Road Dimensions: The roadbed had to be graded to a width of at least 20 feet.

Plank Specifications: At least 8 to 16 feet of that width had to be covered with wooden planks that were at least 3 inches thick.

Grade limits: Companies were forbidden from building roads with an incline exceeding 4 degrees to ensure heavily loaded wagons could traverse them.

Tollgate frequency: Companies were generally permitted to erect tollgates at intervals of no less than five to six miles.

Charter duration: Most charters were initially granted for a period of 60 years, though many companies went bankrupt or abandoned their routes long before that expired. *To be continued…*

(Thanks to Jerry Damon for researching this story.)



