

Howell Area Historical Society

128 Wetmore St. Howell, Michigan



HAHS Caboose & Depot Museum Complex

P.O. Box 154, Howell, Mi. 48844

Phone: 517-548-6876

128 Wetmore Street, Howell

howellareahistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Website:

Howellareahistoricalsociety.org



President's Message:

As you may have noticed, we were able to have our Depot painted this spring. The building had been peeling, and fading for a while. We discussed what would be done...could we as a board paint it? We decided that the job was too big for us to tackle. We ultimately felt that we had to have it painted professionally. We called in Professional Services, who did a beautiful job on our Depot. Please stop over to see how the old building looks. We were able to have the caboose freshened up, also. We will be open through October 31, this year. On that same day, October 31 at 3:00 P.M., we will be hosting a short annual meeting. There will be a brief update on what has been happening at the Depot this year. All members are welcome. Please stop by.



The 5th Michigan Regiment Band

The renowned 5th Michigan Regiment Band gave another stirring performance at the Depot Museum at Melon Fest this year. The audience really enjoyed being transported to another time, on a lazy summer afternoon. We wish to thank the band for their incredible music, and very interesting history lessons.

HAHS Board Members at May, 2021 Cleanup



President Rudy Rudolph



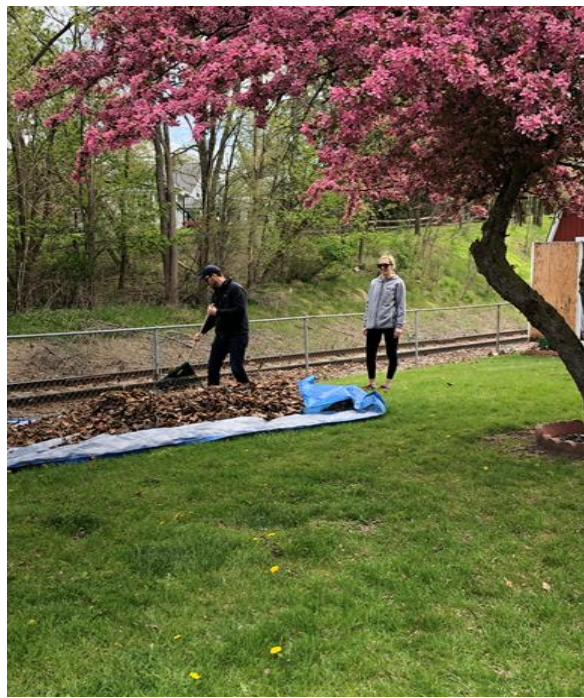
V.P Gerri



Trustee Chelsea



Treasurer Don



Volunteers: Katy and Andy

Attention Members!

Please renew your membership for the 2022 season. The form is on the last page of this newsletter.

Thank you. We appreciate your support. We couldn't do it without you!

Did you know that there once was a thriving condensed milk factory in Howell? It was located near the newer park by Factory and West Streets. It was a thriving business since William Sexton, a local farmer, introduced Holstein cattle into Livingston County in the 1880's. He became very prosperous as a result, and he and his wife had a large farm in Marion Township. Interestingly, the large brick house on Mason at Walnut was built for the Sextons. He used the town house as a place for business associates to stay when they came to town to purchase his prized Holsteins. The Howell area became known across the country as the premium place to buy cattle. In fact, the Depot Museum is home to some of the loving cups that were awarded in Howell for the fine breed of cattle that Farmer Sexton brought to town in the 1880's.

The Holsteins produced a lot of milk, which, (dare we say it?) was a "cash cow" for the town.

Since the milk had to be delivered to Lansing for processing, it stood to reason that a milk condensing facility should be built in town. It opened in 1894, and, provided local employment. The factory added even more to Howell's reputation nationally, as a center for the sale and breeding of Holstein cattle. Unfortunately, after many years of success, the building was destroyed in a fire in 1913, and two workers lost their lives.



The property was eventually sold to Bruce Products in 1926.

Improvements at the Depot Part II

We owe a debt of gratitude to David Bonk; his sons Jon and Chris, and their friends who graciously volunteered their time, expertise and muscles to update the electricity to our 1888 caboose. They did a beautiful job, and we know that our caboose is up to code. Thank you, Bonks & Friends!



Chris Bonk



Nick, Jerry, David, Tyler, and Tom

David & Jon Bonk (below)



U.S. Highway 16
Aka Grand River Avenue

US Highway 16 (US 16), also called Grand River Avenue for much of its length in the state, was one of the principal roads prior to the post-World War II construction of freeways in the state of Michigan. Before the creation of the United States Numbered Highway System in 1926, the highway had been designated as a state highway numbered M-16. The history of Grand River Avenue, and US 16 in Michigan, dates back to before the earliest settlement of Michigan by Europeans. The route has been the basis for an Indian trail, a pathway for European settlers, a state highway, a part of the US Highway System, and a section of the Interstate Highway System.

The original pathway along the Grand River Avenue corridor was an Indian trail, a footpath used by the native population. The first European settlers to the area now known as Michigan also used this trail and, in some areas, enlarged it for the passage of wagons. The chief transportation routes in 1701 were the Indian footpaths that crossed the future state of Michigan. The Grand River Trail was one of these thirteen trails at the time. In 1805, Detroit created 120-foot rights-of-way for the principal streets of the city, Grand River Avenue included. This street plan was devised by Augustus Woodward. A ten-year project to construct a plank road between Detroit and Howell was authorized in 1820 along the Grand River Trail.

After statehood in 1837, Michigan assumed the costs for construction work to the Grand River Trail. At that time, about 60 miles had been surveyed from Detroit westward. The new state lacked the money to continue improvements to the road, and Michigan petitioned Congress for the better part of the next decade for money to complete the work. When the state capital was moved to Lansing in 1847, an improved road was needed to the capital city. The first segments of roadway were privatized starting in 1844. In 1850, the Michigan State Legislature established the Lansing and Howell Plank Road Company, which set about converting various Indian trails into the Lansing–Howell Plank Road, a task the company completed by 1853. At Howell the road connected with the Detroit–Howell Plank Road, establishing the first improved connection direct from the state capital to Michigan's largest metropolis. The Lansing–Detroit Plank Road was a toll road until the 1880s, and it eventually evolved into the eastern part of the modern Grand River Avenue.



West Grand River Avenue in Howell, 1900

By 1900, only a short stretch of the Detroit–Howell Plank Road was still made of planks. Most of the other plank roads had been converted to gravel by this time. The Depot Museum holds a piece of the original plank road. Come visit, and see a piece of Howell history.

Volunteers Needed!!

If there are any members who may be interested in becoming docents for the new year, please call 517-548-6876. You can pick any Sunday that you would like to work. There would always be an experienced docent with you to answer your questions.

It is not a difficult job, and it's a great way to meet people. We had 14-year-old Mia as a docent during Melon Fest. She did a wonderful job and had a great time doing it.

We are always in need of young, strong volunteers to help with various projects, also. If you know someone who needs to fulfill community service hours for school or scouts, send him or her to the Depot. We appreciate any help that anyone can give us. It's a great feeling for a teen to know that he or she has helped to maintain Howell's history. New volunteers at the Depot sometimes are surprised at how much they have learned about the heritage of Howell in one afternoon. Consider spending a few hours enjoying yourself at the museum. It's time well spent.

Your Board:

President: Rudy Rudolph
Vice President: Gerri Moen
Treasurer: Don Maiolatesi
Secretary: Mary Shaughnessy
Trustee: Ed Grima
Trustee: Chelsea Dantuma

Annual Meeting, October 31, 2021 3:00 P.M. at the Depot

We are pleased to announce that Chelsea Dantuma has agreed to join our Board as a Trustee. Chelsea and her husband, Timothy, have also become new parents to Alexander Jack this summer. Welcome, Chelsea, and welcome to the world, Alexander!

Please choose HAHS as your charity at Kroger, Rada Cutlery (Online,) and Amazon Smile.
Every little bit helps.
We appreciate your generosity.

Remember our brick courtyard. 4" x 8" bricks can be purchased for \$100.00, and the 12" x 12" for \$450.00. Bricks are an everlasting way to remember a loved one, or to honor a birthday or anniversary. They're also a great way to advertise a company, team, or school.
Call 517-548-6876

Support HAHS with your membership and/or donation. Not a member? Join today! Your support is vital to the preservation of local history.

Membership year, January 1 – December 31 PLEASE RENEW! Thank you for your support.

Name _____ **Phone** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Email _____

Memberships: \$15 Single \$25 Family \$500 Lifetime

Donation: _____