

AUGUST 2020

PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND PRESENT



TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FEATURED ARTICLE:

Don't Go Near the Water & Traverse City Covid Diary

**The Traverse Area Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly.
The four issues are published February, May, August, and November.**

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PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND PRESENT

FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK

The Board has continued to work this summer on how to plan our activities in light of the pandemic. We made the difficult decision to cancel our downtown tours and regular cemetery tours for this fall. We determined that the safety of our volunteers and our patrons required us to take this extraordinary step. We are still determining whether we would hold our special Halloween Cemetery tours but will make a decision on those tours closer to the date. The Board also decided that we would work on improving our virtual tours of the downtown and work to develop a virtual tour of Oakwood Cemetery. Early this fall we will unveil these new tours for our members and the community.

Similarly, we are looking to offer our monthly programs using the virtual format. Our September program will feature Admiral Jerry Achenbach speaking on the 50 years of the Great Lakes Maritime Academy. Our October meeting will be devoted to our annual business meeting. Our November meeting is currently being planned.

We have also decided to support an initiative headed by the Committee to Record the Story of Traverse Area Libraries. This group is working on a history of the Traverse Area District Library and is seeking our Society support. Our Board created a subcommittee that developed a protocol for the support of non-Society publications of local history. At our August board meeting, the Board approved its new protocol for the support of the publication of works of local history. We created a two tier approach depending upon the level of support the work would result in financially benefiting the Society or the TADL Archives. We also evaluate such proposals based on the quality of the proposal and the work previously done by the author(s).

Based on this new protocol, we reviewed the proposal from the Committee to Record the Story of Traverse Area Libraries regarding the book project on the history of Traverse City area libraries. As the proposal committed to return the full profits of the work to TADL's archives and we knew that the author had completed other work of good quality, we determined that the proposal fully met the criteria for our second tier funding. After considering the value of this work in meeting our mission and in serving the community, we decided to provide the maximum funding under our protocol of \$1,000. Our Society had already pledged our support to the Committee in terms of publicity and research assistance. A news release on this initiative will be sent out in the near future.

FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK

As of August 1, 2020 our membership number is 152. We are sad to report we recently lost Jim Beckett, a longtime supporter of Traverse City as well as Traverse City's history. Jim made a lot of history of his own in this town and he will be sorely missed by many.

Due to Covid we have had to cancel our programs and tours so we have missed seeing our many loyal members. Also, we haven't had the opportunity to bring in new members that we would have met along the way. We hope you will help us spread the word that although the collection is housed at TADL, we need our membership to support our care of the collection and for our many other endeavors to keep the history of Traverse City alive. Without your support the Historical Society would not be able to keep going. A very big THANK YOU to all of you and please spread the word about us to all your friends that care about history!

**THE PRESERVATION CORNER
BY PEG SICILIANO**

Preservation of the Hitchcock/Goodale Farmhouse Foundations

Gradual progress continues to be made on this preservation project. The text has been written and photos selected for the sign. At this point design layout is being worked on which will then need to be approved by the Traverse City Parks and Recreation committee as well as the TAHS board before it is produced. Additionally, further site preparation work (weeding, etc.) has been done and woodchips from the City have been spread in the area



Continued ...

THE PRESERVATION CORNER CONTINUED BY PEG SICILIANO

Con Foster Repatriation (NAGPRA)

We have been notified that the Notice of Inventory Completion for the individual from Emmet County was published on April 20, 2020. The thirty-day waiting period has now elapsed, with no additional requests for disposition received. The City will now be able to make formal arrangements for the transfer of physical custody to the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

Now the NAGPRA component is completed, further disposition of the collection is possible. What that might be is yet to be determined.

Continued Support of Michigan History Day!

The TAHS is continuing to utilize the Petertyl Fund to nurture a love of history in our area youth. This past Spring, the TAHS Petertyl Fund covered the fees of 24 TCAPS students who participated in the Michigan History Day Competition. The \$35 fee for the state competition was reimbursed for 24 students, and the \$75 fee for the national competition was reimbursed for 4 students for a grand total of \$1,140 of funding support for this endeavor. Unfortunately, we were not able to present these checks in person due to the COVID situation.

Building 50 Museum Update

Unfortunately, we don't have good news to report on this project. Prior to the pandemic and quarantine things were in the final stages of getting everything printed and having the museum open by Memorial Day. However, with the COVID pandemic, and then the subsequent floods that happened at Building 50, the museum project is at a standstill due to costs that the Minirvini Group just can't incur at this time. The project is not off the table, but is not on the table until funding can be freed up after all that has happened over the last 4 months

FROM PROGRAM AND EVENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR LOUP'S DESK

2020 Tours

Due to concerns regarding the health and safety of our tour guides and tour attendees, TAHS Board members have decided to cancel in-person tours for the summer of 2020. But we will be offering a virtual alternative of a few of our popular tours - first for our tours of Oakwood Cemetery.

Now you will have a chance to tour Traverse City's historic Oakwood Cemetery without ever leaving the comfort of your living room! Starting the Monday after you receive this newsletter, check out the Traverse Area Historical Society's Facebook Page (search for Traverse Area Historical Society and "like" the page). Each day photos and stories of one Oakwood tour stop will be posted, giving you the information and experience as it would be presented on the live tour. We see this offering as one way to continue TAHS' goal of spreading local history information, in spite of having cancelled our in-person cemetery and downtown tours due to the pandemic.

We hope you will enjoy this ongoing tour, along with the historic local photos posted nearly daily on the TAHS Facebook page

FROM TREASURER GROLEAU'S DESK

Financially, your Historical Society is still doing well, however we continue feeling the impact of COVID. As we have not been able to hold events, our book sales are down (\$170 in 2020 compared to \$850 last year at this time), and membership numbers are lower (\$2,025 compared to \$2,175 last year). And while overall donations are higher this year due to a single major donor, without that donor's impact our donations are at \$633 compared to \$1,330 a year ago.

In addition to the above member contributions being lower, we have made the decision to cancel the downtown and cemetery tours for safety considerations, which we anticipate to have a \$1,000 impact on our financials this year. Counteracting this impact, the \$1,000 budgeted for the Petertyl Internship will not be spent this year, and so the combined impact should be a wash.

We continue to take a cautious approach moving forward, and we still have a positive Net Income even with the expenses we anticipate (and have budgeted for) to complete the Goodale Hitchcock preservation project. Your continued interest and support are truly appreciated.

Don't Go Near the Water!

One of the more bizarre incidents in our colorful history took place in June of 1907. The June 25, 1907 issue of the Traverse City Evening Record ran a front page story titled, "Sea Serpent in the Bay". A number of people living on the western shore of the West Bay reported seeing a sea serpent crawling on the beach and swimming in the West Bay. The witnesses all agreed that the creature had a body about four feet long and was covered with dark brown hair. It had a flat head and two white tusks protruding from its mouth and made grunting sounds.

The next day there were more sightings, this time on the eastern shore of the West Bay. A launch with five people on board came within fifty feet of the creature as it basked in the sun. The estimated length had increased to six feet. The next day there were two sightings, one in the Bay and one in Lake Ann. A Lake Ann resident actually reported having captured the creature and announced plans to have it stuffed and preserved. However, he would not allow anyone to see the animal until it was ready for display.

On June 25, a photograph of the serpent appeared in the newspaper. The photo showed a fishlike creature lying on its back with its head raised. The head looked human with large protruding eyes and two small horns. It was identified as a species of "degenerate walrus". Whether it was a hoax or an attempt to attract more tourists is unknown. The newspaper made no further mention of the creature. It may still be at large somewhere near Greilickville. A word to the wise on this matter should be sufficient.



Traverse City COVID Diary

Beginning last April, TAHS followers have been invited to share stories of life during COVID. Traverse City resident Stephanie Weemhoff responded by sharing parts of her diary.

March 13th seems so long ago. Read how one Traverse City family experienced the first few weeks of this unprecedented time in our history. This instalment ends with the phrase “Cherishing moments together.” Such moments can be one of the silver linings of this crisis.

March 2020

It started out exciting. Like a snow day. At last, no social expectations and nowhere to be. But then cases increased to double and triple digits in Washington, California, and New York. Eventually Wisconsin and Illinois, then Indiana. They were getting closer and we were looking for updates. By the hour. Then: Michigan. The boys had runny noses, Nathan, a headache. Myself: tired and a sore throat. After getting worse, I went in to my doctor. In a side entrance specifically for respiratory illness. I was given a mask, but ultimately deemed not contagious. The diagnosis was pleurisy. I was told to alternate between Tylenol and Ibuprofen and rest. I was feeling better but out of nowhere Will had a bad wet cough. No fevers. Everyone napped. Everyone felt a little yucky.

Grocery delivery today. Wiping down all foreign surfaces-including food. I've been busy cooking chicken meals, making bone broth, soup for lunches. Oranges for vitamin C. Hot drinks. It's strange to consider that some cases are lethal, some have no symptoms at all. It's like Russian Roulette. How will your body respond? There are not enough doctors, masks, ventilators, respirators. China then Iran then Italy are forced to choose who gets medical treatment because there are just too many who are sick. We must 'flatten the curve' to not overwhelm our hospitals like that. One moment you're scared and facing imminent death, like a ticking clock, the next it's just like a cold. What to believe? We will just stay home.

News articles from a day ago are outdated. Live updates happen hourly and daily. There's an update from the Michigan governor at two. I've stopped keeping such a close eye on the news. It is scary. Helpless. Tragic. The news makes us constantly feel like we are over-reacting or under-reacting. Wiping down grocery deliveries with disinfectant, leaving packages three days in the garage. It's better to trust God and not to worry. We are trying to prioritize rest, nutritious soups, fluids. The news said vitamin c may help, maybe we should buy some? I'm afraid to bring anything in from outside our home that may be exposed. I've begun rationing milk, ranch, produce, while trying to still get ample nutrition for health.

We built a bear cave in the living room today. Raked up dog poo in the backyard. Ate lunch on a blanket in the dining room because the table was part of the bear cave. Joann Fabrics is giving away free pre-cut fabric curb side to make medical masks. Car factories are going to make protective medical equipment. Celebrities are posting music, reading stories and poems on social media to boost morale. Prince Charles tested positive today.

Home life is an odd mix of playing with the kids, watching movies, and checking the news. I planted tomato and lettuce seeds in case the food industry collapses. I had a panic attack yesterday. I couldn't breathe and thought it was going to get worse and kill me. I sat crying on the bathroom floor with steam from the shower and Nathan helped me calm down.

Continued ...

Traverse City COVID Diary ... continued

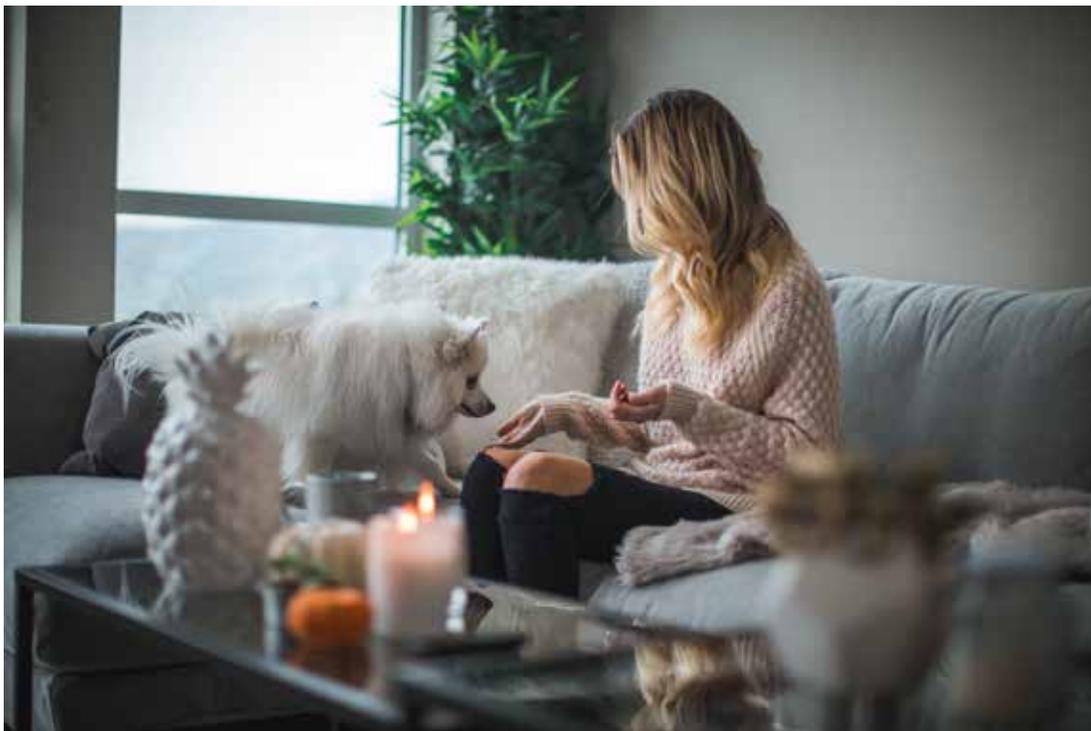
The government is going to give money to families to boost the economy. I want to spend some of mine on growing kits of strawberries, lavender, construction of veggie garden and soil. Also, pajamas and lounge pants, rugs for the house, a Land's End Tote. Maybe a rug for the basement, wash and stain for the deck and basement wood. A nice outdoor rug for the slippery front porch would be nice. We'll see. No new cases overnight after "Stay Home, Stay Safe" campaign to keep everyone home started at midnight.

It's better to not watch the news or hear that cases are doubling in a matter of days, medical supplies are short, hospitals are filling... "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus... Let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid." I tried to bake bread yesterday... ten cups of flour wasted. There's no flour or yeast in many stores. Many companies are trying to make ventilators and medical equipment: Dyson, GM, etc. (March 26th) If we make it through this, and I am capable, I want to go into the medical field. Nursing.

I laid in bed much of today. Very tired and sluggish. If I expend too much energy, bad sore throat, hurting chest, tightness when breathing. My temperature has felt off, but no fever. Night sweats and having to dress in layers to keep warm. Headache threatens. Cough returns. Achy in muscles. Staying hydrated. Using cloth wipes to preserve T.P. for messy jobs.

March 27th-Avoiding the news. Sunny day. Out of bed, throat a little sore, but more energy. Will is coughing less, but hardly slept last night. Is it his breathing? I'm gardening today.

March 28th-There are 5,000 Covid cases in Michigan: 111 deaths. God is in control of all of this. We are trusting. In him. Thankful for each day. Cherishing moments together.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS



Would you like to...

Be a docent on a history walking tour?

Help out at the archives under the supervision of Katheryn Carrier,
special collections librarian

· Explore ways of getting local history into the schools?

Serve as all-around helper with regard to tasks that must be carried out regularly—
newsletters, mailings, or maintaining the website?

Attend TAHS board meetings to find out more about board activities and what you might do
to participate?

Attending TADL board meetings to let that board know we have a keen interest in
maintaining the archives at the library.

· Or...do whatever job you think would be useful to the Society?

Leave an email at traversehistory@gmail.com if you are interested in doing any of these things.
We can always use more help to preserve, protect, and present history!

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!

TRAVERSEHISTORY.ORG | LIKE US ON FACEBOOK: TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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