

**February 1, 2018**



## TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Board Members:

Stephen Siciliano,  
president

Fred Anderson, vice  
president

Peg Siciliano, secretary

Larry Hains, treasurer

Matt Groleau

Sharon Jennings

Jenny Loup

Julie Schopieray

Jim Warner

Newsletter Editor

Bill Ruesink

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### From President Siciliano's Desk

Greetings and Happy New Year to our members. This issue of the Newsletter will provide the 2017 Year in Review along with our plans for 2018.

#### Closing the Chapter on the History Center of Traverse City

Over the past year your Board of Directors has worked diligently to put the organization back on a positive course forward. In December 2016 we successfully vacated the Carnegie Building location and moved our office to my home residence. Subsequently, in January 2017 we changed our name with the state from the History Center of Traverse City to the Traverse Area Historical Society. In addition, we updated our mission to more accurately reflect the purpose of the organization. Finally, over the course of the year, we completed the payment of the bills left as part of the History Center and resolved legal obligations for a past employee. Accomplishing these milestones effectively closes this chapter of the organization's past and puts us on solid ground moving forward.

We continue to have our principal office at 627 Eastwood Avenue, in Traverse City. Our board meetings are being held there and we are glad that members are attending our board meetings at this new location. All members are welcome to attend.

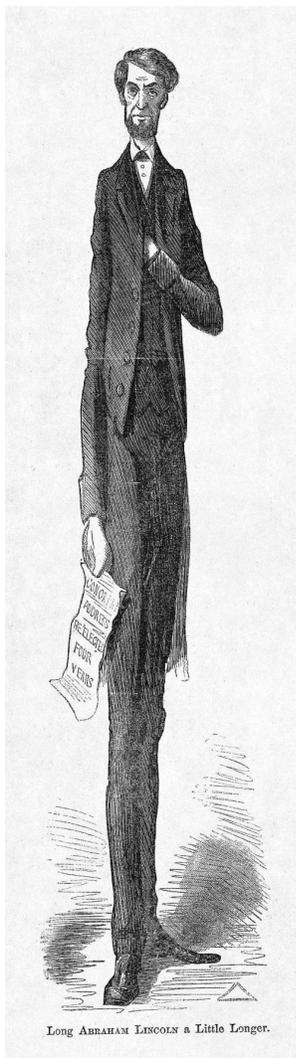
#### Rebuilding our financial sustainability

Based on the hard work of your Board, particularly our Treasurer Larry Hains, we have balanced our budget in 2017 and established a sound budget for 2018. See Treasurer Hains' report below for more details.

#### Continuing Successful Programming

We have had a successful year of offering a diversity of programming to our community. Throughout the summer we offered Saturday tours of the downtown area and Sunday tours of Oakwood Cemetery. Thirty-three visitors attended our downtown tours and forty-two attended our regular Oakwood Cemetery tours. We also held two special Oakwood tours with a Halloween Twist. Sixty-one visitors attended one of these seasonal tours. Together, we totaled 136 tour attendees.

Over the past year, we have had monthly programs during the school year that have been attended by between twenty and seventy community members. The spring topics covered a host of local history topics including early 20<sup>th</sup> century cooking, Odawa history and culture, Great Lakes shipping, the history of Power Island, the William Swan murder in 1870, and Les Biederman and the history of Radio in Traverse City.



This fall we had two programs. In September, I spoke on “Abraham Lincoln’s Presidency through the Eyes of the Political Cartoonists of His Day.” Despite modern historians’ view that Lincoln was one of our greatest presidents, the cartoonists of his day thought differently. Only after his reelection, did cartoons begin to change.

It was largely with a modern perspective, we have come to appreciate the sixteenth president and his legacy.



**THESE DEAD . . . SHALL NOT HAVE DIED IN VAIN.**

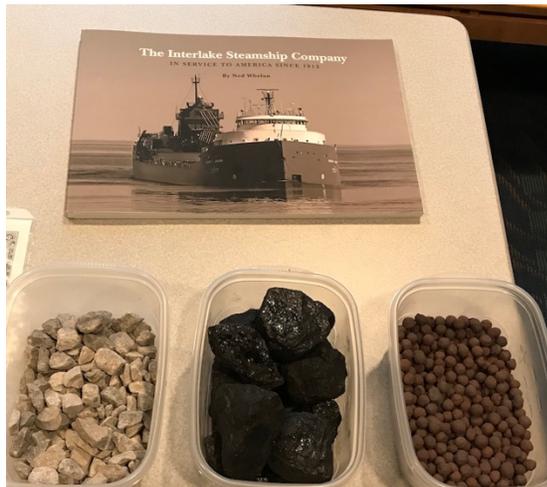
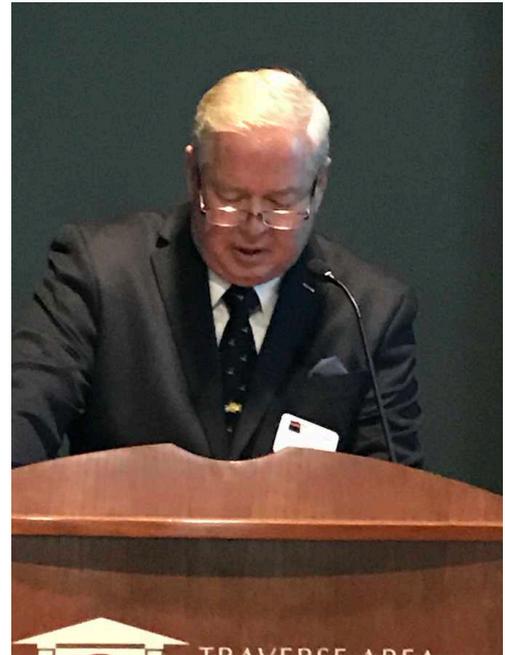
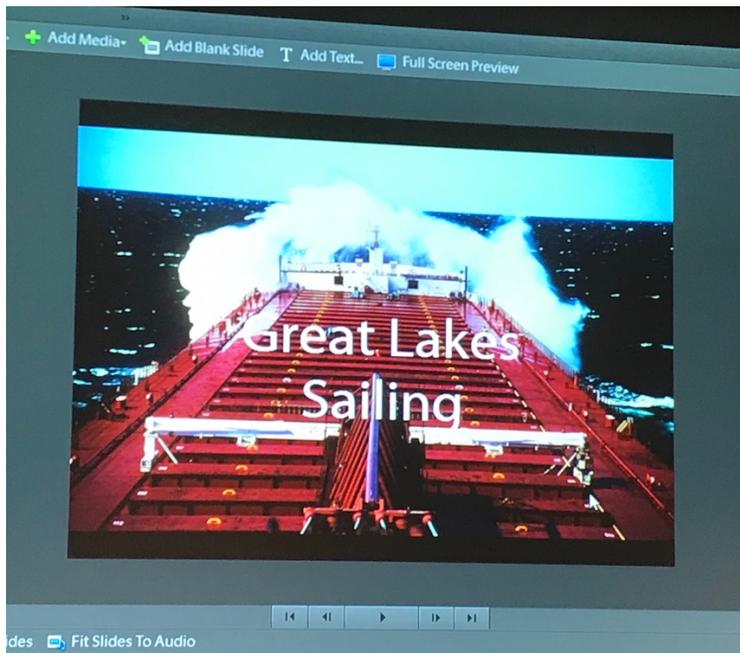
"You have a greater task than I had. Slavery must be removed from the whole of the earth."

Figure 3

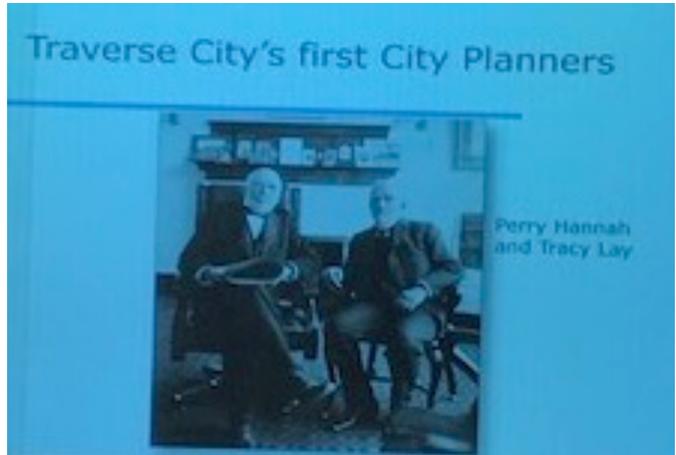
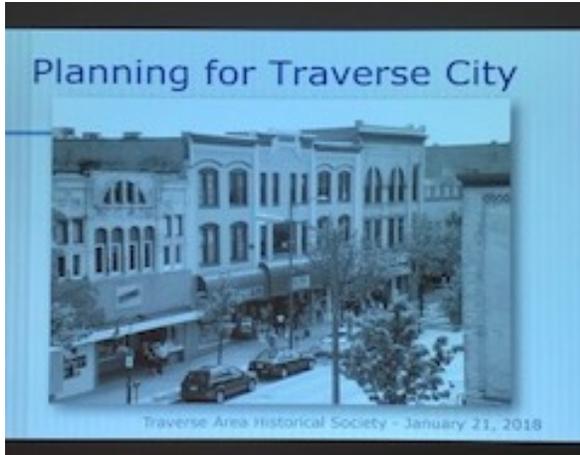
*These Dead . . . Shall Not Have Died in Vain.* In this cartoon, which appeared in the *New York Times Magazine*, February 8, 1942, Roosevelt has Lincoln's support for his anti-"slavery" agenda, albeit with the acknowledgement that FDR's work is of global proportions. Credit: © Punch Limited.

In November, despite a chilly day, forty attendees came to listen to retired maritime deck officer and mariner John Brian speak on the Twentieth/Twentieth-First Century history of Great Lakes shipping.

Mr. Brian described the various vessels on the Great Lakes, the life of deck and engineer mariners, and the joys and challenges of sailing on the Great Lakes. He also provided displays of the various products shipped on the thousand foot long vessels.



Our spring program schedule started this January with Russ Soyring, Traverse City Planning Director, speaking on "How Traverse City Planning Developed and Its Effects on our Community, 1940 to the Current Day." Over fifty attendees heard Mr. Soyring speak about the origins of city planning dating to the 1880s through the present time. He showed how the city developed several master plans, established zoning policies starting in the 1940s, and shifted city planning from an automobile centric approach to a more pedestrian approach in the present time. He closed by sharing some future plans for the city and new developments such as the five-mile Boardman Lake Trail.



In addition to our tours and monthly programs, we continue to publish or republish our library of local history works. This past year, we published our newest local history book, Bob Wilhelm's Traverse City: Then and Now.

Finally, thanks to the Petertyl Fund, the society is now sponsoring ten scholarships for area middle school History students who advance to the state finals of the Michigan History Day program; the funds will cover their registration fees to participate in the state finals.

#### Strong Partnership with TADL

An important part of our success has been our continuing strong partnership with the Traverse Area District Library. The Library's acceptance of the TAHS Archives last year provides a good home for this important collection. Our members continue to support the archives with hours of volunteer service and your society has committed to monthly financial support of the archives. Much thanks to TADL Special Collections Librarian, and Society Webmaster, Amy Barritt for her leadership of the archives and her support of our work. See her report from the archives later in this newsletter.

#### Annual Membership Meeting and Organization Meeting

In addition to our fall programs, we held our annual membership meeting in October. At the Annual Meeting, the board provided a brief review of society activities over the past year, and shared the proposed 2018 Society Budget. Our members voted on small changes to our society board bylaws, and voted on the re-election of some of our current board members and the election of two new board members, Ms. Jenny Loup and Mr. Matt Groleau.

At our organizational meeting in November, we revised our committee structure. We now have the Marketing Committee, Membership Committee, Archives Committee, Program and Events Committee and Publications Committee. Board members chair each of these committees and we encourage society members to join any of these committees. We also elected officers for 2018: Stephen Siciliano as president, Fred Anderson as vice president, Peg Siciliano as secretary and Larry Hains as treasurer.

## **From Board Treasurer Hains' Desk**

We continue to work successfully to meet our financial obligations. We worked within our approved 2017 budget and will have a positive fund balance going into 2018. In addition, we have begun to restore the Julius Petertyl fund for historical education and have a current balance of over \$3,500 in that fund. We have significantly reduced past expenses and through our membership dues, tours, publications, and generous donations we are in a stronger position than in several years.

In addition, the society received an estate gift of \$5,000 from long-time member and past board member, Mary Lautner. We are very grateful to Mary and her family for their great generosity and intend to set up a special fund for this gift.

We have also committed to monthly payments of \$100 to the Traverse Area District Library to support the care of the historical archives which are located there. Board Secretary Peg Siciliano and President Stephen Siciliano established a matching grant for our members where they matched contributions to the Petertyl Fund up to \$100 per month for this past calendar year. Every month in 2017, members matched the grant. Given the success of the matching grant program, the Sicilianos have agreed to continue the program for one more year. I want to thank our members for their generosity.

## **From Marketing Committee Chair Groleau's desk**

As a new member of the TAHS Board of Directors, I am excited about the opportunities to grow the organization to better Preserve, Protect, and Present the historical record Traverse City and the Grand Traverse Region. My main goals for this year are to increase the awareness of the organization in the community, grow our memberships, and increase our tour revenues in order to further support the organizations activities. While we have been discussing ideas at the Board of Directors meetings, I would love to hear ideas from our members about what we could do to increase awareness and promote memberships and tours. If you have thoughts to share, please drop me an email at [mattgroleau@hotmail.com](mailto:mattgroleau@hotmail.com)

Another marketing goal for this year is to continue improving our communication to our membership. This is the first of 4 newsletters we plan to send out this year to keep our members updated on the organizations activities. In addition to the newsletters, we will continue to send out email communications to keep our members informed. Our expanded use of email blasts has worked well to share the programming announcements of ours and other historical organizations. Most TAHS members have elected to receive this enhanced information. We hope with this enhanced system, we can assist fellow historical societies in promoting historical programming within our region.

Finally, we are looking at more opportunities to increase the awareness of the organization in the community. An idea that has generated significant interest has been to have TAHS participate in one of the Friday Night Live evenings in August. While everyone agrees that it would be a fantastic venue to present ourselves to the public and communicate the benefits that our organization brings to the community, it will also take a group effort beyond just the Board of Directors to make it happen. If you would be willing to help with planning, setup, teardown, or being present during the event to help out, please let me know! We really need 5 or 6 members to step forward and volunteer to help out in order to make this a reality. If you are willing to help out, please contact me so we can start putting things in motion!

## **From Membership Committee Chair Jennings' desk**

After going through the transition process of moving our collection to TADL we are happy to report that we have a strong membership of 168 members. That includes 35 Family Memberships, 65 Individuals, 29 Life Members and 2 Businesses.

We are hoping to see our membership grow in the future. If you know of someone who loves Traverse City and loves history please bring them to a program or invite them on a tour. Or contact us and we will personally reach out to them and explain our mission to "Preserve, Protect, and Present" our wonderful history.

If we do not have your Email address, please let us know as soon as possible. We want to reach as many members as we can by Email to save on postage when we need to contact you. Our Email Blast keeps you informed of our events and Board meetings, as well as other historical happenings in the community.

We would like to thank all of our loyal members who have supported us over the years. You are the backbone of history in this community. We couldn't do this without you. You are the reason that our history is not lost in the past but alive today!

## **From Program and Events Committee Chair Loup's desk**

The February program in our History Series will be a presentation on the history of the Clinch Park Zoo and Clinch Park area by Jennifer Loup. Jen was an employee and zookeeper at Clinch Park from 2000 through

the closing of the zoo in 2007. The presentation with focus on the use of the space from the first Traverse City Aquarium in 1932, founded by Conrad Foster, up through the two locations of the Clinch Park Zoo.

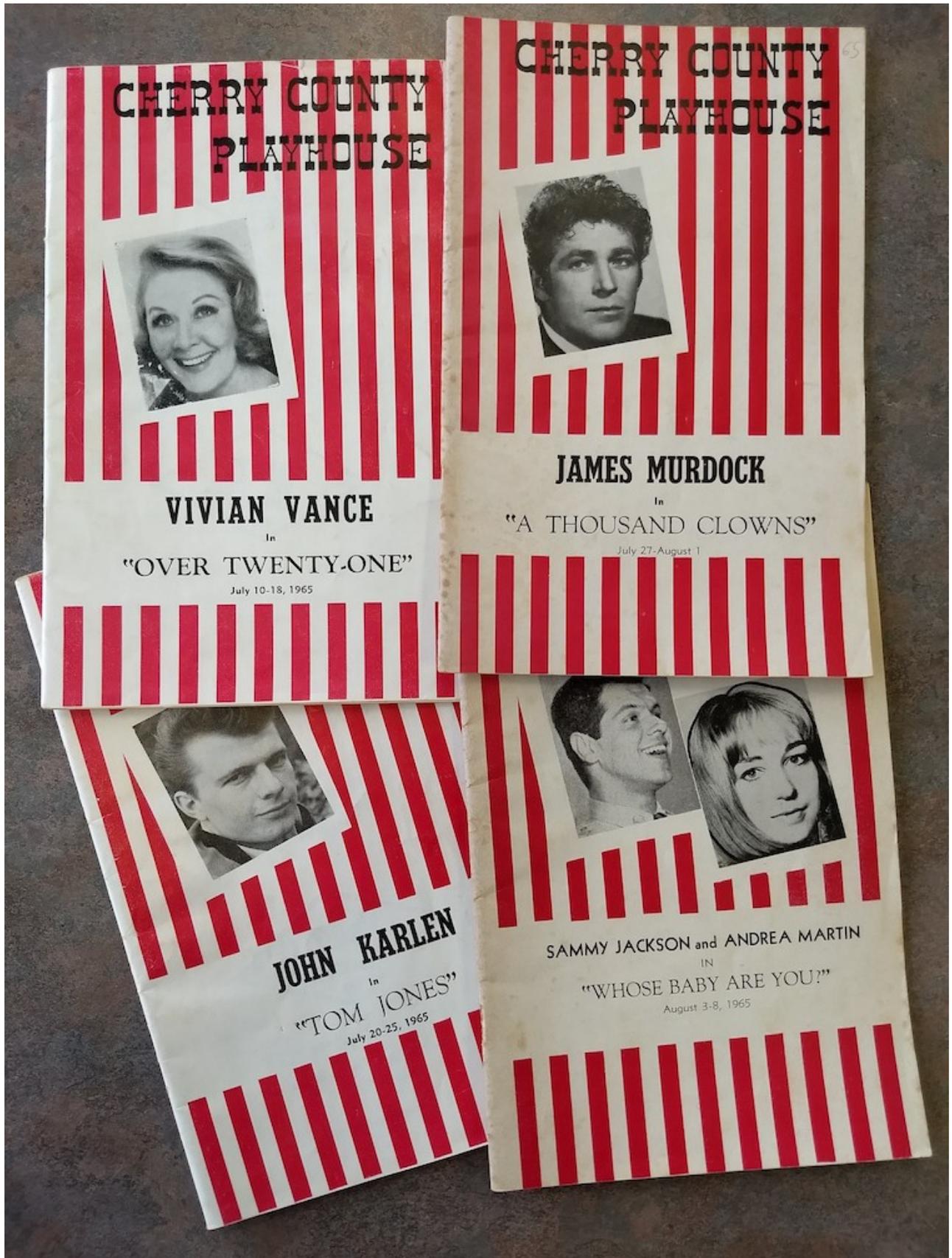
## News from the Archives by Amy Barritt

First, thank you to the TAHS board and its members for your continued support of the archives with your time, treasures, and talents. Since the report given in September 2017, two new collections were opened up to researchers, the Friendly Garden Club of Traverse City Records, and the Cherry County Playhouse Collection.

Example from the Friendly Garden Club of Traverse City:



And an example of Cherry County Playhouse playbills:



Both of these collections are what I am designating as "legacy collections," materials in the archives that were part of the Historical Society's collection before it was relocated to Traverse Area District Library. The bulk of the collection falls into that category, with only a few additional items added to the collection from new acquisitions.

You might ask, why are we not in a rush to add more items to the archives? Imagine, instead of growing an archive of local history research material, we're fishing together on the open seas. What method could we use? We could choose to cast our nets wide and take in everything (including that rotted tire and rusted-out beer can). Or, we could choose to be very selective, and let our lines down with the right bait, only for the most delectable of fish.

In the meantime, we've already got a warehouse full of fantastic fish, waiting to be processed and sold at market! In our case, the fantastic fish are those legacy collections I mentioned previously. In regards to the Friendly Garden Club of Traverse City, we have had their records in our possession since 2015, and they were more or less open to researchers, but without fully processing the collection and knowing what was in there, we were reticent to have researchers vaguely pawing through it. Now, researchers can take a peek at our finding aid for the collection, know what is in it in general, and what is in each box. Rather than combing through all 13 linear feet of material, we can get right down to the box and folder that the researcher needs!

Once we've finally got our legacy collections under control, we will know two things: what we have, and what we don't have! From there, we can begin to acquire new research materials in a very specific way. The Cherry County Playhouse Collection provides us a good example for how we are going to continue to collect to improve the quality of that collection. Now that we know which issues of the playbills we have, we no longer have to waste time acquiring copies to only find out we have yet another duplicate. Instead, I am going to be looking for folks who were involved with the management of the Playhouse to see if any operating records are stored away in someone's attic.

TAHS volunteers have been a huge help in wrangling these legacy collections! Janet and Joe Novak have finished with Bob Wilhelm's Traverse City State Hospital ca. 1990 collection of photographs, as well as a slide collection by "Doc" Aeschliman, consisting mostly of images of the Clinch Park Zoo ca. 1960. Marly Hanson has finished processing a fantastic hidden gem of a collection from the Johnson family, who were local wood buyers for a company out of Manistee in the 1920s, and she is putting the finishing touches on that finding aid. Peg Siciliano is hard at work with the Lone Tree Woman's Club records, which is a wonderful collection to dovetail some of the other Woman's Club records we already have. Finally, Fred Anderson continues with the inventory of the photograph collection, and he could always use another volunteer for that project if you have an interest.

If processing collections holds no appeal, perhaps you would like to support the archives by doing a bit of research and helping us publish our collection holdings better? Bencie Benghauser has taken the lead on one related project, and is using newspapers to compile news from 50 years ago for *Grand Traverse Journal*. Bencie's project is similar to volunteer Cathy Griffin's work, which gets published in the *Traverse City Record-Eagle* weekly as the column *110 Years Ago* (check it out every Monday!) You can read Bencie's first column online:

<https://gtjournal.tadl.org/2018/50-years-ago-january-1968/>

Thank you all for your continued support. We could not offer quality preservation efforts and research for our donors and patrons without you!

## Traverse Area Historical Society Spring 2018 Programs

All held on Sundays at the Traverse Area District Library, McGuire Room, starting at 1:00 PM.

**January 19th** - Russ Soyering, Traverse City Planning Director. "How Traverse City Planning Developed and Its Effects on our Community, 1940 to the Current Day."

**February 18th** - Jenny Loup - Former Clinch Park Employee; Degree in History from U of M; TAHS Board Member: "History of Clinch Park"

**March 18th** - Sharon Jennings - Retired TCAPS Teacher; TAHS Board Member: "History of Schools in the Traverse City Area."

**April 15th** - Julie Schopieray - Local History Author; TAHS Board Member: "Jens C. Petersen: From Bricklayer to Architect: The Life and Works of a Visionary Michigan Architect," based on Schopieray's newly-published book (2017)

**May 20th** - TBA

## Opportunities for Volunteers

Would you like to...

- Help out at the archives under the supervision of Amy Barritt, special collections librarian (see her report in this issue for possibilities)?
- Be an assistant for TAHS downtown or cemetery tours?
- Write an article about history or nature for the Grand Traverse Journal?
- Explore ways of getting local history into the schools?
- Serve on a board committee to work on such projects as newsletters, mailings, programming or maintaining the website?
- Help organize and execute a TAHS Friday Night Live event?
- Attend TAHS board meetings to find out more about board activities and what you might do to participate?
- Consider being a program presenter at an upcoming monthly program at TADL?
- Or...do whatever job you think would be useful to the Society?

Leave an email at [contact@traversehistory.org](mailto:contact@traversehistory.org) if you are interested in doing any of these things.

## Link to TAHS Website

To connect to the Traverse Area Historical Society website, click on <http://traversehistory.org>.