



WHAT THE STRANGER BROUGHT TO PENTWATER

By Amy Vander Zwart

Pentwater is presently in the throes of the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. We haven't experienced anything quite like this in our life time but Pentwater and the surrounding area experienced a killer disease many years ago when a stranger came to town bringing death!

On the 11th day of November in 1871, a stranger appeared in Pentwater. John Thuln stumbled into the Northwestern Hotel (Located at 298 S. Hancock Street at the Northeast corner of Hancock and Third Street.) requesting a room for the night. Mr. Thuln was pale, had a quiet raspy voice and his clothes were worn and stained.

He appeared to be a weary traveler not unlike many before him. W.S. Dumont, who owned the Northwestern Hotel with his father-in-law Walter Walradth, attempted to politely converse with Mr. Thuln, but when he found that the conversation was strictly one sided and his companion's eyes appeared glassed over, he directed him towards his room.

Mr. Dumont was concerned when Mr. Thuln required assistance as he weakly made his way to his sleeping quarters. Being ever the thoughtful host, the hotel owner fetched water and other necessities for the stranger making sure he was comfortable. The local doctor was called from down the road to come look in on the fatigued traveler. Being that John Thuln was having difficulty speaking and swallowing, he was treated for an affliction of the throat by Dr. Bills.

As the crisp fall day waned, the people of Pentwater whispered concerns and tales about the stranger, unaware of the man becoming progressively more ill behind closed doors. When the night was thick with darkness, John Thuln, the stranger who had traveled from California to Louisiana to Michigan with only \$8.50 in his pocket and twenty

dollars worth of gold pieces in a course purse, struggled with his final breath.

The kindhearted citizens of Pentwater paid their respects to the unknown stranger by attending John Thuln's burial. Not long after the somber event, Dr. Bills was called to home after home as the undertaker,

(Continued on next page.)

PANDEMIC LIFE IN PENTWATER

By A Village Resident

When I first heard the news of a dangerous virus in China, my first thought was "Right, cable news is going berserk once again". Now, after four months of endless grim statistics, I look at it much differently. More so, I'm sure, than anyone under sixty and for good reason. So how did it affect me, other than the solitude and the inconvenience? I haven't been depressed nor despondent, but I have been surprised by how isolation can so strongly affect everything. Face Time, oh yes what would I do without it?

The solitude, the lack of information, the images of what Covid-19 could do to me or my family and friends is reminiscent of the atmosphere during WWII when the depressing news

of the German counter offense at the Bulge was on everyone's mind and in their hearts.

Surely, I don't feel that sheltering in place and social distancing is a punishment even though it is the birth-mother of loneliness. Solitude by itself can be golden but only if it is self-imposed.

I can't say that any of this makes me clinically unhappy. I just want to get past this pandemic and reach the age of ninety-five! I'm not unmindful that the record shows that the over 80 age group in Oceana County accounts for only 11% of the cases, but 42% of the deaths; while the entire group over the age 60 has 35% of the cases and 87% of the deaths. The picture doesn't get any better when you look at the

(Continued on next page.)

(Stranger in Pentwater Continued.)

visitors of the hotel, and many others became ill with smallpox. The disease spread quickly throughout the community. There were 51 cases reported in Pentwater. The smallpox virus spread to the nearby areas of Golden, Crystal, and Ferry as well.

Smallpox in the late 1870's was a well known disease and with no cure or vaccine, a community would organize to isolate the victims by removing them from home and family and placed in one area so as to try to keep the outbreak contained. In Pentwater, a fence was erected around the hotel and the patients were taken and moved in the middle of the night to a home on the outskirts of the village known as the "Pest House".

Because it was known that people who had survived smallpox in the past could not contract it again, they were sought out to be caretakers for the sick. The death count in Pentwater and the county in 1871 was not reported, but we do know that Mr. Walradth, the father in law of W.S. Dumont, the wife of Mr. Walradth, his son, William Walradth, and many others died during that fateful fall when the stranger happened to arrive in Pentwater with smallpox.

(Pandemic Life Continued.)

State-wide death rate of 9.7%. Somber facts, yes; caution, always!

How different life during a quarantine is from some of the excitement I've had throughout my life. I've been shot at in Viet Nam, ate pickled eel in London, enjoyed Death by Chocolate in Switzerland, watched pink eye sweep through Southeast Asia like a tsunami; and survived all of that as well. I'm looking forward to the day when I can have happy hour with my neighbors on the back deck. We have been such close friends for twenty years. I can't join them for a famous Brown Bear Burger, or the West Michigan version of Tex-Mex at the Antler Bar, or patio dining at Gull Landing or the Village Cafe. One exception has been seeing my good friend Jim several times while he was out walking. Must have been a hoot, two old coots on opposite sides of the road, hands cupped behind the ears hollering "What?" Really wanting to talk but not daring to get close enough to hear.

I know that I should be doing something right now, but I don't feel like it. I hope that I don't feel this way tomorrow. I felt this way yesterday, the day before, and mostly every day since the start of the quarantine. I can't say much about what downtown looks like; I haven't been there. No newspaper, no drop-in visits, no fun. Meals are boring, how many ways can you fix pasta and ground beef, beans and ground beef, rice and ground beef? Guess I'll find out when I get to the bottom of the freezer. Not many people walking down my street, even fewer cars. Many things can be said about retiring to Pentwater, but rolling commotion isn't one of them, except maybe during tourist season.

WHAT COVID-19 HAS DONE FOR STUDENTS

By **Emme Tarnowski**, Student of Pentwater Public Schools

Quarantine has changed the day to day life of students completely.

We have watched spring turn towards summer; two weeks turn into over two months; classes turn into online instruction; and in person connection cut off statewide. Uncertainty fills daily lives. A six-foot separation behind masks is seemingly the only safety besides pure isolation. With the never-ending extension of quarantine, disappointment has become the everyday norm. Yet through this, students have kept up, pushing for their education despite the unfamiliar circumstances.

Facing a typical day is different for each student. Some have indulged in new hobbies and interests; others have been improving on already acquired skills. A common trend has been playing a lot of video games outside of current class work, which is proving an excellent way to pass time and to have connection with friends! A few students have spent

time fixing their sleep schedules and working on overall self-improvement. Some have taken advantage and started a new job, including myself, not letting Covid-19 interfere with getting a welcomed paycheck. The pandemic has taken away lots of in school experiences, but students aren't letting it get the best of them and the desire to improve!

With Covid-19 closing our schools, there are moments students wish they could have had one last time: one last class wide discussion, one last dance, one last conversation with their favorite teacher, even one last hug with their friends. Finally, with a hopeful end of quarantine in sight, life for students will go back to normal. Seniors move on to begin the rest of their lives outside of high school, whether it is college, the work force, or traveling the world. That leaves the underclassmen prepared to move up a grade, and an overall hope to begin a "normal" school year in the fall for everyone.

QUARANTINE TALES

From the Pentwater Township Library

By Mary Barker, Library Director

This sure is an interesting time! The year 2020 started off as such an exciting time for us at the library.

February 12th, we had a huge celebration for the library's 165th birthday. It was a lot of work, but we had so much fun. Over 250 guests who love and appreciate their local library attended the festivities plus elected leaders from the Village, Township and Oceana County.

One month and a day later, we closed the library for an undetermined time frame. Of course, people missed the library, but many continued using our digital collection from e-books, e-audio, e-movies and databases, but it was not the same. The human contact that a small-town library provides was missing. My phone voicemail messages were interesting. People asked, begged, and made illegal offers to get their hands on a "real book or DVD".

I made at least one trip a week to pick up mail from the post office and was asked each time from a library patron "When is the library going to be open again?"

Many of the updates for changes during the closure centered around Zoom meetings. I attended these meeting from my couch in my living room and saw old friends in the library community during weekly sessions for the Michigan Library Association, MeLCat, and the Library of Michigan. We also had staff meetings through Zoom. Getting everyone back together and being able to see and hear them was the best part! The library staff really do miss each other when we are separated for just a few days.

We did a lot of planning, complaining and got in touch with our feelings.

Being closed this long caused a little (alright a lot) of anxiety for everyone. Plans were messed up and dates kept changing and it seemed like we lost all control in our library world.

For the first few weeks I strangely felt that I didn't know how to run a library during a quarantine and was just hoping we could go back to the way it always was. But soon we all found new ways and support to get the job done.

I retold the story of my Grandma during the 1918 flu pandemic many times during the quarantine. My Grandma had gone to visit her Aunt and Uncle in Canada for a short visit and was quarantined there for six months. She was turned away from the U.S. border several times and decided if she could not go back home, she would help the relatives by getting a job and pay her own way. She got a job in a woolen mill and learned to weave red wool fabric used for the Royal Mounted Police. Her first bolt of fabric, which was over 20 yards, was perfect! She was given an award and recognition for doing a great job. So, if Grandma could change her life for the situation, I think that I could accept working from home was not that bad.

At this time, the library still does not have a firm date for reopening. We will most likely open with only curbside service for a few weeks. Since this is the busiest time in the Pentwater area, we are planning for both the best and worst scenarios and hope for better days ahead.

RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19

Amy Vander Zwart

Throughout the course of history, disease outbreaks have ravaged humanity, sometimes changing the course of history and, at times, signaling the end of entire civilizations. In the realm of infectious diseases, a pandemic is the worst-case scenario. When an epidemic spreads beyond a country's borders, the disease officially becomes a pandemic.

Some of the world's pandemics include:

541-542: Plague of Justinian	1346-1350: The Black Death
1870-1874: Smallpox	1899-1923: 6th Cholera Pandemic
1918-1920: Spanish Flu (H1N1)	1957-1958: Asian Flu (H2N2)
1968-1969: Hong Kong Flu	2009-2010: Swine Flu (H1N1)

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the rapidly spreading corona virus outbreak (Covid-19) a pandemic. What followed that announcement was shocking to many. Schools closed their doors not to reopen for the current school year, tape appeared on grocery store floors to help shoppers distance from one another, non-essential stores and businesses were mandated to close their doors, parks, trails, and playgrounds were roped off and closed, entire sports seasons were cancelled, people were warned to stay at home and not to socialize with anyone outside of their immediate household, shelves in the grocery stores became bare beginning with toilet paper, paper

(Continued on page 10.)

LESSONS IN PENTWATER HISTORY

By Ron Beeber

If you are curious about an event, artifact, building, or person in Pentwater's history before the museum is scheduled to open, there are at least three ways you can find out more!

First, go to the website at: pentwaterhistorical.society.org and watch the 18 minute video about the museum. A link to the video is posted on the Pentwater Historical Society (PHS) homepage.

Second, go to the PHS Website and click on "News & Events" > "Newsletters," and then browse an interesting collection of past newsletters we have posted there.

Third, access our Guide by Cell service anywhere in the world! Dial 231-720-0291. Museum visitors can dial this number to listen to 53 recorded narratives that explain various exhibits/artifacts that are on display. Each recording is 45 seconds to 2 minutes in length. You can listen to as many as you wish at a time. Simply dial the phone number shown above, then press any number between 1 and 53, followed by #.

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Ed Bigelow | 16. Original weathervane | 29. Nickerson Inn | 42. About Pentwater Community Hall |
| 2. Signs from former businesses | 17. Old pump organ | 30. Ships on Lake Michigan/Shipwrecks Lost & Found | 43. Large Scrapbook Display |
| 3. History overview of Pentwater | 18. Native American Artifacts | 31. Brickyard | 44. Three Hancock Street Hotels |
| 4. Charles Mears | 19. Henry Carter Johnson Collection | 32. Movie House | 45. Four Lodging Businesses |
| 5. Pentwater Channel | 20. Pentwater News Collection | 33. Novadoc Bell and Ship's Wheel | 46. Cabins and Campgrounds |
| 6. The Mary Stewart | 21. Channel ferry | 34. Undertakers | 47. Filling Stations |
| 7. Eldred Shingle Mill | 22. Swing Bridge | 35. Commercial Fishing | 48. Two houses on Green Street |
| 8. Carrie Mears/History of Mears State Park | 23. Train Depot | 36. Coast Guardsman Jack Dipert | 49. Several more stories about Native Americans |
| 9. Map of Middlesex | 24. Hotel Valeria/White Elephant | 37. Pentwater Fire Department | 50. Thanks for coming |
| 10. Birdland Sign and Building | 25. Pentwater Yacht Club | 38. Log Ladder | 51. Dumaw Creek |
| 11. Furniture making | 26. Left-hand display cabinet in center of floor | 39. Steam Pumper Fire Engine, Oceana | 52. W.B.O. Sands/Home |
| 12. Shipwrecks/Three Vessels | 27. Right-hand display case in center of floor | 40. Cemeteries | 53. Horse Racing in Pentwater |
| 13. U.S. Life Saving Station | 28. Native Americans in the Civil War, Company K | 41. Origin of Pentwater Community House and Hall | |
| 14. Pentwater veterans audio interviews | | | |
| 15. Pentwater High School artifacts, yearbook and class photos | | | |

ALL NEW! SUMMER MUSEUM DISPLAY

The Museum is ever changing with new exhibits and artifacts. The year 2020 is no exception! The Pentwater Historical Society Museum will have a new exhibit to share. This exhibit has been described as "Funny", "An exhibit you want to hang out in.", and "Story telling through the mail." You will learn snapshots of history in an entertaining way that even the children will enjoy! Come and see what all of the snorts and giggles are about in the Museum this summer!

THE NEWSLETTER IS LOOKING FOR...

Got a good story about life with the Virus? Or maybe you overheard a funny saying. How about writing a short observation about how you and friends are coping. Are you working at a critical job or any job with other people? Write a story about it and send it to Amy at: info@penentwaterhistoricalsociety.org

GUIDE BY CELL CONTEST DURING QUARANTINE

On March 12, 2020 when it was announced that all Michigan schools would be closed for three weeks beginning that Monday, many kids cheered, and many parents groaned. As the days dragged on teachers and parents scrambled to continue the children's education by "virtual classroom".

Much like the school, the PHS Museum, although largely closed in March, scrambled to have a "virtual Museum"

instructions to call the museum's audio tour line (try it out 231-720-0291).

After students listen to an audio clip, they can access the museum's feedback line by pressing 0# to leave their name, grade, school, phone number, and the answer to the trivia question. Students are then entered into a contest drawing for prizes.

Our winners were:

Lola, 7th grade, West Middle School

Myah, 2nd grade, Holland Christian

Braylan, 4th grade,
Coopersville Elementary

Bryson, 2nd grade,
Coopersville Elementary

Addie, 4th grade, Hart Elementary

Andrew, 4th grade, Benny Elementary

Tyce, 6th grade, Nickels Intermediate

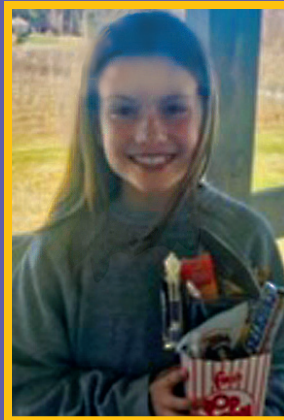
A special Congratulations to Lola and Myah who called in multiple times over the course of the contest and answered the majority of the questions!



Tyce



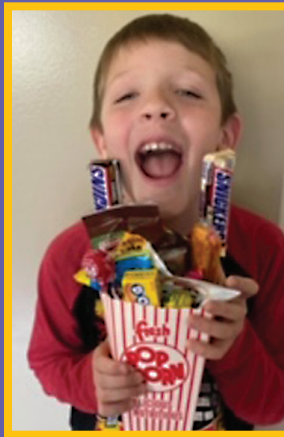
Lola



Addie



Myah



Andrew



Braylan and Bryson

and upgraded the *Guide by Cell* feature by adding the newer audio tour featuring over 50 different categories of historical subjects. (See article on previous page.)

Debbie Deward, a PHS Trustee and Special Events Coordinator and Amy Vander Zwart, another Trustee, came up with a clever idea to have a daily contest, using Facebook and *Guide by Cell*, that's open to Pentwater students. Since April 13th, the Museum has posted a daily trivia question with

Originally offered to Pentwater Schools, historical society members were invited to include their kids and grandkids from anywhere around the country.

The contest began on April 13 and concluded on May 15th. The contest was also featured in an article that was shared on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and on the *Guide by Cell* website.

Thank You! to everyone who phoned in!

We hope you will continue to use our Guide by Cell service and visit the museum to see what you heard about!

What's Up? **in the Village.** See something in the Village that you believe should be documented? Grab your camera, take a photo and send it with a brief description to the Pentwater Historical Society at: info@pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org



Volunteers from the Pentwater Junior Women's Club did a great job supplying over 100 families with food.



We don't go to school nowadays—school comes to us in the form of learning packets!



Repair people were riding high when upgrading the communication equipment atop the water tower.

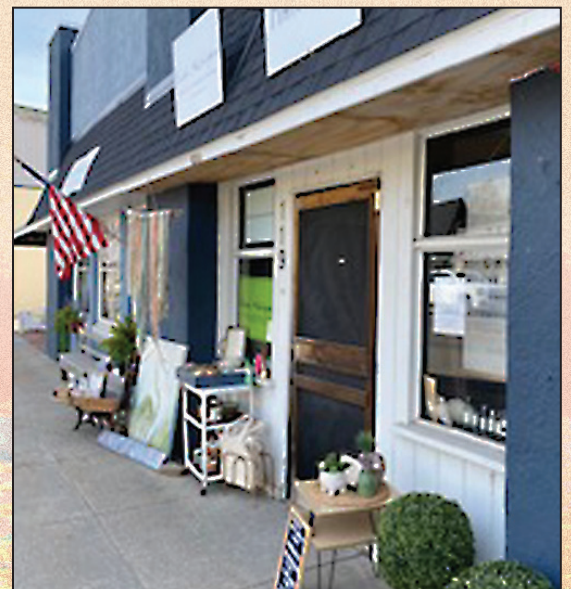


The Easter Bunny was at the Village Green with the Fire Dept.



Behold the great store of candy!.

Pentwater shops are open just in time for the summer season.





School graduations were different this year and banners, featuring Pentwater graduates, were displayed downtown.



Take a book leave a book tiny libraries have been a welcome diversion for readers in Pentwater. This clever design is in front of the Pentwater School.



Signs of the times are everywhere reminding us to to be safe.



DINNER & MOVIE

**Wednesday
August 26, 2020
At the VFW Hall**

**5:30 pm
Appetizers**

**6:00 pm
Greeting from
Dick Warner,
President, PHS**

**6:15 pm
Dinner is Served**

**MY PENTWATER
MEMORIES**

Starring... Citizens
of Pentwater



7:00pm The Movie!

ONLY \$20.00 per person
(BYOB)

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:

Decor by Sandra

Deb Deward

Pentwater Fair Trade

Questions or information contact
Deb Deward at: 231-869-2230

MEET YOUR BOARD

BETH RUSSELL Secretary

I have been coming to Pentwater since my teenage years, but mostly for short visits with family. I grew up in Michigan, and while life took me to Tennessee, I always knew that some part of me wanted to come back to Michigan to be closer to family. Near the end of my career



Beth Russell

in Information Systems, at IBM and later at the Tennessee Valley Authority, my husband reminded me that he had once promised that we could move anywhere after I retired. He was surprisingly calm when I suggested that I might want to move from Chattanooga to northern Michigan.

In the fall of 2017, we purchased a home on the south side of Pent-

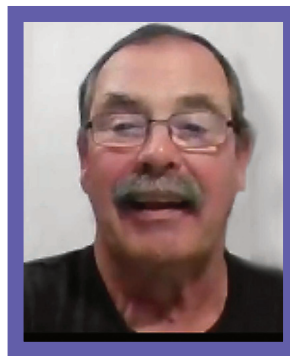
water Lake, moving here year-round in June of 2019. We appreciate the chance to see family more regularly, especially in light of current travel restrictions and social distancing. I enjoy spending time outdoors, reading, and crafting.

We have two grown daughters, a grandchild, and both families live a great distance away. They love visiting us in Pentwater whenever they can, and we sometimes find ourselves traveling to visit them. The fact that they both live in warm places gives us some respite from Michigan winters as well. After hosting at the museum for two summers I have seen what a valuable asset PHS is for the community. It's interesting to see the variety of people that come to the museum, many coming to see and enjoy a glimpse of the Pentwater they might have grown up with 20-50 years ago, and others just coming to learn more about a small town and its history. I'm delighted to be serving as secretary for the PHS board.

DAN HOEKSTRA Museum Director

My childhood was different than most. I am a military brat that lived in Augsburg and Frankfurt Germany. We also lived in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas for four years before moving to Verona, Italy and then Vicenza, Italy.

I graduated from Catholic Central located in Grand Rap-



Dan Hoekstra

ids, Michigan and then went on to Davenport College. I served in the US Navy, Seaman Signalman E-3, assigned to USS Pawcatuck, AO-108, Mayport Florida.

I retired from General Motors in 2009 with 33 years seniority. I rose to the position of Senior Die Set Supervisor. After leaving General Motors, my wife, Lin, and I opened Silver Hills

Antiques at Gustafson's, which we ran for eight years.

Our home was purchased in 1965 by family members, but we didn't start coming to Pentwater until 1993 and after retiring from General Motors, we moved to Pentwater permanently.

I am proud to be a part of the vibrant Pentwater community. I have served on many boards and committees in the community over the years. I was part of the Pentwater Village Council for five years, the Planning Commission for 2 years, and the Pentwater Chamber of Commerce for two years. In addition, I have served on committees for building and grounds, personnel committee, and the ordinance committee. I have also been a member of the Pentwater Service Club and attend First Baptist Church in Pentwater.

Being a part of the Pentwater Historical Society and serving as the Museum Director is an exciting new venture and I look forward to seeing what's in store!

JOAN GEHRINGER RETIRES AS SECRETARY

The Pentwater Historical Society would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to retiring board member and secretary Joan Gehringer. Joan has been faithfully attending and recording PHS meetings as the secretary for over 4 years. Joan will remain an active member of PHS and will continue to head up the job of finding volunteer docents for the museum.

Thank you Joan for all of your continued hard work and dedication! Although the board will miss seeing you at each meeting, we are elated that we will still see your smiling face in the museum and at events.

MUSEUM UPDATE

By Amy Vander Zwart

What a season of change 2020 has turned out to be! Between emails and zoom meetings we have been working hard to get things ready for the summer season and events have forced us to reschedule some of our activities, but the date change won't affect the quality of the experience!

- ♦**Roof And Gutters.** A new roof and gutters are scheduled at the beginning of June.
- ♦**Spring Dinner Canceled.** The good news is that we will be featuring our fabulous Pentwater Documentary starring citizens of Pentwater at our Summer Dinner, August 26.
- ♦**Garage Sale Postponed.** We are hoping to hold our annual Garage Sale in late summer this year so hang on to those unwanted treasures. Watch our webpage and Facebook for details.
- ♦**Historical Walking Tour On Hold.** We are hoping to bring back this entertaining and educational tour. This

is a great activity to be involved in and naturally practices social distancing! Watch our webpage and Facebook for dates and times throughout the summer.

- ♦**Historical Boat Tour Is Happening Now.** The tours will begin June 24.
- ♦**Rent Our Space Happening Now.** The Museum and outdoor space is available to rent for events like weddings and reunions. Availability is dependent on current state mandates at the time of the event.
- ♦**Museum Opening Postponed Until July 9.** Safety precautions will be in place at the time of opening. The hours will be Thursday, Friday, and Saturday 1:00-4:00.
- ♦**Guide By Cell.** Guide by Cell continues to be up and running! So many of you used this service during the stay at home orders! We hope you learned some new information. We know you will now want to see for yourselves what you heard about! Come visit the Museum and get a firsthand look!

PUBLIC SERVICE OFFICERS GET A LESSON IN LOCAL HISTORY

By Norm Shotwell

Pentwater Village Police Chief, Laude Hartrum, recently asked the Pentwater Historical Society to once again provide a portion of the two-day training for his Department's Public Service Officers (PSO). These are 17-19 year-old West Shore Community College students who have shown an interest in law enforcement careers.

Readers no doubt have seen them talking to Village visitors the past couple of summers. The PSO course created by Chief Hartrum is designed to prepare the students to answer a variety of questions from residents and visitors, including those related to Pentwater's history. Ed Bigelow (who else!) had talked to the students in past years.

The PHS asked Ron Beeber to brief the students this year so he met with five PSOs at the museum on Friday, June 12. The group sat facing an aerial photo of Pentwater and Ron used a laser pointer to give a virtual "Pentwater History Boat Tour." Each student officer also was given a photocopy of a 101-year-old U.S. Army Corps of Engineers map (donated to the PHS by Dick Warner), which was reproduced in a past issue of the PHS newsletter. Ron pointed out various locations on the map and talked about events that had happened there. He also described other interesting histor-

ical points that are covered in the Museum's *Guide by Cell* recorded narratives.

The PSOs then browsed the museum for a short time and were invited to come back. Ron explained how, by using the 53 numbered items in the *Guide by Cell Service* the PSO's and other museum visitors can learn more at their own pace.

The PHS was pleased to once again brief these fine young people. This summer's PSOs will be great community ambassadors, recommending that tourists visit the museum as well as take the history boat tour that's expected to return this summer.

2020 OFFICERS & TRUSTEES OF THE PENTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dick Warner <i>President</i>	Norm Shotwell <i>V-President</i>	Beth Russell <i>Secretary</i>	Bart Zachrich <i>Treasurer</i>
TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR Mark Shotwell	MUSEUM DIRECTOR Dan Hoekstra	MARKETING DIRECTOR Jim Lambrix	

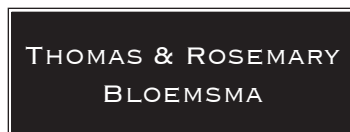
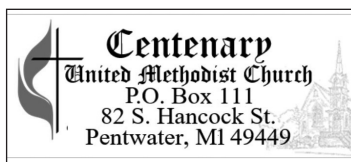
TRUSTEES: Amy Vander Zwart, Terry Roach and Deb Deward

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE
Amy Vander Zwart Jim Pikaart

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WE NEED YOUR YEAR BOOKS!**

If you have any of the following years and are willing to donate your yearbook/s we would greatly appreciate it!

Need of years: 1938, 1939, 1941-1945, 1947-1950, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1977, 1991, 2008, 2016 and 2017.

Please contact: info@pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org

**WANTED:
CLASSIC AND ANTIQUE CARS**

Be part of Pentwater History by showing off your Classic or Antique Car in the 2020 Annual Homecoming Parade.

Saturday, August 15 th.

Get out your wax and make your car shine for our best parade ever!

All Makes, models, and conditions wanted

Contact: info@pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org

**MEMBERSHIP ACTIVITY
DONATIONS**

Roger & Ruth Bailey Duke Energy/Pamela Chapman
Sheila & Richard Folsom Juanita Pierman
Jean Russell Trent & Sara Witteveen

(Resilience During Covid-19 Continued.)

towels, and cleaners, international boarders were closed to travelers, concerts, weddings, festivals, and church services were cancelled, cars sat in driveways as there was nowhere to go and nothing to do.

Life changed for everyone. Some grumbled about these changes, but many made the most of life and found ways to add smiles to peoples' days. Children created sidewalk art and games for people going by, art was displayed in windows for others to enjoy, mystery friends dropped off groceries, treats, or surprises on doorsteps, people donated meals to essential workers, those with sewing skills made masks to donate to those in need, people sat on their balconies and sang songs to the empty streets, jets flew overhead to promote solidarity and support, and animal shelters emptied as people adopted pets.

If nothing else, this pandemic has shown the positive power of the human spirit. The PHS would like to thank our essential workers and citizens for all of their tireless efforts of support and solidarity throughout this pandemic. We live in a wonderful community!

Elizibeth Edwards writes: *"Resilience is accepting your new reality, even if it's less good than the one you had before. You can fight it, you can do nothing but scream about what you've lost, or you can accept that and try to put together something that's good."*

MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2020 ARE DUE

If you see "19" following your name on the mailing label it is time to renew your membership. The dues amounts are shown on the Membership Application Form on the last page of the newsletter.

Please send your check to: Pentwater Historical Society
PO Box 54, Pentwater, MI 49449

PENTWATER AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

***A note from the editor.** Weeks of record job losses have resulted with an unemployment rate that's estimated to be higher than at any time since the Great Depression.*

That shocking reality naturally invites analogies and raises what is perhaps the most important economic question of our time: How long will the bad times last? After all, what made the Great Depression so great was not just the severity of the slump but its extraordinary length, beginning in the United States in the second half of 1929 and not really ending until almost 10 years later.

Our beloved Bob wrote this article last year and it seems eerily fitting to publish during this time. ~Amy

With the Great Depression celebrating its 90th anniversary this year, I thought it would be interesting to see how it affected Pentwater.

With that in mind, I started researching around the year of 1928, about time the banks started to close, the market went bust, and, well . . . you know the rest!

I looked at court records of local bankruptcy filings. I looked for business closings, soup lines, home foreclosure notices, farm foreclosure sales; anything that would tell how it affected our town and to tell you the truth, I haven't found much.

What I did find was many references of local people buying new cars and traveling everywhere to visit relatives and friends and to take vacations. Being that I have been a chronic old car lover for forever – no, I am not looking for any kind of cure for this affliction – I was immediately interested. You have to remember just traveling by automobile to Grand Rapids at this time was a big deal. Paved roads? We don't need no stink-in' paved roads! Most of your route was over dirt roads.

But who are buying these automobiles? Who could afford them? Lots of people. With that in mind, let's see whatcha, buying? Seems Mr. and Mrs. Warren Weldon are the proud owners of a new Oakland motorcar. Mr. Elmer Clarkson and family are enjoying their new Ford automobile. The Big Maple Garage on Hancock Street sold Hudson and Terraplane automobiles up until about WWII. A few livery stables also worked on these new-fangled contraptions. The Pentwater Lumber Company has added another truck to their fleet. Several businesses around town have new vehicles and farmers are bringing their crops to town in trucks. Lumber, furniture and produce are being shipped out daily by rail or ship. The list goes on and on.

So where is the Depression around here? In all honesty I haven't found much.

But what did these people around here do for food during the Depression? I have pulled out a whole bunch of Depression era recipes I had. Imagine you were a laborer, dock worker, store clerk or you worked on one of the boats coming in and out of the harbor. You had a wife who took care of the house and a bunch of your kids and didn't work outside the house for extra income. You sure didn't have any money for extras so I'd suggest a gourmet dinner of ketchup sandwiches or how about ketchup and onion sandwich? Any kind of beans mixed with a can of stewed tomatoes. Cabbages fried with potatoes and potatoes every which way imaginable. Potato pancakes? Potato bread? Yes, even store-bought bread was expensive back then. Not exotic enough for your tastes? How about a stew made with all the usual root veggies only in this case made with baloney or hot dogs and mixed into your stew? Beef, pork and most everything else was expensive. Baloney and hot dogs were not. Ham hocks and beans, ham hocks and rice. Warm rice with milk. Spam with everything. Chipped beef on toast. Creamed peas on toast. Everybody grew peas around here. Bread? 4 cups flour, a package of yeast, milk if you had it or use water. Combine everything in a bowl, cover with a cloth and let it rise in a warm place until double in size. You know the rest.

"But I need greens in my diet!" Get your family together and go out collecting dandelions leaves and roots. In the spring the young leaves were quite tender. Fry them up in some butter along with the yellow heads. Pluck off the greens around the flower head as they are bitter any time of the year. (Don't get me started on dandelions and pine trees.) Fiddle-head ferns – I have a ton of these growing in my back yard every year. We could take up this whole newsletter on wild greens. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to grow tomatoes, cabbages or onions. There are about a zillion recipes for sweet potatoes. Everyone had a garden of some sort. Chickens were legal in your back yard as were rabbits but cows were not.

In the late 1800's Pentwater, like many small towns, saw a wave of industrial activity with the introduction of the steam engine, machine tools, better transportation and increased agriculture.

It was a thriving village with canning factories, saw mills, furniture manufacturing and one of the world's largest shingle mills located at Frenchtown producing 270,000 shingles per day! (Frenchtown was located at the West end of Longbridge Rd. on the shore of the little bayou.) Within two years it was destroyed by fire never to reopen.



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This old post card show giant stacks of lumber behind the Sands & Maxwell lumber mill in winter.



In 1895 part of the Sands & Maxwell lumber storage and building caught on fire. Large boats pumped water on the fire. The S&M mill was located at where the marinas are now located.



The work crew at Chapman Lumber Mill. The Mill was located where the Village boat launch is now located.

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

**HOMECOMING
PARADE AUG 15**

**SUMMER DINNER
AUGUST 26**



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