

Illustration by George De Angelis

# Green Oak Historian

Official Newsletter of the  
Green Oak Township Historical Society

Volume 34 Issue No. 2

Spring 2015



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Meetings at the 1856 Township Hall except as noted.

### August

- 8th Family Pioneer Saturday 2-4 pm
- 12th Board Meeting 6:30 pm

### September

- 9th Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- 12th Green Oak Day (10001 Silver Lake Road)

### October

- 14th Board Meeting 6:30 pm
- 25th Annual Meeting 1:00 pm (Potluck Luncheon)

### November

- 11th Board Meeting 6:30 pm

### December

- 6th Holiday Luncheon 1:00 pm (Restaurant)

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# Green Oak Day

## Saturday, September 12, 2015

### 10 am to 3 pm

Green Oak Day will be held at  
10001 Silver Lake Road  
(Green Oak Township)  
and  
9384 Whitmore Lake Road  
(Green Oak Fire Dept.)

**BOUNCE HOUSE ● HISTORICAL DISPLAYS**

**● PETTING ZOO ● ICE CREAM ● CAKE**

For more information call:  
Mark St Charles, Supervisor Green Oak Township (810) 231-1333 Ext. 102

In conjunction with:  
Green Oak Township Historical Society  
Green Oak Township  
Green Oak Township Police Dept.  
Green Oak Township Fire Dept.



## WE SEND OUR HEARTFELT SYMPATHY TO MARIEANNA BAIR AND THE FAMILY ON THE PASSING OF HER HUSBAND EARLAND BERT BAIR ON JUNE 3, 2015.

(Please see the article Marieanna wrote about “The Huron River Stock Farm”.) Bert was born on September 9, 1925. During the Great Depression, Charley Emmett and Mabel Olson Mayfield Bair brought their family from Jasper, Missouri to Hamburg, Michigan where Emmett found employment. Bert and his brothers, Charles and Roland, attended Hollister Rural School. After graduating from Brighton High School in 1943, Bert served in the Navy from 1943 to 1946 during World War II. Bert married Marieanna Seitz on July 11, 1946. Bert and Marieanna purchased their present home in 1960. Bert was an engineer employed by Chevrolet Division at the General Motors Proving Ground for 34 years, retiring in 1980.

Bert enjoyed fishing with his family, growing healthy food, and hunting. He was a quiet gentleman, who put others’ needs ahead of his own.

Whenever Edna Peach, the founder of the historical society needed extra help, she called on Bert. Cleo Moran remembers Bert as the quiet gentleman who mowed the grass at the Gage House when it was used as the GOTHS museum. Many of us will think of Bert when we have chicken noodle soup as he made it so often for the GOTHS potluck dinners. It was delicious! Bert was a former trustee of our society. He donated his time to GOTHS, the Brighton Area Historical Society, American Legion Post #235 and St. George Lutheran Church. A donation in his memory may be made to Green Oak Township Historical Society

Bert was preceded in death by his parents; brother Charles and half-brother, Robert. Bert leaves to cherish his memory his wife,

Marieanna Bair and their five children: David (Judy), Tony, Paul (Kathy), Roxann (Larry) DeWulf, and Kristal (Gary) Unger, 13 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. (The family plans to hold a memorial service for Bert at a later date.)



**Green Oak Township  
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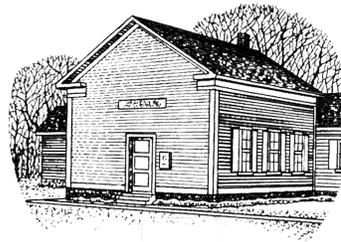
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Stuart Schluckbier  
(248) 486-6662

Antoinette "T" Shelvey  
(248) 342-0978



# Thank You and Recognition From GOTHs

- Antoinette "T" Shelvey for all her work on the June Garage Sale at the 1856 Hall. She raised over \$5700.00 for GOTHs. She is trying very hard to reach \$6000.00, so she is still working on this project and has items for sale.
- Anna Ernst received donations from her friends and delivered them to GOTHs.
- Noah Doneth, a local Boy Scout has donated several hours of his time to GOTHs.
- Murrin Fenrich and Emma Haiser have donated several hours of their time to GOTHs.
- Green Oak Township for their continued work on the building and grounds. Their assistance exceeds what we could do by ourselves.
- Phoenix Players for being flexible with the use of the 1856 Hall.
- Marieanna Bair for writing an article for this newsletter.
- Carrie Buatti and Marilyn Harrington for creating and designing this newsletter.
- Carrie Buatti for working on the GOTHs website:  
[www.greenoaktownshiphistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greenoaktownshiphistoricalsociety.org)
- Jo Ann Driver Williams came and helped "T" each day during the sale.
- So many of our members, and several nonmembers offered and /or assisted with the Garage Sale. We can't thank them enough for their willingness to help! (There were so many, that we didn't get every ones name down, so instead of leaving someone out we are thanking everyone.)
- Everyone who donated and/or purchased items at the Garage Sale.
- Mike Nelson was always ready to haul a load in his truck.
- Dave Huck, Steve Harrington, Marilyn Harrington, and Antoinette "T" Shelvey assisted Mike with loading and unloading his truck many times.



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Check out our website: [www.greenoaktownshiphistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greenoaktownshiphistoricalsociety.org)

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# Huron River Stock Farm

Around 1900 the publishers of the Brighton Argus encouraged area farmers to give their farms a name identifying their unique location, their agricultural pursuits, their business, and/or their background. This would be the logo on their business stationery which could be ordered from the Brighton Argus. Many farmers liked the idea of promoting their identity in this manner.

One of them was Mary Christa. Her 250 acre farm was on the Grand River Trail at the north end of Green Oak Township, east of Pleasant Valley Road.

The original owner of the property was William S. Russell who received a land patent from the Federal government in 1833. The Grand River Trail passed through the north end of the property. With the building of the Plank Road in 1850, a toll gate was located just east of Pleasant Valley Road. William's brother, Elihu, tended the toll gate collecting varying amounts for animals, buggies, wagons, and travelers, using the newly planked road.

With the passing of William in 1870, members of the Christa family from

Detroit purchased the property, building a two story, four square house. Owners of a marble concern, the Christas used much of that material in the house. A very modern house for the time, it had the first furnace (a huge monster) with steam radiators in the area. A marble-lined bathroom, with tub, had an outside entrance for use by farm workers; an inlaid marble-floored front entry, a marble stairway and a shallow marble-fronted fire place. The white marble baseboards provided convincing evidence that the Christas constructed the house. Built-in closets were another unusual feature. Mary Christa, niece of Phillip Christa ran the Huron River Stock Farm very efficiently. Large barns and other outbuildings were east of the house (prevailing winds from the west). A large apple orchard of about 36 to 40 trees were planted south of the house. With fields under cultivation one surely could view the Huron River as it flowed through the south half of the farm.

In 1923, Mary signed a right-of-way for a highway realignment of M 16 (Grand River) when the highway was paved in 1924. This eliminated a

dangerous sharp turn at Woodruff Creek east of the house. (Early drivers were not immune to the challenge, "Just how fast can this Lizzie go?")

Upon Mary's death, her nephew, Milton, was responsible for the property. By 1960, when this writer acquired the house and most of the land (which hadn't been purchased by the state for the recreation area) was owned by the Brighton Development Corporation. It didn't take long for the barns to be replaced by industries. (Compiled by Marieanna Bair from censuses, atlases, a portion of the abstract for the property and Milton Charboneau's First Land Owners and Settlers of Livingston County. Corrections/additions requested. (810) 229-6402.)



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## Notes from Marilyn

### Harrington

We thoroughly enjoyed the **Vintage Strings Band** at the April membership meeting. It was a pleasure to have them return in July for Pioneer Saturday. We had the opportunity to listen, dance, or clap to their lively music.

**Antoinette "T" Shelvey** started work on the June Garage Sale in March. She visited local Estate and/or Garage Sales and let them know that anything that they had left could be donated to GOTHs and we would be glad to pick up the items. (We are a 501 (c) (3) organization, so their donations would be tax deductible.) All of her work ahead of the sale really paid off as she had lots of items to put in our Garage Sale. Antoinette "T" also let customers attending the sale know that she would accept donations during the sale. Several customers took advantage of this and donated items. We are pleased with all the work that Antoinette "T" put into

this sale. Her work for GOTHs was above and beyond as she spent many days preparing for the sale, was present every day of the sale, and then packed up what was left for donation to the Disabled American Veterans.

At the July membership meeting, **Diane Wynings** presented information on Rachel Andresen, the founder of "Youth for Understanding." Diane's presentation was excellent.

**Green Oak Township** is working to improve our building. A new front porch for the 1856 Hall is planned; also the repair/replacement of the kitchen floor, cabinets, and appliances. Their continued support of the Society is very much appreciated.

**Green Oak Day on September 12, 2015 at the Green Oak Township Hall 10001 Silver Lake Road.** It will take place from 10:00 to 3:00 pm. there will be a display of items from GOTHs. This is a joint celebration with Green Oak Township,

Green Oak Township Fire Dept., and Green Oak Township Police. It will be a fun day for all ages. Plan to attend

**Antoinette "T" Shelvey** hopes to have a Holiday Sale. Dates have not been set, but if you have any holiday items you would like to donate please call her at (248) 342-0978.

It has been my pleasure to work with three Brighton High School students who are volunteering their time at GOTHs. **Emma Haiser, Murran Fenrich and Noah Doneth** have helped with cleaning, organizing, and the Garage Sale.

**On Thursday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30 pm Marieanna Bair, Erlah Lambert and I** will be working on the development of exhibits of early Green Oak lives. You are encouraged to join us in making these important decisions. If you are able to help on a different day please call (248) 446-0789.

**Recognition of Major Donors will be in the next newsletter.**

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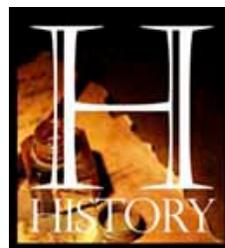
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The Society's purpose is to bring together those people interested in history, particularly the history of Green Oak Township, and to promote a better understanding and appreciation of our American heritage.

[www.greenoaktownshiphistoricalsociety.org](http://www.greenoaktownshiphistoricalsociety.org)



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**The Mission of the Green Oak Township Historical Society Museum**

Is to collect and preserve artifacts and publications with relationship to Green Oak Township and to build an awareness and appreciation of the history of Green Oak Township including the history of the people who settled here.

We have space for three more ads... The cost is now \$60 per year for four printings. Seasonal ads are \$15 each. If you are interested please call David Huck at (248) 486 - 9121 or email david.huck@charter.net Please put "Newsletter" in the subject line.



Thank you

# Pledge Commitment to 1856 Historic Hall

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (first & last name) pledge a one-time contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

I prefer to make a yearly contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for the years \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

This donation is to be used for: check one or both

Renovation/Restoration \_\_\_\_\_ or operation and/or other expenses \_\_\_\_\_ incurred by the Green Oak Township Historical Society related to Green Oak's 1856 Historic Hall.

Send to:

**GOTHS**

**10789 Silver Lake Road**

**South Lyon, MI 48178**



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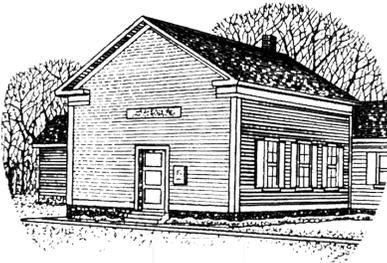
Please check the address area of this newsletter. If it says "**Complimentary**" 2015 membership have not been paid.

"**2015**" above your name means membership dues have been paid and "**Life**" means life member.

Questions: (248) 446 - 0789

The Green Oak Township Historical Society relies on the participation of its members and the generosity of its patrons. To renew your membership, make a donation, or become a member please use the form below.

Please designate your choice of newsletter delivery: \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_ snail mail



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*Please pass this form along to a friend if you are a paid up member. Cut along dotted line and mail form to:*

**Green Oak Township  
Historical Society  
10789 Silver Lake Rd.  
South Lyon, MI 48178**

**Donation to:** Historical Society Project Fund

\$10

\$25

\$50

\$100

\$250

Other

The Green Oak Twp. Historical Society is a 501 c (3) Non-Profit Organization. All donations are tax deductible.





## Green Oak Township Historical Society

1856 Historic Township Hall

10789 Silver Lake Rd. • South Lyon, MI 48178

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### **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED**

- Creating articles for the newsletter
- Creating displays in the museum
- Organizing material
- Archiving
- Building maintenance
- Landscaping

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