



# Romeo Perspective

Volume 1, Issue 4 2010

ROMEO, MACOMB COUNTY, MICHIGAN

www.romeohistoricalsociety.org

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**See Grant Award on page 3!**

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## Bancroft Stranahan Museum..you have to visit!

Major changes at the Bancroft Stranahan Museum by curator Joan Beringer have nine rooms updated with furniture and artifacts for a display more authentic to its time period. Richard Daughtery, local historian and expert in Romeo history, helped Joan with the rearrangements over several days. The kitchen clock is in the kitchen, the parlor chairs are in the parlor and husband Richard had to move that darn square grand piano again. Joan has added a clothing display room as a new offering for visitors. Have a look at Laura Woodin's wedding dress and the kind of suits RHS Treasurer Tim Billo



Bancroft Stranahan Museum had the yard trees trimmed by Mt. Vernon Tree and Landscape and the garden maintained this summer... The Village DPW also repaired the uneven sidewalk out front too! We are looking better yet!

would wear as he courted his wife Gloria. Do you like yellow? This season the new displays were enjoyed by Rochester Questors Club whose 25 members also toured Gray's Opera House/ Masonic Temple on Main Street. The 1950's Romeo High School Class reunion met recently in Romeo and toured too. When Bill Schmidt stepped into the back room he was looking at his father's and

his uncle's baritone and alto horns on display. His father and uncle played in the Romeo Merchant Band. Bill picked up the baritone and played song for the group. The group also toured the Archives as well. Their interview about life in Romeo was video'd for the Archives. Two of the visitors have sent donations and artifacts to RHS upon returning to their homes all over the country.

## Romeo Christmas Homes Tour 2010

Mark your calendar for Saturday December 11 for our premier annual homes tour during the holiday season. We have five beautiful holiday homes to tour together with the historic First Congregational Church.

Be alert to purchase tickets in time. Always a sell-out!

The associated 2010 ornament will also be on sale the day of the tour.

Tickets \$15.00 per person at the Museums and Town Hall Antiques this fall. They make a great holiday gift too!



### Three local museums

#### Romeo Art & Archives Center,

290 N. Main Street.  
(state police building)

#### Bancroft-Stranahan House

132 Church St.

#### Clyde Craig Blacksmith Shop

301 N. Bailey St.



Rosie Chapman appears as Harriet Tubman at Gray's Opera House in January 2011.

## Romeo Art and Archives Museum... *Stop here too!*

Romeo resident Richard Daughtery has again generously given the RHS a William Gibbs painting to add to our growing collection of this important artist's work. The *Girl with the Bowl of Apples* is now hanging in the Bancroft Stranahan Museum. Last year he donated two signed hunting scene oil paintings which are hanging in the Romeo Art and Archives building. Our collection of Gibbs work, native to Romeo, is a major asset in preserving Romeo's heritage.

The *Romeo On Wheels* display has a permanent home in the front display room at the Archives now. It is important in understanding Romeo's economic development and serves as the background and source of the four new outdoor heritage markers around downtown Romeo on transportation,

Thank you to Richard Daughtery for donating the mirror in the formal parlor and the William Gray clock that was in the Gray family music room

dedicated on May 15 this year. These four markers were featured on the Motor-Cities National Heritage Area website.

*The Secret Railroad* display tells the story of the underground rail road in the area. It explores segregation in Romeo and those who challenged the system of segregation. Come see the bullet holes in the mailbox. Cimb into Henry Brown's box to see what it was like to mail yourself north to freedom. Listen to the voice of the 101-year man who was a slave in the south.

We are linking *The Secret Railroad* to the sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War about to start in 2011. Our display is on Kinchen Artis and his two fellow black Union soldiers who are buried in the Romeo

on Church Street.

Thank you Rich and Judy Dugger for donating the Dell laptop computer for museum use.

Cemetery. As you drive by the Archives at night, you can see Kinchen Artis looking out at you. Is he wondering if everyone is finally equal?

Rosie Chapman as Harriet Tubman, conductor on the Underground Railroad, will be performing in Gray's Opera House /Masonic Temple in January. DTE Foundation has presented us with a grant to cover this event's expenses. Thank you DTE Foundation! Everybody leave your lights on! Check our website for more details on this upcoming program in January 2011!

Stop by **Romeo Arts and Archives Museum on Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9pm** to check out all the displays and information your local Society has on Romeo. —Richard Beringer

Thank you to Steve Alling, Stu Walters and Todd Jenema for organizing Blacksmith Days this year.

## That Church Clock Tower continues to chime the hours!

The First Congregational Church clock tower continues to chime the hours every day and we are all still hearing that welcome sound. The clock tower started chiming again on May 15 at noon at the rededication and we still notice the sound. It brings a welcome satisfaction of restoration accomplishment of an important part of Romeo daily life

Restorers Bill Miller and Charlie Randals continue their work in the tower.. They have made the heavy bell more secure in the belfry but have more projects to accomplish. Build guard rails, painting, board replacement and cement work are ahead. And the two men do not stop.

Thank you everyone for all your donations towards the clock restoration Please continue as you can so we can complete the work.

## Grant Brings Cemetery Project Closer to Goal

The Romeo Historical Society's Cemetery Mapping Project got a big boost last month when it was awarded a \$500 grant from the **Four County Community Foundation**. Thank you!

The grant money will be used to pay author Bernard Pearl for his research and documentation of our historic Romeo Cemetery. Mr. Pearl has documented many cemeteries and currently is

available to work on ours.

To date, the Society has raised over \$1,100 for the project, but we still need your help.

The cost of this project is one dollar per grave, and the total number of grave sites is well above 6,000!

For every dollar you donate, you help name a person interred in the Romeo Cemetery. Once named, the Society will research each individual using our archival information and the genealogy

search site, Ancestry.com. The information will then be put into a book, which will be available to the public.

Donations are accepted at the Romeo Arts and Archives Center and Kane's Town Hall Antiques at 205 N. Main Street, open 7 days. Look for the donation cans on store counters around town. You can also mail donations to: Romeo Historical Society, P.O. Box 412 Romeo MI, 48065.

*Thank you in advance!*

**"This Place Matters"**, a National Trust for Historic Preservation fund-raising campaign featured *Gray's Opera House/ Masonic Temple* at 231 N. Main Street, Romeo this month along with other Michigan and nation wide historic sites. Thanks to the Romeo Historical Society, the Masons' famous Romeo building gained national exposure as an important historic resource, worthy of preservation. While the Opera House did not win the \$25,000 top prize, it placed in the top 100 sites featured across the country. The winner, with 14 percent of the votes was Paramount Theater in Austin Texas, site of the NT conference later this year. Thank you to all who voted for our famous Opera House!

Of course, any donations would be accepted for the restoration of the ballroom of the House!

## Alexander Macomb Awards...let's nominate some Romeo people!

The Macomb County Historical Commission honors people who have made major contributions to the preservation of our history each year with the Alexander Macomb Awards.

Anyone can nominate a worthy candidate by writing a letter to the Romeo His-

torical Society, describing the person and their contributions. The Society will forward all letters to the Commission, which will review submissions and decide on the awardees, announcing them annually in April. We have some noteworthy people in the

Romeo area who we think deserve the honor...

Please take the time to write a letter and outline why. Thank you!

RHS

POB 412,

Romeo, MI 48065

***The Society sincerely thanks the Four County Community Foundation for the \$500.00 grant award.***

***"Thanks to Richard Beringer, curator and tour guide, over 60 people learned more about local history on the fall walking tours this year! Thank you Richard!"***

**Romeo Historical Society**

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**Preserve our Heritage!**



**2010 Calendar  
at a glance...**

**OCT/NOV/DEC 2010**

**Thursday Oct. 21**, RHS  
Board meeting RAAC. 7 p.m.

**Thursday Nov. 18**, RHS  
Board meeting RAAC, 7p.m.

**Thursday, Dec. 16**, RHS  
Board meeting, RAAC 7p.m.

**EVERY TUESDAY NIGHT**

**7:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.**

**Archives and House  
Museums are OPEN!**

**Send us suggestions,  
ideas and photos!**

**2010-2011 program plans... we are busy!  
Save this page!**

*RHS has great program plans for 2010!*

Here are the opportunities to meet, socialize and preserve our important heritage here!

**Oct. 9—Romeo Cemetery Tour.** \$8 Tour the monuments and burial grounds in gorgeous fall colors. Free trolley to the cemetery and back from downtown. Tickets available at Archives Museum and Town Hall Antiques at 205 N. Main Street. Open 7 days.

**Nov. 4 -** Ken Schramm will speak on the Detroit Inter Urban Railroad. Free, donations accepted, refreshments will be served. Archives Museum 7pm

**Dec. 11—Christmas Homes Tour.** Our famous homes tour already has some plans underway with homeowners We

need docents!

**Jan 2011 -** We kick off the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, 1861 thru 1864. Rosie Chapman as Harriet Tubman speaks at Gray's Opera House.

**Feb. 2011 -** Watch for us at Romeo Romantic Days & Chocolate Festival!

**March 2011 -** Spring Open House at the Archives Museum.

**April 2011 -** William Gibbs the artist and his work on exhibit.

**May 14, 2011 -** 6th Annual Romeo Victorian Festival.

**June 11, 2011 -** Flea N'Tique Sale

*Join us and participate in some great events coming up!*

*We need YOU!*

*—RHS Board members.*

**Email addresses....**

We need your email address to add to our membership files! Please, please send us a message with your email address to info@romeohistoricalsociety.org or make sure you write it on your membership renewal.

**Thank you!!!**

**WEBSITE...Check out** [www.romeohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.romeohistoricalsociety.org)

*P.S. Sue Kane put up her 1910 home's new historical plaque this summer...and redesigned her backyard. Congratulations Sue!*