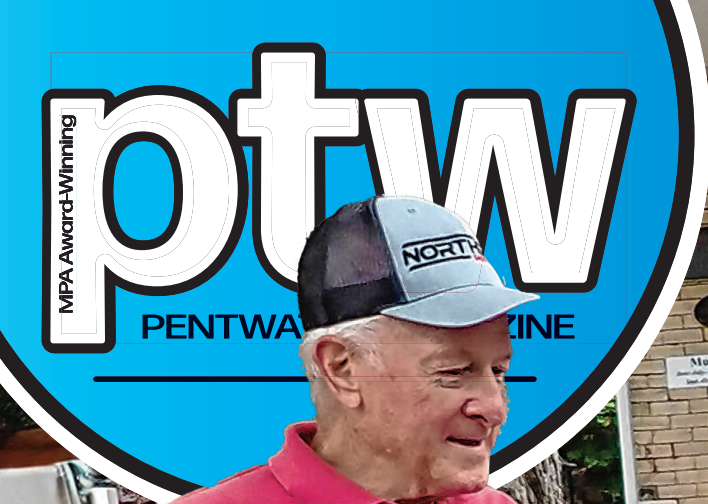




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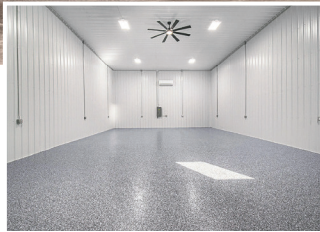
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Pentwater Township Library will



BY DAVID L. BARBER
SHORELINE MEDIA CONTRIBUTOR

Director Mary Barker chuckled at what the staff of the Pentwater Township Library will be doing this fall.

"We're going to be doing inventory," she said. "We scan every copy of everything. It has to be done, it's a routine thing that we do every year. It helps us to make sure that everything we have is in order."

Other than that, Barker and her staff will be busy, busy, busy, as usual.

"Some of the things that we have going is, one, we offer tech help every month at two different times – the first Tuesday and the third Tuesday, from 1 to 2 p.m.," she said. "Sometimes they have trouble

iPhones, sometimes they have an iPad, or a laptop, that they're having problems with, sometimes it's a simple fix, sometimes we have to explore a little bit to see what the problem is, but helping people to be able to use their devices is important.

"We have a lot of people who use our online resources ... and it kind of ruins their day if they can't get into the things they want to use on their computers, so we're here to help them.

"If it's an emergency and they bring their device in, it doesn't always mean that we will have somebody available to help," she said, "but on that first and third Tuesday will always have someone available for tech problems."

And there's more, so much more, that

the library offers.

"We have game day (on Mondays) and it starts around 3 p.m. and goes until we close at 7 p.m.," she said. "We're teaching American Mahjong right now to people who don't know how to play. We hope to get a couple of teams going. We teach the rules – the complexities of the game – and it's really fun. We are still learning, but we do have some experts around."

American mahjong, also spelled mah jongg, says Wikipedia, is a variant of the Chinese game mahjong. American mahjong utilizes racks to hold each player's tiles, jokers, and "Hands and Rules" score cards. It has several distinct gameplay mechanics such as "The Charleston," which is a set of required passes, and optional

again have a busy fall and winter



passing of the tiles.

American mahjong is played with four players using mah jongg tiles. The goal of the game is to be the first, by picking and discarding, to match one's tiles to a specific hand from the annually distributed scorecard published by the National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) and American Mah-Jongg Association (AMJA).

Barker also said "...in November, right before Thanksgiving, we'll start our winter reading program for adults, and it's all going to be about mysteries."

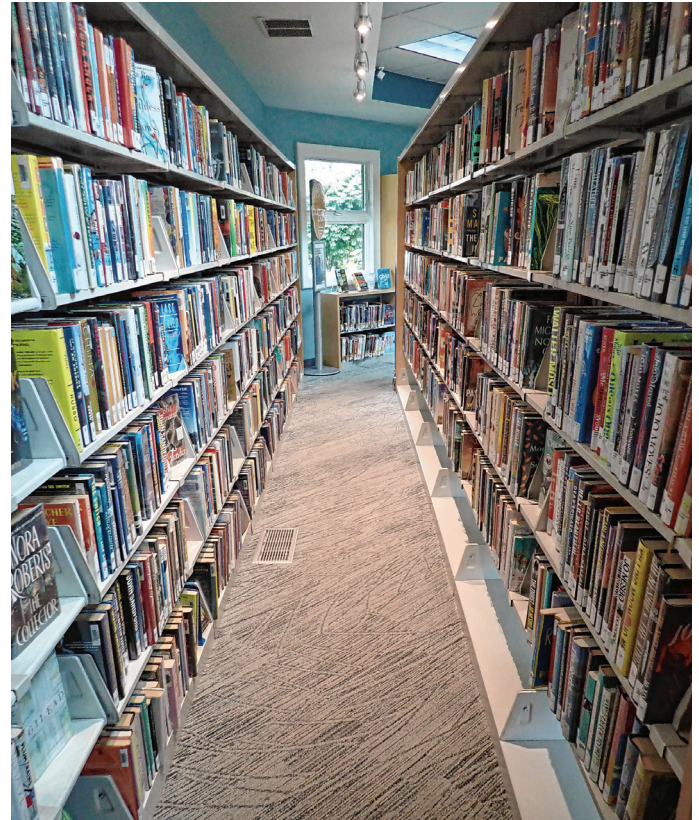
"We will have all sorts of special things happening," she said. "We don't want to announce everything quite yet, but it's going to be a really fun winter with all sorts of mysteries reading going on."

"We'll also have some speakers and some authors, but we don't have everything firmed up yet."

The library shelves over 20,000 books, magazines, and newspapers, as well as various e-resources and more, and of course, new books arrive almost daily.

Barker has served as library director nearly 11 years - since 2015 - with the first director being E.D. Richmond in 1855.

Notable historical moments for the library include: 1928, the



White Elephant Building that housed the library burned down; 1930s, the library moved into rooms above the M.J.D Girard store, and then relocated to Community Hall; 1996, the Pentwater Township Library opened its doors in the current location; 2017, the library reopens its doors on June 19 to a complete reconfiguration, becoming more open and modern; 2024, the library got a new exterior paint color, thanks to donations of services from Pentwater Painting.

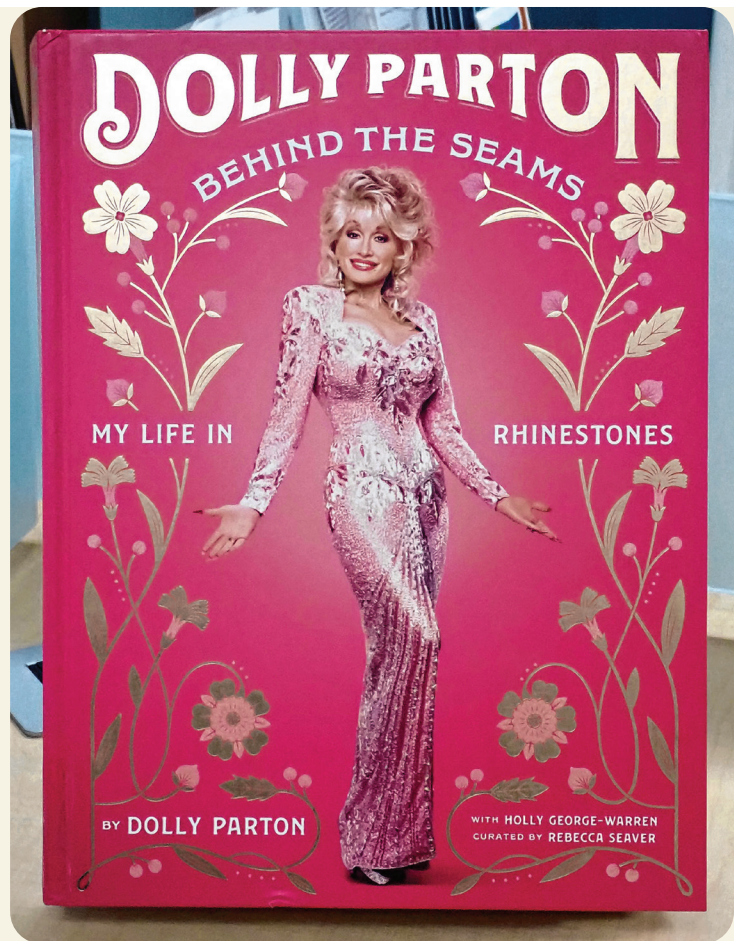
The library was officially recognized as a "Star" library a few years ago, one of just 12 in all of Michigan and one of 248 in the entire nation at the time. Presented annually by the prestigious Library Journal, Star libraries are honored for going above and beyond the call of duty in the contributions they make to their community, and include achieving and surpassing such benchmarks as library visits, circulation, program(s) attendance, public Internet computer use, and more.

For more information go to pentwaterlibrary.org

The library is located at 402 Park Street, Pentwater, and its hours of operation are Monday, 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Sunday, closed



Dolly front and center at Pentwater Township Library



BY DAVID L. BARBER
PTW COLUMNIST

Two times a year, sometimes three, our assignments for PTW Magazine take us to the Pentwater Township Library.

But no matter how many times our editor asks my wife, Jeanne, and myself to check out what's new at the library and to write about it, our visit becomes eye opening.

What's been obvious to me during all our visits over the years is that the library's kind and helpful staff knows and respects its patrons. It knows and respects popular reading trends, current events and what books its patrons might be most interested in reading, at any given moment.

Case-in-point for the latter is when we visited the library the last Saturday in August, staff had placed a large, beautiful, pink book front and center – “Dolly, Behind the Seams – My Life in Rhinestones” Dolly's unexpected passing on Aug. 25 caused her untold millions of fans to go into mourning, including those who frequent the Pentwater Township Library.

Like so many others, Jeanne and I were – and remain – fans of Dolly's music. The

Queen of Country, as she had become known, was a story-teller whose songs tugged at our heartstrings, and captured our imaginations, in wondrous and enduring ways.

Dolly was smart, she was savvy – sassy, too – and hers was a proverbial rags-to-riches story that we have dreamt of enjoying. She was funny, she was insightful, she was a friend to all she knew, and mostly, to all those she didn't know, as well, and she was a phenomenal philanthropist – she gave so much, to so many.

Dolly's Imagination Library put millions of books into the hands of millions of children, over the years, and so what better way could there have been for the Pentwater Township Library to honor Dolly than to put her inspiring story within hand's reach of the hands of all who walked into the Oceana County library.

Dolly Parton had the same connection with her fans who live in Pentwater, as those who live the concrete jungles like New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and the such. Still, she was a small-town girl who grew up in a one-room log cabin in the shades and shadows of rural Tennessee, the fourth of a dozen

children. To say she knew poverty would be an understatement.

From early on, Dolly could write and sing, and in quick time, and ...

... well, you know her story.

The staff at the Pentwater Library knows Dolly's story, too, and again, they know their patrons, and so that is why they placed a brick-heavy book about Dolly's life right there for all to check out as soon as they walk in.

The book about Dolly is just one of the more than 20,000 books, magazines and newspapers, as well as various e-resources, the library offers. And it's right there for you to read as soon as you enter the library.

And if you do that, if you check out a book from the Pentwater Township Library, then you can bet your own rhinestones that Dolly will be up there, smiling down on you.

Editor's note: David L. Barber is a retired journalist living in Manistee. He will provide occasional feature stories and columns for various Shoreline Media publications, including the Ludington Daily News, Oceana Herald-Journal, LakeStyle Magazine and PTW Magazine. He can be reached at dlbarber1006@gmail.com



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October gives Pentwater plenty of reasons to mark the calendar

Classic cars and a 5K, a home tour, chili and live music, costumes, trick-or-treating and homemade doughnuts are among the activities on Pentwater's October calendar.

Oktoberfest brings the month's largest lineup of events Saturday, Oct. 10, with activities on the Village Green, downtown and at other locations around Pentwater.

Registration for the Classic Car and Hot Rod Show runs from 8-10 a.m. Vehicles will line Hancock Street for the show from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., followed by an awards ceremony on the Village Green.

The Stout Stumble 5K also takes place that morning. Check-in begins at 9 a.m., with the run and walk starting at 10 a.m. at the Pentwater Municipal Marina. The route winds through the village and finishes at the Village Green.

The event is open to runners and walkers of all skill levels. Registration is \$30 through Oct. 1 and \$35 after that date. Participants 21 and older receive a beer at the finish.

The C.O.V.E. Home Tour will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., with selected homes in the Pentwater area open to ticket holders.

Proceeds benefit C.O.V.E. Tickets will be available at the homes on the day of the tour, with advance tickets available at Jilly's Gallery and Port View.

A quilt show is scheduled from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and the Cousins Maine Lobster food truck will be at the Pentwater Chamber of Commerce parking lot from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

A chili cook-off runs from noon-2 p.m. at the Village Cafe & Pub. Live music is scheduled from 2-10 p.m., and Big Ten football will be shown on a large screen from noon-10 p.m.

Downtown shops and restaurants also will have seasonal specials during Oktoberfest.

By October, fall color also is spreading through the Pentwater area. A walk downtown can be paired with a trip along the channel and Lake Michigan shoreline, while roads outside the village provide plenty of opportunities to take in the changing leaves.

Spooktacular returns

Halloween festivities get started Saturday, Oct. 24, with Pentwater's Spooktacular.

Registration for the costume contest begins at noon on the Village Green, with winners announced at 12:15 p.m. Goodie bags also will be available.

Downtown merchants will welcome trick-or-treaters from noon-2 p.m.

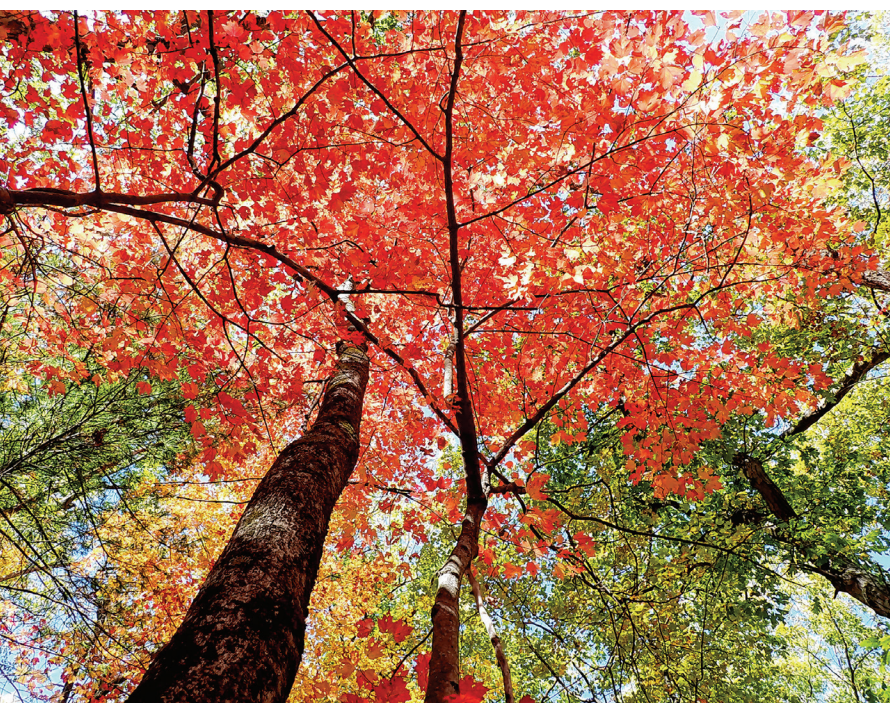
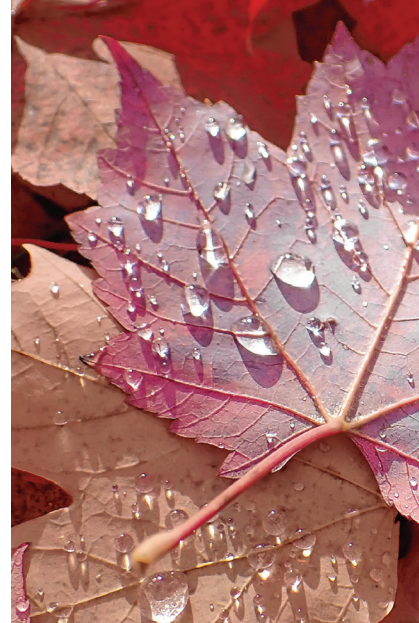
The Spooky Scavenger Hunt will take participants through downtown in search of clues and prizes. The first clue will be available at the Village Green.

Halloween night

Pentwater's traditional trick-or-treating will be held from 5-7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 31. Children can visit homes with porch lights on throughout the village.

The Pentwater Fire Department will continue another Halloween tradition that evening, serving free homemade doughnuts beginning at 5 p.m. at the fire station, 486 E. Park St.





LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

PHOTO ESSAY BY
JEANNE BARBER





A beautiful, long-legged great blue heron sauntered in the shallows of Pentwater Lake, while a cormorant prepared to take flight. Three young friends played pickleball, while several others played a friendly game of beach volleyball at Charles Mears State Park. A few end-of-summer vacationers fished off the pier, while a few others walked their canine companions along the water's edge, and a few others simply found relaxation in lying, elbows down, in the sand.

The end of summer in Pentwater always delivers a plethora of fun and relaxing things to do, just as it did here on the last day of August. As summer gives way, autumn brings its own changes — brilliant leaves overhead, fallen leaves underfoot and pumpkins appearing around town. All of which tells us: **Bring on autumn!**





Pentwater Finds Its Fall Rhythm

By October, finding a parking spot in downtown Pentwater usually isn't much of a challenge.

The beach crowds have thinned and traffic along Hancock Street has slowed. Businesses that spent the summer welcoming a steady stream of visitors settle into a

different rhythm, while some close their doors until another season.

The difference between summer and fall is difficult to quantify because there is no official count of Pentwater's seasonal population. The 2020 U.S. Census counted

1,652 residents in Pentwater Township, including 890 in the village. Pentwater's 2023 Community Master Plan also notes that more than half of the housing units in both the village and township were classi-

fied as vacant, a high percentage the plan attributes in part to the area's large number of seasonal homes.

Fall outdoors

Sunset watchers still head toward the Lake Michigan shoreline in October.

People still walk along the channel walkway, although sweatshirts and jackets have replaced swimsuits and beach towels.

A hike up Old Baldy at Charles Mears State Park takes on a different character in autumn, when changing leaves replace summer's deep greens and cooler temperatures make the trip up the wooded dune more comfortable.

October also brings one of Pentwater's annual fall traditions.

Oktoberfest returns Oct. 10 this year, continuing a celebration held on the second Saturday in October. Activities include the Stout Stumble 5K walk and run, Classic Car & Hot Rod Show, C.O.V.E. Home Tour, live music and seasonal beverages.

The 5K begins at Pentwater Marina and winds through the village before finishing at the Village Green. The Pentwater Cham-

From autumn walks and seasonal flavors to Oktoberfest and cheering on the Falcons, October offers a different way to enjoy the village

different rhythm, while some close their doors until another season.

Pentwater's population swells during the summer as seasonal homeowners and vacationers arrive, although there is no of-

1,652 residents in Pentwater Township, including 890 in the village. Pentwater's 2023 Community Master Plan also notes that more than half of the housing units in both the village and township were classi-



ber of Commerce promotes the weekend as a chance to enjoy the community as fall colors reach their peak.

A change in flavors

At Oldewick Post Gift Shoppe on Hancock Street, homemade fudge takes a seasonal turn. Pumpkin and pumpkin-pecan are among the shop's fall flavors, joining its assortment of year-round varieties.

For something warm, Green Isaac's Coffee & Tea, 240 S. Hancock St., remains

open year-round, serving Michigan-roasted coffee, teas, espresso drinks and baked goods.

The Pentwater Chamber of Commerce describes Green Isaac's as a gathering place for locals and visitors alike. A cup of coffee or tea offers a chance to get out of the October chill and spend a little more time downtown.

Gathering places change, too

October also means fall sports are still underway at Pentwater Public Schools.

On several evenings this month, that means meeting friends and neighbors in the gym to watch and cheer at a volleyball game.

The Falcons have several home volleyball dates on the 2026 schedule, including varsity matches Oct. 1, 2, 6 and 8 and a final home varsity match against Shelby Oct. 27. Junior high volleyball also has home matches during the month.

Outside, the boys soccer and cross country seasons continue through October.

Pentwater's civic and community organizations also remain active beyond the summer months.

The Pentwater Service Club continues its work, while the Pentwater Historical

Society and Garden Club of Pentwater and Neighboring Communities are among the organizations that remain part of community life throughout the year.

Park Place provides an indoor location for meetings, fundraisers and community activities, while Pentwater's churches continue worship services, programs and other gatherings.

The calendar may not be as crowded as it was in July and August, but there is still plenty to do.

Take a walk along the channel. Catch the sunset. Climb Old Baldy to see the fall colors. Stop downtown for pumpkin fudge or something warm to drink. Or head to the school gym and cheer on the Falcons.

It's October in Pentwater. Just bring a jacket.





Beyond Pentwater

Chills down the shoreline of ghostly lore

It's that time of year when the crisp air will send chills down the spine, and the crunch of brittle, fallen leaves tells of earth's slumber where nightmarish stories from the pages of the past dwell and where energies seem to linger. Pentwater has its own share of spooky stories, some which have actually transpired from events in real life, such as the Minshall family murders.

Sue Bainton, who lives on the property where the murders happened at the corner of Rutledge and Lowell, said the old house has been torn down, but through the years an apparition of a woman in a white nightgown appeared twice to two different people.

Disgruntled by an employment situation and financial strain, 45-year-old Samuel Bachtel Minshall, local attorney, shot his

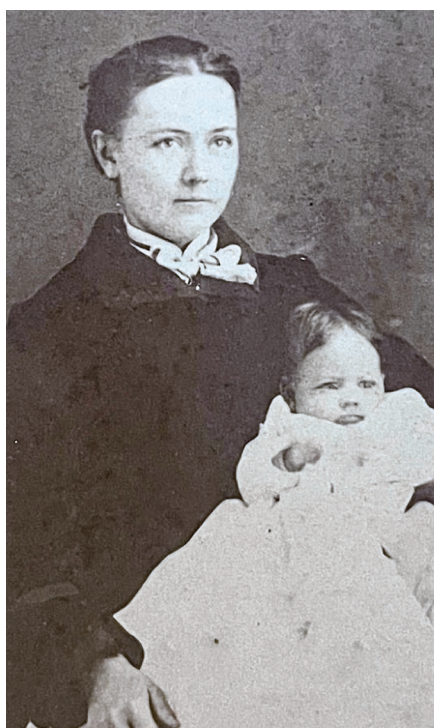
employer and business associate William Sands on the front steps of the Sands home on the night of April 9, 1896, and then went to his own home, killing his wife Eva Minshall (age 42), his daughter Ruby (age 14) and sons, George (age 3) and Frank (age 2) before pulling the trigger on himself.

"We have two sightings of the ghost, a woman in a white night gown, but there had been several families living in the house prior to us. Not sure what they may have seen or felt. We had that house torn down in February of 2007. I believe in energies around us, so nothing ever feels unusual in my mind," Bainton said. "Fern Schafer was the woman across the street who told us what her father, Frank Maynard, found when he entered the house. She passed away 19 years ago, but never

mentioned ghosts or other unusual happenings, just a few rumors as to why Minshall might have done it."

The motive was said to be financial desperation. The Minshall family moved from Chicago to Pentwater after Sands promised Samuel plenty of work to support his household, but over time Samuel felt Sands was intentionally withholding funds and insurance policy sales commissions from him, and watching local merchants and tycoons grow wealthy while his own family struggled, Samuel snapped and planned revenge.

It was about 9 in the evening when five shots were fired at Sands as he was approaching his home, one shot shattering the bone of his right arm above the elbow. His arm was amputated but he died within



hours. Suspicion turned to Samuel, who was on bad terms with Sands who refused to give him the full amount of the firm's insurance business, according to newspaper accounts.

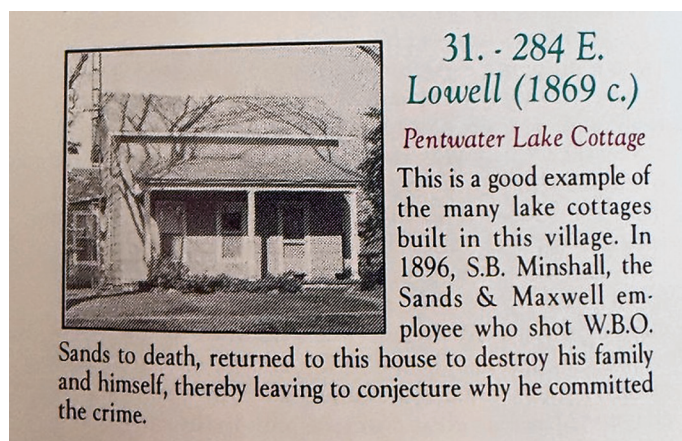
When Frank Maynard was sent to the Minshall home, the 23-calibre rifle Samuel used to kill Sands was found in the woodshed, still smoking from the shots fired at his employer, according to the Pentwater News.

The house was locked up, and Maynard had to force the door open. He passed through the dining room, and pushed through to the sitting room, where a grizzly scene presented itself. Eva, the wife, was found on her right side with her back to the door and her head near the piano, dead, pierced with a bullet. It was reported the daughter Ruby, hearing the first shot, came downstairs only to meet the same fate as her mother. She was found in the southeast corner of the room in her night clothes, her nightgown partly consumed by fire, which was quenched by her own blood. Near the southwest corner of the room at the foot of the stairway lay Samuel, who killed his family and himself with a revolver. The Pentwater News said the carpet was "completely saturated with the blood of the family."

As Maynard passed through the parlor into the bedroom, "there in all their innocence lay two boy babies George and Frank, aged three and two, their little bodies pierced by the deadly bullets as they peacefully slept, the bedding saturated with their innocent blood."

A letter from Samuel was found on the premises showing the act was deliberately premeditated and he originally planned it for at least two months prior. In the letter he said if his family survived him, he asked that a friend from Chicago would watch over them, showing at the time of the letter it was undecided if he would kill his family or not.

Baiton said the home was part of Pentwater Historical Society "Walk by House Tour" with a picture and small story published about the house, which she said piqued people's curiosity for years.



A COUPLE OTHER POSSIBLE HAUNTINGS FLOATING AROUND

An old two-story Victorian house overlooking Pentwater Lake on the southside of town has reports of paranormal activity from a family that rented the house for a week in July 2006, which appeared on a ghost story website and later repeated by author Terri Reid. The person described waking up one night hearing the sounds of people talking and saws in the woods, as well as other experiences such as the TV coming on, even after being unplugged, and a light turning on by itself (an old pull-cord switch.) Another person, on Reddit, also described experiences at the house including TVs turning on and off, a latched door opening at the same time each night, footsteps and other experiences.

The Flagg house, built in 1860 by Edward Flagg, has unexplained activity associated with it from renters, according to the Pentwater Historical Society's 2018 fall newsletter.



'It's really going to be something'

Fundraising, expansion continues for Pentwater Historical Museum

BY DAVID L. BARBER • PHOTOS BY JEANNE BARBER

On a quiet morning in Pentwater – oh, who are we kidding, all mornings are quiet in Pentwater – Mike Curtis pedaled a bicycle.

Quietly, of course.

And except for the fact he was pulling a specially-built two-wheel wagon, on which he was carrying an 80-year old blue canoe, he might have gone unnoticed.

But how do you not notice such a sight, no matter how quiet the surroundings might be?

Smiling ear-to-ear and waving at those he passed, Curtis was delivering the black bicycle that had over-sized balloon tires with bright yellow rims, unique wagon that rolled on spider web-like spokes, and the fully-restored canoe to the Pentwater Historical Society on Rutledge Street, where in quick time they would be presented as a prize to one lucky winner of

the museum's summer fundraising raffle.

One phone call later, with fellow museum board members Beth Russell and Mike Waidelich standing by his side, those prizes – bike, trailer and canoe – were awarded to a lady who lives in Haslett.

The energetic Curtis, who restored the canoe over a several-month period, said proceeds earned from the raffle will go to help build in the museum's planned addition to its historic structure, an addition that is well underway.

"It's really going to be something," Curtis said of the new addition. "I think by this time next summer our residents are going to be quite pleased."

Fifteen years ago, when the historic First Baptist Church of Pentwater decided to build a new church, the Pentwater Historical Society began negotiations to buy the older church in order to provide a larger and more comprehensive site for the society and to upgrade the museum

in order to better display the objects in its collection.

"We're more than doubling the size of the existing building," said Russell. "These two buildings will be connected through the back. We were hoping for a grand entrance, but because of the age of the foundation and the status of it, we can't really connect the two foundations, so we'll have a smaller entry than what we hoped."

"We'll have space on the lower level and space on an upper level also, for exhibits, and meeting space, and things like that."

"We have a backlog of items in storage, so an expansion will finish the building first, and then when we have the funds we will actually build an outdoor exhibit area because we have some artifacts that are just too big to put in the museum, but they deserve to be seen by the public," said Russell. "One of those things is a large tourism boat that was used for rentals. The plan right now is to put that out-





side in our exhibit area.

"We're hoping to open the building in June, 2027. It's not as complicated as a house because it's one big room, for the most part, and it's going to be really cool."

The Pentwater Historical Society, founded in 1982, was created to preserve and share the history and heritage of Pentwater and its citizens. The museum's grand opening at its current location was held on May 31, 2014. It is located at 85 South Rutledge Street.

Its summer hours of operation are June through August, Tuesday through Saturday, 1 to 4 p.m.; fall hours are September through October, Thursday through Saturday 1 to 4 p.m. The museum is closed November through May, except for special events and private functions. Admission is free, though donations are appreciated.

A large, colorful sign erected outside the museum tells passers by that \$1 million has been raised of the museum's \$1.5 goal.

"We've had multiple fundraising events and of course a mail-in campaign each year to make sure people are reminded of our goals and what we hope to do," said Russel. "We've actually had three raffles, the first two were both golf carts and they were wildly popular – everybody in Pentwater wants a golf cart."

"This has been a dream for some time. We started working more seriously on these plans in 2021 and it probably wasn't until about 18 months ago that we felt like that we had enough to do a final push for fundraising. We have gotten the funds for the building – totally from the public, members of our community. The community has come together to support us."

There will be more to the museum than

expanded display areas.

"We'll also have a research area," said Russell. "Right now the balcony of this church is sort of our research area, but they're not accessible. So one of our goals is to make sure we have a research area that's accessible to everybody."

"Some of the artifacts that I can think of that are in storage are some Pentwater furniture because over the history of Pentwater we had furniture factories here, and that would have been in the late 1800s. We have some pieces of furniture that we want to put on display in the new building."

"The other thing about the outside area that we're looking for is an outdoor courtyard," said Russell. "We'll have a beautiful long porch where people can actually have wedding vows and then have their reception here, afterwards. We want to make something that's available to the



community. Certainly the museum, itself, is available to the community, but we want to make it a space where they'll want to come and celebrate. We're telling our story, but we want to help make good memories, as well."

The Pentwater Historical Society rotates its exhibits annually. Popular permanent exhibits include artifacts of Armistice Day Storm featuring a video, replicas of ships, recovered artifacts from the shipwrecks and more; Pentwater High School features school items such as yearbooks, trophies, awards, class pictures, and two desks; Native American Exhibit includes artifacts, a canoe, books, and signs; a scale model of the USS Sequoia is new in 2024; and more

The Mission of the Pentwater Historical Society is "to connect people to the history of Pentwater by collecting, preserving, and sharing information and artifacts," and its Vision "is to enrich lives through access to local history, engaging members, residents and visitors alike."

Its website informs readers "Our Goal for the museum is to establish and maintain a place and institution that is a welcoming place where people are drawn together to share their passion and interest in our history and sense of community; creates and maintains educational programs and exhibits that are professionally presented and inspiring; has collections that provide a continuing source of inspiration and learning."

Looking back over his shoulder at the new expansion that is going up, Curtis smiled and said, "...it's going to be a nice quiet place to sit, isn't it?"

For more information go to pentwaterhistoricalsociety.org



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