

# JHA NEWSLETTER



Issue 1, Jan/Feb/Mar 2018

Pg. 1 - JHA Update

Pg. 2/3 - If Its Sunday ...

Pg. 4 - Events Calendar

Pg. 5 - JHA Board & Contacts

Pg. 6 - Misc. Info

## JHA Update

### **HAPPY NEW YEAR!!**

We certainly hope the holidays were merry and bright for you all. Our Christmas Open Houses were a big success. It was wonderful so many folks came to visit.

Now we are ready to start the New Year! Lots of plans, so check out the Events page.

Also, Volunteering is a great way to start the year. Join us for the fun. We hope to see you soon. Contact info on page 6.

I'd like to thank Ruth Lowing for all her hard work on this Newsletter all these years. She has left some big shoes to fill and I hope I can do her proud.

## Winter

The winds are sighing — sobbing  
Like mourners round a bier,  
And from the hill there cometh  
A voice that soundeth drear,  
As the trumpet call to judgment,  
Saying — —“prepare, prepare!”  
Spread o’er the vale a fleecy pall,  
And lay the old year there!

Within are sounds of gladness,  
And fires that brightly burn,  
And stories of the olden times  
Are told by each in turn;  
Without, the cry of misery  
And want salute the ears,  
And we look on hoary Winter,  
Through mingled smiles and tears.

*-Grand River Times, Grand Haven, MI.  
December 23, 1851, Page 4*

# If Its Sunday....

by Ronnie Aungst



“No person shall keep open his shop, warehouse or workhouse or shall do any manner of labor, business or be present at any dancing or at any public diversion, show or entertainment, or take part in any sport game or play on the first day of the week.”

Remember those days?? Sunday Closing Laws have been in place as far back as the Colonial days in the United States. Originally religious in nature but later supported by the belief, religious and secular, that people needed a day of rest. The first Law in Michigan dates back to 1845 and revived in 1863 to include a \$5 fine for violators. There were plenty of business people that found their way around the closing laws. One unique way was the “curtain method” adopted by the saloonkeepers and later adopted by the barbers. They would stretch a curtain across the saloon or barber shop, exposing half or part to be viewed from the street, thus nominally complying with the law, while the business continued on behind the closed curtain.

The Laws extended to all types of activities that included theaters, train schedules, food, hardware, even hunting. It wasn't until 2003, that all Sunday hunting bans were repealed in Michigan. Since the first laws were passed, many counties and townships were allowed to dictate what could be open. In 1906, Holland township allowed four ice cream stands to conduct business at Macatawa Park, Ottawa Beach and Jenison Park. By 1910, concession men began to grow and other businesses began pooh-poohing the laws and opened as well. Supervisor J. Y. Huizinga led the charge to shut down Sunday operations. Overall, the closing laws were enforced unevenly and when someone complained.

Georgetown township being a Christian farming community with few businesses embraced the Sunday laws. Challengers were few and swiftly put aside. McDonald's even closed on Sundays, the only one in the nation to close. Jenison had embraced the values of no Sunday work and no drinking. Sunday was indeed a day of Church and rest. During the 1960s, more businesses opened like restaurants and movie theaters. Jenison folks went to Grandville or Grand Rapids to shop or be entertained if they were so inclined.

Then in 1969, Meijer moved into Jenison. Although Meijer at first closed on Sundays, by 1972 they had spear-headed a petition drive that put the question of take-out beer and wine on the ballot. It passed and Meijer was given a take-out license even though the township board objected. Then in 1974, Meijer began opening on Sundays. It was a tense time. There was a letter writing campaign by the local ministers and some attempted to organize a boycott. For all the effort, business did not drop off on Sundays. Meijer had been successful and other businesses followed in their footsteps.

Though there are a few restrictions left today, most every business is now open on Sundays if they choose to be. If not, they can be accessed by the use of the home computer. Sunday Closing Laws, an American government practice and public behavior, has disappeared from our life and is slipping from our collective memory.

*Sources:*

*Detroit Free Press, July 30, 1894, Pg.5; Jan. 5, 1962, Pg.3;*

*Grand Rapids Press, Jan. 10, 1938;*

*Advance, Feb. 24, 1981, Pg.1; Nov. 15, 1994*

“The congregation of the East street M. E. church adopted resolutions on Sunday censuring the street railway company for Sunday work and asking the mayor to use his influence towards strict enforcement of the Sunday laws.”

- *Grand Rapids Herald, Nov. 29, 1892, Page 5*

“Prosecuting Attorney Walcott has announced that he will prosecute the Reed’s lake saloon keepers for selling liquor on Sunday. Nobody will raise the slightest objection to this except it be the men who sell ice cream, the use of row boats, steamboat rides, and street railway fares to and from the resort. They will have cause to fear that enforcement of the Sunday laws as to one class of licensed Sunday breakers may extend to another class of unlicensed Sunday breakers.”

- *Grand Rapids Herald, May 29, 1893, Page 4*



One Sabbath-breaker posed this question!

*If Churches are Open on Sundays,  
aren't the Ministers working?*

## **JHA Museum Open Houses**

ALSO BY APPOINTMENT - CALL 616-457-4398 OR 774-6523 [KEN WILLIAMS]

### **QUILTS FROM THE PAST**

March 6 - 10 to Noon    April 3 - 10 to Noon  
March 17 - 2 to 4 pm.    April 21 - 2 to 4 pm.

### **DISCOVER THE HERITAGE TRAIL**

May 1 - 10 to Noon    June 5 - 10 to Noon  
May 19 - 10 to Noon    June 16 - 2 to 4 pm.

### **VISIT THE MUSEUM**

July 3 - 10 to Noon    July 21 - 2 to 4 pm.  
August 7 - 10 to Noon

### **GRAND RIVER LANDINGS**

September 4 - 10 to Noon    October 2 - 10 to Noon  
September 15 - 2 to 4 pm.    October 20 - 2 to 4 pm.  
November 6 - 10 to Noon

### **CHRISTMAS AT THE JENISON MUSEUM**

December 8 - 1 to 4 pm  
January 5, 2019 - 2 to 4 pm.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION 1 - MARCH 13 - 9:30 A.M. - FREE EVENT**

1956 & other area tornados - location: GT Connections  
[a.k.a. Georgetown Senior Center]

### **THE POOR FARM - MAY 17 - 7 P.M. - FREE EVENT**

Documentary - location: GT Connections

### **HISTORICAL BUS TOUR OF JENISON - JUNE 20 - 1 P.M. - \$10/TICKET**

### **JENISON HISTORY PRESENTATION - AUGUST 16 - 7 P.M. - FREE EVENT**

location: GT Connections

### **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION 2 - SEPTEMBER 13 - 1 P.M. - FREE EVENT**

Area farming [i.e. dairy, muck, etc.] - location: GT Connections

### **GRAND LADY BOAT RIDE - OCTOBER 13 - NOON TO 2 P.M. - \$10/TICKET**

## JHA Trustees

Chair

Liz Timmer [2019]  
457-3708

Vice Chair/Curator/Tours

Ken Williams [2019]  
772-6523

Treasurer

Ruth Lowing [2019]  
540-4709

Social Secretary

Nellie DeLaat [2019]  
457-1193

Recording Secretary

Linda Droog [2018]  
457-3016

Archivist

Barb Semeyn [2019]  
457-9343

Maintenance/Historian

Mike Timmer [2019]  
531-1218

Trustee

Yvonne Williams [2019]  
772-6523

Gene Kort [2019]  
534-6769

Township Rep

Becky Steele

Editor

Ronnie Aungst  
780-1056

## Museum Location

28 Port Sheldon Road - Jenison, MI. 49428  
Phone: 616-457-4398

## Meeting Schedule

Meetings are open to the public and held the **3rd Thursday** of the month at **6:45 pm** at the **Georgetown Library**, unless noted.

### Dates for 2018:

January 18  
February 15  
March 15  
April 19  
May 17 - TBA  
June 21 - TBA  
July 19  
August 16  
September 20  
October 18  
November 15  
December - no meeting

## Contact Information

Contact Trustees at their phone number or leave a message at 457-4398 or [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org) or find us on Facebook at Jenison History Association.

## Membership

Become a member and support the local history and museum. We have members from the teens into the 80s. Please join us.

Membership is just \$10 per year.

## Volunteer

Do you have a couple of hours a month? Consider volunteering at the museum. The opportunities are wide open: train as a docent to work during open houses or for the 3rd graders visit in May; assist with displays, general housekeeping, Christmas decorating or maybe you have a skill that you would like to share with us.

Come to any meeting or open house or you can contact us at 616-457-4398 to leave a message. There's plenty of opportunities. We can help you find your niche.

AND we are very fun people!! Come join us!

---

Find us on the registry of the Historical Society of Michigan at [www.hsmichigan.org](http://www.hsmichigan.org)

## Gift Shop

We have many Jenison History items available for purchase. They make great presents for your history lover and support the museum.

Some items include Bend In The River book, ornaments, historical drawings and stationary.



Jenison Historical Association

P.O. Box 664  
Jenison, Michigan 49428

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