



# IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • FOUNDED 1857

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*The Washtenaw County  
Historical Society is a  
501(c)(3) organization.*

## Information

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From September-May.

Museum On Main Street  
500 N. Main Street at Beakes Street  
Post Office Box 3336  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-3336

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Email: [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net)  
Web Site:

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

Annual dues: January-December  
individual, \$15; couple/family \$25;  
student or senior (60+) \$10; senior  
couple \$19; business/association  
\$50; patron \$100.

RICHARD L. GALANT, PhD

## President's Letter

Please join us for our potluck supper and election of officers Wednesday, May 20, 2009, from 6 to 8 pm, at the Milan Senior & Community Center, 45 Neckel Court, in Milan. We will gather at 6:00 pm and dining will begin at 6:30. Dining materials, plates, eating utensils and beverages will be supplied. Please bring a dish for eight to pass. There will be a short program at 7:30 pm, followed by the election of officers.

Our latest exhibition, *COMING to WASHTENAW COUNTY*, is up and running. It features vignettes of German, Greek, Chinese, Arab and African American groups that have chosen to migrate to our area. On the first Sunday of April, May and June, members of the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County will be at the museum with their computers to assist visitors in searching for their ancestors on the Internet.

You also won't want to miss our April General Meeting, Sunday, April 19, at 2 pm. Journalist Don Faber will discuss The Toledo War, which resulted in the inclusion of the Upper Peninsula in the State of Michigan. The meeting is at the Hanson Room of Glacier Hills, 1200 Earhart Road.

The crocuses are popping their stems through the soil along the fence and in a few weeks our garden will be bright with crocuses, daffodils and tulips. Under the direction of Master Gardener Lillian Ferguson, the Garden Ladies will be planting flats of annuals. They make every effort to find these plants and we welcome your donations toward their purchase. We also welcome garden volunteers to work along with our Garden Ladies.

Recently, it was brought to our attention that other groups in the area regard membership dues as a

deductible donation. We investigated the IRS rules and found this statement: "Membership and contributions to the (*Washtenaw County Historical Society*) are tax-deductible. No goods or services were provided in return for these contributions." The rule applies to certain membership benefits provided in return for an annual payment of \$75 or less or to certain items or benefits of token value.

As a result of our research, from this date forward tax receipt letters will be sent for membership in addition to the usual thank you sent for monies specified as donations.

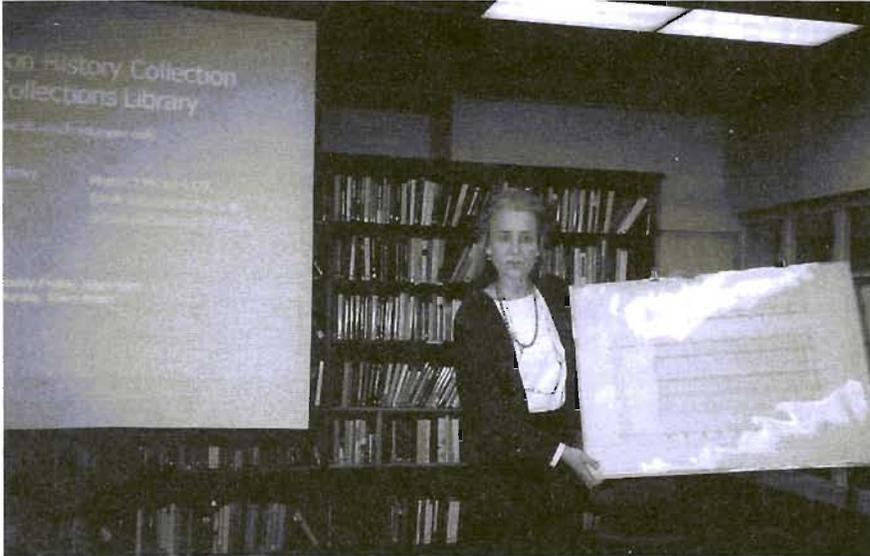
For information on the annual meeting, current exhibition, museum gardens or museum membership benefits, please call 734.662.9092.



*Many of those Coming to Washtenaw County suffered hardships and had to make significant adjustments to their lives. One such story is from Georgina Sanz, pictured here. See Page 6 for her story and be sure to visit the Museum on Main Street to learn about the people who came to Washtenaw County as strangers and now enrich the community. The exhibit runs through July 1 and the Museum is open Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays from noon to 4 pm.*

KATHLEEN DOW • HEAD OF ARCHIVAL PROCESSING AND CATALOGUING,  
AND CURATOR OF THE TRANSPORTATION HISTORY COLLECTION

## How We Traveled



Kathleen Dow included some of the materials in the collection to give attendees a sense of the kind of information that is available.

At the Washtenaw County Historical Society General Meeting last month, Kathleen Dow introduced members and guests to the extensive University of Michigan Transportation History Collection. Dow is curator of the collection and head of archival processing and cataloguing of the Special Collections Library. The talk took place at the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library, where the collection is housed on the 7th floor.

"The original Transportation Library was the creation of John Worley, a professor of engineering at U. of M.," said Dow. "A published author of monographs on transportation and a respected highway expert, Worley began building the collection in 1923 to support transportation-related studies in the U of M School of Engineering. The first books purchased for the Transportation Library were housed in East Hall. They were later moved to the second floor of the Undergraduate Library and in 1992, to the Hatcher Library."

Dow said that in the early days, the study of transportation concentrated heavily on railroads. In addition, it included flight, ships and waterways, carriages and automobiles (particularly early 20th century luxury models), roads and highways, and bicycling and bicycles. In 1992, the rare books, graphics, photographs, paintings, and archival collections that formed a portion of Professor Worley's Transportation Library, were transferred to the Special Collections Library and became known as the Transportation History Collection. Curators have continued to add materials through purchases and donations.

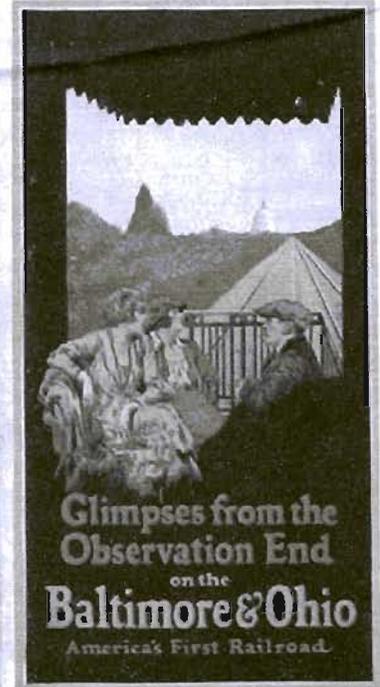
"Before his tenure as the curator of the library ended in 1946, Professor Worley had acquired several thousand volumes of railroad annual reports and other official documents as well as a rich collection of prints, drawings, photographs, and ephemera related to trains and railroads," said Dow. "With close to 6,000 volumes of railroad annual reports, reports to stockholders, and engineer's reports for American lines, a project has been started to digitize all of the reports and place them on the web for use by the general public. Starting with railroad lines in Michigan, the

railroads website now contains annual reports for the Ann Arbor Railroad and the Michigan Central Railroad, to name two. The reports are searchable and may be downloaded."

Dow presented an overview of the collection and then went on to explore more thoroughly two archival collections: the Lincoln Highway Association Archive and the Charles Ellet, Jr. Papers.

### The Lincoln Highway Association

Founded by Indianapolis businessman and entrepreneur Carl Fisher, the Lincoln Highway Association included representatives from the automobile, tire and cement industries. The goal was to plan, fund, construct and promote the first transcontinental highway



An example of early 20<sup>th</sup> century train travel advertising that is part of the collection on railroads.



**A photograph of the Ann Arbor No. 7, an Ann Arbor Railroad Company railroad car ferry in service in 1925. Crossing Lake Michigan carrying fully-laden railroad cars below deck and passengers on the upper decks, ferries like the Ann Arbor No. 7 considerably shortened the travel time between Michigan and the upper Midwestern states.**

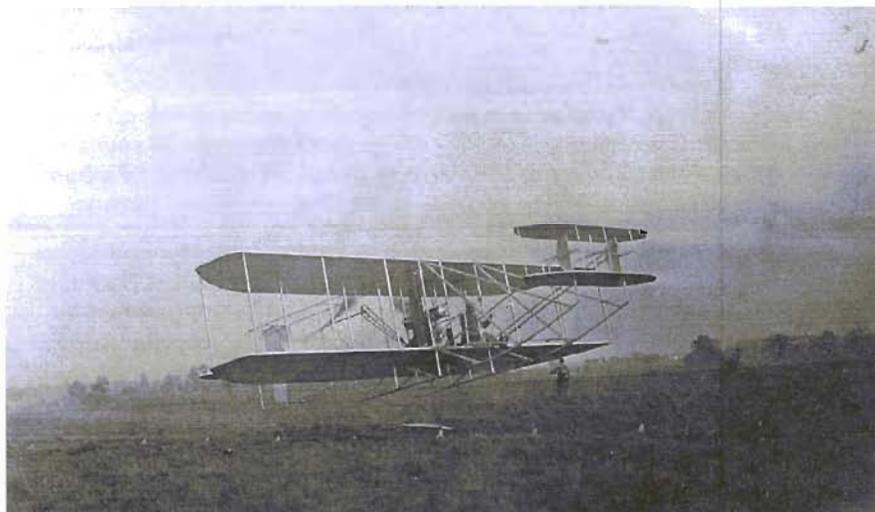
in North America. Following the most direct route possible, from New York to San Francisco, it would consist of both existing and newly built roads that covered approximately 3,400 miles.

"The archive consists of five linear feet of manuscript material (including scrapbooks), six published road guides, six drawings by landscape architect Jens Jensen, and 3,012 photographs," said Dow. "These are materials from the central office in Detroit dating from 1912 through the early 1940s. There are letters, manuscript trip logs, minutes of meetings of the board of directors, reports, contracts, membership sales and subscriptions records, planning documents, financial statements, press releases, maps, and newsletter enclosures. Scattered throughout the archive are maps created by the association as well as local or federal government surveying maps or those published by the Automobile Association of Southern California.

"The correspondence portion of the archive contains hundreds of letters signed by such people as Carl Fisher, William Dobyns,

Arthur Pardington, Henry Ford, Austin Bement, Gael Hoag, Henry Joy, and H.C Ostermann," continued Dow. "From the early years there are many letters soliciting financial, or even just philosophical support. Carl Fisher's written plea to Henry Ford prompted a reply from James Couzens declining to offer any support to a privately funded highway. [Couzens, later a Michigan senator, was at that time associated with the Ford Motor Company.] He writes '... it is better to spend our money in making the price of the cars low, as this will have the beneficial effect of putting more cars in use ... the greater demand there will be for the government building Good Roads.' There is also a letter from Woodrow Wilson's secretary declining a certificate and a presidential endorsement of the project."

Most of the solicitations for financial support were positive, according to Dow, and "showed a sense that the building of this "drivable ocean to ocean highway would strengthen, and even create, a multitude of businesses." There are nine notebooks of various sizes that log each mile and every turn along various sections of the highway. These logs were the raw data that was later edited, expanded or condensed and used in the official field guides published by the Association. The collection also includes minutes of the board of directors meetings.



**One of three photos taken by U of M student Harry F. Baker between 1909 and 1911 while working for Orville and Wilbur Wright.**

"Most of the meetings were held in Detroit, but there are a few that were convened in Indianapolis and New York," said Dow. "There are discussions of routes, troubles with local government officials, discussions of changes in leadership and membership, and memorials acknowledging the passing of a colleague."

In 1920, planners developed a model section of road called the "Seedling Mile," located in Lake County, Indiana, between Dyer and Schererville. Design specifics included a 110-foot right-of-way, a 40-foot wide concrete pavement 10 inches thick, a minimum radius for curves of 1,000 feet with guardrails at all embankments, curves that were super-elevated, no grade crossings or advertising signs, and a footpath for pedestrians. Most notable, says Dow, was the addition of a campsite to be designed by landscape architect, Jens Jensen, who worked with Frank Lloyd Wright. He designed a site that would blend in with the surrounding countryside.

More than 3,000 photographs, part of the original gift of the archive, document the early research and yearly trips taken by the directors and



38-X2 Culaybra Cut, Culabra, Looking north from Contractor's Hill, May 17, 1913.

**Ann Arbor resident and engineer John G. Claybourn donated this photo of the excavation of the Culaybra Cut, one of the most treacherous sections excavated during the building of the Panama Canal. He donated 24 albums and hundreds of handbooks and serials to the Transportation Library.**

field secretaries of the Association. Funded by grants from the Friends of the University Library and the new Lincoln Highway Association (founded in 1992), all of the photographs have been re-housed in archival quality sleeves, digitized and placed on the web in a searchable website. They can be found in the original categories designated by the Lincoln Highway Association: California, Yosemite, Nevada, Victory Highway, Midland Trail, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, The Ideal Section, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Portraits, and General.



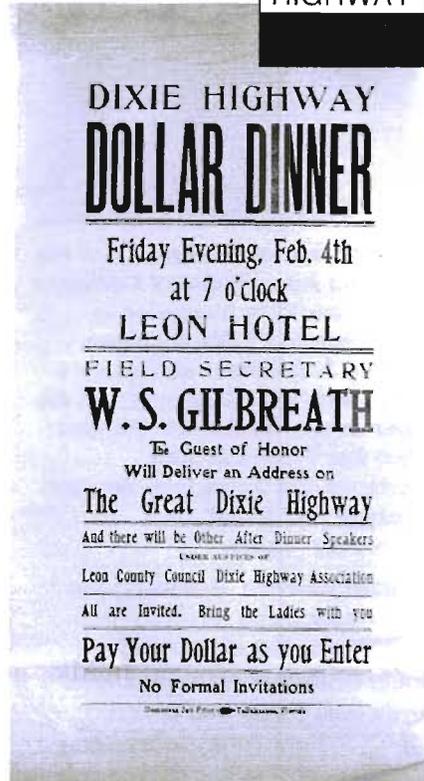
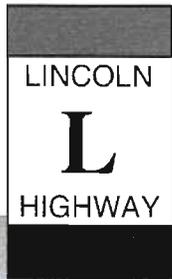
**Carl Fisher, founder of the Lincoln Highway Association, also planned and developed the North-South Dixie Highway, portions of which are now I-75, considered the gateway to Florida.**

**Charles Ellet, Jr. Papers**

Dow described Charles Ellet, Jr. as “one of the foremost American civil engineers of the 19th century.” He is best remembered for his efforts in introducing the suspension bridge into the United States and for his experimentation with different types and configurations of twisted and untwisted wire cables used in building these bridges.

“Born in Penn’s Manor, Pennsylvania, Ellet had a natural aptitude for math but little formal education,” said Dow. “As a young man he traveled to Europe, observing bridge construction while also attending engineering classes in Paris. When he returned to the United States, Ellet quickly

Funding and publicizing the Lincoln Highway



established himself as a talented railroad and canal surveyor and an innovative bridge designer.”

Ellet was a prolific correspondent and the collection includes letters that provide much information about his professional and personal life. One of interest is a letter written in 1838 by Prussian-born engineer John Augustus Roebling, who was interested in Ellet’s use of twisted wire cables as a bridge’s support structure. Although the two engineers never worked together, Roebling went on to great success and is most well known for his design and construction of the Brooklyn Bridge.

In 1848, Ellet was awarded the design and building contract for a bridge that would span the Niagara Falls River. He built a single-level foot and carriage bridge linking Canada and the United States, the first such bridge at the Niagara

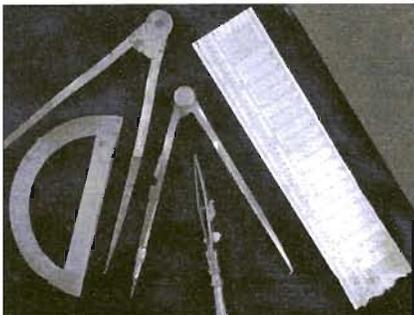


Charles Ellet, whose extensive papers archived in the Special Collections Library consist of seven linear feet of correspondence that include business and financial records and small drawings and sketches; six large drawings of the Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge; 20 manuscript notebooks, and 150 books, pamphlets and memorials written by Ellet.

Falls Gorge.

"Ellet fell into a dispute with both the Canadian and United States' governments over ownership of the bridge and the distribution of its tolls," said Dow. The bridge was torn down in 1849 and rebuilt by John Roebling in 1854, this time as a bi-level bridge with an upper platform for foot and carriage traffic and a lower platform for trains. Roebling retained the massive piers that Ellet designed and built for the bridge."

A letter from Ellet's wife Elvira (Ellie) in 1854 bears the heart-breaking news that his suspension



Some of Ellet's tools.

bridge at Wheeling, Virginia, had collapsed. For many years, the 1,010-foot bridge had the distinction of being the longest suspension bridge in the world. However, strong winds during a storm led to the cable bolts attached to the piers to give way, causing the collapse. Although the Wheeling Bridge was rebuilt, it would be the last that Ellet would build. He instead turned his attention to engineering solutions to the flooding problems at the mouth of the Mississippi River and, later, to using his ram-boats in battles during the Civil War.

"At the beginning of the Civil War, Ellet approached the Union Army and proposed retrofitting steamboats with reinforced prows and iron rams," said Dow. "These ships, used by the United States Navy, were designed to assault Confederate ships and coastal forts on the Mississippi River. Ellet was commissioned as a Colonel to command his fleet of ram ships and they were successfully used in battle."

During the Battle of Memphis, while commanding the ram boat, The Queen of the West, Ellet was wounded in the leg and subsequently died on June 21, 1862. Some accounts suggest that he did not die of his wound, but rather from the measles. Tragedy continued to haunt the Ellet family when Elvira died shortly after her husband, some said from a broken heart. One year later, their son Charles Rivers Ellet, died.

As the current part-time curator of the Transportation History Collection, Dow continues to acquire material related to all modes of transportation and their related infrastructures. Over the past several years she has been broadening the scope of acquisitions to include the history of transportation outside the United States. Dow welcomes questions and queries and invites those interested in transportation to visit the Special Collections Library, which is open to the general public. She can be reached at [kdow@umich.edu](mailto:kdow@umich.edu), or 734-764-9377.

## Museum Shop Books For Sale

### Three new books now available at the Museum Shop:

LEGENDS and LEGACIES, The Greeks in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

By Pearl Kastran Ahnen. Soft cover, 200 pp, \$15

THE THIRD MARKED TREE, Paths Through the Wilderness – John Williams of Webster Township and His Descendants. By James Baldwin Parker and Osbert Oliver Williams. Hard cover, 314 pp, \$20

WEBSTER: A Time, A Place, A People. By Grace Shackman.

(About Webster Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan.)

Soft cover: 274 pp, \$27.50; Hard cover, \$32.50

### Two books relating to our current exhibit: *Coming to Washtenaw County*, also are available.

ANOTHER ANN ARBOR, By Carol Gibson and Lola M. Jones.

(About the African-American community in the Ann Arbor area.)

Soft cover, 128 pp, \$20

JEWISH ANN ARBOR, By Richard and Ruth Adler.

Soft cover, 128 pp, \$20

### And finally, we have a book that will appeal to the many that worked for Argus Camera.

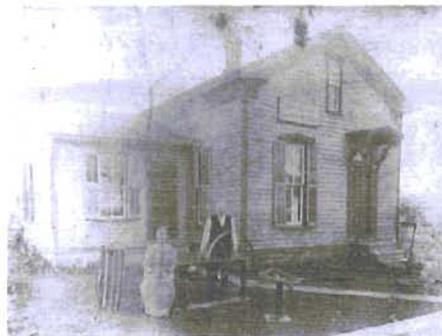
ARGOMANIA, A Look at Argus Cameras and the Company That Made Them. By Henry J. Gambino. Soft cover, 222pp. \$40.

Books are available for purchase at the museum or through the website, [www.washtenawhistory.org](http://www.washtenawhistory.org)

SUSAN WINEBERG • WAY BACK WHEN  
**Pontiac House Dated  
 by Dendrochronology**

The house at 1526 Pontiac Trail, recently restored by Patrick McCauley, has been dated using a technique known as Dendrochronology. McCauley sent wood samples from his joists to Henri D. Grissino-Mayer at the University of Tennessee and for \$500 they were able to tell him his house was built in 1845. Although the house was moved to its current location in 1869, it is fairly certain to have come from the Lund Estate. McCauley believes it was the first house built by Jonathon Lund before he built his fabulous mansion, still standing at 1324 Pontiac Trail, in 1847. McCauley bases this on a set of initials carved in his basement, which belonged to P.H. Howland, a relative of Charles Richmond, the brother of Mrs. Lund.

In doing his research, McCauley was also able to discover an old photograph of his home, showing that the location of the entry had been moved from right to left and the wing moved to the rear. You never know what you will find if you dig deep enough and McCauley has the stamina to keep on digging. If you are interested in having your property dated by dendrochronology you can contact him at [patrickmccauley@hotmail.com](mailto:patrickmccauley@hotmail.com)



1526 Pontiac Trail then



And now

## Georgina Sanz's Story

**One of many to be found at Coming to Washtenaw County, currently at the Museum on Main Street.**

My name is Georgina Sanz. I came to the United States in 1962 from Cuba. My family had to emigrate because we were considered counter-revolutionary. My husband, Lino, my eight month old son and myself came first to Miami. We lived briefly in Oklahoma before coming to Ann Arbor because an uncle told us this would be a better place to settle. My daughter was born in Washtenaw County in 1967.

When we left Cuba, we were forced to abandon our homes and all our property. We could not take any money, jewelry or family pictures with us. In my small suitcase I was able to bring only six outfits and two pairs of shoes. I was allowed to leave with only my plain gold wedding band and a watch. Everything else had to be left behind including my mother and father. Fortunately they were able to join us the next year.

In Cuba my father was a lawyer; in Ann Arbor he cleaned tables at a cafeteria at the University of Michigan. My husband was a captain in the

Cuban Navy. He also worked for the University of Michigan, first as a janitor and then in an office.



This photo of Georgina Sanz's family is from an old newspaper clipping. Her father and mother are on the left; her husband is on the right; and she and her son, who was a month or two old when the family left Cuba, are in the center.

## Upcoming Events

### Kempf House Noon Lecture Series

**When:** Wednesdays, noon to 1:00 P.M.

**Admission:** Members, \$1; Non-Members, \$2

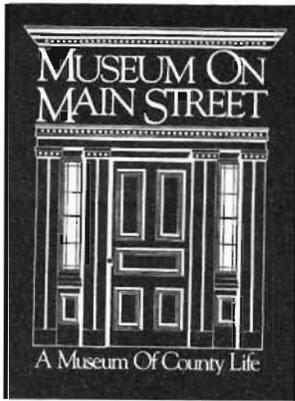
**Where:** 312 S. Division St., Ann Arbor, MI

**Details:** Parking available in large public lot south of Kempf House

**April 8:** **Stu Johnson**, father of Kempf House board member Kjirstan Blander, presents, *Dixieland: The Forgotten Root of Jazz.*, explaining his lifelong love of all music, particularly jazz.

**April 15 :** **Richard Rubenfeld**, EMU art history professor with a special interest in cartoon and comic art, presents, *Artists Who Age Successfully*, his reflections about aging among artists.

**April 22:** **Keith Matz**, self-described "advanced amateur enthusiast," presents, *Imagery of the Galapagos Islands*, striking digital photos from his recent trip to the islands and to Quito, Ecuador.



**WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Post Office Box 3336  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-3336

**EXHIBIT: COMING to WASHTENAW COUNTY WILL BE UP UNTIL JULY!**  
So far almost 250 UM students have visited - HAVE U?  
Hours: Noon-4 PM / Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday  
and by appointment / groups welcomed

Non-Profit Org.  
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SUNDAY • APRIL 19  
2:00 PM  
**THE TOLEDO WAR**  
JOURNALIST DON FABER  
GLACIER HILLS, HANSON ROOM  
1200 EARHART ROAD, ANN ARBOR, MI  
INFORMATION • 734.662.9092  
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**WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY IMPRESSIONS APRIL 2009**

# Make Note - Dates to Remember

## 2009 General Meeting Schedule

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Sun., April 19<br>2:00 pm | <b>The Toledo War</b><br>Glacier Hills, Hanson Room<br>1200 Earhart Road, Ann Arbor, MI   |
| Wed., May 20<br>6 to 8 pm | <b>Annual Meeting</b><br>Potluck Supper and Election of Officers<br>Milan Senior & Community Center<br>45 Neckel Court, Milan, MI |

## Mission Statement

*The purpose of the Washtenaw County Historical Society is to foster interest in and to elucidate the history of Washtenaw County from the time of the original inhabitants to the present. Its mission shall be to carry out the mandate as stated through the preservation and presentation of artifacts and information by exhibit, assembly, and publication. And to teach, especially our youth, the facts, value and the uses of Washtenaw County history through exhibits in museums and classrooms, classes, tours to historical places, and other educational activities.*

## Thank You!

to *The Ann Arbor News* for donating seven months' worth of paper for our newsletter.