



The Crow's Nest

"Preserving the heritage of Ferndale for future generations"

Spring 2003

Newsletter of the Ferndale Historical Society

Vol. 16



Memorial Day 2003: Dedication Of The New Ferndale Veterans Memorial

This Memorial Day we again formally acknowledge our debt to the veterans of times past and present who by their courage and dedication have helped to secure and maintain our freedoms. For the residents of Ferndale this day will have an added significance this year: a new memorial listing the 129 names of those Ferndale residents who gave their lives - 105 in World War II, 8 in Korea, 11 in Vietnam, 1 in the Persian Gulf, and 4 in Non-Conflict situations--will be dedicated. Inscribed on the center panel of this monument are the Four Freedoms, which President Franklin D. Roosevelt first cited in a message to the U.S. Congress proposing lend-lease legislation, January 6, 1941: *Freedom of speech, Freedom of worship, Freedom from want, and Freedom from fear.*

Located south of a center obelisk that is "Dedicated to Those Who Served in the Armed Forces of Our Country," the new memorial joins Ferndale's original Veterans Memorial listing the 71 Village of Ferndale residents who served in World War I, including 5 who gave their lives. Situated in the median on Livernois near Nine Mile, these monuments, soon to be joined by a brick walkway, are a fitting commemoration of Ferndale veterans who so ably served our country.

One person was instrumental in inspiring the support necessary to build this new monument: **Ferndale Police Officer (ret.) Tim McGhee**. And the resources of the **Historical Society** were his inspiration, he says. One day more than 8 years ago he walked into the Museum on Memorial Day, saw a vintage 1945 newspaper front page announcing the end of WWII, read an accompanying list of those Ferndale residents who had served in the conflict, and suddenly realized that Ferndale had no memorial that publicly listed these veterans--or those who had served in subsequent conflicts. Thus began his effort, later joined by many other interested Ferndale residents, to raise the funds necessary to build a suitable monument. Memorial Day 2003 is the culmination of the hard work, though some finishing touches remain to be done: brickwork is still to be installed on the walkway, and a three-and-a-half-foot bronze eternal flame, crafted in Spain, is to be placed atop the monument.

Officer McGhee is scheduled, among other speakers, to deliver thank-you remarks at the Dedication Ceremony, to be held at 11am, at the Livernois site on Memorial Day. **Ray White**, President of the Ferndale Historical Society, will also participate. Also represented will be members of the Ferndale Veterans Memorial Project Committee: **John Mielke, June Kotlarek, Alice Rice Johnson, Eleanor Mielke, Gordon Rowe, and Debbie McGhee**.

Grateful acknowledgment is due to Officer McGhee, members of the Ferndale Veterans Memorial Project Committee, and the residents of Ferndale who so generously supported this tribute to Ferndale's war veterans--who, as the inscription on the World War I monument says, "offered all to their country 'that Liberty and Justice might not perish from the Earth'."

Special Memorial Day Exhibit

Plans are that a collection of military uniforms representing all major American conflicts will be displayed at the Ferndale Historical Museum on Memorial Day. Included will be a special collection of vintage uniforms first shown at the St. Clair Shores Museum several years ago. Uniforms worn by several Ferndale residents will also be on exhibit, including a woman's Army uniform (buttons missing) that was worn by **Florence Warren**, former Lincoln High School teacher, during her service in World War II.

Ferndale Historical Society Member, **John Mielke**, made the arrangements for this special exhibit, much of which was assembled by a member of John's WWII Marine unit, "The Raiders." This unit, stationed at Henderson Field on the island of Tulagi, adjacent to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands, participated in a key battle that ultimately altered the course of the war against Japan.

This exhibit promises a unique perspective on veterans present and past - Stop in.

A New Book About Ferndale

Ferndale Author, Sherry A. Wells, will sign her new book, *The Mullers From Missouri: Father, Ford, \$5 a day*, at the First United Methodist Church in Ferndale, Sunday, June 22, 2003 from 11:30 - 1:30 PM.

Proceeds from the book signing will benefit the Ferndale Historical Society and the First United Methodist Church of Ferndale.

**THE MISSING ROBERT TODD LINCOLN LETTER:
A LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL MYSTERY**

This story [dated June 6, 1952] was written by a Lincoln High School student in a Journalism class taught by **Alice Jorgensen**. The assignment required that students interview long-time teachers and Ferndale residents about Lincoln High School history.

In the year 1920, the cornerstone for Lincoln was laid at the west side of the Nine Mile entrance. The three acres of land on which Lincoln is located was purchased for \$4,000. A letter was written to Robert Todd Lincoln (the son of Abraham Lincoln) inviting him to the dedication of the new high school in Ferndale. The family of Mr. Lincoln answered the letter saying he was grateful to have been invited but would not be able to attend the ceremony because of illness. Two weeks later Robert Todd Lincoln died.

Since the day of the dedication, the letter from Robert Todd's son has been missing.

About 1925, Miss Mary Humphry, history teacher at Lincoln, was told about this letter by Mr. George Dondero, at present United States Congressmen from Michigan. Miss Humphry carried on a search for the letter. Checking through the office, libraries, Board of Education files, and talking to various faculty members from the year 1920, she was not able to find the letter.

And it is still missing . . .

Be a Ferndale Historical Society
Building fund Patron!

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Museum Hours

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1651 Livernois
(248) 545-7606

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Memberships are for 1 year: June 1 to May 31

Membership Dues

- \$5.00 individual*
- \$10.00 Family*
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- *1 year membership

Send To:

Ferndale Historical Museum
1651 Livernois
Ferndale, Michigan 48220

If you would like a Membership card mailed to you,
please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Museum Items For Sale

- Museum T-Shirts (2 Styles)
\$15.00 & \$20.00
- Cole's "Ferndale of Yesteryear"
\$20.00
- "Old Timers Tell It..." Hard cover
\$15.00
- Afghans (Red, Blue, or Green)
\$35.00
- Calendars
\$8.00
- Cardboard "vintage" cars
\$1.00
- Post Cards (4 to choose from)
.75 each
- Note Card Pack
\$4.00



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