



ROYAL OAK

Historical Society

OCTOBER 2018 • ROYALOAKHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM

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IN MEMORIAM:

Stephen W. Jones

May 8, 1941- September 6, 2018

Leon "Pete" Mancour

August 20, 1934 - March 10, 2018



Historical Society Plans 79th Annual Fundraiser Dinner

Mark your calendars! The Royal Oak Historical Society's 79th Annual Fundraiser Dinner is coming up October 19th at Pasquale's at 31555 Woodward Ave., and we're hoping all of you can come celebrate with us!

Social hour will start at 6 p.m. with dinner following at 7 p.m. We'll have a silent auction, elect our new officers and board members. In addition, we'll be honoring Royal Oak citizens when we present the Sophie Bowman Award, Doc Morrison Award, Spirit of Royal Oak Award, and the Tom Wurdock Award.

And, of course, we'll run our popular trivia contest again, complete with prizes, during the past several years at our dinners. We are thankful for Cas Swastek, who helps us with this portion of the dinner.

This year, we are updating our pricing for the Annual Dinner tickets. The tickets for the dinner will remain at \$35 per person but will not include the Historical Society membership. Instead, we will offer a \$5 discount on any of our membership levels purchased at the dinner. Your membership can be paid with cash, check or credit/debit card.

Tickets are available at the Museum, William Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors, Frentz & Sons Hardware, via Paypal on our website (royaloakhistoricalsociety.com), or from any board member. For more information at 248-439-1501. Tickets are also available at the door.

All proceeds to the Royal Oak Historical Society Museum.

(Pasquale's has a ramp to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers and an elevator to the restaurant's lower level where the festivities will take place.)

ROYAL OAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY 79TH ANNUAL DINNER

6PM SOCIAL HOUR | 7PM BUFFET DINNER | TRIVIA, AWARDS



FRI. OCTOBER 19

PASQUALE'S
31555 WOODWARD AVE

TICKETS ▶ WM. SULLIVAN & SON FUNERAL HOME, THE ROYAL OAK HISTORICAL MUSEUM,
FROM ANY BOARD MEMBER, OR PAYPAL VIA ▶ ROYALOAKHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM

\$35

**\$45
AT THE
DOOR**

Homes & Buildings In Royal Oak

Edited by John S. Schultz

Each newsletter, the Royal Oak Historical Society will focus on historic homes and buildings in our city. The selections come from the book, "Royal Oak Images, Yesterday's Charm Today's Treasures," published by the Roundtable of Royal Oak Historical Organizations, a standing committee of the Royal Oak Historical Commission of the City of Royal Oak. The book was published in 2006, and a second edition is in the works.

We encourage other Royal Oak residents to share the history of their home for possible publication. For more information, contact: **John S. Schultz at johnsschultz@sbcglobal.net**.

The Robert J. Nykiel House 111 Royal Avenue

A French Norman Revival Style Built in 1940

This house style originated in the Normandy province of northwestern France where houses and barns at one time were attached. The central turret (or tower) was used at that time for the storage of grain or silage. From about 1915 to the late 1940s, a more informal and revival version of the larger French style house became very popular in America; based heavily on the inspiration of earlier French farmhouses, this style would be called the French Norman Revival. Common to this style is the rounded turret having a cone-shaped roof. The tower almost always housed the main arched doorway into the home. Steeply pitched roofs with hipped dormers are also characteristic of this style. Windows may be double hung or casement with small leaded panes. The exterior is usually

built of bricks, cut-tone, and/or stucco. This revival style flourished during the 1915 to late 1940s period and was frequently found in the suburban areas of the east and Midwest.

Located on a corner lot, this house at 111 Royal Avenue, is an attractive example of a French Norman Revival style house built in 1940. The house is accented by two interesting gargoyle/lion type concrete statues on the front porch, a curved drive, and beautiful landscaping. The backyard exhibits a beautiful in-ground swimming pool and a playhouse. The playhouse was once a shed and was redone by the owner in 2001 and designed in the same French Norman style as the house ... turret and all!

continued on page 5



Curator's Corner

by Muriel Versagi



Museum Attracts Visitors From All Over The U.S.

The month of August at the Museum has been just incredible.

The outpouring of respect and honor for Robert Edwards at the "Automotive Concept Art Exhibit" put together by the League of Retired Designers in his honor was overwhelming. The design artists outdid themselves in pulling together a great exhibit. More than 150 people attended the opening preview party on August 3.

Besides the auto show, we had visitors from all over Michigan as well as folks from Texas, California, South Carolina, Indiana, Ohio, Florida, Maryland, Colorado, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania...oh, and Paris, France and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Many were here visiting family and friends for the annual Woodward Dream Cruise and had heard about the Concept Art exhibit. So much fun being a docent!

Then on August 10, volunteers Don & Adair Calder hosted the "All Classes of the Royal Oak High School, 1950s Reunion" at the museum; over 60 graduates attended, and they donated more than \$400 to the museum. According to the Calders, the grads had a great time walking down memory lane, looking at all the yearbooks, class composites, and schools in the flipchart.

On August 15, the Huron Valley Corvette Club had a private tour of the Museum and the exhibit. We had a dozen or so super

Corvettes in our parking lot. They spent about three hours at the Museum checking out the Concept Art. Several said... "See you next year!" Check out our Facebook page for a few pictures of them at the Museum.

On August 19, automotive photographer Jim Secreto hosted a reunion of graduates from the College for Creative Studies photography program. They were all involved with the automotive industry. A major reason for the reunion was to honor the professor, whom they all credited with helping them find their love of photography as well as cars.

Check our website at <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com> for more information on the following:

New Exhibit

The South Oakland Art Association will be opening a new Juried Fine Art Exhibit from 2-5 p.m. October 7. A \$10 donation is requested to support the Common Ground Art Therapy Program. The exhibit will run through October 20.

Christmas Exhibit

A Holiday Tea, limited to 32 Tea Party Lovers will open the new Christmas exhibit. An email will be sent out when the date and time have been determined.

All On One Block In Downtown Royal Oak

by Bob Muller, ROHS Board Member

This issue's Photo Game features photos taken all on one block in downtown Royal Oak. Can you identify which Royal Oak buildings are pictured here? (Answers on page 7)



Photo Credits: Bob Muller

ROHS Notices

What's Going On At The Orson Starr House?

The Orson Starr House is a Michigan farmhouse that was originally constructed about 1845. Located at 3123 N. Main St., one block south of Thirteen Mile Road, the house is owned by the City of Royal Oak and is open to the public from 1-4 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month or by prior arrangement. Additional parking is available two doors to the south at the Salvation Army Citadel.

The house was occupied by the Starr Family for nearly 100 years and was home to one of Royal Oak's pioneering families.

Open houses and tours are provided by the members of the Orson Starr House Guild, a volunteer committee that organizes special events at the monthly sessions.

Admission is free; however, donations are always welcome.

Donations to the Royal Oak Historical Society Are Gratefully Accepted

Send checks payable to:

The Royal Oak Historical Society • 1411 West Webster Rd.
Royal Oak, MI 48073

Donations are tax-deductible. Thank you in advance.

The Robert J. Nykiel House *continued from page 3*

The interior of the house includes five different hardwoods: walnut, oak, pine, birds-eye maple, and chestnut that are used throughout the home in flooring, paneling, built in cupboards, and shelves in the various rooms.

Current owner information indicates that the house was built by a lumberman in about 1938. City records and Royal Oak City directories relate that Robert J. Nykiel and his wife, Caroline, were living in the house in 1940, and that Mr. Nykiel was a salesman for the Currier Lumber Company of Detroit. Mr. Nykiel died before 1945 as his wife is listed as a widow continuing to live in the house until 1948 when it was sold to Charles C. and Letha Wroughton. Mr. Wroughton worked in investment securities for Slaten & Co. of Detroit.

They, in turn, sold the house to Charles K. and Edna L. Norton in 1950. Mr. Norton was an osteopath/physician with offices in the Washington Square Building in downtown Royal Oak. The Nortons lived in the house until at least 1960.

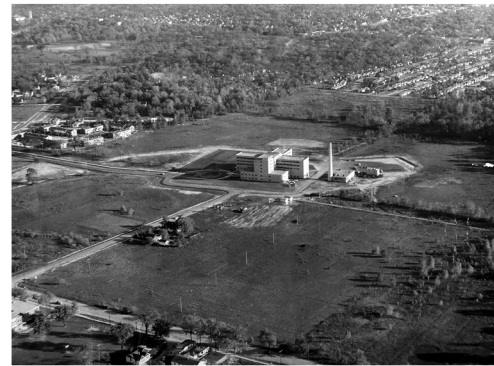
Royal Oak Then & Now

by John Maurice, ROHS Facebook Editor

In the 1940s, two area groups — the South Oakland Hospital Authority and a similar group in Birmingham/Bloomfield - formed committees to advocate for a hospital to support Detroit's growing northern suburbs. The two groups eventually merged into one incorporated as Oakland Hospital, and considered two locations: a site on Adams Road in Birmingham and one at Thirteen Mile and Woodward in Royal Oak. The 112-acre Royal Oak site was ultimately chosen, and after some confusion with contractors delivering supplies incorrectly to Oakwood Hospital during construction, the name of the hospital was changed to be named after Dr. William Beaumont. When the new hospital opened in January 1955, nearly 20,000 people attended an open house to view the hospital billed as the most contemporary of its time.

There's so much to see in the "Then" photo, starting with the hospital itself, in the shape of a cross. This view was taken from the northwest. You can see a bit of the old Parker School at the lower left corner and 13 Mile Road was little more than a dirt path at that time. The only part of Parker school that remains today is the

flagpole on 13 Mile. To the upper left, Coolidge Highway, which was extended south in 1926, can be seen snaking its way toward 12 Mile with the newly built housing units for the hospital staff sitting right at the access road. At the very top left corner, the Shrine Catholic Church can be seen at the corner of Woodward and 12 Mile with Roseland Park Cemetery spread out between Coolidge and the church. At the upper right side of the photo, the Berkley subdivision known as St. John's Woods can be seen, still largely under construction. South of the hospital is open land all the way to Webster Road. To the north of the hospital can be seen the remains of the old Sharp family farm which used to occupy the entire area now taken by the Beaumont complex.



ROHS Cartoon Vault

by Dan Saad, ROHS Board Member

Toothless (Detroit) Tigers

The Daily Tribune | February 2, 1988



The woeful 2018 Detroit Tigers, mired in the current rebuilding plan, are not the first to disappoint us. Thirty years ago, after the excitement of the 1984 World Series Championship, the Tigers management began disassembling that team to launch another rebuilding plan.

For Kirk Gibson, however, there was no disappointment. After being dealt to the L.A. Dodgers in the off-season, he enjoyed another World Series Championship there in 1988.

Dan Saad was the editorial cartoonist at The Daily Tribune from 1983-1999. He still draws editorial cartoons regularly for Crain's Detroit Business. He is a Royal Oak resident and member of the Royal Oak Historical Society Board of Directors. **Dan's Cartoon Blog:** <http://saadcommentary.blogspot.com/>

PHOTO GAME ANSWERS:
 • Photo A: 320 S. Main St. Astoria Pastry Shop
 • Photo B: 312 S. Main St. Mesa Restaurant
 • Photo C: 306 1/2 Main St. Dapper House Barber & Shop

Honoring Stephen W. Jones

May 8, 1941 - September 6, 2018

Stephen W. Jones, a longtime board member of the Royal Oak Historical Society, died September 6, 2018. Besides the Historical Society, Steve was also very active in other community service around Royal Oak. He was past board member of both the South Oakland YMCA and the Royal Oak Boys and Girls Club. Steve was also actively involved with Boy Scouts Troop 1629 and First Congregational Church of Royal Oak.

Steve, 77, graduated from Cranbrook in 1959. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Albion College and received his law degree with distinction from the University of Michigan Law School. He practiced in the areas of estate planning, probate administration, corporate, tax, and real estate law for over 50 years.

Steve was the beloved husband of Karen Jones for 49 years. Loving father of Linda (Jeremy) Dostie and Michael (Linda) Jones. Proud grandfather of Grace and Charlotte Dostie and Kylie, Stephanie, Spencer and Maverick Jones. Dear brother of David (Nancy) Jones and brother-in-law of Daniel (Sue) Teare. Also survived by several nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his parents, Harry and Eleanor (Whitman) Jones.

Our hearts and prayers go out to the family.



THE ROYAL OAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
1411 West Webster Rd. • Royal Oak, MI 48073
248.439.1501 • ROYALOAKHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM



ROYAL OAK
Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Email Address _____

Individual: \$20____ Family: \$30____ Supporter: \$50____
Century: \$100____ Club: \$200____ Premium: \$300____ Benefactor: \$500____

**Mail your check to: Royal Oak Historical Society
1411 W. Webster Road • Royal Oak, MI 48073**

Dues also are payable online at royaloakhistoricalsociety.com. Click on the Membership link and you may pay your dues online or subscribe and have your dues paid automatically annually. For more information about membership levels and benefits, visit the website. Thank you in advance!

IMAGE PRINTING

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