



MILL RACE QUARTERLY

57
Years

Vol. LVII No. 2

A Publication of the Northville Historical Society

Spring 2021

Martha's Musings

By NHS President, Martha Michalak

And just like that, spring is here! Nowhere is that reflected better than at Mill Race Village. It seems like, overnight, we have moved from dull and grey to flowering and green. Many thanks to Juliana Cerra, the Garden Club and the Stone Gang for the efforts they are putting in to beautify and enrich the Village.

If you would like to help with that effort, we are holding a Spring Clean Up at the Village on May 22nd from 9AM to Noon.

Bring your gloves and gardening tools and plan on getting dirty. It's exciting to be able to see people again - moving around the Village, interacting with each other and planning events. Returning to normalcy feels good.

We are very much looking forward to being able to open the buildings again for our Summer Sundays starting in mid-July. We all missed this last year, and we are making plans to keep our volunteers and visitors safe while allowing everyone to enjoy our beautiful buildings.



Looking Ahead With Leanie

by Leanie Bayly, Executive Director

In spite of the column title, let's start with a glance at where we've been since the last Quarterly. The past few months have been seen steady progress on several fronts. Grant approvals have significantly contributed to keeping our financial heads above water along with continuing our belt tightening measures to cope with the Covid downturn. As the spring deepens, more outdoor projects have been checked off our dance card between the Stone Gang, the Garden Club, and our own Master Gardener, Juliana Cerra. The grounds are really shaping up. New guidance for the use of masks out of doors has been helpful to that end, though it's recommended all still wear them when congregating.

Our pop-up Antique sale freed up some much-needed space in our buildings while putting a few more doubloons in the treasure chest. Items for sale can still be found online at: <https://www.townpeddler.com/northville-historical-society>. Better pick something out before it gets sold! Archive projects continue apace as the shift to providing more digital access for our members remains a major focus.

Partnering with the Northville District Library, Storytime videos were made at our Wash Oak School to use virtually and more are planned to be made at the Gazebo this summer. This is a perfect way to reach out to the community with a virtual story time and highlight MRV at the same time.

As warmer weather beckons, our wedding and rental activities have begun to pick up some steam which will add to the momentum already developing for the Married by the Mayor and Wines of the World events. Information regarding both can be found on our website at www.millracenorthville.org

We continue to observe state and CDC guidelines regarding social distancing and wearing masks when indoors any of our buildings. This is a fluid condition so please look for policy changes on our website and in Village signage. The Northville Historical Society offices, though not open for walk in services, remain available for service by appointment.

The History of Ford Field – Part 2

by Ellen Elliott

In the first part of this series, we learned of Henry Ford's attraction to the Northville area and his devotion to the small town. In this second part of the series, Ellen looks at the next, nearly 40 years as Ford Field grows in significance to the community.

Work continued on the field with the installation of concrete bleachers and the addition of a softball diamond in 1947. The new ball diamond provided a home for the Northville Recreational League and a softball league for boys and girls.

As the recreation department developed, Ford Field was used for a variety of activities. The summer of 1948 saw about 1000 Northville youths participate in the village recreation program at the field. In 1949 a summer tether tennis tournament was held. Donkey Ball came to Ford Field in May 1950. This gimmicky softball game was played with participants rounding the bases riding donkeys and proved quite popular as a fundraiser in Northville. In 1951 The game made a repeat appearance and was billed as "America's Funniest Sport." In June 1950 school children put on a program at Ford Field in which a flag and flagpole were dedicated. A field day was held that year for members of the Junior Police. Activities of the day included tether tennis, a BB gun tournament, and a baseball target throw. By the end of 1950 a scoreboard was added to the southeast corner of the field after an aggressive fundraising campaign began in 1949. The



Northville High School class of 1948 was the first to contribute (\$204.47) thus providing inspiration for others to donate. The campaign was successful and provided approximately \$1600 to turn the dream into reality. The space was not just used for recreation but was also a location in which large crowds could congregate. Governor G. Mennen Williams scheduled a visit to Ford Field to speak on November 3, 1950 as part of his campaign for reelection.

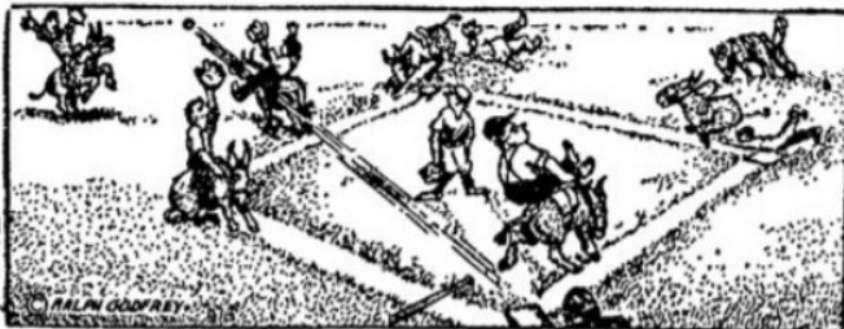
Even though the village did not formally own the property, improvements were still being made. In 1953 a new entrance constructed on the north end of Ford Field. In February 1954, Ford Motor Company offered to sell the property to the village of Northville for \$5500. The transaction did not take place at that time; forty years would pass before ownership was transferred.

LOOK WHAT'S COMING!

Ralph Godfrey's Famous Donkeys in America's Funniest Sport

Donkey Ball Game

Laughs ... Spills ... Fun ... Thrills



Better Than A Rodeo!—Funnier Than A Circus!

As the years progressed, the site continued to play an important role in serving the needs of the community from a cultural and recreational perspective. A Pet and Doll Show was organized by the children of Northville and held at Ford Field on August 1, 1956. In 1960 Ford Field was used for the Northville summer recreation day camp. This program was not just for athletic pursuits; arts, crafts, and games were offered as well as an archery tournament and golf. In 1961 the National Football League established the national Punt, Pass, and Kick competition. The local contest was sponsored by John Mach Ford Sales of Northville. Ford Field was naturally chosen as the local venue for the competition which would take place annually for many years.

Continued on page 3

Wines of the World Returns!

By Martha Michalak

We will hold our second “Wines of the World” wine tasting experience at Mill Race Village on Friday, June 4th from 6 -9 pm. This will be a completely outdoor event, held in full compliance with the Michigan Health Department guidance.

Tickets are limited and are on sale now at:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wines-of-the-world-2021-tickets-148665393193>.



We will have wine tastings from around the world, including Australia, Argentina, Italy, and France, as well as from right here in the US.



BROUGHT TO YOU BY
THE DETROIT WINE ORGANIZATION

**Tickets Available
April 9th**

wines of the world

A Charity Wine Tasting Event to Benefit
the Miracle League of Plymouth & the
Northville Historical Society



Friday, June 4th

6:00 - 9:00 pm

Mill Race Village

Taste Over 100 wines

Strolling Dinner

Wine Wall

Silent Auction

Live Music

TICKETS \$125 FOR ONE \$225 FOR A PAIR





MILL RACE VILLAGE
215 GRISWOLD STREET
NORTHVILLE, MI 48167



MORE INFORMATION: WWW.MILLRACENORTHVILLE.ORG

The History of Ford Field – Part 2

by Ellen Elliott
(Continued from page 2)

By 1962 the new high school athletic field was dedicated and Ford Field was no longer used for high school football games. Even though the high school football games were now being played at another location, Ford Field was being utilized as much as ever. Throughout the 1960s the community enjoyed the circus, carnivals, and chicken barbeques. Prior to the summer season of 1967, volunteers came out in force to help prepare Ford Field for recreation activities. In 1969 Northville hosted a BB-gun tournament at the field and saw six of the participants earning a spot at the state competition.

The issue of ownership arose again in 1970. There was concern about spending tax payer dollars to improve property that was not publicly owned. Ford Field was important to the success of the recreation

department and the culture of the city so expenditures for improvements were approved anyway. As programs were expanding in 1970-71 season, this site provided the necessary space to accommodate the growing popularity of baseball, softball, and soccer. The Jaycees worked diligently in 1970 to refresh Ford Field with lighting upgrades, removal of the old bleachers, and tidying up the landscape. Later that year an outdoor ice rink was installed at the site providing the community with year-round activity opportunities with skating and hockey skill instruction as part of the recreation department program offerings.

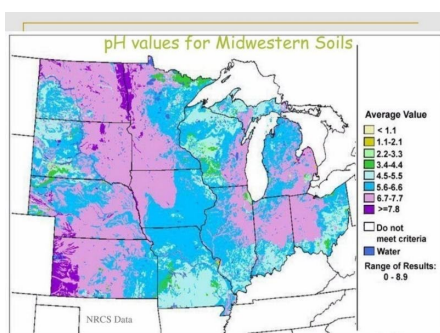
The 1980s saw further improvements with a new wooden stairway installation made possible by a federal grant. In 1984 Tom Rice's Folk and Bluegrass Festival celebrated its eighth anniversary at Ford Field thus providing the community yet another culturally stimulating way to spend time together in this historic space.

Future of Mill Race's Maple Trees

By Juliana Cerra

Over the past few years, some maple trees in the village have indicators of poor health, including chlorosis, stunted crowns, branch die-back, and weak trunk development. The following report details the causes of these conditions; unfortunately, there is no easy solution. Future planning for the village needs to include removals of declining specimens and replacement with trees better suited to local soil conditions and careful management of planting and maintenance.

Foliar chlorosis (pale leaf color and high contrast veins) is primarily an indication of manganese deficiency. While Michigan soils typically provide adequate amounts of elemental nutrients, including Mn (manganese), N (nitrogen), P (phosphorus), K (potassium), Ca (Calcium) and S (sulfur), uptake of Mn is dependent upon soil pH. Even if a soil test reveals that elemental nutrients are adequate, the wrong pH will limit the tree's ability to absorb Mn. For red maples (*Acer Rubrum*), *optimal pH levels for growth occur in acidic soils (pH 5.0-5.6). For southeast Michigan, DNR soil surveys indicate soil pH in the 6.7-7.7 range, characterized as slightly acidic to slightly basic. Consequently, plants sensitive to lower pH will not thrive without intervention to modify the naturally neutral soil of our region. Preliminary findings based on observation (adjacent sugar maples exhibit strong green color) and pH test kit results (pH 6.5-7.0) both indicate that soil pH is the cause of the chlorosis.*



Treatment is problematic. Common fertilizer injections will not address pH, so adding more Mn will not increase uptake. Lowering soil pH is an agricultural practice that requires large seasonal applications of elemental sulfur worked into the soil for annual plants. For ornamental horticulture, small amounts may be applied for acid-loving shrubs (e.g., rhododendrons, blueberries) but not for large trees due to massive root systems. Attempts to alter soil chemistry to accommodate plants not suited to the naturally occurring pH may negatively impact native species that thrive under existing conditions.

While red maple is native across the Midwest, the specimens at Mill Race Village may be phenotypes

from outside of SE Michigan, and not adapted to local soil pH. This possibility may also be a contributing factor to their decline.

Stunted crowns and branch die-back are typically caused by girdling roots, trunk damage and compacted soil that restrict movement of water and nutrients to the canopy. Often this condition begins at planting and is not apparent until the tree matures. The red maples all show troubled root structures and the characteristic low, flattened crown that characterize the condition. The cambium layer has been permanently damaged and removing large roots further stresses and destabilizes the tree. Also, if a tree is planted too deeply, continuously "volcano" mulched, or damaged by weed whips, bark rot exposes the cambium layer to decay. The tree's life span and health are permanently compromised.



Weak trunk development noted on the trees lining the drive is the result of aggressive pruning. Wound evidence indicates that the trees had large limbs removed too close to the trunk, resulting in incomplete closure of the bark collar and leaving the cambium layer vulnerable to decay. Standard tree pruning allows removal of a 4" diameter branch provided

the trunk is at least 3 times larger than the amount pruned and less than 15% of the canopy is removed. There is no treatment for structurally compromised trunks.

Bad technique is another issue that occurs even during "professional installation" with failure to remove synthetic rope surrounding the trunk and root ball. Landscape crews are not trained to remove things that impact tree health and sometimes even insist that the material will rot away. Not true. An example of the devastating effects; the large purple beech planted at the top of the slope above the General Store has been completely girdled and will begin to fail long before its time. The tree had originally been planted too deeply (and the rope was only exposed in 2020, too late to address the problem).

While there is no way of knowing exactly how long the trees will live under these many stresses, they will not thrive. Planned removal and replacement in conjunction with changes in hardscape design (village lane engineering) is a sensible approach to the problem.

Lecture Series About to Wrap Up

By Paul Snyder

As May closes, we end our Virtual Lecture Series with our own NHS board member, Paul Hinz who will be sharing his passion for Historic American League Baseball Stadiums.

This lecture will take place virtually as have been all our lectures this season. It will be on May 26 beginning at 7:00 pm. Though there is no charge, registration is required due to limited Zoom capacity.

More information and the registration link can be found on our website under the Events tab. We thank all of our presenters for our (hopefully) one-of-a-kind season for their perseverance and adaptability as we sailed uncharted waters.

For our next season we expect to resume the live presentations in the church. Have a happy summer!

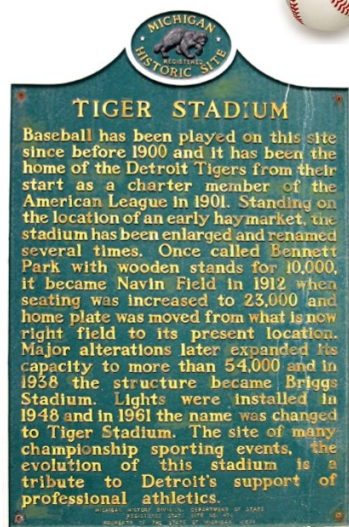
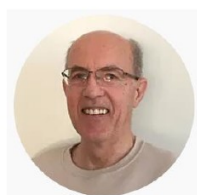
Northville Historical Society's
2021 Virtual Lecture Series
presents:



A Colorful History of American League Baseball Parks

presented by Paul Hinz,
a baseball enthusiast

Let's play
ball!



Experience the evolution of the original ballparks of the
8 Charter Members of the American League in this
informative virtual presentation.

Wednesday, May 26th at 7:00 pm.
Register on our website at: <https://www.millracenorthville.org/>

Ceremony Officiated by Northville
Mayor Brian Turnbull

Processional and Recessional
Music by Shawn Riley

Mini Reception with
Sparkling Wine Toast
Catered by Toria Restaurant

Professional Photographs by
Pamela McCormick
Photography

Bride's Bouquet and Groom's
Boutonniere by Adorn Fine Flowers

Exclusive use of the Village with choice of two
decorated ceremony locations and other amenities

\$2,000 Package for up to 25 Guests
75 guest maximum with additional guest charge

Married by The Mayor
at Mill Race Village

Bookings available
Friday, June 11

Email rentals@millracenorthville.org or call 248.348.1845

Married By the Mayor-Take Two!

By Jennifer Luikart

Do you know someone who had their wedding plans cancelled due to COVID? Anyone who has been thinking of having a vow renewal? We are once again offering all inclusive wedding packages at Mill Race Village on June 11 and 12, 2021. All June 12 dates are taken, but June 11 is still available!

For \$2000, our package includes a 90 minute rental of the gazebo and church with the grounds exclusively yours. You may choose from either decorated venue. Northville Mayor Brian Turnbull has once again offered his time and talents to officiate your wedding! Adorn Fine Flowers is providing each couple with a bouquet and boutonniere, Pamela McCormick Photography is providing each couple with 75 photographs of their wedding, Shawn Riley is lending his smooth voice and guitar for processional and recessional music and Toria restaurant is providing the champagne toast and an individually packaged grazing box for all of your guests. This package is for up to 25 guests. We can accommodate up to 75 guests, with a surcharge for each guest over the first 25.

All you need to do is get your marriage license and show up! All the organizing has been done for you! Please email rentals@millracenorthville.org if you're interested!

Membership Update

50 Years of Mill Race Memories

By Maria Simonte

2022 will mark the 50th Anniversary of Mill Race Village. In 1972, the first buildings (the New School Church and Hunter House) were moved to the grounds from their original locations in Northville. The rest is history, so to speak.

To commemorate this anniversary, we are starting to ask our members to share their memories. We are looking for First memories, Favorite memories and Future memories. First memories about your first visit to the Village (be sure to include the year), Favorite memories about the things you love most here and Future memories you hope to create at Northville's treasured landmark. Photos are strongly encouraged so please include your pictures as well.

You are welcome to email your memories to Maria Simonte at msimonte@millracenorthville.org or send to her attention at the offices at 215 Griswold St, Northville, MI 48167. By submitting these memories and photos, you are giving the Northville Historical Society permission to use them for possible promotional purposes. We look forward to walking down the Mill Race Memory Lane with you!



Welcome New Members!

Barbara & Jim Fortune
Marilyn & Raymond Friedrich
Kevin Ryan & Jonathan Fuhrman
John Suchomel
Paul & Maureen Travalini

Thank You to our Donors!

\$100 & Above

Ellen and Joe Elliott
Roy & Perla Forbes
Steve & Brenda Mihalik
Tim O'Callaghan

Up to \$100

Bell Foundry Questers #1006
Jim & Suzy Bone
Elaine Brennan
Gina Esposito
Craig & Patricia Fishbeck
Dave & Sue Laabs
John Roby
Jim & Carolyn Stuart

Thomas Hess Memorial Donations

Richard & Mona Alonzo
Roland Hwang
Luci Klinkhamer
Gerald Oljace

2021 EXCLUSIVE PHOTOGRAPHY DAYS FOR PERMITTED PHOTOGRAPHERS

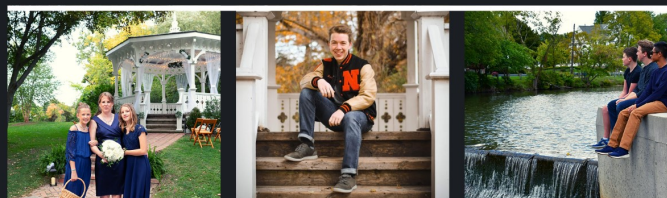
GROUNDS OPEN FOR OUR PERMITTED
PHOTOGRAPHERS AND THEIR CLIENTS ONLY



SUNDAY, AUGUST 15 2 TO 9 PM
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18 9 AM TO 2 PM
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 3 9 AM TO 2 PM

CONTACT THE VENDORS LISTED BELOW
TO BOOK YOUR PHOTO SESSION
THESE ARE THE ONLY PHOTOGRAPHERS PERMITTED TO SHOOT AT MILL RACE VILLAGE

ALL OTHER PHOTOGRAPHERS MUST PURCHASE A ONE DAY PHOTO PERMIT



PAMELA MCCORMICK PHOTOGRAPHY PMCCORMICKPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

TRENDIA KNEZEK, 6 LITTLE FEET, LLC. 6LITTLEFEET.COM

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SAMANTHA DOMINGUE PHOTOGRAPHY
WWW.SAMANTHADOMINGUEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



*Stone Gang Members Ed Flayer, Jurgen Switalski
& Mike DeFrancesco preparing the Northville "N"
backdrop for the May 27th Prom Night*

New this year, the Board of Directors reserved 5-7 hours on 3 prime fall weekend dates for permitted photographers and their clients to have sole use of the grounds for photo sessions! It's the perfect time to schedule a family picture for the holiday card, schedule a sr. photo session, engagement or maternity session!

We urge you to choose one of our annual permitted photographers or choose a different photographer and purchase a one day photo permit (discounted for members!) and schedule an appointment for a photo session today! We expect our photographers will book their spots early!

Calendar of Events

- May 22 - Spring Clean Up at the Village 9AM to Noon
- May 26 - Virtual Lecture Series - A Colorful History of American League Baseball Parks 7 PM
- May 27 - Northville High School Prom Photo Op 5PM to 8
- June 4 - Wine Tasting Fundraiser 6 to 9 PM
- June 6-12 - Annual Garage Sale, 218 W. Dunlap St, 9AM to 9PM
- July 11 thru October 3 Village Buildings Open, Sundays, 1PM to 4
- June 25 - Double Pi Day, 1PM to 4 Pre Orders & Curbside Pick Up Only
- July 4 activities canceled as of publication



New NHS Storefront Display at the Marquis Theatre—Come check us out!

President
Martha Michalak
Vice President
Bill Stockhausen
Treasurer
Scott Lowery
Secretary
Jen Mihalich
Directors
Barbara Bakewell
Mike DeFrancesco
Gina Esposito
Paul Hinz
Kirt Holder
Andrea Johanson
Tim Luikart
Maria Simonte

Executive Director
Leanie Bayly
Business Director
Jennifer Luikart
Finance Director
Marti Murdock
Archivist
Paul Snyder

Quarterly Editorial Team
Tim Luikart, Maria Simonte and
Paul Snyder

248-348-1845

office@millracenorthville.org

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Northville, MI 48167

