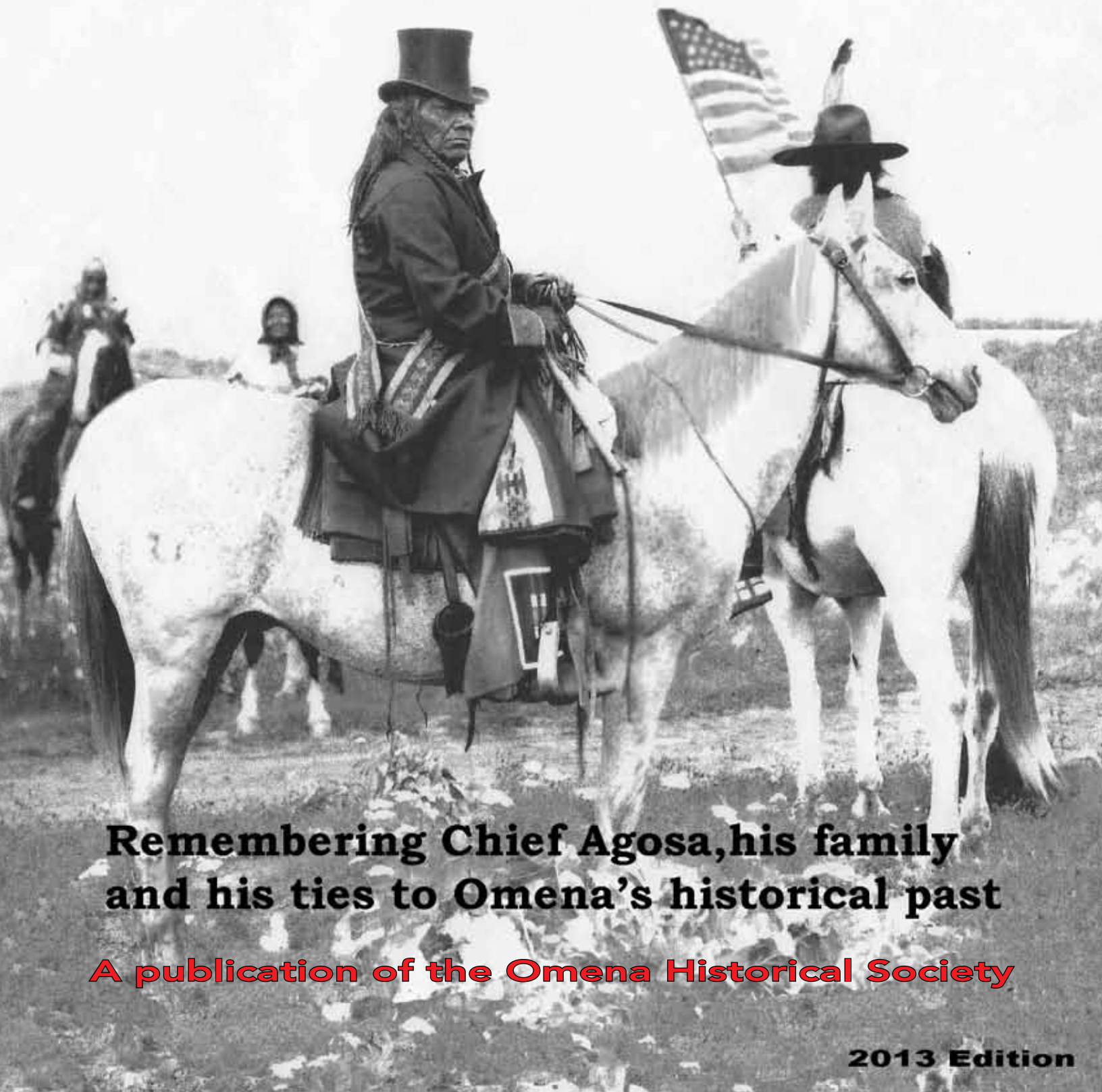


# Omena Timelines



**Remembering Chief Agosa, his family  
and his ties to Omena's historical past**

**A publication of the Omena Historical Society**

**2013 Edition**



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## TIMELINES MISSION STATEMENT

Our purpose is to showcase Omena's past as we chronicle the present, with an understanding that today's news becomes tomorrow's history.

## COVER PHOTO

Chief Agosa after 1836 when he acquired his top hat and frock coat in Washington, D.C.

When driving from Omena to Northport on M22, between Craker Road and Sunrise Landing, one passes through an area still known as “Ahgosatown,” named for Chief Agosa and his family. The Agosa family’s connection with Omena begins with the Treaty of 1836. In return for the surrender of most of northern Michigan (13 million acres) the federal government provided some monetary compensation and pledged to supply teachers, missionaries and farmers to educate the Indians. Chief Agosa was among the 22 chiefs and headmen of the Ottawa and Chippewa tribes who traveled to Washington that year to sign the treaty.

Presbyterian minister Peter Dougherty, along with Chief Agosa and his band, settled near the tip of the peninsula separating East and West Grand Traverse Bays, which would eventually be called Old Mission. According to 1848 census records, Chief Agosa’s band numbered 166 members.

Agosa and Rev. Dougherty had great rapport and the Chief worked hard to learn the English language. Though he never became Anglicized, nor fluent in English, he encouraged his band members in their learning, supporting the education his people were offered at the Mission School.

During the next eleven years, the Indians and Dougherty built their Mission Church, where the early Agosas were powerful forces. Chief Agosa was baptized on June 4, 1843 at the Old Mission Church by Rev. Dougherty and given the Christian name Addison Potts. By that time, he and his wife, Elizabeth, had four children: James, Albert, David, and Ellen. Elizabeth died giving birth to their fifth child, George, in 1845.

The 1836 treaty provisions limited Indian occupancy of their remaining reservations to five years. Although Dougherty had helped the



AHGOSATOWN  OMENA

Indians save a portion of their government payments to buy land, the government did not allow them to buy at Old Mission where they had worked hard and developed a successful farming operation. Instead, they opened up other counties for purchase, among them, Leelanau.

As a result, Chief Agosa and many band members moved across the bay to what would become New Mission, a distance by water of about six miles. Chief Shabwasung and a small band were already occupying a portion of the area, where they had established summer gardens. Chief Agosa and his people settled along the bay, north of Shabwasung's settlement, today known as Omena Point, with access to the water and to the Indian trail from Shabwasung's settlement to Waukazoo (later a part of Northport). This new land would be called "Ahgosatown."

The first child of Chief Agosa, James Ahka Agosa, was born in 1817 and died of old age April 14, 1900 in Leelanau Township. He was a blacksmith and lived in Ahgosatown. He and his wife had a child, Peter, baptized by Rev. Dougherty on January 7, 1866.

David Agosa, born circa 1832, died circa 1907. He married Mary Waukazoo of Northport and



they had five children: Jacob, John, Daniel, Robert and Paul. When the church was reorganized following Dougherty's departure in 1871, David was one of four Indians ordained as Elder. He became fluent in English and was Interpreter and Bible teacher, as well as Superintendent of the Church School. He contributed much to the Omena community during his life.

A third son, Albert Agosa, was born circa 1832 and died December 5, 1916 in Leelanau Township. Albert, a farmer, and his wife Charlotte, had four children baptized and were baptized themselves. His Indian name was Ke-way-to-naw-quo.

George Hale Agosa, a fourth son, was born on January 7, 1845. George owned 40 acres of land west of David's 80 acres. He had a son, Benjamin, who barely survived a severe compound fracture of the skull caused by a falling tree. Their daughter, Ellen Agosa, was baptized in 1845. Her Indian name was Kis-suh-nah-ne-qud, but little else is known of her.

Paul, David Agosa's son, married Mary Ann (Marian) Fisher and they lived on Carlson Road in a pleasant white farm-house. They had ten children, but only Don, born in 1900, survived. Don was a cherry farmer on land distributed



*Ahgosatown Painting*

**Paul Agosa  
standing  
with Jacob  
Agosa at  
the Omena  
Church**



in the 1855 federal treaty allotments to Michigan Indians. The family owned 80 acres in the Carlson Road area. Bill Marbach, long-time Omena summer resident, remembers visiting there with his parents when Paul's son, Don, lived there.

In 1934 Paul was ordained as Elder in the Omena Church, a position he held for twenty years. When he died in 1954, 115 years had passed since his grandfather, Chief Agosa, had welcomed Rev. Dougherty to the Indian settlement on Old Mission. For years, the Chief committed himself to the church and from that time on, a faithful member of the Agosa family held a leadership role in the church. Their continued devotion to it after Dougherty left Omena, helped keep it alive.

Paul's son, Don, graduated from Northport School and was reputed to be a very good



**Paul Agosa**

student. He served four years in the Navy, where he learned to be a house painter. When he returned to the area, he took up that profession, opening a painter/decorator shop in Northport with his father, Paul (now the women's clothing Boutique). After Paul died in 1954 Don continued the work through the 1960s. They are both remembered for the beautiful work they did, and the Omena Church still preserves the stenciling they did in the sanctuary. Don also made signs for businesses and his nephew, Jim Concanon, later joined him in the paint business.

Don was active in the Northern Michigan Ottawa Association and Leelanau Indians, Inc. (These organizations preceded the federal reacknowledgment of the Grand Traverse Bands in 1983.) Don passed away of bone cancer in 1989, survived by his companion and wife in later years, Shirley.

Shirley Behymer Agosa was born in Chicago in 1920 to Oliver and May Behymer, who bought land in East Leland that same year which eventually became a cherry farm. As a young woman, she met Don Agosa through her father and Uncle Albert, all cherry farmers. Years went by and they finally married and lived happily at their Northport farm until Don's death. Shirley returned to her family farm in Lake Leelanau in 2007 where she continues to garden and go for "rolls" around her land. Shirley has been active in Kateri Tekakwitha Church in



**Don and Shirley Agosa**



**Shirley Agosa**

Peshawbestown, Leelanau Historical Museum, Elders Community at the Grand Traverse Band, as well as giving her help to others at ShareCare when needed.

Jacob, another son of David Agosa, is remembered for his devotion to the Omena church. On December 6, 1915, he was elected the new Superintendent of the Sunday school and was to “see that suitable persons be appointed to teach in the Sabbath school and lead in the prayer meetings and religious services in the church on Sabbath afternoons.” He also cared for the church building, which included cutting, hauling, laying and lighting the wood for the winter fires in the church stove by 5:00 a.m. in order for the church to be warm for Sunday School by 10:00 a.m. He either walked from his house in Ahgosatown, through the snow and blizzards, or used his horse and cutter. When his father, David, died, Jacob also took over the job of church interpreter.

Jacob helped summer cottagers in many ways, such as cutting ice from Mougey Lake and packing it in sawdust to deliver to cottages on Ingalls Bay in the summer. Bill Graf, in a 1998 interview, has a touching remembrance of Jacob from those days:

“Jacob Agosa lived in Ahgosatown up on the west shore here. He was simply a magnificent man. I would love to have the opportunity to see that gentleman again. He had just a simply won-

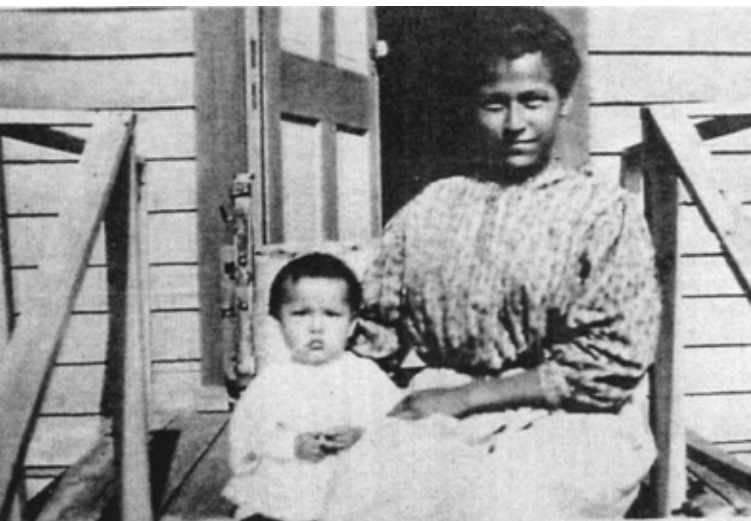


*Jacob Agosa*

derful face and was a lovely person to deal with. He would row down from Ahgosatown on a regular basis...maybe once or twice a week, in a little flat bottom rowboat, and then he would come in [at Ingalls Bay] and chop wood.

One day he made a bow and arrow for me. He took a branch of a tree, and I think it was ironwood, and with a knife he simply fashioned this bow out of this branch and then took some thong and made an arrow for me and he signed his name on there. I let that get away somehow and I am most regretful of that.”

Chief Agosa’s many descendants and their devotion and contributions to this special place, are a testament to the man himself, who was often described as kind, likeable, and intelligent. Few images exist of the Chief, but one of the lasting photographs is of him sitting tall and handsome on his horse, elegantly dressed in top hat and frock coat, a style he had admired on the Washington



*Mrs. Jacob Agosa and Emma*



**"Chief Agosa's many descendants and their devotion and contributions to this special place are a testament to the man himself, who was often described as kind, likeable, and intelligent."**

**Ahgosatown Group**

dignitaries at the signing of the Treaty of 1836. There is no doubt his kind, cooperative nature made the hardships of the first white settlers to the region more bearable. He valued honesty highly and it grieved him if any white man dealt dishonestly with him. His father, Chief Aish-gunwan-aba, had raised him in the ancient Ottawa

tradition of complete honesty, repeatedly telling him, "You must never tell a lie to anyone." How ironic that such people would repeatedly experience broken treaties and lack of good faith from the federal government. Omena owes a great debt to Chief Agosa and his descendants.



**Women and Baskets, Circa 1920s**

(Sources: Manuscript written by Betty Craker Armstrong who's great grandfather came with Dougherty. She learned much of it first hand as she knew many of the Indians as did her grandfather. The book, *Grand Traverse Region* by Dr. L. M. Leach. Birth dates are from Durant Roll from 1907. An interview with Shirley Agosa by Mary Tonneberger. Debra Wetherbee and ShareCare bios, Pictures from the Omena Historical Museum archives.)

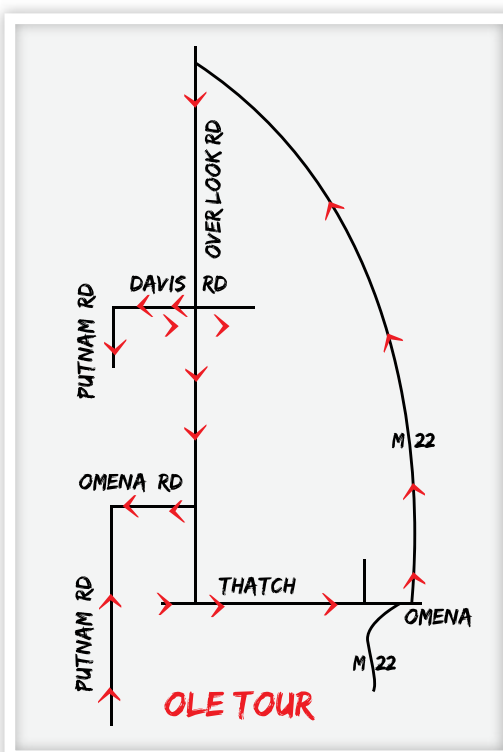
# A MORNING WITH OLE

JOEY AND LARRY BENSLEY

Winding our way through the rural landscape on a beautiful September day 2011, we listened to stories and the history of some of the farms and people during the 1930s and 1840s. With us was a unique person by the name of Ole Kiersey who had spent much of his younger days in the area. For two hours he reminisced about what it had been like.

He began by relating special times with Mr. and Mrs. Solle who had moved from Chicago in the 1930s. Mr. Solle ran a bookstore out of their home but later moved it to a house just south of Omena. His name became synonymous with books across the U.S. as well as countries around the world. However, it was Ole who had the pleasure of taking Mr. Solle's dinner to him in a little tin bucket when he worked late or who was happy with a whole dime and lunch he got for splitting wood and stacking it on the porch. Mrs. Solle also provided an enjoyable time when she let Ole listen to Fritz Kreisler, Caruso, Chopin, etc. on their old victrola.

A sense of history can be challenging but Ole made it come alive as he pointed out land, much



Our Route

of it now orchards and fields, where Ahgosatown had once been. Up on the bank a little North of Sunrise Landing, Don Agosa had his house. According to Ole, he was one of the Agosas who did odd jobs. Quite a lot of time he was working on the Point, pulling poison ivy with his bare hands. "Joan told me that." (Joan is Ole's wife)

Turning onto Overlook Road, a field over run with grass and weeds came into view. "This is where Mr. and Mrs. McMachen raised their 10 children." A sense of sadness overwhelmed us that the house no longer exists and is now only in the memories

of those who lived there and the people who knew them.

Farmsteads at one time dotted the landscape along this road and several are still in existence even though the purpose for them may have changed. The first one on the left belongs to Bob Weaver who continues as a cherry farmer. When Ole was young, however, John Johnson, a boat builder lived and worked there. "Some of the fishing boats that ended up in Leland were built by him," Ole commented, "and if you are in the

Bluebird Restaurant, you will see a picture of him working on the boats." Ole used to go to the house to watch him and help with the farming for \$2 a day. According to Ole, however, he quit as he thought



he was doing too much. This didn't go over very well with his dad and he was soon back at John's house finishing his obligation.

Continuing on we passed a nice looking white farmhouse on the right adorned with lovely hanging baskets. This was the home of Jim Von Holt's mother. Further along are the orchards and land, once farmed by Jon Von Holt but presently in the hands of his grandson, Jim. At the top of the hill stands Overlook Farm, first owned by Ole's great grandparents, the Bartletts, who later moved to a farm on the way to Northport. Presently this cherry farm belongs to the Van Pelts. Beyond these homes, much smaller in size but historically significant, is the house once owned by Rufus Ranger, a general farmer. It is where Irving Ranger, his son grew up but, as was the case with some other children of farmers, he was not interested in taking on the work of running a farm and went on to other endeavors.

"Turn left on Davis Road," Ole said with excitement in his voice. "Where it dead ends on the Southeast corner is where I grew up from 1939 on. There was general farming and we had cows, horses and pigs that needed taking care of. During WWII most of the fellows were drafted so we had to work and do the same thing the men did. Unfortunately in 1956, when my parents were away, the mice ate some wires and the house burned to the ground. The one you see is not the original."

Crossing back over Overlook where Davis turns into Putnam Road, on the right side is the old Ruffi farm. The Ruffis had several children but sadly one, Carl, a chemical engineer who Ole had spent time with when quite young, went to the barn one day and shot himself. Ole commented he could never figure out why as he was a very interesting person. It is a memory he would rather forget.

Back to Overlook Road on the southwest corner



**John "Ed" Scott Farm**

where the Craker-Brown School once stood. Ole remembered Henry Brown and his wife owning it. However, he also recalled it was rented to Claude Craker and his family for awhile before they moved to Craker Road. Ole and his parents lived there while rebuilding their house that had burned. Frank Stowe owned it at the time, along with a large barn close by. Ole had vivid memories of a riding stable with six or seven horses that he was allowed to ride. "I would throw a saddle on and ride around, come back, put a saddle on a different horse and do the same thing all over again." On the land was an apple orchard where apples foreign to today's apple lovers were grown. One, called a banana apple, made us wonder what it actually looked like.

Further along, a little south of Craker Road, we pass what was originally the John "Ed" Scott farm, built by one of the early families in the area. It is now owned by Amanda Holmes and her husband. Fortunately it still retains the character of the original house. One can almost imagine what it must have been like living there. A short way on is where Ed Egler, an early mail carrier lived. Although the original house burned, the barn remains. Ed's horse, an important member of the family, was kept in it. During the winter, the roads were rough and unplowed so the horse pulled the sleigh and made its way from farmhouse to farmhouse to deliver the mail. Ed had a small orchard and did just enough general farming to support his horse with hay and oats.



*Rennie Putnam Barn*



*Inside Putnam Barn*

After turning onto Omena Road and driving a short way we were told to stop. Ole pointed North up Putnam Road. “You can’t see it, but nestled back in the woods is Bass Lake and this is where the Doe farm was. Avis Wolfe grew up there and eventually married Bud Wolfe, a distant cousin of mine. You don’t want to talk about anyone here as everyone is related,” he laughed.

Reversing directions and heading south, a breathtaking scene of green pastures and rolling hills greeted us. Perched on top of one of the hills is a lovely stone house. The original house built by Ed Putnam burned and was replaced by the house seen today. An interesting tale told to us by Ole was about the barn. It also had burned but the barn that took its place was not built on site but was moved there. Just as one enters Northport there is a house on the left at the edge of the woods. Across the road was a barn that Frank Kalchik moved to the Putnam farm. “I don’t know how he did it, as this was in the 40s,” Ole said, shaking his head.

At the corner of Putnam and Freeland Road, Ole spoke of his grandfather’s farm on the East side. “Josephaus Klavius Kiersey came from Iowa. When Oklahoma became a state, he was on a government survey team. He then moved on to Kansas where he was a vigilante. During the westward movement, people were robbed on the way West and he kept these people safe. Eventually he turned up in Omena and married Mary Bartlett who gave birth to two sons, one being my dad.”

Near the end of Putnam Road we pulled into the driveway of Rennie Putnam’s old farmstead. Ole’s eyes lit up with anticipation of relating stories about the farm and time he spent there. It was obvious he had fond memories of this place and the people who had lived here. According to our tour guide, Rennie finished high school but didn’t go for the diploma as he once said, “I am farming and don’t need it.” Stretching our legs and taking in the splendid scenery in every direction, we followed Ole into the old house where Rennie was born.

Ole drifted back in time as he reminisced about the old wood stove, the hand pump on the ancient sink, and the old wood cabinets. It was in the kitchen that Mrs. Putnam taught Ole the alphabet and how to add and subtract. “And all this before I entered kindergarten,” he exclaimed proudly. It was evident he was reliving a wonderful period of days long passed. “There was only wood and kerosene in the beginning but when Rennie lived here as a grown man, he added electricity.”



*Ole Kiersey*



*Putnam House*

**“It is difficult to put into words what an amazing time this was and how much we learned from a special person, but we do know it is two hours we shall never forget. Thank you, Ole.”**

In the back of the house there had been a cream separator and at one end, “we called it the Shatty,” Ole remarked, “is where Rennie and his two brothers slept. Below this room was the basement that served as the storage area for potatoes, canned goods and wood.” Tools once used, were still evident in various places on the walls. One, Ole did not know what it was called, but remembered it was used to shove ice from Bass Lake to the waiting horse and sleigh. As he spoke of this he was reminded of Rennie’s covered sleighs and how, before he was nine years old, he and the children living in the area would be delivered to the school bus at the end of Freeland Road where it meets M22. Perched on top of the sleigh with the sound of sleigh bells ringing in the air sounded like great fun.

The barn, so prominent on the land, is a magnificent structure. To Ole as a young boy it must have seemed massive with its stone basement where the animals lived, its main floor that held the wagons and the loft where hay was stored. Haying was a huge part of Rennie’s life and when Ole was about 14 he would give him a hand hauling hay. One time Rennie said, “Ole, why don’t you throw it up on the wagon a little faster?” This made Ole mad so he threw a bale and knocked Rennie off the wagon. Ole did not offer anything about the response. In the early days getting the hay into the haymow was an interesting procedure. It was put into three or four slings and when it was brought into the barn the sling was pulled up by pulleys and tripped causing the hay to come down into the haymow where it was leveled off. The rope used proved to be not only for work but for entertainment as well. As a kid, Ole and others would hold the rope and swing across to the mow on the other side and then climb down a ladder.

The planting of corn or potatoes was also rather unique. It involved the use of a long cord with an 8 or 10 foot chain attached. A man on each side would walk up the field dragging it and mark one row and then walk back the other way marking another row. This is where the corn and potatoes were sowed.

Ole continued to fill us with wonder as he remembered special times he spent on this farm. One other story that should be noted is when Ole decided to climb into an apricot tree near the house. John Putnam happened to catch him at it and said, “Get out of that tree.” Ole’s response was, “Go to hell.” What occurred was a sprint by Ole towards home with John hot on his heels. “He caught me, Ole remarked, “but he didn’t do anything.”

Time had passed much too fast and we realized our special tour was winding down as we drove by the Joynt farm, the Tatch land and the spot where the Omena School had been near the old railroad station. We stopped to take a picture but only brush and grass, waving in the breeze, filled the lens as the school, like many of the old farms, exist only in the memories of a few.

It is difficult to put into words what an amazing time this was and how much we learned from a special person, but we do know it is two hours we shall never forget. Thank you, Ole.

*Omena School Site*





Photo by Jim Miller

## MILESTONES

### **Scott Carl Tonneberger**

January 21, 1964 – August 3, 2012

Scott was born to Ronald D. and Mary P. (Gaffney) Tonneberger. He grew up in Cascade, MI. He graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a major in languages (he spoke five languages). He spent a year of study in Bologna, Italy, then received a M.B.A. degree from Columbia University. He worked for marketing firms and specialized in Hispanic Marketing. He traveled extensively and built bonds with people from all backgrounds and stations in life. Scott is survived by his parents, his sister, Karen L. (Roger) Edgley; special friend, Williams Molina; nieces, Claire, Katherine, and Tess Edgley; nephew, Alexander Edgley; cousins, aunts, and an uncle. He was preceded in death by his grandparents and uncle, Frank Gaffney.

### **Dorothy L. Blue**

August 23, 1922 – August 12, 2012

Dorothy was born in Owosso, MI to Lawrence and Lucile Seward. She was a teacher for thirty-five years in the rural schools in Shiawassee County and taught in Chesaning, Rochester, Owosso and Saginaw. She married Robert L. Blue, July 1, 1961. He passed away June 18, 2004. Dorothy was a close family friend of Jim and Kathy Miller. She was always interested in history and donated to the Omena Historical Society to help obtain the survey. She also supported other museums..

### **Neva “Ping” Abbot**

January 16, 1920 – August 28, 2012

Ping was born to Nelson and Margaret Caplinger Pingley. Ping was trained as a surgical nurse and was a first lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps during WW II. She was stationed in Burma where she met Waldo Abbot, the love of her life for over 55 years. Her first glimpse of Omena and the family cottage “The Abbey” was shortly after the war and before Waldo was released from the service. She came alone to Omena by plane, train and milk wagon to meet his family. Over the years she would talk about that first adventure: the cocktail parties, meeting the sisters, and the cold Lake Michigan water which left the greatest impression. Although she was not a lover of the water, she came to cherish her time in Michigan and spent parts of every summer in Omena for over 55 years. A memorial will be held this July when Ping Abbot will be put to rest next to her husband at the Hillcrest Cemetery overlooking Omena Bay. She is also preceded in death by her parents, four siblings, Owen, Penny, Robert and Aut. Her sister Betty McCarthy survives and her children, Brenda Anderson and Waldo Abbot, and six grandchildren also survive.

### **Carl A. “Bill” Emmert**

August 22, 1924 – September 14, 2012

Bill was born to Carl and Mary Emmert. He spent his childhood in Ohio and learned to sail at a summer home there. He served in the U.S. Navy

as a Signalman in the South Pacific during WWII. After the war he graduated with a B.S. in Engineering from University of Michigan. Bill sold electrical motors and controls to industry. He later worked at marinas. He married Lin Flahive in 1984. After moving to Omena, Bill was a volunteer driver for ShareCare, a member of the Omena Breakfast Society and served on the Omena Woods Board. He is survived by his wife, Lin; son, John (Lisa) Emmert; daughter, Gail Emmert, step-daughter Lisa Flahive; grandson, Alec Emmert; and granddaughter, Hannah Emmert. He was preceded in death by his brother, John Emmert; sister, Betty Hacker; and stepson, Scott Flahive.

### **Hugh “Ole” Kiersey**

February 21, 1930 – October 6, 2012

Ole was born to Eleanor Erikson and Donald Kiersey. He served in the United States Air Force from 1950 -54 in Greenland. Ole loved woodworking, creating beautiful furniture. He loved teaching and taught in the Portage Public Schools. Ole loved the land in Michigan near Omena where he spent his childhood and a lifetime of summers. He enjoyed time spent on the water. His Norwegian ancestry was seen in his face and eyes that were the same color as Omena Bay in winter. He had a wonderful sense of humor and always had a smile. He was called “Laughing Eyes” in Chipewewa, and the name became him. He is survived by his wife, Joan Kiersey; and his daughters, Kathleen “Katja” Sage, and Kim (James) Cleary; brothers Denver and Gerald; sisters, Beulah Benedict and Kay Alpers. He was preceded in death by his parents, and his brothers, Ralph, Don, and Robert Kiersey.

### **Mary M. Rockwood**

August 15, 1950 – October 21, 2012

Born to Halcyon (Rennie) and Jerry Nelson, Mary lived in Omena next to the post office for many years. As a teenager, Mary owned a horse that lived in the barn behind their house right in downtown Omena. She often rode her horse on the beach of Omena. Mary also lived there for a

number of years with her son Bill. She worked for several years at Tamarack Gallery. She was fun-loving and had a great smile. She is survived by her son, William Rockwood; her mother Halcyon Nelson; and brother, John Nelson, all of Traverse City. Her father, Jerome Nelson, preceded her in death.

### **William “Bill” A. Marbach**

January 10, 1922 - November 12, 2012

Bill was born to Reverend Dr. William H. and Harriet Marbach. He married Carolyn Dickerson and was father of William D. (Deborah), Elizabeth M. (Douglas) Thompson, and Margaret M. (Al) Buchholz; grandfather of Catherine and Billy Buchholz, Greg (Parisa) Beers and Sam Thompson; great grandfather of Zahra, Leila and Kimia Beers. Bill was a longtime summer resident of Omena who contributed much to the area. He began coming here in 1928 when he was six years old. His father was the first summer minister to spend a month at the Omena Presbyterian Church, and they spent every August for 37 years at the manse. Bill spent 81 years coming to Omena. He and Carolyn lived in Omena in the summers during Bill’s retirement years. Bill served as an Elder at the Omena Presbyterian Church, was instrumental in the founding of the Omena Historical Society and was the archivist for many years. He gathered many letters, documents, and audio recordings of Omena residents that ultimately contributed significantly to the book, *Omena A Place in Time* by Amanda Holmes.

### **Lawrence J. Franchek**

November 12, 1940 - December 1, 2012

Larry lived in Omena for over a decade. He was a carpenter by trade, hunted and fished, and was a great reader. He is survived by his son, Kevin and his daughter, Rene Holcomb; six grandchildren; as well as his companion of six years, Margie Meachum; and his brother Steve Franchek. His parents, Steve and Marie Franchek, and his siblings, Jerry and Geraldine, preceded Larry in death.



*Agosa Tombstone*

### **Merra Lee Fouts Burden**

August 1, 1939 – January 9, 2013

Merra Lee was born to Martin “Pooda” and Theta Craker Fouts. She lived in Traverse City but spent a lot of time in Omena during her “growing up years.” Both sets of grandparents lived in Omena, Homer and Myrtle Fouts, and George and Anna Craker. She also visited her parent’s cottage on Ingalls Bay. She worked at Munson Medical Center for 31 years. Her husband, Ross “Pat” Burden, her daughter Melissa and her grandson Elliott Shea survive her.

### **Theodore J. Ruffi**

May 10, 1926 – January 4, 2013

Ted was born in Omena to Royal and Mary Mooney Ruffi. He served in the United States Army under the command of General George S. Patton. Ted received the Purple Heart for injuries suffered during WWII in the Battle of the Bulge. He worked at many places in his lifetime and went to Alaska in 1966 to work on the oil pipeline. He built and repaired many airplanes. He lived in Fairbanks but returned to Michigan yearly to visit his family and many friends in the Omena area. His parents, his brothers Royal, Carl and James, and sisters Claribel Banonis, Margaret LaPonsey and Eileen Holzknecht preceded him in death. His sister Josephine Cato and many nieces, nephews, and great-nephews and nieces survive him.

### **Ann “Annie” C. Kimmerly**

December 30, 1932 – February 3, 2013

Born in Dublin, Ireland, Annie met Jack Kimmerly when she worked at Northport Point one summer. They were married for 50 years and lived in Omena all of those years until a few years ago when they moved to Battle Creek to be near their children and grandchildren. Annie had a lively Irish humor and was a great cook. She is survived by her husband, John “Jack” C. Kimmerly, sons, James Kimmerly, Patrick (Patricia) Kimmerly, both of Battle Creek; grandsons, A.J. , Maxwell and Dillon Kimmerly ; mother-in-law Beatrice Kimmerly of Omena; sister, Mary O’Brien of Dublin, Ireland; a brother, Patrick Sweetman of Dublin, Ireland; and many nieces and nephews in Dublin.

### **JoAnn Cox Bishop**

October 14, 1928 – February 19, 2013

JoAnn was a long time summer resident in Omena. She and her husband Rev. John “Jack” Bishop began coming to Omena in the 1950s when Jack was one of the visiting ministers at St. Christopher’s Episcopal Mission on Omena Heights. Initially, they stayed at the cottage of the Boswell sisters who had made their cottage available to the visiting ministers. Eventually, the Bishops purchased a lot on Singing Sands and built their cottage. They retired to Omena and Fort Myers, FL in 1992. Her four sons, John, Timothy, Matthew, and Christopher survive.



### **Tucker Joyce**

December 2012

Omena’s first mayor, **golden retriever** Tucker Joyce, died in December, 2012. He was 11½ years old. He marched in many parades as mayor, visited children at the Leelanau Children’s Center and adults at the Northport Highlands. He is missed by all of Omena and especially his owners, Bob and Diane Joyce. He was a fine ambassador for Omena.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the award winning book, *Omena A Place In Time* by Amanda Holmes. To celebrate this occasion, the Timelines Committee thought it would be interesting to interview Amanda in order to give the reader a sense and a feel for what went into writing the book. The following is from this interview.

"It was a milestone," Amanda began. "What the process taught me is that local history is serious. Everyone involved loves Omena history, and we had to navigate lots of complications and different opinions. When we were all done and sweating from the experience, we didn't realize what an amazing thing we had done. It took getting an award from the Historical Society of Michigan for us to realize we had produced something beyond any of our expectations.

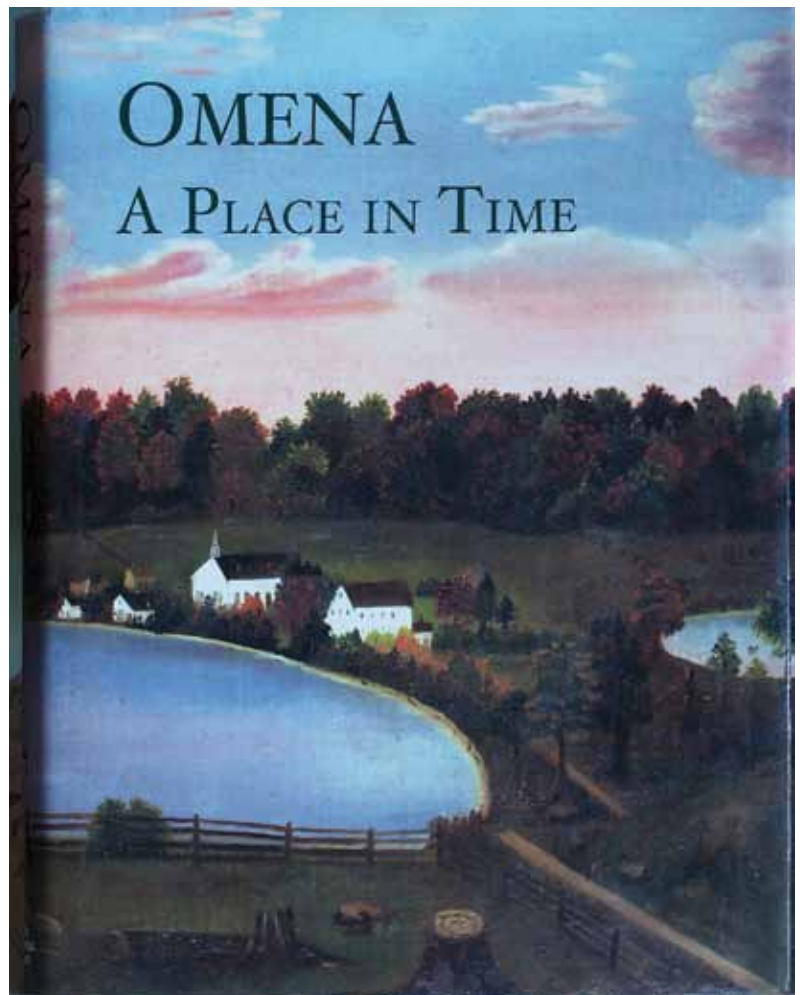
"I also learned a lot about myself. I get a picture in my head of what I want, and I get pretty determined to get there. At first some people were thinking of something small, like a pamphlet, and we could've done that. But if you're going to put in the effort to make something, why not put in the extra effort to make it all it can be? The history could've been smaller, but only at the expense of leaving out important parts of the story. I wanted to make sure all the voices were there, that it was real and not romanticized, because in my mind every voice is just as legitimate in telling the tale of Omena. I knew it would be hard for all of us to get there in full agreement, but I knew we had to stick to that standard.

"One reason I wrote as I did is that I'd been researching that book since 1983, when my parents moved to Omena. Thus a lot of material I used was from almost 20 years of collecting, as were many interviews and materials the Omena Historical Society had in its archives. It was a personal project for me."

The Omena history was actually Amanda's second project based on local sources.

"The previous project, was for my senior thesis at Amherst College in 1985," she continued, "I wrote about Arvilla Powers Smith, the wife of Rev. George Smith. That got me in the habit of gathering information, collecting books, talking to people, realizing that neighbors like Irving Ranger and the Van Pelts were opportunities to see into the past, to make some wonderful friends and be in their homes and see their family photos. I feel in a way they became like family."

Collecting so much information, of course, presented challenges of its own.



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“As I mentioned,” Amanda said, “I tend to gather a lot, because you never know what piece will be the one you need. For instance, I had a lot of interview transcripts I would read through and highlight, and if there was a certain topic, I would copy and paste that information together in one place. Other books and documents had so much in them I used Post-Its and wrote on the edge what the topic was, drawing from them as I drafted each section of the book. When I was done with the reference, I folded the Post-It back so I wouldn’t turn to it again. For some chapters, I had to put together a master list of all that was available.

“Long before you start telling the story, in your head you realize which pieces are going to come together, because you want a story rather than a list. You have to weave the story, and sometimes you have favorite things you have to leave out because they just don’t fit.

“The book committee and I had to decide which parts of Omena life we should include in the story. We agreed on the Mission, the Indians, the summer people—but we didn’t all agree whether to invest the time and energy to include the farming families who lived away from the shoreline. Should they be a part of the Omena story?

“The farming chapter, though, was the one that actually mattered the most to me, the one I felt the most attached to. The chapter almost didn’t make it into the book, but I wanted the farm family voices, too.

“I wonder now whether the book helps shape people’s ideas of what Omena is. I hope that it does, that it helps people to see all the different groups that have made us what we are now.

“The Omena book helped to shape my own path. When I wrote it, I was in graduate school. My program wasn’t well funded, so I took on projects to pay my way, including this one and three National Park Service reports that were of similar length. In some ways it was counter-productive, since it was like writing multiple dissertations, but all of these did lead me to what I’m doing now as executive director for Fishtown Preservation.

“There’s always something more to learn and bring to the surface. If it’s something I can do and do well, I want to do it. I love hearing what people have to say about their experiences and their lives. We all have rich stories to tell.”



**Amanda Holmes**

## Celebration

There are so many reasons to **celebrate** the Omena Historical Society Museum (OHSM); as in past years we will have much opportunity to celebrate great things to come. OHSM is a collective effort. Our alliance has strengthened over the years. It's a relationship built on a strong foundation of teamwork and a shared commitment to community. No matter what your commitment is as a volunteer, you matter. The time and talents you share are, quite literally – worth a fortune! Your role is invaluable and the volunteer hours of so many at both board and committee levels is truly appreciated.

As we welcome our 2013 season, we **celebrate** an eagerly anticipated new exhibition. Our talented exhibit team (Joey & Larry Bensley, Amanda Holmes, Alice Littlefield, Jim Miller, and Bob Smart) worked tirelessly to mount a special new exhibit featuring “A Kitchen from the 1850s and 60s”. The exhibit will open on Sunday, June 30 from 4-6 pm. We also look forward to ongoing improvements as building and grounds committee (Larry Bensley, Keith Disselkoen, and Bob Smart) install a beautiful new sign on our streetscape.

Our special programs help strengthen OHSM's mission, help keep our supporters engaged, help expand our reputation, and help spread the word that our museum is indeed a special gem not to be missed. OHSM has always fostered a spirit of excitement to see what's next and the program committee (Helen Putnam Bradley and Kris North Mampe) has promising plans for our education and entertainment. To help spread the word about OHSM, publicity chair Linda Kemper will be distributing our new publicity rack cards to Leelanau County Chamber of Commerce and visitors centers, libraries, and various other local businesses.

There are so many things happening behind the scenes on tasks as varied as taking care of our finances (John Ray); recording our board minutes (Alice Littlefield); orchestrating the docent committee (Ellie Stephenson and Bob Gelakoski); editing Timelines (Jacquie Johnson); researching and writing articles (Joey Bensley, Joan Blount, Nancy Craker Enyart, Debby Disch, Alice Littlefield, Kathy Miller, and Mary Tonneberger; soliciting new and renewal memberships (Judy Fowler and Ed Oberndorf); designing many graphic art projects and serving as web administrator (Jim Miller); maintaining our patron database (Kanda McKee), and a myriad of other tasks such as helping with our fundraisers that demands the hands of so many valuable players. Special thanks to George Anderson, long time board member, resident historian, and raconteur. George always keeps us on the right track.

Serving in the public, are our invaluable docents who give generously of their weekend time to lead tours for our visitors and sell items from our mini gift shop. We appreciate the many public appearances of our ambassadors Annette Deibel and Mayor Maya. Last, but not least, a special thank you to Laura Deibel for providing our ongoing venue for the Annual Meeting.

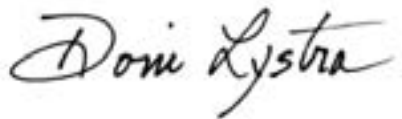
We are also **celebrating** the 10th anniversary of *Omena A Place in Time (A Sesquicentennial History: 1852-2002)* as well as our gifted author Amanda J. Holmes and editor Dale M. Blount for taking us on an incredible journey covering 150 years of Omena's heritage. They will be honored at the Annual Meeting.

Considering that we have about 100 copies (second printing) of this beautiful publication, the board decided to pursue a *corrigenda*. It is a way to correct those inevitable errors of fact that happen when working on a major project like a history book. A number of people who have lived in the Omena area a long time, or who have long-term roots in the area, were enlisted to help with

the fact checking over the past six months – a daunting task. Special thanks to the following readers who helped to accurately preserve our history: George Anderson, Joey Bensley, Helen Putnam Bradley, Nancy Craker Enyart, Eric Hallett, Mary Hallett Stanton, Joan Kalchick TenBrock, Fred Putnam, Ruth Steele-Walker, and Jim Von Holt. In addition, Jane Saxton, Mary Helen Ray, and Rat Renz were enlisted to read the section on cottages since they spent their young lives summering in Omena and would be cognizant of any factual errors in Chapters 8 and 9 in particular. The *corrigenda* will be placed inside the cover of the remaining books and will be available to download from our website for those who have already purchased a copy.  
([www.omenahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.omenahistoricalsociety.org))

This letter affords an opportunity to thank you for all you have done, and continue to do, to make OHSM a success story. Very special thanks to our *Caretakers* - your annual donation makes it possible for OHS to fulfill its mission. And to our visitors, it is our goal to be relevant and exciting in pursuit of historical education. Please visit us often and thanks, as always, for your support.

Remember to **celebrate** your efforts as a volunteer,



Doni Lystra  
President OHS



*Omena Historical Society Museum*

## 2013 Schedule of Events

**Friday, June 21 (1 pm)**

Omena Presbyterian Church  
and Cemetery Tour followed  
by refreshments at the Museum

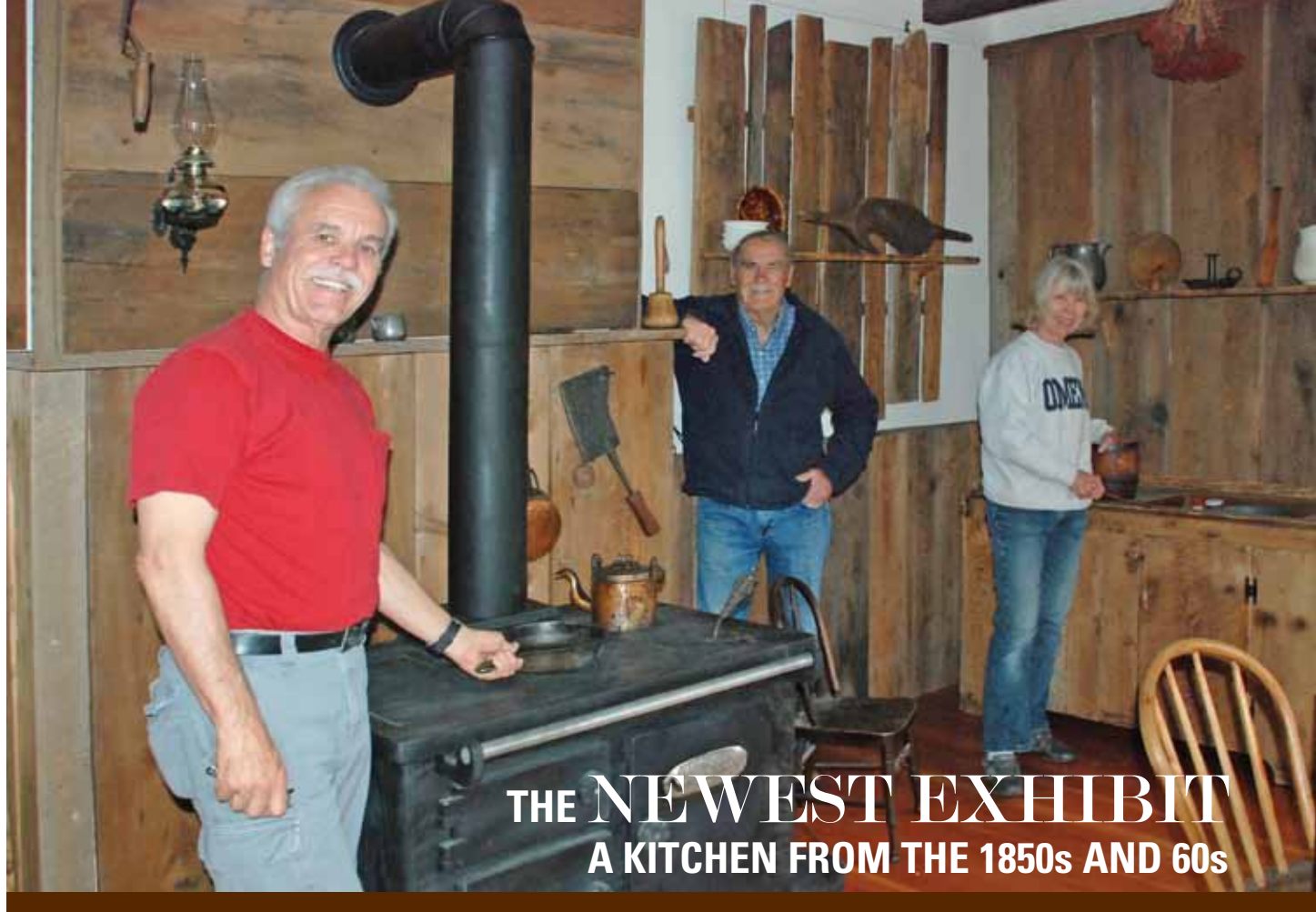
**Sunday, June 30 (4-6 pm)**

New Exhibit Opening of  
"A Kitchen from the 1850s  
and 60s" followed by  
refreshments at the Museum

**Tuesday, July 16 (2 pm)**

Tour of 100+ year old barn  
at Putnam Farm (weather permitting)  
followed by refreshments

**Annual Meeting -  
Date to be Announced**



*Jim Miller, Larry Bensley and Joey Bensley*

The Omena Historical Society's new exhibit is well underway. After two years, the smaller front room is being transformed from an old, one room schoolhouse into another flashback in time to represent a farm kitchen of the 1850s-1860s. Items have been donated or loaned and many volunteer hours have been put into this project. Some items may be unfamiliar as to their use and museum guests will be encouraged to guess their usage. Please come and check out our museum and the new exhibit. The date of the opening is June 30, 2013, 4:00 to 6:00PM.

### **A CALL FOR DOCENTS & VOLUNTEERS**

OHSM is looking for docents to provide tours of the museum. We provide the training and support for our wonderful corps of volunteers who lead tours for visitors and special groups. This is a wonderful opportunity for people interested in museums and history. If you are interested in signing up or learning more, please contact Docent Chair Ellie Stephenson at: E.B. Stephenson@valley.net or 231.386.5576 (summer); 603.727.9592 (winter). Museum hours: June-September, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00-4:00 pm.

If you are interested in becoming a part of our dynamic group of volunteers, please contact Doni Lystra at 231.271.6403 or dlystra@sbcglobal.net. You can make a difference! We are looking for a few members to serve on the hospitality committee and people to work on exhibits.

### **Volunteer Museum Docents**

***We want to thank our docents from 2012.***

They include:

Mike Biskupski, Joan Blount,  
Be Fuertges, Bob Gelakoski,  
Jay Grosmark, Linda Kemper, Bob Krist,  
Julie Krist, Doni Lystra, Kanda McKee,  
Paula McMenamy, Kathy Miller,  
Ed Oberndorf, Charlotte Read,  
Nancy Smith, Ellie Stephenson,  
Delcie White, Nana Kenndy  
and substitute, Suzie Mulligan.

***Your services are so necessary to our museum!***



## ***Your Bouquet is Ready!***

*Visit our Tasting Room and experience the aromas and tasting of award winning wine. We are open year round, and...as always, free tasting!*



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