

## Sept. 18 Heritage Festival 2010 Ox-Bow Tour Narrative:

Guest board bus at museum, exchanging tickets for field guide.

**Bus Host: JOHN SANFORD** (11:00)

Hello! Let me be the first to welcome you to the Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency. Normally Ox-Bow is a closed, private campus. The only public events are the five Friday Night Open Studios in the summer. But in honor of the school's 100th year, Ox-Bow has graciously opened its doors for this very special Heritage Festival tour.

September is an interesting time to be at Ox-Bow. Summer classes have ended. The hundred-or-so regular students have been replaced by twenty artists-in-residence. These are young, practicing artists here to concentrate on their work. Some have traveled here from as far away as Austria and the Philippines. Please be respectful of their privacy and do not disturb them today.

Of course, no visit to Ox-Bow is complete without seeing artists *at work*. That's why David Baker, Dawn Stafford, Jill Lareaux ("La-roee"), Roy Brown, Leo Holly and Sheryl Drenth will be working today in the Meadow. Feel free to interact, ask questions, or just observe the Meadow artists. They've come here especially to be part of this event.

When the bus stops, you will be greeted by your tour guide, who will lead you around the campus. Please stick with your guide. There's a lot of ground to cover today and there will be a rest stop half way through the tour. After the tour, if you want go deeper into the woods that surround this 115-acre campus, there will be guided hikes up to the Crow's Nest scenic overlook.

---

**Bus stops at bottom of Dilly Drive** before it continues up Dilly Drive. (This is the opposite direction used for Friday Night Open Studios). **Tour Guide is waiting there to shepherd guests around BACK of bus.** Pause at Welcome Tent, located in the parking spot by the Paint, to formally introduce the guide and consolidate group. **Pass by Inn, stop at Meadow, across street from Inn, between Arbor and Paint**

---

### Site 1. In front of the Ox-Bow Inn

Host: **HAROLD THIEDA** (11:00)

Hello. I'm Harold Thieda, president of the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society.

Before you begin your tour, I'd like to take you back to what this place was like, at the turn of the 20th century, when Ox-Bow founders Frederick Fursman and Walter Marshall Clute, both associated with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, were hiking the dunes and came upon this place.

Here is Fursman's account of "discovering" Ox-Bow, as recalled to a reporter in 1930: (this quote is also in field guide) *"We found the spot one day by chance as we walked along the river and cut through the woods to the lagoon. ... this spot, close to the village and yet quite apart from it ... was ideal for our purpose. The Inn was already operating. The oldest part of the present building had once been an Indian fur-trading post. Later, it had served as a lumberjack's hotel. When the axmen left, the*

*fishermen came — and now the artists."*

It was lucky for everyone that Fursman stumbled upon this area. Saugatuck was booming as a tourist town. In 1900, there were 50 boarding houses, two hotels and 14 cottages in the area. The river was lined with tents. Tourists flocked here in the summer to temporarily escape the overcrowded, polluted, and rapidly urbanizing Chicago. Keep in mind, Chicago's population had been 300,000 in 1870. By 1900, it was 1.7 million.

But let's return to Saugatuck. With all that tourist activity in town, the Inn, then called the Riverside Hotel, was struggling to survive. The problem was the body of water behind you. What we now call the Ox-Bow lagoon was once the serpentine course of the Kalamazoo River. Back then, the river was this area's economic lifeline. (The highways had yet to built.) Most of the lumber, fruit, fish... and visitors that sustained the local

economy came and went via Lake Michigan.

But just like today, silt and river flow was a problem. The river was getting so shallow in places the all-important steamer ships were having trouble navigating. In 1905, a new river channel, the one that still exists today, was dug to ease commercial shipping.

The bend in the lagoon, there (point) is called Shriver's Bend. The area between Shriver's Bend and the Lighthouse was lined with fisherman's shanties and known as Fish Town. But once the new channel opened, the ends of this part of the Kalamazoo River became clogged with silt or filled in with blowing sand. Eventually this section of the river became the landlocked Lagoon you see today. But long before that, the fishermen had left, the water traffic died away, and so had the Riverside Hotel's customer base. The arrival of some artists, with dreams of opening an art school, gave the Inn a new lease on life.

There were only four buildings on the property when Fursman first arrived:  
the **Inn**, then known as the Riverside Hotel, (point), built as a home in 1873 by a fisherman, Captain Charles Shriver  
the **Bogart**, built around the same time, by Captain Shriver's brother Henry Shriver.  
the **White**, built in the 1890s as the Innkeeper's house and the **Red**, an 1890s barn.

Many structures have been added to the campus since then. The buildings farthest to the North (that

you can't see from here) were built in the 1920s. There were more flurries of cabin building in the 1930s, 1940s and the 1970s. Nine new buildings were added in the 2000s, bringing the total numbers of structures to 43 on this 115-acre campus.

In general, the area North of us is the residential district: where the staff and instructors live. The area to the South of us is the commercial district, filled with studios and workshops.

And in the middle of it all is the Inn, the core of Ox-Bow. From the very beginning, the Inn is the social center of the school.

Originally, the Inn looked similar to the Bogart. (You'll pass the Bogart later in the tour.) The unpretentious design, with none of the Greek Revival details so popular at the time, suggest that it was a purely vernacular building. It was built using locally-available materials and in the typical Michigan style of its day. Probably an architect was not involved. Although the Inn has changed through the years, for example porches were added in the 1890s, the modest budget of the early Ox-Bow school meant that the structure was not extensively remodeled through the years. Much of its original spirit remains. The Ox-Bow Inn was inducted to the Michigan Register of Historic Sites in 1979.

Now, please follow your guide for a tour inside the Ox-Bow Inn. Please be careful, some of those 100-year-old floors are a bit uneven.

---

**2A. Inside the Ox-Bow Inn.** Enter via front porch and go into living room.

Host: **PEG SANFORD** (11:00)

Props: pictures of early classes, 1924 brochure, Fursman painting on display

Although Ox-Bow was founded in 1910, it was not born at this location. The first Ox-Bow — which was then called the Saugatuck Summer School of Painting — was based at the Bandle Farm, also known as the Bandle's Riverside Rest, on Holland Street, just North of downtown Saugatuck. Today, the Bandle Farm property is the home of RJ Peterson.

In 1912, Ox-Bow had outgrown the Bandle Farm so it moved to the Park House (built 1857) at 888 Holland Street. The Park House Inn still stands today. In honor of Ox-Bow's anniversary, the Park House will have a raffle for a 3-course dinner for eight, which includes a tour of the property and perhaps a few ghost stories over coffee. Tickets

are \$5 for a chance to win a dinner for yourself and seven friends. The dinner includes wine so it's an over-21-only event. All proceeds benefit the Society. Raffle tickets will be available at the Metternich, later in the tour.

In 1914, the Saugatuck Summer School of Painting leased the Riverside Inn. In 1920, Frederick Fursman, Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, and Edgar Rupprecht purchased the Riverside Inn and seven surrounding acres. The Riverside Inn was renamed the Ox-Bow Inn. The school has been here ever since.

(Point out painting by Ox-Bow's founder Frederick Fursman.)

So what were the classes like, back in Fursman's day?

Fursman and Clute wanted to establish school, loosely modeled after the studios and *concoures* (critiques) of the *Académie Julian*, a private studio school in Paris (that, scandalously, accepted female students). Fursman had developed a taste for the bohemian lifestyle in Brittany and wanted to encourage the social life of the literary soirees he enjoyed in Chicago.

Every morning the art students would gather their pallets, brushes, easels and sun hats and troop out for a day of painting *plain air*. (*Plein air* is a French term that means "in the open air"). The students returned for a communal meal and then spent the evening singing, writing, and making costumes for the weekend's theatrical productions.

Each Saturday, after a week of painting, the colony convened for the weekly *concoures*, where all the paintings were hung up and evaluated by the

instructors and students.

The only discipline taught at Ox-Bow then was painting. The subjects were landscapes or figures in the landscape, with an impressionistic attention to color and light. The hard, Academic style was politely discouraged.

We are now in the old section of the inn. In 2006, the Burke Addition was added. It contains a new kitchen and dining area, 13 guest bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, the executive offices and a classroom in the basement. The artists-in-residence are living there now so that area is not open today but you will get a good look at it in a minute.

OK. Now, after a quick peek in the gallery, where an installation is being created, you'll be going upstairs to see some of the unoccupied student rooms. Watch your head when you squeeze through the library! Once outside, pause to get a good look at the Addition before you descend.

**Return to front door, go up the stairs, north along hallway, squeeze through library, out the back door, view Addition, down into courtyard, to breezeway.**

---

## **2B. The Breezeway.**

Host: **DAWN SCHUMANN** (11:00)

You are now in the breezeway that connects the original Inn to the 2006 Burke Addition. On this side is new kitchen and dining area. On that side is the old inn.

Originally, the Addition was supposed to be attached to the Inn. But building code would have required that the old Inn be brought up to code. This would have gutted the old Inn (the doorways widened, staircases replaced. Its essential character would have been lost. So the breezeway was devised, thus making the

addition a separate structure. What was conceived as a technical workaround and evolved into the grand central station of Ox-Bow. The Inn, new and old combined, is the heart and soul of Ox-Bow.

On your way out, look to the left. The large bell is thought to be the original Ox-Bow bell. The smaller bell on the top of the pole is the bell that calls everyone in for meetings, evening lectures and, of course, the fantastic meals.

---

**Tour takes Rupprecht Way up to the Rob.**

---

## **3. The Rob:**

Host: **JIM BIRKES** (11:15)

Props: sheriff's star, guide map to help host name all the buildings in area, if asked.

Welcome to Ox-Bow's "Downtown." Most of the structures you see around you were built in the 1920s and 30s and are used today as living quarters for the Ox-Bow summer staff.

This building, The Rob, is the youngster, built in 1971.

It was originally was a ceramics studio and was named after long-time ceramics instructor Rob McClurg. Today it is the maintenance building and the lair of John Rossi, the facilities manager. It's a popular student hang out too. When you walk in, note the industrial refrigerator, proudly built in Niles, MI, and

salvaged from the original Inn's old kitchen.

If you saw Judy Anthropol's Tuesday Talks about Ox-Bow and the Radical 60s, then you probably have a sense of the downtown vibe. Ox-Bow has always been a home for free spirits. One of the most notorious characters was Mary K Bettles, known as Mary K. She had the nickname "the Sheriff of Ox-Bow" because she was very protective of her beloved Ox-Bow... and because she would flash a Cook County Sheriff's

department badge when she accosted trespassers.

After your walk through the Rob, you be going through the Scanlon. Most of the building here have been closed up for the winter, but the Scanlon has been kept open so you can see how the staffers live. You'll notice there is no heating, no A/C, and no plumbing. To bathe, staff and students alike trek to the shower house, named the Wet, that wasn't built until 1983

---

**Walk through the Rob and then continue to...**

**4. The Scanlon** (1925) Walk through only. No host.

---

**5. The Tallmadge.**

Host: **JIM SCHMIECHEN** (11:15)

*Guest who feel they cannot make the climb may go directly to Metternich.*

Built by Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, a prominent Chicago architect, and architectural historian who became involved with Ox-Bow in 1915. He designed and built the Tallmadge cottage in 1923.

Tallmadge convinced Fursman and Rupprecht to buy the Inn (then the Riverside Hotel) and seven acres of land in 1920.

Tallmadge purchased an additional 5 acres of land plus the 100-acre parcel now known as the Tallmadge Woods.

Tallmadge invited various friends from Chicago to

build cottages at Ox-Bow as long as they were in keeping with his design and painted dark green, and that his friends pledged support Ox-Bow and teach in the summers.

A true visionary: In his will, Tallmadge stipulated that the 105 acres would belong to Ox-Bow so long as it remained an art school. If the school closed, the property would revert to the City of Saugatuck to be preserved as green space. Recently, Ox-Bow, the City of Saugatuck, and the Land Conservancy of Michigan place 80 acres of this land into conservancy to further protect the Tallmadge Woods.

---

**6. The Norton**

Hosts: **JANE UNDERWOOD & SANDY BROOKHOUSE** (11:15)

Content to be handled by Smalley/Underwood.

Designed by Tallmadge for his friend John Norton, a muralist, in the early 1920s. The cottage is still owned today by the Norton family.

---

**7. Metternich Lodge:** outside the North breezeway

Host: **KATHLEEN MARKLAND** (11:30)

You've seen the older residences on campus, the Tallmadge and Norton from the 1920s, and the Scanlon from the 1925. Now you are about to enter one of the newer structures, the Metternich Lodge, built in 2007. This building is the residence of Jason Kalajainen, Ox-Bow's Executive Director, and a guest suite.

This building exists thanks to Mr. Dale Metternich, a

Grand Rapids interior and furniture designer who resided in Saugatuck. Metternich bequeathed his Bavarian Lodge-style home on Holland Street in Saugatuck and its contents to Ox-Bow for the purpose of building the new Metternich Lodge here. The remaining funds endow the Dale Metternich Memorial Scholarship.

When Dale Metternich was a boy, growing up in Grand

Rapids, and he said he wanted to be an artist, the usual response was, oh no, don't be an artist! Do you want to starve? Be a plumber. Be an accountant. Dale did not listen to this advice and he grew up to be the vice-president of LaBarge Furniture. The construction of the new Metternich Lodge was Dale's way of showing that it is possible to be an artist and not starve.

You'll be going into the guest suite for a little rest and

refreshment. Inside, you'll see Mr. Metternich's library, some of his furnishing and the "twig door" from Carl Hoerman's log cabin studio.

After your break, feel free to go out onto the Meadow. There are six artists working there today:

<b>Holly Leo</b>	<b>Dawn Stafford</b>
<b>Jill Lareaux</b>	<b>David Baker</b>
<b>Roy Brown</b>	<b>Sheryl Drenth</b>

---

**8. Metternich Lodge refreshment break** (20 minutes) Space watched over by **Vic Bella** and **Mike Van Meter**. No host text. Coffee, cupcakes. Book and raffle ticket sales. Metternich Lodge booklets. Encourage guest to wander out to observe artists working in meadow.

---

### **9. Fire Pit and Burials.**

Host: **JUDY HILLMAN** (11:30)

Props: Burial maps, photos from the Elsa era

If you're a student, or a staffer at Ox-Bow, it's not all work and no play. There is swimming and canoeing in the lagoon. Volleyball. Hanging out at the fire pit.

In fact, for Ox-Bow, the end of the season is tinged with sadness. From Ox-Bow's early days, summer's end has been memorialized with a Burial. The cement slabs you see there are the foundations of various studios that used to be here (like the famed Waldorf-Castoria and the Drake, that were torn down in 1969) but those cement slabs are Burials. The process has changed through the years but in general, a hole is dug, the staff and fellows take turns dropping an item of significance into the hole. The hole is filled in and the site capped with a burial stone. Back in the Elsa Ulbricht era, the burial was a costumed pageant. Today, it is required that the hole be dug as deep as the shortest staffer. To measure the depth, the staffer is placed in the hole.

The words inscribed on the top of the Burial Caps give clues to the mood at the school that year.

The first burial is entitled "The Early Years ... 1910-1930, Summer School of Painting, Ox-Bow Inn, 1913." The next years' caps meander toward the lagoon in chronological order.

The 1949 burial says "Here Lies 1949" and then in large letters the word "LIGHT" and the "candlelight symposium." This probably refers to the introducing of electricity to Ox-Bow in 1949.

After the 1950s, the caps start showing up all over campus.

The 1961 burial is right by the front door of the Inn and indicates that the Mason Cottage was donated and that Burr Tillstrom was present with his Kuklapolitans.

As you walk along the Lagoon, you will find more burials.

The 2010 burial is just outside the Inn and capped with a large bell. The bell was recovered from a yard in Douglas and is thought to be the original Ox-Bow bell.

---

### **10. The Glass**

Host: **RANDY CHAMBERS** (11:45)

The Glass studio that is officially named the Helen Keeler Burke Glass Studio. It is closed for the season.

Helen Keeler Burke, known as "Dilly" was Ox-Bow's patron extraordinaire. In 1988 she donated the funds for the glass studio, which until then was a tent. Every year, for over 60 years, Dilly paid all of Ox-Bow's debt at the end of the year to keep the school running. She gave \$2 million to build the Burke Addition to the Inn

and bring sewer and water to the campus. She gave another million upon her death. She kept the school going through some very hard times and it would please her greatly to see the school now.

In 1987, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago assumed responsibility for Ox-Bow's academic program and in 1995 Ox-Bow and the SAIC formalized a sponsorship agreement of mutual commitment to



preserving and nurturing the artistic process.

Today, Ox-Bow offers three types of educational programming.

**1. Core Classes** are offered from June through August and specialize in six studio areas—Ceramics, Glass, Painting and Drawing, Papermaking, Print, and Sculpture. The classes are one- or two-week intensives that can qualify for credit from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. A week's tuition in the summer is about \$550 with about the same again for room and board, if required. New construction and weatherproofing of older structures have made way for a program of winter classes that run in January.

**2. The Art in the Meadow** is a series of workshops for children, teens, and adults. These workshops are geared towards local permanent and seasonal residents. The workshops are non-credit and run 2-3 hours a day for 3-4 days. They cost about \$130.

**3. The Artist in Residency** program is for established artists. They come here to focus intensely on their work. The studios are available 24 hours a day. This is a highly competitive program with 90 to 150 artists applying for 28 positions. The cost is \$250 per week that includes room and board and use of studios. The Spring program is one or two weeks long and runs from June to August. The Fall program is two to five weeks long and runs from September to October.

Three groups of people keep Ox-Bow running.

**1. The staff** run the school. The on campus staff are all artists who live here in a community of artists. An office in Chicago also assists with administering the academic programs.

**2. The fellowship students** or “fellows” are 12 young people pursuing visual arts degrees from competitive art schools across the nation. Fellows live on campus from June to September. They participate in campus life as both staff members and as artists. They work 20 hours a week, opening all the buildings in the spring, doing yard maintenance, kitchen duty, house keeping, and close up the buildings in the fall. They receive studio space; a weekly stipend; free room/board; access to visiting artists for critiques; and the opportunity to exhibit their work.

**3. The teaching faculty** come from learning institutions throughout the nation. They stay on campus for as long as they are contracted to teach their specialty. When some of these instructors arrive, it is the first time they have ever set foot in Ox-Bow. Others return year after year, patiently growing their programs and developing the studio space. Jerry Catania has been building the glass program since 1985. Andrea Peterson has been contributing to the Paper and Bookmaking curricula for over a decade.

---

## 11. Works on Paper studio (2009) No host. Walk through only.

---

### 12. New Studio District

Host: **PATTY BIRKES** (11:45)

You've just strolled up Dilly Drive, named for patron Helen Keeler Burke. You've pass by many of recent structures that will have an important role in Ox-Bow's future, including

The **Marshall** dormitory (2005) 9 student rooms, bathrooms and showers, heated for year-round use. Designed to recall the style of the Inn, it's neighbor.

The **Janie** dormitory (2008) Year-round living space for ten students. The color scheme is keeping with the flamboyant structures of Ox-bow's "downtown" district.

You went through the **Works on Paper**, the newest building on campus, completed 2009. It replaced the Buehr Print Studio and is the new home for printing and multi-media. This new facility has the space to allow a classic letterpress to be used in concert with

the latest in digital image making.

Behind me is the **The Krehbiel Ceramics Studio:**

This state-of-the-art ceramics studio was built in 2000. Named in honor of Albert Henry Krehbiel, an important painter and instructor at Ox-Bow from 1926 until 1932. Later Krehbiel opened his own art school in Saugatuck named the AK Studio. The Krehbiel family of Chicago contributed to the building of the Ceramics Studio.

You'll notice the large, wood-burning kiln, not often seen in academic environments. To do a firing, an entire class of has to work together, as a team, to keep the kiln continuously stoked all day and all night.

**The Padnos Metals Studio:** Built in 1995 with funds from the Seymour and Esther Padnos family of Holland. The classes taught there include, fabricating, blacksmithing, metals, jewelry, sculpting. This summer

a visiting artist did a trapeze performance from the I-beam that juts from the front of the structure.

Recently, LeRoy and Janet Neiman (both alumni of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago & Ox-Bow) contributed \$1 Million to create the LeRoy Neiman Scholarship that will support student scholarships and Ox-Bow's Fellowship Program. Best known for his brilliantly colored, energetic images of sporting events, LeRoy Neiman is quoted in a SAIC press release: (quote in field guide)

*"Ox-Bow has been a retreat from hectic city life for over one hundred years. Such a retreat has never been more needed than it is now in the 21st Century with all its incredible technologies"... "we should appreciate the great luxury of creating art in nature and making that opportunity available for the generations now and in the future."*

**Conclusion:** Ox-Bow's future is bright. With improvements to the infrastructure and faculties, in keeping with the school's history and landscape, a dedicated staff and board, Ox-bow is strong, financially secure, and attracting an ever-wider group of artists and instructors. Currently, Ox-Bow awards approximately \$200,000 in scholarship funding to almost 200 students annually, including many SAIC students.

Thank you for joining us on the tour of the Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency.

This tour was largely based on Judy Anthrop's book "A Portrait of Ox-Bow." It's a very personal history of the people and places of Ox-Bow. If you wish to learn more about the history of Ox-Bow, please get a copy of her book (available at museum) or visit the SDHS museum's "A Place Called Ox-Bow" exhibit before it closes at the end of October.

---

### Guide walks guests to bus stop West of Works on Paper.

Guests may also opt to return to with guide to welcome tent to catch the 1pm, 2pm or 3pm guided hikes to the Crow's Nest. (Hikes begin and end at welcome tent.)

---

### September 18 Tour Timeline:

**9am-10:30:** welcome tent set up, hospitality gear schlepped to Metternich.

**10:30am:** First load of volunteers picked up by Interurban bus at West Shore parking area and brought to Ox-Bow.

**11am:** First tour group departs museum. Groups (max. size 18) depart museum every 15 minutes.

**2pm:** Last incoming tour leaves the museum. Maybe 2:15 if there are disappointed latecomers.

**4pm:** Event official ends. Interurban continues to run until 4:30 to shuttle volunteers to parking lot.

**5pm:** Everyone must be cleared out of Ox-Bow.

### Notes to Hosts:

1. Please be at your post at the time indicated next to your name. I beg, please make arrangements to carpool or get dropped off at the museum. (Parking will be very tight. We have to squish ±72 cars in the lots at West Shore and Mt. Baldhead.) Please check in at the welcome tent when you arrive.
2. You do not have to stick to this narrative. It is only provided as a confidence-builder for those new to Ox-Bow. Feel free to add your own information and let your distinctive character shine through the text.
3. Wear a watch. You must keep your presentation between 5 and 7 minutes. If the guide "ah-HEMS," that's a signal that you need to conclude.
4. Twice throughout the day relief Hosts **Kristi Mueller** and **Fran Van Howe** will come to take over your post so you can have a break. Feel free to come to the Metternich for coffee and cupcakes. There is a

refrigerator at the Metternich if you want to stash a sack lunch.

5. Be lighthearted. This day is more about exploring the beauty of Ox-Bow than a hard-core history lesson.
6. THANK YOU for giving your time to promote our community and the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society.