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Society Presents 2010 State History Awards in Frankenmuth

FRANKENMUTH—The Historical Society of Michigan presented its 2010 State History Awards at the 136th Annual Meeting and State History Conference held October 15-17 in Frankenmuth. The awards were presented at the annual awards reception and banquet on Friday evening. The State History Awards are the highest recognition presented by the state's official historical society.

Fifteen awards were presented this year in a variety of categories including Publications: University and Commercial Press, Publications: Private Printing, Media, Communications, Educational Programs, Restoration/Preservation, Distinguished Volunteer Service, Special Programs and Events, and Lifetime Achievement.

This was the fourth year that the Historical Society presented its **Lifetime Achievement Award**, which honors men and women who have dedicated themselves to preserving Michigan's history over a significant amount of time.

The 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Iron County Historical and Museum Society charter member Marcia Webster Bernhardt. Bernhardt has worked for many decades to preserve the county's heritage, having spent more than 40 years as curator/director of the Iron County Museum in Caspian. Under her guidance, the museum has become a facility that stores important material and makes it available for visitors to enjoy and for scholars to use to conduct important research.

Bernhardt has also recruited community volunteers in every aspect of historical preservation. She has helped students research and write several publications and to produce historical productions. And, in 1985, with her husband, Harold, she established the Northern Historical Consortium with representatives from more than 20 historical organizations participating.

As a grant writer, Bernhardt was instrumental in securing dollars for numerous projects in the Upper Peninsula, including a \$100,000 grant to help build a cultural center and a second \$100,000 grant for building repair.

In addition to these achievements, Mrs. Bernhardt has written or edited numerous books as well as articles for such newspapers as the *Iron River Reporter* and the *Green Bay Press Gazette*.

In the category of **Distinguished Volunteer Service**, the Society recognized Sandy Stamm for her 20 years of work as a volunteer archivist and historian for the Plainwell area. Stamm organized and preserved the materials in the archival collection at the Charles A. Ransom District Library, enabling easy access for researchers. She also developed a volunteer project to index the *Plainwell Enterprise*; because of her leadership, the years 1886-1944 have been completed.

The 2010 State History Award in the **Restoration/Preservation** category was presented to Corey Alberda and Travis Lepsch, members of Boy Scout Troop 338 in Wyoming, Michigan. During their junior year in high school, these young men planned and executed their Eagle Scout project of restoring and preserving the Calkins Law Office and the bust of Abraham Lincoln, both located in Lincoln Place Park in downtown Grand Rapids.

Four books were recognized with State History Awards in the **Publications: University and Commercial Press** category. The first, Larry Lankton's "Hollowed Ground" (published by Wayne State University Press), chronicles a key part of the Upper Peninsula's history in recent times—the copper mining industry. The volume concentrates on the beginnings of the three major corporations that came to dominate the industry by 1900, the various mines and the company towns that grew up around them, miner/management relations, and the decline of the major corporations ending with the White Pine mining operation near Ontonagon.

The second book to receive a State History Award in this category was Charles K. Hyde's "Storied Independent Automakers" (published by Wayne State University Press). In this text, Hyde explores the history of the Nash and Hudson car companies which eventually merged in 1954 to form the American Motors Company. More than 90 color photos of restored automobiles as well as brochures, period literature, factory photos, and road test information appear in this volume.

Paul Taylor's "Orlando Poe: Civil War General and Great Lakes Engineer" (published by Kent State University Press) was the third recipient in this category. "Orlando Poe" chronicles the life of one of the most influential and yet unrecognized soldiers of the American Civil War. Poe commanded the 2nd Michigan Infantry during the Peninsular Campaign, and the Civil War era serves as a backdrop for the book. Taylor also documents Poe's post-war career, in which he supervised the design and construction of numerous lighthouses as well as the largest shipping lock in the world at Sault Ste. Marie.

The fourth book to receive an award in the University and Commercial Press category was Gary Kaunonen's "Challenge Accepted: A Finnish Immigrant Response to Industrial America in Michigan's Copper Country" (published by Michigan State University Press). As Kaunonen noted in his work, Finns were the largest single ethnic classification in the copper mines and were often treated like the lowest rung of the ethnic ladder. Strong personalities often competed and conflicted in their goals and methods and followings. This volume is a worthy addition to the study of Pre-World War I Copper Country and Michigan history.

In the category of **Publications: Private Printing**, the Historical Society of Michigan presented three awards. The first went to Jan McAdams Huttenstine's "Remotely Yours: A Historic Journey into the Whitefish Point Area," a thoroughly documented study of this area of the Eastern Upper Peninsula. Its pages reveal the lives of cranberry farmers, school teachers, mail

carriers, and the other resilient people who lived and worked in the region. Over 250 photographs, maps, and other illustrations complement the text.

The second private printing award went to “Celebrating 150 Years: Huron County, Michigan,” which was compiled by the Huron County Historical Society from the work of more than 30 local authors. “Celebrating 150 Years” describes the history of villages such as Parisville, Ruth, Kinde, and Owendale; the agriculture and industry that built them from the wilderness; and the region’s heritage of lumbering, fishing, railroading, and shipbuilding.

The last award in this category recognized historian Tim J. Todish for “A Legacy for the Future, Reminiscences of Scouting in West Michigan,” published by the Gerald R. Ford Council of West Michigan, Boy Scouts of America. In this narrative, Todish shares the story of scouting in this region of the state, important milestones in its development, and memories of past West Michigan scout camps. The volume also delves into the contributions that scouting has made to Michigan history. Included is a section on Mackinac State Historic Parks’ summer scouting program and its famed barracks where hundreds of scouts have served as docents to tourists since 1929.

In the **Communications: Newsletters and Websites** category, the award was presented to five historical websites created by the Presque Isle County Historical Museum in Rogers City.

In 2008, the museum established its first website to make its collections and activities more accessible to the public. Later sites disseminated information about museum hours and events; offered information about the Metz Fire of 1908; documented the wreck of the Great Lakes freighter *Carl D. Bradley* in 1958; and made accessible a wide variety of photographs from the museum collections.

The Presque Isle County Historical Museum also received the **Local Society** award. Though located in a small city in a sparsely settled county, the museum has succeeded in presenting ever-changing displays, publishing books and hosting varied programs, scanning thousands of photographs, and creating a teaching guide program with accompanying material for use in local schools.

In the **Media** category Pamela Peak was honored with a State History Award for her documentary titled “Voices of a Never Ending Dawn: The Heroic Story of the American WWI Polar Bear Force in Arctic Russia.” Using period photographs and written accounts by the soldiers, Peak used modern portrayals in a Northern Michigan winter to realistically recreate this epic tale of the “Polar Bears”—American forces sent to intervene in the bitter civil war that erupted in Russia after the 1917 revolution.

In the category of **Educational Programs**, the Society recognized the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society and Museum for a series of exhibitions, lectures, and documentaries centered around the theme “A Place Called Ox-Bow: 100 Years to Connecting Art, Nature and People.” This program shone light on a significant but little studied chapter of the 100-year history of Ox-Bow: one of Michigan’s most important arts organizations.

Finally, a **Special Programs and Events** award was presented to Macomb Community College’s Lorenzo Cultural Center for its program titled “Remembering the Henry Ford Trade School.” This April program drew 400 trade school alumni and their families, community members, college administrators, faculty, staff, and students to the Center to celebrate the legacy

of a school that taught technical skills paired with traditional high school coursework and also instilled the essential traits for life success.

The Historical Society of Michigan, which administers the State History Awards, is the state's oldest cultural organization. Founded in 1828 by Lewis Cass and Henry Schoolcraft, it is an independent non-profit dedicated to the preservation and presentation of Michigan's historical story.

Nomination forms for the 2011 State History Awards can be found on the Society's website at www.hsmichigan.org.