**OLD MISSION PENINSULA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING**

**JANUARY 5, 2017**

**Thank you to Ellen Kerr for chairing our meeting as our president Barb Berthelson is on temporary leave.**

**ATTENDANCE**: Ellen Kerr, Ken and Judy Weaver, Libby Westie, Karen and Chris Rieser, Anne Griffiths, Nancy Warne, Anita and Marty Klein, Laura Johnson, Mary Morgan, Ann Swaney, Grace Rudd, Bill and JoAnn Cole, and Jim Brammer.

**PROGRAM**: Fabulous program, “If Only Buttons Could Talk”, by Sherry DeCrew.

**BUSINESS MEETING:**

**NOVEMBER’S MINUTES:** Correction: The Log Cabin Fund gave the Park Commission $12,100 for the chinking of the Log Cabin. A motion was made to approve and was passed.

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** ELLEN KERR - $4,970 in the checking account, $2,057 in savings, $4,300 in the tree fund and funds (TBA by Township) in the Log Cabin account.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**LIGHTHOUSE:** Anne Griffiths: Received $100 for the car commercial filmed at the lighthouse some months back. The education building has been moved to its original location. Its interior is in good shape. Spring project is to insulate the building and attend to the lawn, fencing and sidewalk.

**DOUGHERTY HOUSE:** Marty Klein: The work on the outside of the house, woodchips on the big trail, and the hard surface for handicap use complete. Landscaping and the furniture inventory have begun. Tentative date for Dougherty Spring Clean Up is May 13th.

**LOG CABIN:** Marty Klein: Closed for the season. Glass windows have been removed and need reglazing. A motion was made to reglaze and was approved. Shutters now cover the windows.

**TREES:** Ellen: Spring planting is planned.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**LOG CABIN DAYS:** Laura Johnson. Motion was made to do Log Cabin Days again this year- June 25th. There will be a series of meetings to work on this project…volunteers are needed to support Laura. First panning meeting is set for January 12.

**PUBLICATION- “MURDER UNDONE” Steve Lewis’s-**Historical fiction using Old Mission Peninsula history. A motion was made to support Steve’s work and approved.

**DONATIONS:** Ellen Kerr made a motion to donate $50 to the Dennos in memory of Bob Rudd and a $50 donation in memory of Don Pratt to the United Methodist Church. We have sadly lost two fine members of the OMPHS.

**NOTED:** Mark Holly has donated to the archives a copy of his underwater study of the Metropolis

ADJOURMENT: 9:00

Respectfully submitted,

Karen and Chris Rieser

Co-secretaries

PRESS RELEASE

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Two Books Cast Light on an Unexplained Murder on Old Mission Peninsula

In 1895, Woodruff Parmelee, the son of a prominent Old Mission Peninsula fruit farmer, was convicted of murdering Julia Curtis, his pregnant mistress. His son supported his alibi that he was clearing a new road toward West Bay while Julia’s body was found in the hemlock swamp across from East Bay. Yet Parmelee was still convicted and sentenced to life in prison at Jackson State Penitentiary. Parmelee was in his 40s, twice Julia’s age, already twice married and recently divorced from his second wife. His checkered history no doubt influenced the jury that convicted him. That story forms the basis of *Murder on Old Mission* by Stephen Lewis, an Old Mission resident who is re-issuing the novel in January through Mission Point Press.

Lewis is simultaneously publishing a follow-up novel, *Murder Undone,* in which he reveals this startling fact: In spite of the sensational nature of the crime, Parmelee was released from prison in 1915 after the direct intervention of then Governor Woodbridge Ferris (after whom the state university is named). Although no new evidence had emerged to determine exactly how Julia died, this sequel provides a fictional answer to the puzzling intervention of the governor 20 years after Parmelee’s conviction. *Murder Undone* tells this story largely from the perspective of the same son who testified at the trial. Lewis also writes a dramatic parallel plot line of the copper mining strike culminating in the Italian Hall Tragedy in 1913, when 70 people, mostly children, were trampled to death in the panic caused by a false cry of fire at a Christmas party for the striking miners. The governor was involved in both the strike and Parmelee’s pardon, his oversight tying the two plot actions together.

Both books, a reissue of *Murder On Old Mission* and the publication of *Murder Undone*,are coming out in January through Mission Point Press. The books are available locally and online at Amazon.com.

Born and raised in Brooklyn and Professor of English Emeritus at Suffolk County Community College on Long Island, New York, Stephen Lewis now lives on Old Mission Peninsula not far from a local, private cemetery where the Parmelees, except for Woodruff, are buried. He is married to award-winning short story writer Carolyn Johnson Lewis, whose father, local historian Walter Johnson, first introduced him to the Parmelee/Curtis case. Lewis’s previous novels were historical mysteries, so this case was a natural fit for him. He can be reached at 231-631-4727 or stevelew@charter.net.