

The Crow's Nest

"Preserving the heritage of Ferndale for future generations"

NEWSLETTER OF THE FERNDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 2010

CAT'S WHISKERS, CRYSTAL SETS, AND ROY'S RADIO: MASS COMMUNICATION COMES TO FERNDALE

Jean Spang (with special thanks to June Kotlarek)

The first radio broadcast of the *Lone Ranger* (WXYZ 1270) was on January 31, 1933. Ferndale heard it loud and clear, and "Hi-Yo, Silver!" quickly became part of every local kid's vocabulary. But before the Lone Ranger, his horse Silver, and Tonto became American broadcasting icons, radio as a viable means of communication required all sorts of creative innovations.

"Radio" became a possibility in 1906, when American Lee DeForest built the first amplifying tube, which was soon joined to the wireless telegraph that had been invented by Italian Guglielmo Marconi in the late 1890s. At first, radio was considered just a novelty, available only to the few "hobbyists" who had receivers capable of capturing the experimental broadcasts produced by DeForest and a few others. Such broadcasts normally had a range of only a couple of miles. By 1916, David Sarnoff, manager of the Marconi Wireless Co. and later the owner of RCA and NBC, predicted that every home would soon have a receiver. But not until the end of World War I, when government restrictions on U.S. broadcasting were lifted, did radio become a serious means of widespread communication.

WWJ in Detroit began testing local radio in 1920. Founded by the Scripps family and licensed to the Detroit News, WWJ's first broadcast (20 watts) was on August 20, 1920; it was received in 30 homes. The Detroit News soon printed a schematic in its newspaper showing how to build a crystal set that would receive WWJ broadcasts. Several neighbors in Ferndale, including Roy Waugh, got together one evening and, out of curiosity, built one: Wire was wound around a round oatmeal box and attached to a cat's whisker and a crystal. When the whisker was moved around on the crystal, WWJ could then be picked up on earphones. Fascinated, Roy, a carpenter by trade, built more of these sets; he even sold some to his fellow workers at Ford's. When the News later printed schematics for building one-tube radios run on a battery, he followed the instructions and glimpsed what would become his future career.

Pittsburgh is considered the first US city to have a commercial radio station; on November 2, 1920, it broadcast the Harding-Cox presidential election returns, along with music and some daily news. WWJ (950) in Detroit, which also started broadcasting in 1920, is now credited as the first station in the world to have regularly scheduled news, religious programming, and sports. (The first Tiger game broadcast, 1927; announcer, Ty Tyson.) The Free Press, which like the Detroit News had begun experimental broadcasts in the early 1920s, soon had given up on the project and, on August 15, 1925, sold its interest to WCX-AM in Pontiac. Under the ownership of the Jewett Radio and Phonograph Co., this

[continued next page]



Roy's Radio, corner of Allen & W. Marshall, 1932

Photo: Museum archives



Roy's Radio, Interior, 1937

Photo: Museum archives

[continued from page 1]

station soon began broadcasting as WJR (760). By December 1925, even Ferndale had a broadcasting station: J.A. Fenberg and W.J. Thomas build a station (100 watts) at 187 E. Woodland, with a range of 150-200 miles. Its purpose was to “transmit secret communication of government traffic” as well as music. Ferndale also began receiving broadcasts from small stations in nearby communities, including WEXL in Royal Oak (by 1948 changed to WOMC in Ferndale).

By the later 1920s radio had proven to be a vital means of communication—and with it came the need for equipment and repair services. Roy Waugh left Ford’s when his unit was moved to Dearborn. Although he began working with the contractor who built Cranbrook, he at the same time rented the back end of Jacob’s Jewelry store on E. Nine Mile, Ferndale, and, part-time, focused on building a radio repair business. When the Depression hit in 1929, to support both his family and the Model T required for his service route, he soon opened a shop in the basement of his house, made radio service calls for Crowley Milner in Detroit, and did calls from his home in the evening.

| |
|----------------------------|
| Roy’s Radio Service |
| Corner Marshall and Allen |
| 25 Used Radios for Sale |
| Open Evenings |
| Phone R. O. 0655 |

Advertisement, The Lincolnian, 12/16/1937

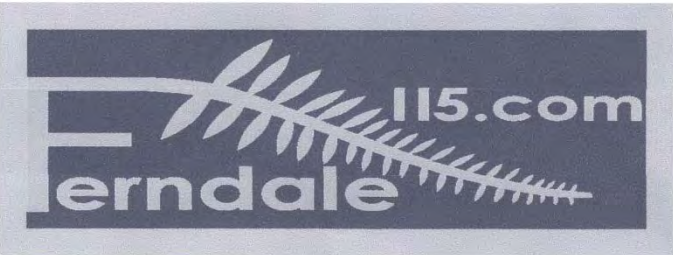
By 1930 things were looking up in the U.S. (“We’re in the Money” was No. 1 on the Hit Parade.”) Ray then bought a former grocery store, Allen at Marshall, for a radio shop. Car radios were becoming popular; he added a garage to the back of his shop to accommodate servicing them. He also purchased used radios and repaired them, bought 100 from Sears Roebuck (console radios sold for \$15-20), and did repair work for electrical stores in Royal Oak. Before long he had trouble keeping radios in stock. Born in Fulton, Michigan in 1897, and a member of one of the first 50 families to settle in Ferndale, Roy died in August 1984. His shop “Roy’s Radio” had become a Ferndale landmark, lasting for some 60 years in the same location--and providing an enduring memory of the introduction of radio as a major means of communication.

Radio changed communication in many ways, including “commercially.” Example: The Lone Ranger often shouted “Hi-Yo, Silver! Away!” But recall that the *away* meant that a commercial was coming up . . .

Sources: Broadcasting history: Michiguide.com, Michigan Radio & TV Broadcast Guide, “History of Michigan AM Broadcasting,” retrieved May 11, 2010; Wikipedia.com, “History of Radio Broadcasting—Origins of WJR,” retrieved May 11, 2010; Charles Panati, The Browser’s Book of Beginnings. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984: 218-220; Detroit Free Press (Peter Gavrilovich and Bill McGraw, eds.) The Detroit Almanac: 300 Years of Life in the Motor City (Detroit Free Press, 2000): 451-52. Broadcasting in Ferndale: Ferndale Gazette (re Fenberg Radio Co.) Dec. 2, 1925; August 19, 1926 (clippings in Ferndale Historical Museum Archives). History of Roy Waugh, Roy’s Radio, and building a crystal set, from recollections of June Marie Waugh Johnson Kotlarek (handwritten manuscript, her family’s story, on file in Ferndale Historical Museum Archives.)

Officers of the Ferndale Historical Society: 2010

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ROY'S RADIO SHOP: THE NEW EMPLOYEE

June Waugh Kotlarek

Dad [Roy Waugh] wanted to break me in as a repair girl. At first I didn't think I could. Dad said girls had just as many brains as boys did. He finally convinced me. It was a dirty job especially when I had to turn upside down in cars and pull a vibrator or Z4 tube out or maybe pull the whole radio out to take in the shop to repair it.

I had to prove myself to customers over and over and sometimes repair a radio in front of them so they could believe it. I know my dad was proud of me and like to show me off.

One customer wouldn't let me touch his radio so he took it to Midget Radio and told Art [our helper] what he did. Art told the man he had made a fool of himself. Art knew me and dad and told the man that I was just as competent as he was. The man came back and apologized. I fixed his radio in front of him by soldering a filter condenser into take out the gurgle. He was one of our best customers later and always asked for me.



Roy Waugh and daughter June, Roy's Radio, 1939

*Source: June Waugh Johnson Kotlarek [handwritten manuscript, her family history, on file in the Ferndale Historical Museum Archives].
Photo: Museum Archives*

ALL THAT STATIC . . . RADIO RECEPTION: CONVERSATION HEARD AT LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOL, 1928

Kate Gordon: It's nice to have a radio on winter nights.

Ruth Doran: Yes, we are planning to buy two of them, so when the static is bad on one we can use the other.

Source: The President, Lincoln High School Yearbook, 1928, p.113.

OUR CONDOLENCES

The Museum staff and membership extend sincere sympathy to the family of Mary Pence, long-time Society member, remembered for her life-long dedication to Ferndale Public Schools and involvement in community affairs. Mary passed away in May.

CHECK YOUR CLOSETS, PLEASE. THE MUSEUM IS LOOKING FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO ADD TO ITS COLLECTION:

Copies of St. James High School yearbooks, all years
Copies of *The Talon* (Ferndale High School yearbook), years 1987 and 1999
Photos of Peppy's, restaurant on Nine Mile near Pinecrest, in the 1960s

Please let the Museum staff know if you would like to donate these treasures to the Museum's archives. Thank you.

A Gallery of Vintage Advertisements:

A Million Dollar Lunch for 5c
RED HOTS and HAMBURGERS
 ... at the ...
NEW WAY LUNCH

FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES—
 Come to the
JULIAN 5c-\$1.00 STORE
 190 West Nine Mile Road
 Next to the Postoffice

THE STYLE SHOP
 COTTON DRESSES
 FOR SCHOOL WEAR
 Dark Colors and Good Style
\$1.95
 250 West Nine Mile Road

H. F. ZEHNDER'S
 WHEN YOU WANT QUALITY MERCHANDISE
 COME TO ZEHNDER'S
 YOU WILL FIND IT
 LADIES AND GENTS FURNISHINGS
 DRY GOODS
 5c TO \$1.00 DEPARTMENT
 Woodward at Nine Mile
Eight-Wood --- Florist
 EVERYTHING IN FLOWERS
 Wedding and Hospital Bouquets
 Our Specialty
 CORSES
 Free Delivery Phone
 Service R.O. 6205
 Elm. 6334
 WOODWARD
 CORNER EIGHT MILE ROAD

McMillan Drugs
 PRESCRIPTIONS
 Easter Greeting Cards
 McMILLAN FINE CHOCOLATES
 50c lb.
 Delicious!
 FRESH CECIL'S CHOCOLATES
 39c lb.
 Woodward at Nine Mile
 DELIVERIES R.O. 1600

**ESSMANN-CALDWELL
 PRINTING CO.**
 50 Christmas Cards ... \$1.00
 Parchment Folders
 Name Printed on Each One

Advance Sale!
**SHRINE CIRCUS
 TICKETS**
 50c GENERAL ADMISSION — 20c
 — TICKETS FOR —
 FEBRUARY 3rd - 16th
FRANK ELLIS GARAGE
 21736 Woodward Ave. Ferndale

THE STERLING SHOP
We Rent Typewriters
\$3.00 per Month
 180 West Nine Mile Road

S. & C. CAR
 145 W. NINE MILE FERNDALE
 BUTTER FRIED HAMBURGER
 On Toasted Bun
 Special 25c Noon Luncheon

RADIO CITY THEATRE
"The Theatre Beautiful"
 ADULTS - 25c — At All Times — CHILDREN - 10c
 OPEN DAILY AT 6:45 P. M.
FRED CHANTLER, Manager

NOW!
POTATO BREAD
 Only 10c
WESLEY BAKING CO.
 BREAD AND CAKE
 Delivered Daily
 Phone: HO. 3350

See **SHAW'S**
 For Your
NEXT SHOES
 We have a Large Assortment of
 WHITES — \$2.00 to \$5.00
 Men's Douglas Shoes, \$4 to \$6
 Peter's Oxfords . . \$3 to \$5
 Peter's Oxfords . . \$3 to \$5
SHAW'S SHOES
 166 W. NINE MILE

HELLO! LOOKING FOR
 BUSINESS—
 You will find it at Jimmy's.
 He has a week end special—
FISH AND CHIPS 20c

Announcing
**GERTRUDE PARRISH'S
 SCHOOL OF DANCE**
 Ballroom Classes
 Monday Evenings, 8:30-9:30
 1 Hour Lesson, 50c
 Instruction in
 TAP - BALLET - TOE - ACROBATIC
 Lessons by Appointment
**ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL
 CHURCH HOUSE**
 Lewiston at Livernois
 For Information Phone R. O. 4983

Patronize
 These
 Progressive
 Ferndale
 Merchants

AVALON BEAUTY SHOP
 PERMANENT WAVES
 \$2 — \$3 — \$5
 Finger Waves 35c
 Shampoo and Wave 50c
 112 WEST NINE MILE


FERNDALE RESTAURANT
 22700 WOODWARD
 At Troy

You can learn to play any standard number
 on the Hawaiian Guitar in sixty weeks. . . .
 We furnish Instrument, Music, Case, Picks,
 and Bar for \$1.00 per lesson.
Honolulu Conservatory
 (Detroit Civic Conservatory)
 236 WITHINGTON AVE.

Look !!!
NEW SPRING SHOES
 Tree Barks - Palm Beach
 \$1.95, \$2.45 to \$3.95
 Cloth and Kids
 SHAW'S 166 NINE MILE W.

SCHOOLGIRL'S SPECIAL!
 Personality Permanents, comp. \$2.50
 Free Gift with Each Permanent
 Shampoo and Finger Wave 50c
BOOT'S BEAUTY SHOPPE
 23320 Woodward Ave.
 Ferndale, Mich. Royal Oak 5112

For Sale
 Martin Trombone - \$25.00 Cash
 Just Overhauled
L. H. DOUGLASS
 22745 Woodward Ave.
 Local Representative C. G. Conn Co

THIS COUPON AND 10c
 . . . is good for . . .
ONE 15c MALTED MILK
BARTE
 625 WEST NINE MILE

GORDON CLOTHIERS
 CLEANERS — TAILORS
 247 W. Nine Mile Road Telephone R. O. 2616
 STUDENTS' SUITS.
 TOPCOATS - OVERCOATS **\$14.50 up**
 . . . We Carry a Complete Line of Students' and Men's Wear

Ferndale, 1929 - 1930s

Watch for
YOYO DEMONSTRATION
BARTE
 625 WEST NINE MILE

THIS COUPON ENTITLES BEARER TO
FREE ADMISSION
 To Talking Movie—"TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME"
 Lincoln High School Auditorium — TODAY — 3:30 P. M.



PONY FREE
ASHMORE SERVICE
 23157 Woodward At Lewiston
 With each 50c Purchase or Service Call you receive
 One FREE Chance to Win
 "CHUBBY" — A SHETLAND PONY
 Come In and Get Your Car Serviced for Winter
 OIL CHANGED COMPLETE LUBRICATION
 ANTI-FREEZE IN RADIATOR
 Come to the Station and See "CHUBBY"

REPAIR BEFORE COLD WEATHER
 * * *
 Pay \$10.00 Per Month
 Interest 5%
McCAUL LUMBER & COAL CO.
 FERNDALE ROYAL OAK
 R. O. 0464 - 0465 - 0665

LUMBER COAL
NORTHERN LUMBER AND COAL CO.
 2 MILE ROAD BETWEEN WOODWARD AND JOHN R.
 PHONE ROYAL OAK 927
 INTERIOR FINISH BUILDERS SUPPLIES

A SPECIAL
 INVITATION
 TO
 STUDENTS
 * * *

Hudson's Music Store cordially invites you to inspect their large assortment of fine musical instruments. You'll find everything you need from a saxophone reed to a tuba. Expert repair work on all types of instruments done in our own workrooms.

Try Our Regular
 8-Course Turkey
 Dinner
 at only . . . **65c**

 This Same Dinner Served Every Sunday
 And on Thanksgiving
RIALTO CAFE
 22740 Woodward Ave. At Nine Mile Road

RIVIERA CAFE
 22812 Woodward
SPECIAL LUNCHES
 — 25c and 40c —
DINNERS, 55c
 Most Modern Restaurant
 in Ferndale
 Patronize Our Advertisers

— SPECIAL —
SODAS — 5c
 ... at ...
BARTE
 625 WEST NINE MILE

EASTER SPECIAL
HOSE
 Clear and Sheer
 FULL FASHIONED
 Every Pair Perfect!
 49c
 Blouses . \$1.00 - \$1.98

- Saxophones* . \$80 to \$280
- Clarinets* . . . \$35 to \$156
- Mandolins . . . \$10 to \$ 75
- Cellos \$35 to \$150
- Trombones* . \$20 to \$120
- French Horns . \$75 to \$160
- Violins \$10 to \$600
- Trumpets* . \$17.50 to \$100
- Bugles . . . \$3.50 to \$17.50
- Snare Drums . . \$15 to \$35
- Bass Drums . . . \$25 to \$75
- Music Stands . . . 79c to \$6

FOR SALE
 GOOD VIOLIN OUTFIT
 Complete \$15.00 Cash
 See
L. H. DOUGLASS
 22757 Woodward Phone R.O. 9600
 Local Representative for

SMITH'S MARKET
 Meats - Groceries - Fruits
 and Vegetables
 WE DELIVER — R.O. 2691
 22938 WOODWARD AVE.


LUCY LANE SMART SHOP
 230 WEST NINE MILE
 Next to Woolworth's Ferndale

*Complete with Case
 Extended Payments available on musical instruments in amounts of \$25 or over
 Thirteenth Floor—Music Store
HUDSON'S
 Prices subject to 3% Sales Tax

 **CONN**
 BAND INSTRUMENTS
 C. G. CONN, LTD., World's Largest Manufacturer, ELKHART, INDIANA, U. S. A.
PIANO ACCORDIONS
 WITH FREE LESSONS
 Biggest Band Instrument
 Manufacturer in United States

BICYCLES
 REPAIRING — PARTS
 We Deliver
FERNDALE BIKE SHOP
 22741 Woodward R.O. 3360

Save on Easter Wearables
 at

 READY-TO-WEAR CLOTHING
 HOSIERY - GLOVES

Your name on our mirror
 means a FREE SODA for you!
 A new name every day
SCHOOL SUPPLIES
 . . . CANDIES . . .

FAMOUS NATIONALLY ADVERTISED
WATCHES and JEWELRY
 ON CREDIT
 We have a Large Selection of Gifts for Every Occasion!
 School, Sport, Society Emblems made to your specifications
RUSH JEWELERS
 Ferndale's Neighborly Store

ICE SKATES \$4.45 & up
FOOTBALLS 98c
HOCKEY STICKS 25c
BASKET BALLS

ZEFFS'
HARDWARE
SPORTING GOODS
 We Deliver
GAME BOARD 25c & up
 Wagons 98c & up
GAMES OF ANY KIND
 Scooters

SHAHER'S SODA GRILL
 Woodward at Woodland

ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION IN FERNDALE'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE*

The speech patterns of native Ferndale residents have always followed the traditional regional pronunciations common to metro-area Detroiters. The metro area, which is part of what linguists call the "Northern Inland Region," has distinctive patterns of English that evolved from the many cultures and accents of residents throughout Detroit-area history.

Unlike speakers in other parts of the U.S., native metro-Detroiters pronounce *marry*, *merry*, and *Mary* exactly alike, and say *creek* not *crick*, *fawg* not *fahg* (for *fog*), and *greesy* not *greezy* (for *greasy*). Some local pronunciations reflect the proximity of Canada and its residents' characteristic "Canadian raising," meaning that some words are spoken in a higher part of the mouth. Example: *house* sounds more like *howoos* rather than *how* with an *s* at the end.

Researchers in the year 2000 began to note a marked change in the way metro-Detroiters pronounce vowels. *Better* now sounds almost like *butter*, *link* like *lenk*, *uncomfortable* like *oncomfortable*, and *slang* like *sleng*. Such shifts have also been documented in many northern cities. Linguists have labeled these drastic changes the "Northern Cities Shift" and identified the metro-Detroit area as the shift's epicenter.

These changes, according to researchers, are the most significant alterations in U.S. pronunciation in many decades. Ferndale residents now, therefore, are on the forefront of the continuing evolution of American English.

* Source consulted and examples cited from *The Detroit Almanac: 300 Years of Life in the Motor City* (Peter Gavrilovich and Bill McGraw, eds.). Detroit: Detroit Free Press, 2000, p. 445.

THE SEVEN SISTERS AND THE SEVEN STACKS, 1965

Mrs. Roy Chansell of 1447 Albany and her seven daughters, Dolores, Patricia, Kethleen, Barbara, Carolann, Darlene, and Margaret, were among the families with seven sisters or more who attended the Detroit Edison Company open house last weekend at its Connors Creek Power Plant. The occasion marked the 50th anniversary of the plant on Detroit's east side. Its towering seven stacks have been called "seven sisters" for years. Two more stacks, added in 1951, were promptly dubbed the "two brothers."

Source: *The Ferndale Gazette-Times*, Thursday, May 27, 1965, p. 1.

THE BIG STORM OF '68: HOW FERNDALE AND PLEASANT RIDGE FARED

Mother Nature may have forced many Ferndale and Pleasant Ridge residents to their knees in prayer Friday, but none were killed or even injured . . . a miracle that many children were cavorting around in flooded streets, where electrical lines were down and sputtering. Yet, thankfully, no one was hurt by electrical shock, fallen trees, or direct injury due to high velocity winds.

Pleasant Ridge lost at least 100 trees, a terrible blow to the small community which calls itself "The City of Trees." Ferndale, however, lost at least 142 trees. In both cases counts are only of trees fallen on city or park property; and do not include losses from private property, a number impossible to estimate . . . There is no way in the world of estimating the amount of loss to private homeowners from food spoilage in refrigerators and freezers. . . The power went off between 8 and 8:15 pm Friday and some areas have still not been restored.

A woman called this morning and complained that her husband is starting to smell. She said they have an electric hot water tank and do not yet have service. [This call was to the City of Pleasant Ridge. Ferndale reported no calls about smelly husbands.]

Source: Summarized from *Ferndale Gazette-Times*, Thursday, August 22, 1968, p. 1.

A WALK THROUGH FERNDALE'S PAST

A visitor entering the Ferndale Historical Museum is greeted by a view of reminders of everyday life of former times. Farm tools hang on the wall among old photos of a time when life seemed simpler but the days were harder and seemed longer. Clothing, hairpins, ice picks, and bridles, all were donated to the Museum by descendants of pioneers who had a vision of future in Ferndale.

Further along on a wall hangs the large Lincoln mural, painted by Lincoln High School students in 1929 as a gift to Lincoln High School—just 66 years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation (1863). For many years a landmark in the halls of Lincoln High, the mural came to the Museum in the 1990s for care and restoration, finally finding a permanent home here.

Nearby is a glass cabinet filled with glistening trophies which exemplify the well-deserved pride in the achievements of Ferndale residents in sports over the years. Further on, Museum bookshelves house one of the area's largest collections of high school yearbooks, dating from the 1920s to the present. Scrapbooks by memory makers from all walks of life take up one whole bookshelf of their own. Two stack ranges contain the Diane O'Neill Housing Resource Collection, which documents the histories of all 8,000 structures in Ferndale, a collection that continues to be updated to this day.

Hundreds of pictures adorn the Museum walls, recalling decades of historical moments caught with one observant flash. Histories of every church of every denomination in the city can be found in the Museum as well as a complete military collection dating to the Civil War, all donated by Ferndale residents. Throughout the Museum are tangible artifacts that explain facets of everyday life throughout Ferndale's history.

Seen from the street outside, the Museum is unassuming: inside is a cache of secrets from the past. Someone walking by has no idea of what lies behind the brightly colored door. But once a visitor enters, 150 years of past to present comes alive—with stories of every decade. A recent example: a hand grenade from World War II, donated by a local soldier, had been housed at the Museum for many years. Recently a visitor, a former Navy Seal, determined that, upon close observation, the grenade was, after all these years, still live. The State Police, the bomb squad, the Ferndale Police and Fire Departments and all their rescue squads showed up immediately to defuse this artifact. Disaster averted! The deactivated grenade is now back in its familiar spot behind glass—with yet another tale to share with visitors curious about the colorful life it once had.

The Museum is the largest, and only, complete repository of all things historical pertaining to Ferndale. The Research staff routinely responds to queries about Ferndale's past from local and global sources—using resources such as eight five-drawer filing cabinets with local facts and figures. Long-time resident, visitor, or newcomer to our city, all will find that the Museum holds memories, treasures, and stories waiting to be shared.

It is my hope that you will come, visit, and utilize this little known treasure, the Ferndale Historical Museum, allowing yourself time to be wrapped in the magic and warmth of our past, present, and future.

*Garry Andrews,
Director, Ferndale Historical Museum*



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Calendar of Events:

Thursday, June 24 6 pm Board Meeting, Historical Society, held at the Museum, public is welcome

No Board Meeting in July

No Board Meeting in August

Thursday, September 23 6pm Board Meeting, Historical Society, held at the Museum, public is welcome

The Crow's Nest, Summer 2010

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“Preserving the Heritage of Ferndale for future generations”