

October-December 2019



**R**alphie and the rest of the Parker family returned to the Plymouth Historical Museum in November in our current special exhibit, "A Red Ryder Christmas Story."

This is the sixth time that we have exhibited this combination of vignettes from the movie *A Christmas Story* and information about Daisy Manufacturing Company, which was headquartered in Plymouth until 1958.



Each time we showcase this exhibit, we add some twists to make it more fun and compelling. One of the new highlights this year is the Chinese restaurant scene above. At the same time, we bring back classic favorites, such as the Santa mountain scene on the right.

So even if you've seen this exhibit before, it's worth your time to return!

Open  
through  
January  
26, 2020



Next special exhibit:  
*Plymouth Rides the Rails*  
February 12-July 3, 2020

## Explore Plymouth Michigan History

Open 1-4p Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday  
Adults \$7 / Students \$3 (6-17)



Plymouth Historical Museum  
155 S. Main Street, Plymouth, MI 48170  
[734.455.8940](tel:734.455.8940)  
[secretary@plymouthhistory.org](mailto:secretary@plymouthhistory.org)



Visit the Museum's  
new website  
[www.plymouthhistory.org](http://www.plymouthhistory.org)



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Plymouth Historical Museum  
 155 South Main Street  
 Plymouth, Michigan 48170  
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 734-455-8940 Fax: 734-455-7797

**Hours**

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday  
 1-4 PM all days  
 Open year round (except some holidays)

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**Museum Memo Editor**

Gerry Sabatini [sabatini1983@att.net](mailto:sabatini1983@att.net)  
 Proofreader—Elizabeth Kerstens

The Museum Memo is printed four times a year.

**Monthly Drawing**

Ken West, Chalmer Hillson, and Frank Cozza are the respective winners of the October, November, and December drawings for a \$25 gift certificate.



**Kroger Plus Card Donations**

Thank you to those who have added the Plymouth Historical Society to their **Kroger Plus Card**. The Museum receives a small percentage from any purchases made by those who have an up-to-date registration on their cards.

To participant in the program, visit [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com).

Click on "Michigan" and click on "Enroll."

You must have a valid online account at Kroger.com to participate. If you need help, give us a call at 734-455-8940 ext. 9. We'll be happy to help you get enrolled.

**New Members—Welcome!**

Kristi Barry, Plymouth  
 Michele Benton, Dearborn Heights  
 Holly Borrusch, Livonia  
 Ruth Churley-Strom, Plymouth  
 Jan Fulton, Northville  
 Dr. Richard Haines, Oak Harbor, WA  
 Annette Halttunen, Plymouth  
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 Linda Pudlik, Farmington Hills  
 Esther Rogers, Plymouth  
 Helena Scappaticci, Plymouth  
 Diane Shanahan, Novi



Thanks for Supporting The Plymouth Historical Museum

The Plymouth Historical Museum is a privately funded 501(c)3 charitable organization. We receive no government funding. We always have a "wish list" of things that help us as we work to preserve and share the history of Plymouth.

Here are some of our common purchases to provide inspiration:

- 1 Roll Postage Stamps **\$55 per**
- IT/Network support **\$250**
- ½ month heating bill **\$375**
- ½ month electric bill **\$475**
- 1 month employee salary **\$500**

To donate, make your check payable to the Plymouth Historical Museum.

# Bits 'n Pieces

By Elizabeth Kelley Kerstens, executive director



Progress on the restoration of our caboose was far enough along in late November that we opened it for Santa Claus to greet children this holiday season.

Our Santa, Mike Gillett, made himself at home in the caboose, meeting many children during the four weekends that the caboose was scheduled to be open. He is very gentle with apprehensive children, engaging with them on their level, which sometimes means letting a child play a video on his cell phone.

The stairs and platform to the front of the caboose were installed before Thanksgiving, but will be removed again after Christmas to be galvanized and powder coated. Inside the caboose, the new heater is keeping Santa toasty and the rewired electricity allows for lights to be on for visitors.

The caboose is not yet done. The interior still needs work, in-

cluding replacing floor boards near the bay windows and repairing vinyl on chairs and bunks. Also, the door on the rear of the caboose has broken glass in the window.

On the exterior, the front stairs will be finished and replaced in January. We have all of the engraved bricks for the paver sidewalk that were ordered up to the end of October. They will be installed once the weather breaks. Also once spring hits, we hope to get the area around the caboose landscaped and looking like a small railroad park.

On our wish list for the future is putting in a second platform and stairs on the back end of the caboose.

At this point, however, we have run out of money from donations. We are so thankful for the generosity of members and the community thus far. We still

need money to continue, so if you are so inclined, you can donate in a couple of ways:

## Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/donate/425059984855148/>

## Museum Website

<http://plymouthhistory.org/get-involved/support-the-plymouth-historical-museum/>

## Museum

Bring in donations or mail to 155 S. Main Street, Plymouth 48170. Or call 734-455-8940 x0.

*Thank you!!!*

Date	Event	Members Tickets	Public Tickets
February 11	Members-only Reception	January 2	N/A
February 16	Lincoln White House Tea	December 23	January 6
March 27	A Night FOR the Museum	January 1	January 1
April 25	Ghosts of Plymouth Walk	February 3	February 17
May 3	Frozen Princess Tea	March 9	March 23
May 9	The Sly Mr. Fox Murder Mystery	March 9	March 23
May 17	Wilcox House Tour	April 6	April 20

**Donations Received**  
**September – November 2019 Thank You!**

Thank you for the following generous donations that were received between September and November 2019:

**The Lincoln (\$1,000+ )**

Blackwell Ford  
 Dolores Guenther  
 Tenneco (Federal-Mogul)  
 James Thornton

**The Starkweather (\$500–\$999)**

Jim Burroughs  
 C.L. Finlan & Son  
 Margaret Kidston  
 Kiwanis Club of Plymouth  
 Raffaele Mautone  
 O'Donnell Electric

**The Penniman (\$250–\$499)**

Dennis Cebulski  
 Clark Chapin  
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 Mary Fritz  
 Dr. Robert Gordon  
 Dr. Richard Haines  
 Chris Huffman  
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 Jean & Dave LaPointe  
 William Lawton  
 Stephen Marulis  
 Packaging Corp. of America  
 Don Phillips  
 Plymouth Oran & Facial Surgery  
 Susan Stelli  
 Dolores Vincent  
 Carolyn Zaborski

**The Kellogg (\$100–\$249)**

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 James Vermeulen  
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 Jeff Zemsky



If you know of anyone who would be willing to volunteer three hours of service at the Museum each month, please let us know.

Please phone the Museum at 734-455-8940 x4 and leave a message. We will return your phone call as soon as we are available.

Thank you for your support, and thank you to our dedicated team of volunteers!

50 Years Ago -  
Fall 1969

## *Historical Museum Gets \$5,000 Help*

The campaign to collect funds for the building of a new Plymouth Historical Museum was given a giant boost this week with a gift of \$5,000 from the Plymouth Community Credit Union.

Announcement of the contribution was made by Miss Margaret Dunning, president of the Credit Union, and George Lawton, treasurer and manager.

The contribution is in keeping with the interest shown in civic affairs through the years by the credit union. In the past it has sponsored the summer concerts in Kellogg Park and the various bus trips made by the Plymouth High School Band.

Under the plans now being studied for the new historical museum, it will be erected on the site of the present antiquated building next to city hall. When the plans are finalized, the building is to be the third in the series of city buildings, --the library, City Hall and historical museum and will carry out the same colonial appearance.

It will give the city an unique trio of public buildings and will be an asset to the downtown area.

When plans for a new museum were started more than a year ago by the Kiwanis Club, it was suggested that a second story be built on the community center building on Union Street. A study proved this was not feasible, so attention was turned to the razing and rebuilding on the present site.



## The Lincoln White House Tea

with Mary Todd  
Lincoln  
(portrayed by  
Pam Dawson)

Sunday, February 16  
2-4 pm

- Enjoy tea delicacies catered by Diann's Catering
- Sip the Museum's own special tea, "Mary's Blend"—a tantalizing cherry and almond black tea blend in honor of Mary Todd Lincoln

Tickets are \$30 for Plymouth Historical Museum members (on sale December 23); \$35 for non-members (on sale January 6).

Add \$5 to ticket prices after January 31.

Plymouth Historical Museum

155 S. Main Street

734-455-8940 x0

[plymouthhistory.org/events/upcoming-events/](http://plymouthhistory.org/events/upcoming-events/)

## Old Village Plans Fete

"Revitalization" is the key word among merchants in Old Village, and "lower town" is a term that members of the newly formed Old Village Association are attempting to bury permanently.

Chuck Getson, of Blunk's Inc. and newly elected president of the Old Village Association, is enthused about the new shops and merchant interest that is evident in the village area.

"We've had two good meetings -- the first on Nov. 5 and the one last night (Wednesday, Nov. 19) both were well attended. Right now we're concerned about Christmas," he said.

**GETSON SAYS** that merchants in this section of town have annually asked for cooperation on Christmas promotion from the Plymouth Chamber of Commerce and that this is the first year they have received it.

Santa is scheduled to appear in Old Village between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. December 4, 10, 12, 20, and 22.

He also will be on hand during the same hours Saturday, Nov. 29, when a 15-foot Christmas tree is officially lighted at 4 p.m.

## Meters Go Into Effect

Parking meters will be in operation Monday in the East Central Lot, which runs from behind City Hall to the area behind the Penn Theatre.

They were installed Wednesday and Friday and the rate will be five cents per hour from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. for the approximately 50 spaces covered.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

Plymouth Historic Museum's  
Annual Fundraising Gala

Friday, March 27, 2020  
Laurel Manor, Livonia

**FIRST TIME EVER!**

**A MURDER  
MYSTERY GALA**

More to Come...

The remaining 73 spaces in the lot are restricted to holders of monthly permits, available at City Hall for \$5 per month.

City Manager Richard Blodgett said Friday he expects considerable confusion Monday as those in the habit of using the lot find that either they must

pay by the hour or hold a permit covering the full month of December.

The permit policy also will go into effect Monday on three other lots, Central, Wiedman and Schrader. No driver without a permit will be able to park his vehicle in areas designated for holders of permits.

Thirty such permits are for sale in City Hall for the Schrader lot at \$5 per month, 25 in the Wiedman lot next to the Mayflower Hotel at \$7.50 per month, and one per abutting business firm in the Central Lot, also at \$7.50 each per month.

## Rent a Room for Your Next Function

The Plymouth Historical Museum is the ideal setting for wedding, showers, receptions, corporate functions, funeral luncheons, and many other events. Our Sanford Burr Meeting Room can comfortably seat up to 100 people and has wireless Internet access. Prices are reasonable, and for an additional fee, rental includes use of the kitchen and/or a private tour of the Museum. For information, visit the Museum or phone 734-455-8940 x0.



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL MUSEUM

# Volunteer Spotlight



## Paula Holmes

All this education led her to a teaching career, mostly with the Plymouth schools. Much of her teaching time was spent as an elementary teacher but also included stints as a learning specialist and in staff development training.

Paula and her husband, Zack, who is from the Plymouth area, raised a son and a daughter and are blessed with two grandchildren, ages eight and ten.

Besides her devotion to the Museum Store, Paula is an avid reader of historical fiction and is a collector of cookbooks. She said her favorite recipe is a chocolate cheesecake that is to “die for.”

Paula and her husband also love to travel and only need two more states, North Dakota and Idaho, to complete their visits to all 50 states. They also like to travel abroad and find the Mediterranean to be their favorite area to visit.

Paula loves her volunteer position and is very proud of the fact that she is part of our great institution here in Plymouth. We truly appreciate Paula and all that she does to keep our Museum Store vibrant.

**O**ur Museum is very proud to have a first-class Museum store and we have been very fortunate to have a first-class manager running it, Paula Holmes.

For almost 10 years, she has been responsible for finances, inventory, personnel, and all the other responsibilities of a retail store in her volunteer position.

Paula is not from the Plymouth area, growing up in Benton Harbor, Michigan. Her education includes a Bachelor’s degree from CMU, a Masters degree from Oakland University and an Education Specialist certification from Wayne State.

**Volunteers Make  
a Difference!**

## 50 Years Ago - Fall 1969



Michigan’s new-style passenger vehicle license plates for 1970 had three letters and three numbers, as shown here by Maedelle Carrithers (left) and Marcia King of Plymouth’s Department of State branch office. The letters and numbers were white against a gold background, in honor of Oakland University. For 1970, Michigan’s new license plate policy banned vowels from the letter combination.

## Seek Volunteer Fire Help

**PLYMOUTH**  
Daytime volunteer firefighters are critically needed in Plymouth, according to Chief George Schoenneman.

All physically fit men between the ages of 21 and 35 inclusive are eligible to enlist. All will be screened and given a physical exam paid for by the city.

# Plymouth Days Gone By

Compiled by Gerry Sabatini from the newspaper archives at the Plymouth District Library

## Monument Moves To Riverside



Plymouth's civic leaders finally have determined what to do with the 50-year-old Civil War monument which stands in Kellogg Park facing the corner of Main Street and Ann Arbor Trail.

It will be moved to Riverside Cemetery, either ending a controversy or starting a new one.

The statue is of a feminine figure and was donated to the city in 1917 by William Bradner. It is dedicated to the memory of Plymouth's Civil War dead, and yet the park's official

memorial to the nation's military heroes is recognized as being the boulder with its several plaques at the opposite end of the park.

50 Years Ago -  
Fall 1969

AGITATION in favor of moving the statue as part of the park's beautification plan was resolved when Atty. Perry Richwine offered to pay to have it moved to Riverside Cemetery if it would be placed on a parcel which he also was willing to purchase there.

Richwine's letter to the commission, spelling out exact terms of his offer, stated:

"I will pay \$1,000 to the city for the Cemetery Board for the triangle adjoining my cemetery lot. No burials are to be on this lot except for the three now

living members of my family. These three burials are to be on space immediately adjoining my present lot.

"It is understood that the city is to retain title to that portion of said triangle upon which the actual relocated monument is located.

"I will also make a gift to the city of \$1,200 to defray all or part of the cost of relocating said monument upon a suitable foundation."



## Sidney Strong Is Dead At 85

In failing health for the past several years, Sidney Davis Strong, one of Plymouth's "Grand Old Men," died Friday morning at the age of 85.

The end came quietly in Hendry Convalescent Home, where he had been confined most of the past year.

Coming to Plymouth from Sault Ste. Marie in 1920, he took over as the area's first city manager and in that position he helped guide the city for several years and developed the city seal that still is used.

\* \* \*

THROUGH THE YEARS he gave wholeheartedly of his time and efforts, not only in government but to other activities as well. One of his most cherished honors was his medal as a Silver Beaver Scout and the fact that he had served in all capacities with the Boy Scouts of America over a 50-year period.

Sid, as he was popularly known, was born in Kalamazoo on Feb. 23, 1884 and was educated in the Kalamazoo public schools. He obtained an AB degree at Kalamazoo College in 1905 and a BS in civil engineering at the University of Michigan in 1907.

AFTER HIS STINT as the city manager, Sid served on the planning commission and was chairman of this group for many years. For a long time he also served as an engineer with the Wayne County Road Commission.

A member of St. John's Episcopal Church, he also was a member of the Plymouth Rotary Club, the Plymouth Historical Society and the American Society of Engineers.



50 Years  
Ago -  
Fall 1969

It was strictly coincidental, but Plymouth residents were given a chuckle when the Penn Theatre opened its showing of the film, "Don't Drink The Water." A few days prior to the movie's debut at the theater, the Plymouth City Commission voted 4-3 to discontinue operation of the city's own water system, and decided instead, to purchase water from the Detroit water system.



## A Rockwell Dream

By Philip H. Power

Plymouth. A moonlight night. I'm walking through Kellogg Park, the heart of downtown Plymouth. The pale light glints off the newly-planted sycamores. The fountain gurgles in the background. Kids sit on the benches under the trees. A crowd comes out of the late show at the movie theater with a burst of laughter.

It is a scene right out of those paintings Norman Rockwell used to do for the Saturday Evening Post. Small town America, the kind we all keep in our mind as some sort of ideal.

Around the park, the stores of a downtown. Specialty stores, banks, small department and clothing shops.

The people in Plymouth know a lot of people are going to shop at the big shopping centers. But they think that the small town nature and the intimacy and convenience of a downtown area will continue to serve as an economic and social focus which will keep the city growing and developing.

City leaders keep saying, "The downtown and the park are our greatest advantage."

And it's just the pace and nature of suburban life that makes the dream represented by the Norman Rockwell painting of the small town downtown so important and attractive.

The real problem is to bring together dreams and facts. That's hard, but worthwhile trying.

# plymouth

THROUGH BIFOCALS

By FRED DELANO / Editor: Mail & Observer

HAROLD GUENTHER was mayor of Plymouth as 1959 drew to a close, and with him on the City Commission were J. Rusling Cutler, William Hartmann, Carl Shearer, Robert Sincock, Marvin Terry and Richard Wernette.

Guenther, who is back as a member of the present commission, along with Sincock, sums up the passing decade as one "which has made Plymouth face up to the fact that we are not a little island by ourselves."

"The horses had left, the automobile was here, but we wouldn't believe it," commented Guenther as he looked back and summarized: "What we thought were big problems then have been dwarfed by the problems of human behavior which face us today."

He also emphasized that in municipal government, "We saw that we were running out of land, and the economic problem of the city was starting to show itself."

Harold didn't have to add that 1969 has seen him take the lead at City Hall in urging study of a municipal income tax as a possible answer to that very problem. You can count on facing that bit as one of your delights of the '70s.

IN ALL FRANKNESS, the writer has found the three concluding years of the decade the steadiest, with a more meaningful relationship to the future, than the first seven. That comes from trading the crazy world of national press agentry for his present desk.

A few days ago a friend warned, "You show signs of becoming one of us -- a middle-aged, conservative Plymouthite."

What prompted this was my recitation of how comforting the family had found it to know a doctor who would make a house call, a plumber who would come on a Sunday to ream out a blocked sewer, a pharmacist who would unlock the store to fill a prescription, the joy the kids have in their schools, and even the three-block proximity between automobile salesman, financier and insurer.

Smalltown, U.S.A.

You who have been here a generation regret some of the changes. Yet, enough vestments of the past remain to give Plymouth an identity of its own which constitutes the city's charm.

50 Years Ago -  
Fall 1969

## Change Of Heart Will Bring Santa

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus.

What's more, he's coming to Plymouth to visit for a few weeks.

Don't believe those ugly rumors that he may not be invited.

'Tisn't so.

There's been a change of heart and the welcome being planned now may surpass anything that has been done to show hospitality to the white-haired gent from the North Pole.

If present plan materialize, there'll be the usual municipal tree lighting and a big time when Santa arrives.

## Livestock To Enhance Holiday Manger Scene

Sheep and hopefully reindeer will be added to Plymouth's village green in addition to the traditional manger scene and three wisemen who annually move toward the front of the park.

THIS IS just one phase of "operation-Christmas" that has been undertaken by the newly organized Plymouth Christmas committee.

Fred Hill, a member of the organization, listed other plans being formulated by the committee:

"We also are thinking of having some animals in the park," Hill stated, "and the last few days before Christmas we hope to have a live Nativity scene."

# Volunteer Spotlight



## Clark Chapin

When the Museum needs a special construction project or repair completed, we rely heavily on the volunteer staff in our maintenance crew.

One of those reliable workers is Clark Chapin. In fact, Clark's family has been a fixture as Museum volunteers for many years.

Clark's father, Gordon, worked in maintenance and his mother, Betty, worked in the archive.

Clark spent his early years in northwest Detroit and moved with his family to Plymouth when he was twelve years old. He graduated from Plymouth High School and started a long career with General Motors as an engineer. His main duty at GM was in design in fuel tank & storage.

Clark and his wife, Karen, moved into their home on Church Street in 1973. This home has been in Karen's family since 1920 and was built in 1906. Clark likes to call his residence the "Grand Old Home" since it is always costing him "a grand here and a grand there." Some of the folks in Plymouth may remember his wife Karen as the music teacher for many years at Our Lady of Good Council Grade School. Clark and Karen have one son and two grandchildren, ages 1½ and 6½.

Apart from the Museum, Clark is very active in sailboat racing. He currently holds the position of US Sailing National Judge and is a club race officer. He formerly held the positions of secretary for the board of directors for US Sailing and past chairman of the bylaw commission.

Clark loves his volunteer job at the Museum, especially the camaraderie with his fellow workers. He is also proud to be a downtown Plymouth resident and loves the fact he can walk to all the local businesses and eateries. It is fitting that Clark's words of advice mirror his work ethic, "When the alarm goes off, it has to be the job that makes your feet hit the floor."

Thanks for all you do for the Museum, Clark!

**Volunteers Make a Difference!**

# There Is Place For Girls' Sports

50 Years Ago -  
Fall 1969

During the past several weeks, we have been swamped with calls from parents for answers to the question, "Why don't high schools in Observerland have varsity sports for girls?"

Many times the calls have come from mothers and fathers who take a great deal of time to point out that they have been blessed with nothing but members of the opposite sex and thus never

will have an opportunity to cheer for a member of their family during the heat of competitive, varsity contests.

"Sure, we're real happy to attend the games now when the boys have all of the spotlight, and the only opportunity for girls is in the cheerleading squads -- but they are limited to no more than eight on the varsity and eight on the junior varsity," said parents.

"WE ARE NOW IN a different generation, one in which there is a repeated cry of a generation gap, and we as parents of girls, nothing but girls, believe it is time for a change. We would like part of that change to be the start of varsity sports for girls."

The move towards girls' varsity teams may not be as far away as the parents would believe. There has been a tendency on the part of some athletic boards and the school boards to sanction such a program.

The first break in the barrier came last spring when the Northwest Suburban League -- which lists South Redford's Thurston, Livonia Franklin and North Farmington among its six members -- voted for girls varsity competition.

## 'Use Of Marijuana More Widespread Than Parents Imagine'

50 Years Ago - Fall 1969

In the youthful never-ending search for something new, something different, drug abuse among suburban youth has become a common-place occurrence.

Educators and police officials in Observerland agree that middle-class suburban parents have no idea how widespread the use and availability of drugs and narcotics are among their teenage children.

In January, 1968, Don Grabowski, Thurston High School attendance director, and Cpl. O. Gallagher of the Redford Township Police Department concluded a four-month study of drug and narcotic use among Thurston students. They then sent a letter advising local officials of their findings and recommendations.

"The use of marijuana is far more widespread than people imagine. In addition to marijuana, we discovered students have experimented with LSD and 'speed' pills," Grabowski and Gallagher said in their letter.

Farmington Police Chief Robert Deadman told the Observer Newspapers that "now marijuana has gotten down into the junior high school level and LSD is becoming common in the high schools."

John N. Mitchell, United States attorney general, recently testified before a congressional subcommittee that "our young people are, in frightening increasing numbers, turning to marijuana, hard narcotics and other dangerous drugs as a way of life."

Another indication that teenagers' abuse of narcotics and drugs has become a large problem is the police departments' statistical evidence in annual reports.

The great increase in narcotics complaints and arrests include many juvenile cases, say Observerland police officials.

According to the U.S. Justice Department, narcotic and marijuana arrests have increased 16 times over the past 10 years.

While youths under 21 accounted for 14.1 per cent of the 1958 drug and narcotic arrest total, last year they comprised 56.5 per cent of the 162,177 marijuana and narcotic arrests.

Observerland police reports indicate that in the last three years, narcotics arrests have at least tripled in every community. Livonia police, who recorded three drug arrests in 1966, made 166 last year, an increase of 5,500 per cent.

Friends of the Plymouth Historical Museum  
155 S. Main Street  
Plymouth, MI 48170

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## Calendar of Events

### January 2020

26—Special exhibit, “A Red Ryder Christmas Story” ends.

27–February 11—Museum closed for exhibit changeover.

### February

11—Members only Reception, 6-8 PM.

12—Special exhibit, “Plymouth Rides the Rails” opens.

16—“The Lincoln White House Tea,” 2-4 PM. Tickets are \$30 for members; \$35 for non-members. Tickets go on sale to members December 23; tickets are on sale to the public January 6, 2020.

### March

27—Friday, A Murder Mystery Gala, Plymouth Historical Museum’s Annual Fundraising Gala, at Laurel Park Manor, Livonia, 6–10 PM. Tickets are \$75 and go on sale January 1, 2020.



**A Red Ryder Christmas Story**  
Special Exhibit at the Plymouth Historical Museum  
On display thru January 26, 2020  
Museum hours, 1-4 PM  
Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

