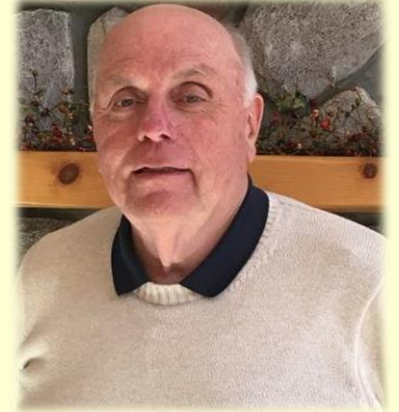


This week's History Matters Update introduces another one of our detectives, Jim Hilgendorf, a familiar name in the Johannesburg-Lewiston area. He grew up in the Corunna area and actually attended a one room school house kindergarten through 8th grade graduating in the top three of his class. (there were only 3 students in his class) His love of history was sparked by a very special teacher, Mrs. Ott!



After graduating from Corunna High School, Jim continued his educational career graduating from Michigan State University with his BA(1970), MA(1972) and EDS(1991) in education.

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Jim began his teaching career in Rapid River, Michigan teaching 11 years (social studies, geography, history) and serving as a high school principal there for another nine years. He then found a new home at the Johannesburg-Lewiston School District as their Superintendent of Schools for 20 years, retiring in 2012.

Coaching high school sports was an important part of Jim's career in both the Upper Peninsula and at Johannesburg. What was supposed to be a temporary job as assistant football coach with the J-L Cardinals, turned into 16 years.

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Jim and his wife Cathy have a blended family with a total of 5 children - all of whom have graduated from college. They are blessed to have 10 grandchildren who range from 22 to 3 years of age. They spend their leisure time snow shoeing, cross country skiing and of course golfing. The couple enjoys traveling – especially to historic sites and Civil War battlefields.

Jim stays active by serving on the Sportsplex, Otsego Memorial Hospital, and Gaylord Golf Club boards of directors. He also is a member of the Kirtland M-TEC / University Center advisory board.

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He is a part of the Vision Steering Committee for the Louis M. Groen Nature Preserve. [Link](#) This property was given to Otsego County and is located in Charlton Township. Developing historical, recreational and environmental activities for the 800 plus acres is a very special interest. The Groen property was home to the Johannesburg Manufacturing Company, a major logging operation during the early development of our county!

Welcome Jim, as we continue to enhance our community by uncovering our past!

Jim in center interviewing Duane Bale (L) and Howard Long (R) at the Groen Nature Preserve

This week's History Matters Update was written by Barb Switalski