



Winter 2014

# History Matters

Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society  
Keego Harbor • Orchard Lake • Sylvan Lake • West Bloomfield



## CELEBRATING 40 YEARS 1974-2014

### *Celebrating 40 Years*

GWBHS celebrates a major milestone in 2014 - its 40th anniversary! Originally formed as the Orchard Lake Scenic and Historical Society on January 28, 1974, the group has continually increased in size and scope, serving to stimulate public interest in the history of our area, now and for future generations.

Members of GWBHS and the public are invited to help celebrate the 40th anniversary at events throughout the year, including the return of the Historic Homes Tour (June 21) and the 40th Anniversary Ice Cream Social (September 14). Members will receive a special insert with each 2014 issue of History Matters that takes a look back at these first 40 years.

We continue to collect GWBHS memories and photos to add to our archives and include in our celebrations this year. If you have something to share, please send it to Melissa Gilbert at [smgilbert2000@yahoo.com](mailto:smgilbert2000@yahoo.com) (photos as 300 dpi scans)

### *Annual Meeting - Reserve Your Ticket by January 21*

Don't miss the 40th anniversary annual meeting and recognition program, followed by a presentation about the rich history of Orchard Lake Schools. Tickets are on sale now through January 21 for the January 25 event. For ticket sales, call 248.808.0893 (\$15 includes brunch). **Annual Meeting & Orchard Lake Schools Rich History Presentation Saturday, January 25, 10 a.m. – noon, St. Mary's Dining Hall, Bldg. 15, Commerce Road**

### *Historic Homes Tour Update*

Plans for the first historic homes tour in 27 years are underway. Living with History: Historic Homes Tour of Greater West Bloomfield is scheduled for Saturday, June 21 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. This self-driving tour of historic homes in the area provides a rare opportunity to see the inside of some unique homes and learn about their special histories. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 on the day of the tour and will go on sale soon.

Each attendee will receive a tour booklet with information about the historic homes and the event sponsors. Advertising and event sponsorship opportunities are available.

Organizers are still seeking additional volunteers. Contact Judy at 248.808.0893 to get involved.



## *From the Desk of President Gina Gregory...*

Happy New Year and best wishes for a great 2014! For GWBHS, 2014 will be a year of looking back while moving forward, as we remember our accomplishments from 1974-2014. It's our 40th anniversary! Throughout the year, we will be celebrating and recognizing the people who have helped us reach this milestone.

- ❑ At the January 25th annual meeting, we'll recognize West Bloomfield historian, Charles Martinez, and other GWBHS volunteers. A local history presentation on Orchard Lake Schools' Rich History will round out the morning.
- ❑ Throughout the year, the Orchard Lake Museum will exhibit Society history.
- ❑ Join us September 14 for Hands-On History and 40th Anniversary Ice Cream Social. Ice cream socials have often marked special GWBHS anniversaries.

I hope you will show your support by joining us at our events throughout 2014. Be sure to bring your friends and family!



### **Experience the History of Orchard Lake Schools**

*In 1909, the former site of the Michigan Military Academy, on Orchard Lake's east shore, became the new home of the SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary. This growing "Polish Seminary" in Detroit had trained men for the priesthood since 1886. Further development of the campus allowed for increased enrollment and a restructuring of the seminary (1927-8) led to the designation of three distinct schools, each with a four-year program: SS. Cyril and Methodius Seminary, St. Mary's College and St. Mary's Preparatory.*

On a similar note, I ask you to consider showing your support by volunteering your time this year. The GWBHS Board encounters more project ideas and research requests than our current group of volunteers can accommodate. We are looking for additional volunteers to fill the following needs: research/project coordinator, research/project librarians and a guest information processor. The publicity, development, and homes tour committees all need support as well. Please contact Judy Kerr ([volunteer@gwbhs.org](mailto:volunteer@gwbhs.org) or 248-808-0893) to volunteer or to request further information.

As we look forward to building on the successes of the past 40 years, please continue your support of local history by renewing your membership. I ask that you also consider 40 for 40, an additional \$40 donation to help us in our goal to remain a vibrant, community-backed organization for the next 40 years.



*The GWBHS 2014 Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 25, features a presentation about the rich history of Orchard Lake Schools. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about the background of these educational institutions at a brunch on this historic campus. Tickets are on sale now through January 21 (\$15 includes brunch). For ticket sales, call 248.808.0893.*



*2014 members can receive a complimentary book "Song of the Heron: Reflections on the History of West Bloomfield" by Charles Martinez and a set of note cards at the annual meeting or at any Orchard Lake Museum event by presenting their 2014 membership cards.*

# January – April 2014 Events



Visit [gwbhs.org](http://gwbhs.org) for the latest event updates

## Annual Meeting & Orchard Lake Schools Rich History Presentation

*Saturday, January 25, 10 a.m.-noon. St. Mary's Dining Hall, Bldg. 15, Commerce Rd.*

40th anniversary annual meeting and recognition program followed by a presentation about the rich history of Orchard Lake Schools. \$15 includes brunch. Reservations by January 21 to 248-808-0893.

## Detroit Immigration: Past to Present

*Sunday, February 16, 2 p.m., WB Library Main Meeting Room, 4600 Walnut Lake Road*

Historian Greg Kowalski discusses the immigrant experience to metro-Detroit and highlighting its impact on Hamtramck. Sponsored with West Bloomfield Township Library. No charge.

## Volunteer Opportunities Meeting

*Saturday, March 1, 10 a.m., Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road*

Are you looking for flexible, interesting volunteer opportunities? Come learn our needs -- from one-time to long-term commitments. Planning begins now for Apple Island Tours, Historic Homes Tour and Vintage Fashions.

## Tatting 101

*Saturday, March 8, 10-11:30 a.m. & noon-1:30 p.m., Schulak Farm, 6889 West Maple Road*

Participants will learn shuttle tatting basic techniques with professional crafter DuAnne Sonnevile, making small flowers to decorate greeting cards. Sponsored with West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation. Class size limited to three. \$20 includes materials. Reservations by Feb. 22 to Judy 248.808.0893.

## Detroit: Early America's Frontier Seaport

*Sunday, March 30, 2 p.m., WB Library Main Meeting Room, 4600 Walnut Lake Road*

Detroit developed from a French fur-trade outpost to a thriving American port town. Historian Catherine Cangany, Ph.D., explores how Detroit's ties to the frontier made the city's stratospheric rise to prominence possible. Sponsored with West Bloomfield Township Library. No charge.

## Apple Island Spring Forum

*Wednesday, April 9, 7-9 p.m., Orchard Lake Community Church, 5171 Commerce Road*

Anthropologist LouAnn Wurst, Ph.D., shares findings and updates of the 2013 Western Michigan University Apple Island Archaeological Dig project. \$5.

## Spring Nature Walk

*Sunday, April 20, 2 p.m., Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary, on Pontiac Trail west of Old Orchard Trail*

Join Naturalist Carol Fink for a guided tour. Walk through rolling terrain and explore seasonal spring beauty. Sponsored with the Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary. No charge.





Models participate in Vintage Fashions on September 21, 2013. I-r Helen Jane Peters, Betty Bradbury, Deb Macon, Grace Gilbert, Melissa Gilbert, Annie Hunt



Rudy Ruzicka demonstrates military arms during Focus on the Civil War on October 12, 2013.



Girl Scout Troop 41320 opens Our Local Veterans with a flag ceremony on November 10, 2013. The girls also provided homemade cards to the veterans.



US military veterans attend Our Local Veterans on November 10, 2013 at West Bloomfield Library. I-r John Dagg, James Coates, Eric Wiegand, Alan Kerr, Pete Peters

## Thank You to GWBHS Volunteers!

GWBHS counts on the hard work of many dedicated volunteers throughout the year. Thank you to those who have recently helped out:

- Installing the new computer: Scott Gilbert
- Docents for Fall Group Tours: Gwynne and Jim Cherfoli, Carol Fink, Rob Gregory, Don Newman, Nancy Perkins, Steve Saponis, Larry Weisman
- Docents for Summer/Fall Open Houses: Gwynne and Jim Cherfoli, Bill McIsaac, Steve Saponis, Larry Weisman.
- Our Local Veterans: Gina Gregory, Rob Gregory, Alan Kerr, Judy Kerr, Helen Jane Peters, Pete Peters, Eric Wiegand and members of Girl Scout Troop 41320 (Madeline DeZell, Grace Gilbert, Eliana Levy, Alyson Rooke and Emily Sherry)
- Vintage Fashions: Elise Gregory, Gina Gregory, Carole Hovespian, Annie Hunt, Alan Kerr, Judy Kerr, Barb Krause, Mary Anne Lisac, Jeanne Miller, Helen Jane Peters
- Focus on the Civil War: Grace Gilbert, Melissa Gilbert, Alan Kerr, Judy Kerr, Lynn O'Brien, Helen Jane Peters



GWBHS President Gina Gregory presented at the West Bloomfield Public Library event *1938: What Was Life Like in West Bloomfield?* to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Library. View the video of the presentation at [civiccentertv.com/west-bloomfield-in-1938](http://civiccentertv.com/west-bloomfield-in-1938)

# GWBHS Historic Timeline

CELEBRATING **40** YEARS  
1974-2014



As Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society (GWBHS) celebrates its 40th anniversary (1974-2014), here is a look back at the history of the organization.

By the early 1970's, Orchard Lake and the many square miles surrounding it had become a sprawling suburbia, still scattered with reminders of its recent past as a community of farms and orchards. The days of trolleys, hotels and summer vacationers were a distant memory and no one lived on Apple Island anymore. It had been many generations since tribes of American Indians had called this land their home.

The development of the area inspired a small group of citizens "interested in preserving the scenic and historic values of the surrounding area." The Orchard Lake Scenic and Historical Society was formed on January 26, 1974 at Abbott School. Nine members of the Board of Directors were elected: the Rev. Walter J. Ziemba (president), Mel Rycus (vice president), Frances Gadd (secretary), Doris Bonneville (treasurer), General F. S. Strong, Jr., Rita Spiteri, Dr. Roger Garvelink, Agnes Patterson and 13-year-old Sam Stephen.

The longevity of the organization is a testament to the hard work and dedication of countless volunteers who treasure the stories and natural beauty of Greater West Bloomfield just as the OLSHS founders did in 1974.





# Timeline of the Society and Orchard Lake Museum



**1974**  
The Reverend Walter J. Ziemba and eight others form the Orchard Lake Scenic and Historical Society (OLSHS) on January 28, 1974.



**1976**  
OLSHS is active in area Bicentennial celebrations.



**1982**  
Gift shop items for sale include: 1870 Orchard Lake Polka, 1986 map, note cards and Scenic Historical Tour map.

**1987**  
City of Orchard Lake Village offers GWBHS a museum space and West Bloomfield Township contributes \$4,000. Donated items finally have a home and the group (now 100 members) has a permanent meeting space.

**1992**  
GWBHS gives residents of Orchard Lake Village free annual memberships in appreciation of their millage to purchase the Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary.



**1996**  
An outpouring of supportive letters from the community secures the renewal of the Museum's lease.

**1998**  
Keego Movie Theater artifacts donated.

**2000**  
The St. Francis Foundation of Michigan awards GWBHS with a grant.



**2004**  
"Song of the Heron: Reflections on the History of West Bloomfield" by Charles Martinez is published by GWBHS Press.



**2008**  
GWBHS participates in activities for West Bloomfield's 175th anniversary.

**2010**  
GWBHS creates a QR Code.



**2012**  
West Bloomfield Beacon begins publishing GWBHS events list three times yearly.

**1975**  
A logo is created to properly represent the growing organization.



**1978**  
The name of the Society changes to Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society (GWBHS) to better acknowledge the strong volunteer and financial support from the adjacent communities of Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake and West Bloomfield.

**1990**  
A rare 4,400 lb. conglomerate boulder is placed on the grounds of the Orchard Lake Museum.



**1991**  
Detroit artist Roy C. Gamble's painting, "Mary and Her Little Lamb," is relocated to the Museum from Whitfield School before its demolition.



**1995**  
A Westacres and Orchard Lake School/Joseph Tarr Copeland historical marker is erected.



**1997**  
West Bloomfield and Keego Harbor municipal support of GWBHS continues.

**1999**  
GWBHS hosts a 25th Anniversary Gala.

**2002**  
A page about GWBHS is posted on Wikipedia.org.



**2006**  
The Museum's renovation is featured in the Detroit Free Press.

**2009**  
Geocaching comes to Orchard Lake Museum.



**2011**  
GWBHS presents resolution strongly objecting to the renaming of Green Elementary School.

**2013**  
A \$10,000 grant from The St. Francis Foundation of Michigan funds Apple Island archaeological project.



## ‘Peal of the Bell’

GWBHS and West Bloomfield School District PTOs have joined forces to document and share the histories of the district’s schools. GWBHS volunteers put countless hours of research into recording these histories as part of the “Called By the Peal of the Bell” project. In 2014, these histories are to be shared in framed exhibits at each of the 10 schools. The PTOs are heading up the design and framing of the displays and the completed reports are available on the GWBHS web site.

Local interest in the project has been immense. You may have read about it in recent issues of West Bloomfield Beacon, Oakland Press and The Laker. Project organizers have reached out to the community for information and artifacts about the schools from the 1910s – 1950s. To share information or donate artifacts/photos, email Christy Forhan at [pealofthebell@gwbhs.org](mailto:pealofthebell@gwbhs.org) or call 248.757.2451.



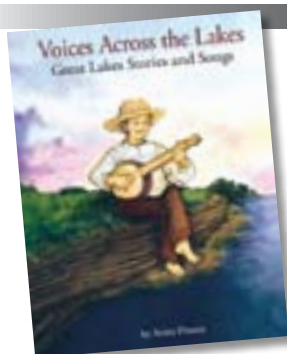
## New Year, New Exhibits

As part of the continuing effort to provide fresh perspectives on local history, new exhibits have been added at Orchard Lake Museum. The Exhibits Committee presents a variety of themes to suit a range of interests:

- ❑ West Bloomfield Early Pioneers & Curling is featured in the Innovators exhibit.
- ❑ West Bloomfield’s George Lawton is featured in the 1932 Winter Olympics Curling exhibit. Newspaper articles and personal memorabilia highlight how he led his team for this demonstration sport.
- ❑ An exhibit for the GWBHS 40th Anniversary displays memorabilia and archive binders.
- ❑ A guest exhibit by Helen Jane Peters shares her extensive doll and toy collection.



*in the NEWS*



### **Children’s Local History Book Receives Award**

*In November 2013, GWBHS Vice President Anita Pinson received the Moonbeam Children’s Book Awards Silver Medal for her book “Voices Across the Lakes: Great Lakes Stories and Songs.” The book was inspired by Anita’s love of music and local history. Congratulations, Anita!*



Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society  
 Orchard Lake Museum  
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Sue Williams	Treasurer
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Carol Fink	Corresponding Secretary
Helen Jane Peters	Historian/Membership
Bill McIsaac	Historian/Website
Melissa Gilbert	Museum Committee Chair

**Committee Chairs**

Don Newman	Group Programs
Hannah Dagg	History Matters Editor
Judy Kerr	Volunteer Coordinator
Christian Sonneville	Development Co-chair
Angela Cini	Historic Homes Tour

*Scan this QR  
 code to see  
 our website.*



**Membership Application**

Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society

Individual	\$20	Family	\$40
Senior Indiv.	\$15	Senior Couple	\$30
Premier	\$50	Patron/Business	\$100
Lifetime	\$600	Donation	\$___

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I support **40 for 40**, an additional \$40 donation to mark the 40th Anniversary of GWBHS, 1974 - 2014.

Membership year is January 1 to December 31.

Please make checks payable to GWBHS.  
 Mail to GWBHS: 3951 Orchard Lake Road  
 Orchard Lake MI 48323



Like  
 “Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society”  
 on Facebook for the latest updates  
 on our events and to learn how  
 you can get involved.

**GWBHS Mission Statement**

*The Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society is a non-profit organization that collects, preserves, researches and stimulates public interest in the history of West Bloomfield Township and the cities of Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake Village and Sylvan Lake.*

