



Winter 2013

History Matters

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



GWBHS leads effort to nominate Apple Island for Michigan and National Register of Historic Places

The Society is leading an effort to secure Michigan and National Register of Historic Places designations for 35-acre Apple Island in the center of Orchard Lake.



Dr. David Brose,
nationally known archaeologist

History of Summer Camps in West Bloomfield

1910-1960s, Sunday, March 17, 2 p.m.,
West Bloomfield Township Main Library
Meeting Room, no charge

Did you know that years ago the greater West Bloomfield area was the site of a number of summer camps? John and Patti Hartwig will talk about the Girls' Friendly Society Holiday House on Pine Lake, Helen Jane Peters will share personal reminiscences of the Detroit Free Press Fresh Air Camp on Sylvan Lake, and Joe Stieger will tell about Camp Tinega near Orchard Lake that he attended as a child.

In December GWBHS received a \$10,000 grant from the St. Francis Foundation of Michigan for the project. Also in December the West Bloomfield School Board, owners of Apple Island, granted GWBHS permission to seek the designations and for Western Michigan University (WMU) students to conduct an archaeological dig and survey in May under the supervision of nationally known archaeologists Dr. David Brose and Dr. LouAnn Wurst, WMU associate professor and chair of the Department of Anthropology. Stephen Damm, a WMU master's student and graduate assistant in archaeology, is the teaching assistant for the course.

The dig will run May 7 to 24.

GWBHS members are invited to save the dates for two dig-related events. On May 7 GWBHS will host an evening meet-and-greet with dig personnel and Native spiritual leader Gayle Joseph (Oji-Cree), elder and founder of the Cedar Water Healing Lodge. On May 23 there will be a wrap-up dinner and presentation on the dig's development. More details on both events will follow.

Those attending the May 18 and 19 Apple Island Tours for the public will be able to observe the dig.

The St. Francis Foundation is a charitable organization established and endowed in 1994 by Mary McSherry Ward for the benefit of organizations dedicated to preserving and protecting the natural environment and its early inhabitants.

Apple Island Spring Forum

Wednesday, April 10, 7-9 p.m.
Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian,
5171 Commerce Road

Don Moore, Education Manager of the Nokomis Learning Center, Native American Cultural Center in Okemos, MI, will speak about the history and culture of Michigan's first inhabitants and the life of Chief Okemos who some think was born on Apple Island. \$5 adults, children free.

Spring Wild Flower Walk

Sunday, April 21, 2-3 p.m.,
Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary on Pontiac Trail
west of Old Orchard Trail

Join Naturalists Carol Fink and Judy Graham for a tour through rolling terrain and explore breathtaking spring flowers. No charge.
Co-sponsored with the Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary.

Docent Training

Wednesday, May 15, 7-8 p.m.
Orchard Lake Museum,
3951 Orchard Lake Road

Would you like to lead tours on Apple Island or guide 2nd grade classes through the Orchard Lake Museum? Come see what it's all about. RSVP by Tuesday, May 14 to Gina Gregory, 248.661.5345.

Apple Island Tours

Saturday, May 18 & Sunday, May 19,
11-5 p.m. Orchard Lake Museum,
3951 Orchard Lake Road

Along with a guided tour of Apple Island, students from Western Michigan University will demonstrate their current archaeological work on the island. \$15 adults, \$10 children 12 years and under. Free for GWBHS members.



From the Desk of President Gina Gregory....



*Gina Gregory, new president
of the Greater West Bloomfield
Historical Society*

Energy and activities are bountiful at GWBHS! With more volunteers than ever before, in 2012 we were able to host 13 events for 500 people, Apple Island Tours for 430, and group programs for 550, including 415 school children who toured the museum and/or Apple Island. Open House attendance increased by 100 percent.

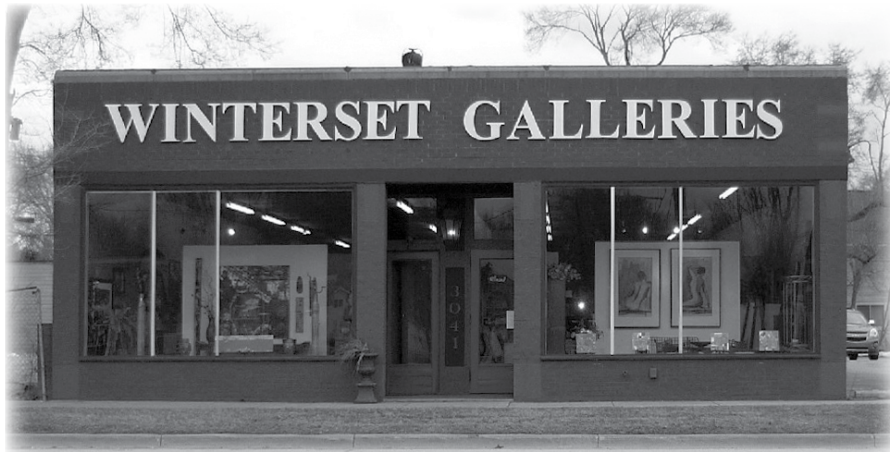
These efforts were spearheaded by former President Buzz Brown who last spring stepped aside, Vice President/Acting President Cara Kazanowski, Betty Bradbury who retired from the board after many years, and many others. I welcome Anita Pinson, retired Bloomfield Hills Schools teacher, to the GWBHS Board of Directors.

The Frances Gadd II Fund supported these special projects: pontoon boat repairs, computer and web upgrades, media projector purchase, Peal of the Bell research, exterior door purchase and Apple Island project consultation. Memberships hit a record high of 188 in 2012.

The Board's 2013 goals are to increase sustainability with more volunteers, donations and fundraising support, and to continue six initiatives: website redesign, collection storage improvements, Peal of the Bell, *Mary and her little Lamb* painting restoration, MotorCities National Heritage Area Wayside signs, and Apple Island Michigan and National Register of Historic Places designation.

In addition, the coming year is going to be an active one keeping local history alive with 15 public programs and other events. **History matters to the community, and we need your support!**

Keego Harbor's Winterset Galleries sells GWBHS maps, prints, books



Winterset Galleries, 2540 Orchard Lake Road, 248.681.8708

Winterset Galleries is selling a variety of items for the historical society, including reproductions of old maps, prints of Apple Island and Sylvan Lake photographs, and books, including "Song of the Heron," "Keep Your Eyes on Keego" and "Them were the Days," about the Michigan Military Academy.

"With the museum open only three hours monthly, we are happy to have a local retailer making these items easily available to the public," said GWBHS Board member Helen Jane Peters.



60 Members attend GWBHS Annual Meeting



GWBHS Board member Gina Gregory with Sebrina Borth



Joe Ketchum, WB Park Operations Superintendent and Cara Kazanowski, GWBHS Acting President



Joe Mancuso, Director of Adult Services; Ken Macon, Library Board of Trustees President; Cara Kazanowski GWBHS Acting President; Steve Ketchum, Westacres Branch Library Manager

The Society honored local individuals and organizations at the Annual Meeting on January 26 at Orchard Lake St. Mary's. Sebrina Borth and former president Buzz Brown received the society's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award.

Mrs. Borth was honored for her many years of service as Group Programs Coordinator, primarily coordinating the fall and spring tours of the Orchard Lake Museum and Apple island for elementary students.

Mr. Brown, active in the historical society for 15 years, including 10 years as president, was honored "for many years of creative leadership which served as a catalyst for expanding the understanding of and enthusiasm for the history of greater West Bloomfield."

Recognition for Outstanding Community Service honors were given to the West Bloomfield Township Library and West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation.

Parks & Recognition was cited "in appreciation for stimulating interest in nature and recreational activities" while the library was recognized "in appreciation for continually improving the lives of our community's residents."

Following the program, about 40 people watched the Polish Panorama of 100 wooden characters dramatizing the history of Poland from the earliest times to Pope John Paul II.



Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society Board Members and volunteers



More funds needed for restoring “Mary and her little Lamb”



In 1928, Mr. & Mrs. Charles Fisher, the architect for Daniel Whitfield School, commissioned Detroit artist Roy C. Gamble to paint the picture of “Mary and her little Lamb” that hung in the kindergarten room until 1991 when the building was closed.

The work was painted on canvas and then glued to the plaster on the wall with a very strong adhesive. When Whitfield School was closed in 1991, a group of people led by teacher Mrs. Carol Samuilow worked all summer to remove the painting from the wall. Without success, they called Jim Laarman from the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society for help. With a 10-pound mallet and a lot of sweat, he managed to remove the painting from the wall.

The painting has hung in the Orchard Lake Museum, run by GWBHS, since 1991.

Over the past year, the GWBHS has successfully negotiated an agreement with the Pontiac School District, the painting’s owner. The District would not give or sell the painting to the Society or the City of Sylvan Lake. However, the District did agree that the Society could restore the painting and move it to the lobby of the Sylvan Lake City offices.

“We are anxious to move the painting to the lobby of the Sylvan Lake City Hall,” said Helen Jane Peters, Sylvan Lake historian. “However, the painting needs a lot of restoration. Without restoration, the painting will continue to deteriorate.” There is still plaster on the back of the canvas and holes in the painting. Alfred Ackerman from the Detroit Institute of Arts has agreed to perform the restoration for between \$3,000 and \$3,800. This cost does not include the cost of a frame, which will be necessary to properly display this wonderful painting. We have collected more than \$2,500 to date and a total of \$3,000 is needed for Mr. Ackerman to begin the restoration.

“We really need your help to make this happen,” said Mrs. Peters. “Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to GWBHS earmarked for the restoration of the painting. We can assure you that your gift will be used 100% toward this good cause and that your name will be included on a donor list to be displayed next to the painting in its new location.”

Please make your check payable to: “GWBHS” and write “Mary Restoration Fund” in the memo portion of the check. Then send your check to GWBHS, 3951 Orchard Lake Road, Orchard Lake, MI 48323.



MotorCities Wayside signs show local transportation history

SYLVAN LAKE INN

The Dream of Merrill B. Mills




"He and other Detroiters were full of enthusiasm over the project of establishing a great summer resort..."
October 27, 1903
newspaper article



Merrill B. Mills had many plans in the early 1890s for his land around Sylvan Lake. His Sylvan Lake Improvement Association developed lakeside subdivisions and a resort hotel. He hired architect W. B. Stratton to design a resort hotel. The Sylvan Lake Inn was built in 1893 on this Point, including a dance pavilion, bowling alley, billiard parlor and riding stables. To make it easier to visit, in 1895 Mills built an electric trolley line along Garland Avenue linking the Inn to Pontiac. Festivities were followed by financial difficulties, and the Inn burned to the ground in 1903.



Merrill B. Mills, 1891. He was born in Detroit in 1854, and gained wealth through leadership and investment in many industries, including shoes, tobacco and insurance. He was an advocate for children's welfare, reflected in his family's donation of the Sylvan Lake Inn property to the Detroit Free Press Fresh Air Camp in 1906. Photo courtesy of the Detroit Historical Commission.



One of the hallways of the Porcine & Sylvan Lake Railway, founded by Merrill B. Mills, on daily trips from Pontiac to Sylvan Lake. Photo courtesy of the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society.



Today's Sylvan Lake Community Center opened in 2008 on the former site of the Sylvan Lake Inn and Detroit Free Press Fresh Air Camp.



The Porcine Drive Bridge that carried visitors to the Inn in 1895 is still in use today.

YOU AUTO KNOW

"The Inn was the most convenient and charming resort an hour's ride from Detroit." The Detroit Free Press, 1896.

Above and below are example of the colorful Wayside signs that will be placed around Sylvan Lake.

NEW LIFE FOR CHILDREN

at the Detroit Free Press Fresh Air Camp




They needed and got a good dose of being wanted. The Detroit Free Press began the Fresh Air Camp in 1906 to give underprivileged Detroit children the experience of two weeks of recreation in the countryside. Most were on their first trip away from home, their first rides in new modes of transportation – interurban trolleys, automobiles, boats – which brought them to a whole new world in only an hour. Until 1962 the camp gave children swimming, fresh air, fun and good food. Generations of Detroit residents shared in play and entertainment with the visiting children.



"The essentials of honesty, decency, cleanliness and order, were inculcated in with the air of an eagle when imperious go down."

Memoir of Fresh Air Camp participant (in 1941) letter to Detroit Free Press



YOU AUTO KNOW

In 1908, the Detroit Free Press encouraged kids to "set up a table in a piece of paper and send a post card to camp."



The Society was invited to convert its temporary "trolley" signs on the West Bloomfield Trail to permanent ones through the MotorCities National Heritage Area project, a branch of the National Park Service program administered by the Michigan Department of Transportation.

Some 300 "Wayside" exhibits, measuring 2 by 3 feet, are going up all over southeast Michigan to chronicle automotive and railway transportation.

Locally, the Oakland County's Community & Economic Development Department is overseeing the program. Board members Cara Kazanowski, Helen Jane Peters and Sue Williams are working with the West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation staff and others to create 15 signs for Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake and the West Bloomfield that will be installed in 2013.



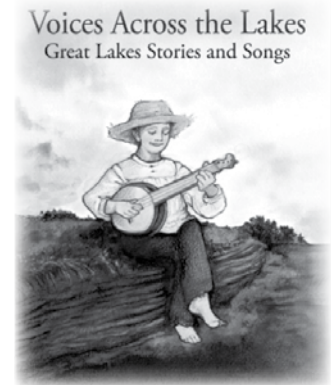
New children's history and song book



Author Anita Pinson

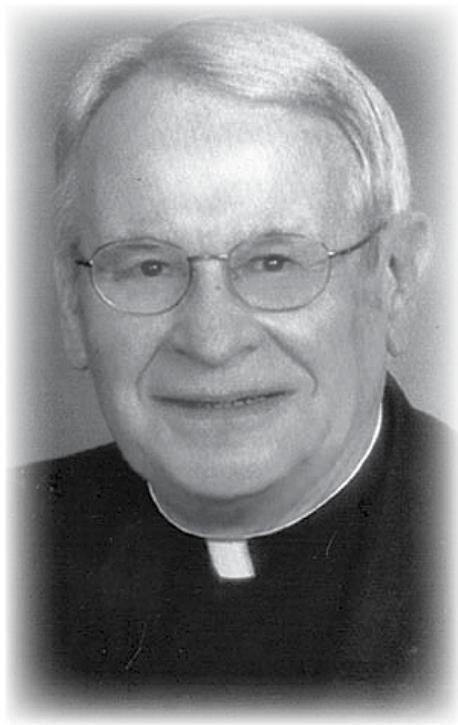
Local author and GWBHS board member Anita Pinson has just published a book, "Voices Across the Lakes Great Lakes Stories and Songs." As a teacher and musician, Mrs. Pinson weaves together original stories and authentic songs to highlight moments that helped shape the country's heartland. The courage and greatness of our past are described in these pages that encourage children to learn and sing, and to share with others.

This book is geared for children, families and teachers with beautiful four-color illustrations. Audio also is available on the website: voicesacrossthelakes.com.



**"Voices Across the Lakes
Great Lakes Stories and Songs"
book cover**

Msgr. Walter Ziemba



**Msgr. Walter Ziemba
(1926-2012)**

Monsignor Walter Ziemba, first president of the historical society, died at age 86 on June 8, 2012, in a Petoskey hospital, near the family farm in Charlevoix where he had lived since he left Orchard Lake Schools in Orchard Lake, MI.

One of nine founding members of the Board of Directors of the Orchard Lake Scenic and Historical Society on January 26, 1974, Msgr. Ziemba was elected its first president.

He was Orchard Lake through and through, graduating with highest honors from St. Mary's Preparatory in 1944 and St. Mary's College in 1947. After his ordination by the Archdiocese of Detroit in 1951, Msgr. Ziemba was appointed to the St. Mary's faculty and never left the staff, eventually serving as rector-president of the Orchard Lake Schools from 1967 to 1977.

During his tenure he established the Center for Polish Studies and Culture, the Center for Pastoral Studies, the Polish American Liturgical Center and the Orchard Lake Ambassadors.



Updated website with digitized archives to be available at new www.gwbhs.org



After three years of planning, the GWBHS Museum Collections and Website Committee members have begun a new three-part plan to offer 100% of its historical archives to the public through an updated website.

According to Chair William McIsaac, “The Orchard Lake Museum, which houses the society’s collection, is open three hours per month to the general public, which severely limits access to 200-plus years of local history. We made the decision to make the museum collection available 24/7 from anywhere in the world.”

Phase one, which started in Fall 2012, began with the revamping of the existing website and includes a new web address at www.gwbhs.org.

“Thanks to developer Sebastian Tkaczyk of Press Web Design, the new website programming allows the existing PastPerfect digital archives, previously not online, to be easily transferred,” said Mr. McIsaac. “Together we designed a simplified Excel spreadsheet to institute a quick, universal archive style that works for both old and new data as the online archive continues to grow.”

Phase two of the plan, which also began in the fall, is the conversion of some 30-plus years of handwritten records to the new digitized format. Volunteer Molly Rozycki has painstakingly sifted through several acquisition books and added nearly a thousand accessions to date. These records can be expected to be available online in the next several months.

Phase three will include a re-inventory of the Orchard Lake Museum. The inventory plan will include the photographing of the many items housed in the collection. Then each photograph is merged with its corresponding accession in the online database.

“We know this is not an overnight process and will take much time and many more hours. Currently several options are being explored to bring phase three to reality,” said Mr. McIsaac. “More volunteers, college interns or even a part-time museum employee are all possible ideas on the table to aid in expediting phase three.”

As of January 2013, research on the GWBHS website can now be done through the collections, gallery, database and most importantly, keyword search. Anyone with an Excel database that relates to the greater West Bloomfield area who would like to contribute to the growing archive should contact Mr. McIsaac at wmcisaac@gwbhs.org.

Check out gwbhs.org often for event updates, historical features, current newsletters and items available at the museum store. Other areas of interest include memoirs, research articles, pocket professors and the ever-popular zoomable maps.





Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society
Orchard Lake Museum
Phone 248.757.2451
3951 Orchard Lake Road
Orchard Lake MI 48323

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Board of Directors

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Cara Kazanowski	Vice President / Newsletter
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Carol Fink	Corresponding Sec. / Apple Island
Helen Jane Peters	Historian / Membership
Bill McIsaac	Museum Collections / Newsletter

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code to see
visit our
website.*



Twitter @gwbhs

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: _____

Please contact me to volunteer. _____

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

GWBHS needs you....

Volunteers needed: Local history remains alive through the work of volunteers. Here are the areas in which we need help.

- ***Apple Island Tours May 18 and 19: Set up/take down, registration table, general volunteers at the museum, and island docents.***
- Buildings and grounds: gardening, museum cleaning
- Development: fundraisers, sponsorships and grant proposals
- Museum Collections: filing, exhibits
- Newsletter: editor, writers
- Programs: hospitality, process evaluations, event host

Contact: Gina Gregory, gina@gwbhs.org or 248.661.5345

