



Fall 2015

# History Matters

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



Gina Gregory, courtesy of Michigan Week

## Leadership Award for GWBHS President

GWBHS President Gina Gregory was presented with a Lifetime Volunteer Leadership Award at the Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Awards Breakfast on May 15, 2015. This award "...salutes an individual who makes a special contribution to the community through dedicated leadership on projects that benefit the community at large." Congratulations to Gina on this well-deserved award!

## Save the Date for Annual Meeting

The GWBHS 2016 Annual Meeting will take place Saturday, January 30 from 10 AM until noon at the dining hall on the St. Mary's campus. This year's event will include a review of 2015 and a presentation of early area photos. Find more details on the enclosed events page.

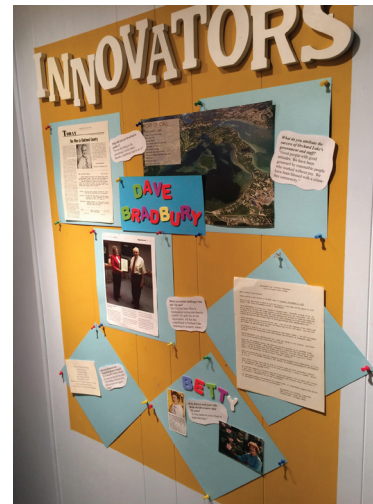
## Dave Bradbury Presented With Orchard Lake Proclamation

After many years of service to the City of Orchard Lake Village, David (Dave) Bradbury has resigned from the Planning Commission, and so was honored with a proclamation by the city. Many may know Dave as the volunteer who has demonstrated the grinding wheel during GWBHS events.

The City recognized that "...his efforts with the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society have provided a lasting contribution to the community." Additionally, Dave was recognized for his work on the City Planning Commission and as Mayor. The proclamation concluded "...NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Orchard Lake Village hereby recognizes and commends David Bradbury for his excellence in service, devotion to the community, and numerous volunteer hours."



(left) Dave Bradbury demonstrates the grinding wheel at Orchard Lake Museum  
(right) Current *Innovators* exhibit at Orchard Lake Museum



## Bell Tower Dedicated at Roosevelt Elementary

As part of the celebration of Roosevelt School's 95th anniversary during the 2014-15 school year, a bell tower and historic area school bell were erected in front of the school. The bell tower dedication took place on May 8, 2015 and was attended by West Bloomfield School District officials, staff, students and other members of the community. GWBHS President Gina Gregory spoke about "The History of the Bell."

Photo courtesy of Bill Bertakis.

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

*Yes! Our community embraces local history!*

My last President's letter raised the question: "Does our community value local history?" Now we have evidence that it does! In May, the Roosevelt School community mounted an old school bell on their lawn (more on page 1). Then, in July, Oak Hill Beach Club celebrated its 100th anniversary with a community party (see page 5). Finally, citizens interested in supporting our mission to preserve local history, joined us for a series of strategic planning sessions moderated by Farmington historian Brian Golden.

GWBHS and community members met three times to look deeply at what excites the community and to formulate strategic goals for 2016 and beyond. We examined current concerns and set goals in four focus areas: a strengthened board; a vibrant museum; education and volunteers. In addition to the need for financial support, we need active volunteers to achieve these goals. Support GWBHS efforts by donating funds or your time today!

Don't miss these great fall events!

- A late morning presentation during brunch about the Michigan Military Academy, housed on the Orchard Lake Schools campus, will take place on **Saturday, October 10**. Come learn the fascinating history of an important institution in our area!
- Monthly Open Houses at Orchard Lake Museum are **the second Sunday of each month**. Do you have a historical collection you are willing to share? GWBHS hosts guest collections and exhibits so community members can share their personal historical interests! We find history is always most interesting when you see its connection to people. Do you have grandparent mementos you'd like to share? I hope so. We'd like for the Orchard Lake Museum to be a hub of activity with new exhibits often! I'll be sharing my great-uncle's WWI mementos in November.

## *Recent Events*

GWBHS could not provide so many great programs without the help of our wonderful volunteers. Thank you to those who have recently given their time and helped out!

April Nature Walk: Carol Fink, Karen Faett, Sue Murphy, Tanya Sharon



Apple Island Tours: Ella Baker, Betty Bradbury, Dave Bradbury, Steve Briggs, Mikki Chase, Ye Chen, Angela Cini, Liam Collins, Hannah Dagg, Diane Eanes, Jacob Eanes, Nora Feinberg, Carol Fink, Christy Forhan, Oneil Franso, Grace Gilbert, Melissa Gilbert, Scott Gilbert, Shealyn Gilbert, Gina Gregory, Rob Gregory, Glen King, John Linemeyer, Anita MacSorley, Bill McIsaac, Jeanne Miller, Steve Missaghi, Phyllis Berryman-Missaghi, Don Newman, Heather Rae, Molly Rozycki, Diane Santia, Christian Sonnevile, DuAnne Sonnevile, Eric Weigand, Larry Weisman, Sue Williams, Josephine Wu

National Trail Day: Ye Chen, Bozena Chumeicki, Diane Eanes, John Line-meyer, Larry Weisman

Keego Skate Night: Diane Eanes, Tanya Sharon

WBHS Family Night: Christy Forhan, Gina Gregory, Tanya Sharon

Vintage Fashion: Karen Faett, Gina Gregory, Barb Krause, Tanya Sharon, Kat White, Sue Williams

Open Houses: Bill McIsaac, Diane Eanes, DuAnne Sonnevile, Gwynne Cherfoli, Jim Cherfoli, Molly Rozycki, Sue Murphy





# Celebrating Milestones

The group Surveying Michigan is celebrating 200 years in 2015 since the initial points of baseline and meridian were determined for the state. Learn more about their October 11 event at <http://1815surveyingmichigan.weebly.com> or on their Facebook page "1815 Surveying Michigan".



Many community groups have recently reached major milestones. Countryside Improvement Association and Oakland County Boat Club celebrated their 100th anniversaries. Does your neighborhood have a significant anniversary coming up? Let us know at [contact@gwbhs.org](mailto:contact@gwbhs.org).

## Oak Hill Beach Club Celebrates 100 Years

*The Oak Hill Beach Club is a 7-unit vacation home on Cass Lake, built in 1915 by Samuel Abelson of Maybury Grand Ave in Detroit. Members celebrated the Club's 100 years with a birthday party on July 11, 2015.*



by Jane L. Stern and Leslie A. Clark,  
Generations 3 and 4 of the family in Unit #7

In the early months of 1915, seven families met at a home on Pacific Avenue in Detroit. They all belonged to the Grand River Methodist Church on McGraw, later to become the Nardin Park M. E. Church, and all lived within a couple of miles of that church. They met to establish the Oak Hill Beach Club as a corporation, and to pool their money for the building of a unique summer cottage for their families in the up-and-coming resort area of Cass Lake.

For the summer of 1915, the families camped on the site while the building was erected. Marion Wells was 7 years old and recalled starting the trip on the Interurban at Grand River and Mc-

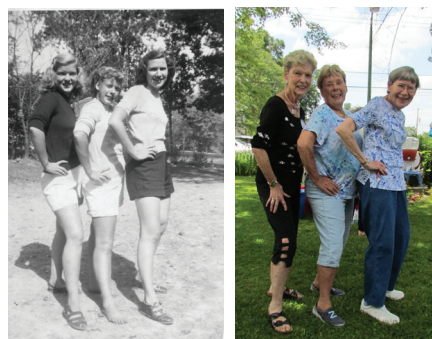
Graw, picking up members along the way. Popcorn was a treat on the long ride to Keego Harbor. From Strong's Landing, a boat service carried them to the property on the north shore of Cass Lake. They lived in tents and cooked on kerosene stoves that summer. The children carried water in assorted pails from Mr. Watchpocket's farm, spilling half of it along the way. The building was finished by that fall, with seven attached units, a style referred to as a 'terrace'.



Oak Hill Beach Club building viewed from the dock, circa 1930s.

In subsequent years, the women and children packed up and stayed for the summer, while the men commuted from the city for the weekends in one car. A boat from Strong's carried them between Keego Harbor and the cottage on Friday and Sunday nights. A well was dug; a dock and steps down the hill were added; a screened porch and a breakwater were the cause of much

debate. Electricity came to the neighborhood in 1923. Cars became common and a parking lot was added. Later, a new outhouse with flush toilets was built.



Dorothy (Garrison) Cleaver, Jane (Morriss) Stern and Marilyn (Throop) McCreedy at the OHBC, circa 1949 (left) and at the centennial celebration on July 11, 2015 (right).

That outhouse is now on the city sewer, but there is still no running water inside the units. This is no longer 'Up North', and

people no longer travel from the city. Instead they live close by and come for the day or the weekend or just for dinner. Several of our families have owned their units for many decades, including the Gizas in Unit 6, the Clarks in Unit 2, and the Rowlands in Unit 3. Unit 7, belonging to Jane and Burton Stern, has been continuously owned by descendants of the original members, John and Grace Wells.



# Greater West Bloomfield

Keego Harbor • Orchard Lake • Sylvan Lake • West Bloomfield

## Historical Society



### SEPTEMBER 2015 - JANUARY 2016 EVENTS

Final details will be listed in the History Matters newsletter and at [gwbhs.org](http://gwbhs.org)

#### Michigan Military Academy Morning\*

*Saturday, October 10, 9 a.m. - noon, St. Mary's Dining Hall, Bldg. 15, Commerce Rd.*

MMA author Brian Bohnett and renowned archaeologist Liam Collins share their perspectives and recently found artifacts from the 1880-1905 military prep school known as the "West Point of the West." Also includes commentary from Marcin Chumiecki and JJ Przewozniak of The Polish Mission. Event includes brunch, presentations, artifacts exhibits, and MMA focused guided campus tours. \$15 per person. Prepayment by Oct. 7. Contact [rsvp@gwbhs.org](mailto:rsvp@gwbhs.org) or 248.518.0871 with questions. Sponsored with West Bloomfield Parks & Recreation Commission. Prepayment at [www.gwbhs.org/events](http://www.gwbhs.org/events).

#### Autumn Nature Walk

*Sunday, October 18, 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 autumn seasonal beauty. Sponsored with the Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary and Orchard Lake Village. No charge.

#### 2016 Annual Meeting and Early Area Photos Presentation\*

*Saturday, January 30, 10 a.m. - noon. St. Mary's Dining Hall, Bldg. 15, off Commerce Rd.*

Annual meeting and presentation by Dave Walls. \$15, includes brunch. Prepayment by January 26. Contact [rsvp@gwbhs.org](mailto:rsvp@gwbhs.org) or 248.518.0870 with questions.

#### Monthly Open Houses

*Second Sundays, 1-4 p.m., Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road*

Enjoy temporary and permanent exhibits interpreting area history and culture. Occasionally guest presenters share their interests. No charge.

Featured topic at upcoming Open House:

#### World World I Mementos

*November 8, 1-4p.m.*

Speaker Gina Gregory will share her great-uncle's mementos from World War I. See the photos, souvenirs, personal notes and songs of a soldier from the Army 321 Supply Company unit from his time in France, as the war ended (1918-19).

\*Prepayment at [www.gwbhs.org/events](http://www.gwbhs.org/events)

Connect with Us!

[gwbhs.org](http://gwbhs.org)

Twitter @gwbhs

248.757.2451



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Orchard Lake MI 48323

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### Board of Directors

Gina Gregory	President
Anita Pinson	Vice President & Recording Secretary
Sue Williams	Treasurer
DuAnne Sonnevile	Membership
Carol Fink	Corresponding Secretary
Helen Jane Peters	Historian
Melissa Gilbert	Museum Committee Chair
Hannah Dagg	History Matters Editor
Diane Eanes	Volunteer Coordinator

### Committee Chairs

Don Newman	Group Programs
Christian Sonnevile	Development Co-chair
Christy Forhan	Our School History Project Chair

*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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*The Oak Hill Beach Club on Cass  
Lake recently celebrated 100 years.  
Learn more about this historic  
building inside.*



### GWBHS Mission Statement

*The Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that collects, preserves, researches and stimulates public interest in the history of Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake and West Bloomfield.*