

History Matters



Keego Harbor • Orchard Lake • Sylvan Lake • West Bloomfield

Newsletter of Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society

FALL 2023 | MEMORIAL SAVED | 50TH ANNIVERSARY | IN MEMORIAM GLEN KING | E. LEROY PELLETIER | SOCIETY PROGRAMS & NEWS

Memorial Saved

On the south side of Walnut Lake Road, on the site of the former Walnut Lake Elementary, a forgotten "Peace Memorial" was threatened with demolition. Through an interesting sequence of events, it was rediscovered, cleaned, reborn, and now saved!

West Bloomfield residents Steve Kay and Bert Green had driven by the site hundreds of times but didn't know what it was or anything about it. Upon closer inspection in Spring of 2023 they realized it was some type of memorial; covered by growth and weeds. There was a plaque with an engraving, a flagpole with no flag, and a small fence in need of repair.

Without thinking about it, they decided to clean it. Early one Sunday morning they brought gardening tools and went to work, cutting down trees and weeds. They trimmed and mowed as the memorial slowly revealed itself. They saw that it was dedicated in 1972 by the Walnut Lake Women's Club. Although neglected, it was overall in good condition. They went to the hardware store across the street and bought some materials to repair the fence, some spray paint, and an American Flag.

What they didn't know is that the site had been purchased and everything was going to be demolished including the memorial since no one knew what it was.



Before



After

As they finished their work. Bert hooked up the new flag on the old pole and rope and slowly raised the flag, for perhaps the first time in decades! When the flag reached the top of the pole, the rope snapped! The flag should've crashed to the ground, but it didn't. The rope somehow wrapped around the pole and made a little knot, and the flag is still flying months later.

Bert and Steve worked with West Bloomfield Township and the new owners of the property and all parties agreed to let the memorial stand.

The inscription on the memorial reads:

*They spoke, I think of perils past
They spoke, I think of peace at last
One thing I remember
Spring came on forever*

They hope to have a rededication ceremony on Veterans Day, November 11, 2023.

Bert Green

Save the Date: 50th Anniversary!

Come celebrate our 50th Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 27, 2024, from 10 am - 12 pm at the Polish Institute! Director John Radzilowski will give a campus update and tour of the 1880s and 2022 classroom buildings. 2024 member door prize drawings. Make brunch reservations by January 23 at contact@gwbhs.org or (248) 518-0871. Polish Institute of Culture & Research at Orchard Lake Schools program partner.



Your Membership Support is Important!

Membership policies and benefits have been reviewed and there are exciting changes planned for the upcoming year.

Our annual collaboration with the West Bloomfield School District for Apple Island Tours is one of the most popular events offered by GWBHS. We anticipate resuming these tours in 2024 (after a four-year hiatus). Your 2024 membership will allow you the benefit of reserving an estimated tour-group departure time! An "Individual" membership level would allow for only one reserved estimated departure time; memberships at other levels would allow for up to six. Those attending the tour without a membership nor a reserved estimated departure time will be scheduled on a first come/first served basis. More information about this benefit will follow in future newsletters.

A reminder of other benefits of membership:

- Free mailed GWBHS History Matters newsletter.
- Free online reservations for some GWBHS programs.
- Invitation to the Appreciation Reception.
- Free participation in Time Travelers, a reciprocal membership network (TimeTravelers.MOhistory.org). More than 400 participating history museums, sites, and societies across 45 states extend member benefits such as free admission and gift shop discounts.
- Free access to Zoom History Hounds Historical Society of Michigan lectures.
- Investment in our community by supporting GWBHS educational programs, Orchard Lake Museum, and our Mission of enriching our communities by collecting, preserving, and sharing history in Keego Harbor, Orchard Lake, Sylvan Lake, and West Bloomfield.

"Thank You" for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you at a future event!

Karen Pushie, Membership Chairperson



From the Desk of President Gina Gregory

When I "look back while moving forward," I see the passage of time for the Society and myself. Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society will CELEBRATE ITS 50th ANNIVERSARY IN 2024! Volunteers are planning new fundraising activities, historical projects to spark community interest, special programs, and more. That's a lot, while maintaining regular collection activities, community event participation, open house hours, media communications, museum exhibits, newsletters, programs, and research. From what I see there aren't any historical groups of our size who are as active.

In 2024 I will begin my 12th and final year as a very active president. New leadership will be needed in 2025 to maintain the level of service GWBHS volunteers have given the community. I will volunteer but not as a very active leader.

How will GWBHS move forward for the next 50 years? For the Society to survive and thrive, the organization needs more support. Guided by Strategic Plans, committees have been looking to increase the organization's strength and sustainability. More volunteers are needed. Only with funding changes can additional staff time provide leadership.

Can the greater West Bloomfield community give more support to GWBHS? Currently, we see donations, fundraising, grants, and memberships as the most viable opportunities. We appreciate the City of Orchard Lake Village's support of the Orchard Lake Museum and see it as viable for now. Please support YOUR community's local history as YOU are able. Consider a donation of support at Silver to Diamond levels! Donate online at [GWBHS.org](https://www.gwbhs.org)!

Stay tuned for activities, programs, and new resources in 2024. Only Society members will receive mailed newsletters. Renew your membership now! Click on "Join Our eClub" at [GWBHS.org](https://www.gwbhs.org) to receive GWBHS emails!

Summer Activities 2023

Many collection donations were received and the Research Committee answered nine information requests!



Memorial Day Parade carriage debut!



Waiting for Appreciation Reception raffle prizes!

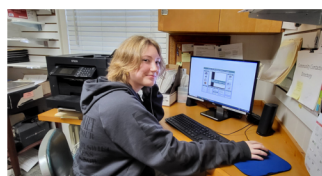


Presenters at Pine Lake Marina Tour!



Tim Pawl shared some of his extensive automotive knowledge!

Updates from Shelby Nelsen Museum & Communications Assistant



Volunteer Lynn Barber enters collection information into PastPerfect

Since March, I have been working with a group of nine volunteers to add photographs and documents to GWBHS's digital collection database which is available free online with these new additions at [GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com](https://www.gwbhs.org/PastPerfectOnline.com).

Volunteers have been doing an amazing job and have digitized over 700 items so far! The project continues through the end of September thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan. If you are interested in doing this kind of work, please contact me at snelsen@gwbhs.org to set up a time for you to come in.

Updated Research Request Form

GWBHS has had a lot of research questions and requests over the past few months. With a newly updated form we will be better able to research questions. Before submitting a request, please read the ["Research Request Policy"](#) for an overview of the process and what you can expect. Then fill out the ["Research Request Form"](#)



Tim Pawl researching in archives

online via our ["Research Request Google Form"](#) or print and mail it to Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Rd., Orchard Lake, MI 4832. If you leave a voicemail at (248) 757-2451, we will call you back and fill out the form with you over the phone. On this form, we will collect your contact information and details about your request. Please fill out this form with as much detail and information as possible, in order for us to help best answer your questions.

You will be contacted when your initial Research Request Form has been processed, which may take up to seven days. At this time, GWBHS may need to collect additional information to complete your request, see if a Research Fee is needed for in-depth assistance, or set up an appointment for you to view requested research materials.

Volunteer Needs

We are looking for Museum Open House Hosts! These volunteers greet and help visitors during our regular Open Houses each month. We will provide training to make sure you are comfortable with all tasks associated with hosting. If you are interested in regularly volunteering for this position email snelsen@gwbhs.org or leave a message at (248) 757-2451.

Development & Fundraising Committee Updates

Christian Sonnevile attended an informational grant writing workshop offered by MotorCities National Heritage Area. Christian and Shelby Nelsen submitted grant proposals totaling over \$70,000. While we've learned it's difficult to read between the application lines, we were successful with two applications for \$9,100 and \$2,500, and we hope to be successful with a few more in 2023.

2023 Programs

September - December



Greater
West Bloomfield
Historical Society

Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society hosts and sponsors programs covering a wide variety of history topics throughout the year. Visit GWBHS.org for more information and final event details.

Antique Saws Collection Open House

Sunday, September 10, 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum | 3951 Orchard Lake Road

See an extensive antique saw collection with a saw dating to 1890. Jerry McManus began collecting in the Tawas area, an area rich in lumbering-history.

Tour Orchard Lake Museum with Docent

Thursday, September 14, 1:30-2:30 pm

Orchard Lake Museum | 3951 Orchard Lake Road

Meet at the Orchard Lake Museum for a guided small group tour with a Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society docent. See new exhibits about our municipalities, Albert Kahn, our schools, and first responders. Sponsored with WB Parks. Must register at WBParks.org.



Presentation: "Where History and Genealogy Meet: The Dash Between the Dates Presentation"

Monday, September 25, 7 pm

WB Library Main Meeting Room,
4600 Walnut Lake Road

Our ancestors are more than their birth, marriage, and death dates! Family historian and professional genealogist Judy Muhn shares perspectives on ways history, artifacts, stories, and documentation inform the larger stories of our families. Sponsored with West Bloomfield Library. Free admission, donations appreciated.



Mrs. Butterworth Bottle Collection Open House

Sunday, October 8, 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum

3951 Orchard Lake Road

Kyle Staulter shares their collection of unique Mrs. Butterworth syrup bottles and related folk art. Free admission, donations appreciated.



Underground RR "Flight to Freedom" Tour & Lunch

Thursday, October 19, 10 am- 1:45 pm

4640 Walnut Lake Road

The Underground Railroad "Flight to Freedom" tour is a storytelling re-enactment of the passage to freedom at the First Congregational in Detroit. West Bloomfield Parks' Community Transit bus pickup and return is available for this trip. Call 248-706-2411 to schedule your ride. Sponsored with WB Parks. Register at WBParks.org.

Open House Dates 1-4 pm (closed holiday weekends or when a program is elsewhere). Come see new permanent exhibits interpreting local history and culture! *Free Admission, Donations Appreciated.*

September

Sunday: 9/10, 9/24

Friday: 9/15

October

Sunday: 10/1, 10/8, 10/29

Friday: 10/20

November

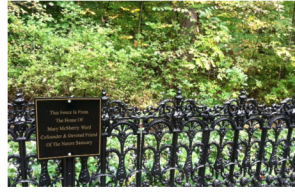
Sunday: 11/5, 11/12

Friday: 11/17

December

Sunday: 12/3, 12/10

Friday: 12/15



Autumn Nature Walk

Sunday, October 22, 2-3 pm

Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary

4700 Pontiac Trail

Join Naturalist Carol Fink for a guided tour. Walk through rolling terrain and explore seasonal autumn beauty.

Sponsored with the City of Orchard Lake Village. Free admission, donations appreciated.



Heroes Appreciation Breakfast

Wednesday, November 7, 8-10:30 am

West Bloomfield Middle School

6000 Orchard Lake Road

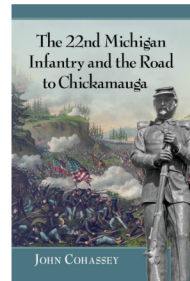
Come visit our exhibit at this year's Heroes Breakfast! Learn more at WBParks.org.

Military Collection Open House

Sunday, November 12, 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum | 3951 Orchard Lake Road

See our military gear, newspaper articles, photos, uniforms from WWI, WWII, and Korean War. Share/donate your family military memories and objects. Free admission, donations appreciated.



Presentation: "The 22nd Michigan Infantry and the Road to Chickamauga"

Thursday, November 9, 7 pm

WB Library Main Meeting Room

4600 Walnut Lake Road

"The 22nd Michigan Infantry and the Road to Chickamauga" author John Cohassey will share some of our Civil War soldiers' challenges and experiences, with information about soldiers buried at Pine Lake Cemetery, West Bloomfield. Free admission, donations appreciated.

Sponsored with West Bloomfield Library.



Volunteers Opportunities Meeting

Wednesday, December 6, 7 pm

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. We need volunteers looking to make a difference in our community and help keep our unique local history alive! No charge.



Hand-crafted Christmas Open House

Sunday, December 10 1-4 pm

Orchard Lake Museum | 3951 Orchard Lake Road

Learn the history of various handicrafts, from knitting, crocheting, macrame, applique, and more with DuAnne Sonnevile. Holiday decorations of each of these crafts will be on display. Free admission, donations appreciated.

Thank You for Supporting GWBHS!

GWBHS could not do so much good work without the help of our wonderful volunteers.
Thank you to those who have recently given their time and helped out.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Hannah Dagg, Gina Gregory, Neil Hepburn, Sylvia Houlahan,
Linda Kidd, Kathy Peltier, & Karen Pushie

COMMUNITY EVENT SPEAKER

Helen Jane Peters

GWBHS GREATER WEST BLOOMFIELD COMMUNITY AWARDS BREAKFAST COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Karen Pushie, Awards Cochair,
Helen Jane Peters, DuAnne Sonnevile, & Susan K. Williams

MATERIALS DISTRIBUTION

Sylvia Houlahan & Kathy Peltier

EXHIBIT VOLUNTEERS

Hannah Dagg, Chair,
Gina & Rob Gregory, Helen Jane Peters,
DuAnne Sonnevile, & Susan K. Williams

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE VOLUNTEERS

Apollo Gray, Athena Gray, Joyce Zhang Gray, Isla Hepburn,
Neil Hepburn, Carter Klumb, Matt Klumb, Michael Pierz,
Karen Pushie, Christian Sonnevile, DuAnne Sonnevile,
Kendrin Sonnevile, & Julie Zhu

Behind the scenes: Kevin Douglass, Rob Gregory,
Michael Pierz, Christian Sonnevile, & Susan K. Williams

PRESENTATION & OPEN HOUSE PRESENTERS

Carol Fink, Ron Gay, Brian Golden, Sue Grifor, Neil Hepburn,
Ron Hodess, & Tim Pawl

OPEN HOUSE DOCENTS

Hannah Dagg, Gina & Rob Gregory, Kathy Peltier,
Karen Pushie, & Derek Schraffenberger

PROGRAM PARTNERS

City of Orchard Lake Village
St. Mary's Preparatory
West Bloomfield Library
West Bloomfield Parks

APPRECIATION RAFFLE DONATIONS

Gino's Italian Restaurant
Great Harvest Bread Co.
Hite Photo
Petite Gardens
Stage Deli Fine Foods
Trader Joe's
Julie Zhu

EXHIBIT SPONSORS

Pat and Glen King, 2021
Tom Bjorklund
Gwynne & Jim Cherfoli
GWBHS Memorial Fund for John Breeze Long 2022

HISTORY MATTERS 2023 SPONSORS

Brookdale Senior Living
Provision Living at West Bloomfield

OPEN HOUSE 2023 SPONSORS

Bridging Michigan Grant
Gino's Italian Restaurant
Petite Gardens

WEBSITE 2023 SPONSOR

Provision Living at West Bloomfield

DONOR RECOGNITION

Silver Level:

Facebook donations for buggs Beddow's birthday, 2023

Gold Level:

FM GLOBAL donation for Christian Sonnevile's birthday, 2023

Platinum Level

Carbonari Family Foundation

MUSEUM SUPPORT

City of Orchard Lake Village

PUBLICITY & PROGRAM SUPPORT

Civic Center TV

City of Orchard Lake Village Complex Updates

Close to the Museum, the Department of Public Works (DPW) building was demolished in June. The City of Orchard Lake Village new additions will house the Police Department and DPW. The City will schedule an open house when the transition is completed.



Before



During



After

In Memoriam: Glen King, 1940 - 2023



Glen King

Volunteer Glen Alan King will be missed. We remember him as an Apple Island Tour volunteer, 2005-2018, cheerfully greeting guests on the island dock while helping guests exit and board pontoon boats. Glen also helped plan, set up, evaluate, and recommend Tour improvements.

His wife Pat remarked the highlight of his summers was being on the island where his parents spent their honeymoon as part of the Campbell family. After he retired, Glen enjoyed getting back to the island, looking for artifacts, and learning more about its history. He donated his family archives about Apple Island to GWBHS.

He received the GWBHS President's Merit Award 2018 in appreciation of his Apple Island interest and years of Apple Island Tours volunteerism. He, with his wife Patricia, sponsored the Apple Island Exhibit in 2021. During the next Tours, a group of friends will remember him while on the island. He is buried at the Great Lakes National Cemetery.



Apple Island Celebration 2019, L to R: Gina Gregory GWBHS president, Rob Gregory, Glen King, Carol Fink, Mikwhandahn Jewell, & Mark Hooch



Apple Island Celebration, L to R: King's cousin Pat King, & Glen King

E. LeRoy Pelletier Adventurer, Journalist, Automotive Pioneer, and Gentleman Farmer 1868-1938

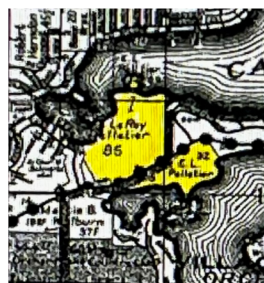
Known as LeRoy, he is not as well-known as the older settlers of the area, like the Dow and Ward families. He was one of the original Orchard Lake Village residents, back when only 80 families called the area home. LeRoy was a man of great vision and showmanship.



Henry Ford & LeRoy Pelletier

In my earlier research and presentations of his life, we found him traveling to the Klondike with adventurer and author Zane Grey to report for the New York Times about the "Gold Rush". He was the first journalist on the spot.

Later he came to Detroit and went to work for Henry Ford as his first Advertising Manager. In 1908, after helping successfully launching the Ford Model T, LeRoy left and moved across the road to join the EMF Co., then later Studebaker in the same marketing capacity.



LeRoy's Property

In the early 1900's, he bought 175 acres from Peter Dow between Orchard Lake and Cass Lake off Commerce Road. It's known today as Cass Lake Woods, a West Bloomfield subdivision of 125 homes on the north side of Commerce just west of Marshbank Park.

Early in 2022, I was given a newly discovered correspondence dated

August 5, 1935 between a Detroit Free Press reporter and an Editor of The Architectural Forum Time Inc., regarding his most recent experiments with a concrete floating airport runway. Such is the life of a man who never thought in small ideas. Where did he experiment? Cass Lake, Orchard Lake? Little is known of his exploits in this area.



LeRoy's Barn

LeRoy's Woodcrest Farm was not the usual early 20th century acreage, raising crops, sheep or cattle. He had a prized herd of over 250 Shetland ponies, the largest herd in America. He also raised Holstein cattle and sold the champion, Dora Del Kol to the Emperor of Japan. Edgar Guest, the Free Press writer and Michigan Poet Laureate, was a regular guest at the farm and wrote many poems about the tranquility and solitude of the lakes area.

To learn more about LeRoy Pelletier

- Visit GWSH.PastPerfectOnline.com
- See my 2022 LeRoy Pelletier presentation "coming soon" to TV West Bloomfield cable channel # 35 and CivicCenterTV.com
- In August 2024, visit his barn and cow birthing room as we celebrate West Bloomfield automotive heritage and the 50th Anniversary of GWBHS.

"History matters!"
Rick Bartus



Orchard Lake Museum
3951 Orchard Lake Road
Orchard Lake, MI 48323

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Linda Kidd	Recording Secretary
Carol Fink	Corresponding Secretary
Susan K. Williams	Treasurer
Hannah Dagg	Communications, Exhibits
Karen Pushie	Membership database

Committee Chairs

Christy Forhan	WBSD Liaison
Sue Grifor	Membership
Neil Hepburn	Community Relations
Don Newman	Group Programs
Christian Sonnevile	Development/Fundraising

Mission: enriching our communities by collecting, preserving, and sharing history.
GWBHS is a 501(c)3 organization open to all and has served
Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake, Orchard Lake, and West Bloomfield since 1974.

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GWBHS Membership Form

☐ New Membership ☐ Renew Membership ☐ *Gift Membership

Name

Address

Email Phone

*Gift Membership From Phone

Address

Membership • Jan. 1 to Dec. 31

- ☐ Individual \$25
- ☐ Family \$50
- ☐ Premier \$75
- ☐ Patron/Business \$100
- ☐ Life \$600

☐ Please contact me about volunteering with GWBHS

Please make checks payable to GWBHS.
Credit card payments are accepted through PayPal at gwbhs.org.

GWBHS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations
are tax deductible according to IRS regulations.

Membership includes access to Time Travelers reciprocal membership network.

Donation Form

\$

- ☐ This is a one time donation.
- ☐ This donation is in memory of:
- ☐ This donation is in honor of:

Name

Address

Check #

Total Amount Enclosed \$

