History Matters

Keego Harbor • Orchard Lake • Sylvan Lake • West Bloomfield

Newsletter of Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society

SPRING 2024 | APPLE ISLAND TOURS & POKER RALLY | UPDATED APPLE ISLAND TIMELINE | SOCIETY PROGRAMS & NEWS | ROOSEVELT SCHOOL

Apple Island Tours Return!



Experience the serene beauty of Apple Island during this popular annual event. This is a unique opportunity to visit the 35-acre nature sanctuary at the center of Orchard Lake and learn more about its nature and history.

Tour Tips & details at: GWBHS.org/Apple-Island-Tours/

About the Trip: The tour begins at Orchard Lake Museum, followed by a quick bus ride to the shore (bus transportation provided by West Bloomfield Parks) and pontoon boat ride to Apple Island. The tour of the island is self-paced. Allow 3 hours for the round trip.

Activities at Orchard Lake Museum: Orchard Lake Museum will be open during the event, with many fun outdoor activities, including: historical costume photo op, archaeology activity box, and old-fashioned games and crafts. Snacks will be available for purchase. The Museum gift shop will be open.

Tickets: Ticket donations: $25 adult, $15 child (ages 5-12), none under 5 years old. Tickets will be available for purchase at Orchard Lake Museum on a first come, first served basis during the event.

Advance Reservations: Members only, May 1 - June 7. For the first time, GWBHS members can purchase tickets and schedule their chosen estimated time of departure online! Must check in 15 minutes before planned departure time. Reservations are nonrefundable, except in the case of weather event cancellation. Individual level members can purchase one advance ticket; other membership levels up to 6.

Support Apple Island Tours as a $500 gold sponsor, $150 silver sponsorship, or $50 Apple Island Champion. See details at GWBHS.org/Support/Sponsorships

Volunteers & Docents are needed! See what it's all about in training sessions, at the Orchard Lake Museum! RSVP the day prior at contact@gwbhs.org or (248) 757-2451.

- Second-grade student island and museum docents on Wednesday, May 8, 7 pm
- Apple Island Tours volunteers and docents on Wednesday, June 5, 7 pm

Car Show & Poker Rally

Among the many planned activities this year, we are hosting an Historic Auto Poker Run, August 11, 12-3 pm. At the West Bloomfield High School parking lot, participants will receive a list of historic sites to visit in our area and learn how we are connected to the automobile industry. After a brief presentation at each site, participants will draw a playing card to form a poker hand. The best poker hand at the end of the afternoon will win an awesome trophy! What a fun way to learn about our local history. The event is free for GWBHS members and $30 per car for non-members. Membership can be obtained before or at the High School ($25) the day of the Poker run. For more information visit GWBHS.org/PokerRally.

West Bloomfield area has a long automotive history reflected in vacationer subdivision development, entrepreneur gentleman farms, and early auto entrepreneurs' wives volunteerism. This event highlights connections to Walter Flanders, Henry Ford, E. LeRoy Pelletier, Westacres subdivision, and Girls Friendly Society.

WBHS Robotics Club Car Show before Poker Rally, 9 am-12 pm. See Page 3 for event details.





From the Desk of President Gina Gregory

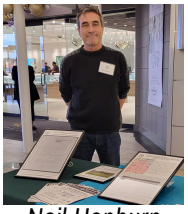


We began 2024 celebrating 50 years during the Annual Meeting with community and state elected officials assisting! The 2023 Board of Directors received the GWBHS Distinguished Service Award.

Receive your golden anniversary pen by presenting a GWBHS membership card during any Open House. See the meeting and presentation video at Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society YouTube channel. View the 2023 Annual Report at GWBHS.org.

We brought value to the community by:

- Installing evening lighting on outdoor Museum exhibits with a Michigan Humanities grant
- Sharing new research at the WB Parks Black Expo
- Hosting an open house about the 150 years of Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian
- Flying an Anishinaabe flag outside the Museum
- Multiple Civic Center TV highlights
- GWBHS presentation "History Through Maps!" available now on CC TV's YouTube channel
- 16"x20" color West Bloomfield maps are available for sale during open houses.



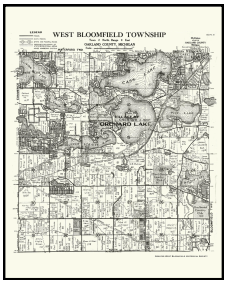
Neil Hepburn shares Black history





Anishinaabe flag







We appreciate new volunteers! Guests and docents enjoy sharing stories at Open Houses.

We are excited for the return of Apple Island Tours, June 8 & 9 and our first Poker Rally: Things You Auto Know, August 11 - celebrating 50 years of GWBHS! Support these programs as an Apple Island Champion and Poker Run Champion at $50 each! Like many things, sharing history isn't free and GWBHS needs your support! See details at GWBHS.org.

Updates from Anna Smith

Museum & Communications Assistant



Anna Smith & Collections Chair, Sue Williams

In March, I began working with a team of 7 volunteers to finish digitizing photographs and documents as part of the "Our School History" Project. With a grant from Michigan Arts & Culture Council and National Endowment for the Arts, we will complete this effort in April 2024. See these new additions to the GWBHS digital collections database online at GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com.

We need volunteers for Apple Island Tours, June 8 & 9 and our first Poker Rally, August 11! GWBHS depends on volunteer support in order to run a smooth event. Other volunteer opportunities include recruiting sponsors, attending monthly SRG Chamber of Commerce meetings, helping with newsletters, hosting Open Houses, and assisting with collections. We will be a less vibrant group without new volunteers as replacement and additional volunteers. If you are interested in helping with GWBHS events or other Society operations, please contact me at anna@gwbhs.org.

Community Opposes School Demolition

A group of dedicated community members is challenging the West Bloomfield School District (WBSD) plan to demolish the 104-year-old Roosevelt School in Keego Harbor. Heart of the Lakes Community, a nonprofit organization, is pursuing legal action to stop the summer demolition. Community members have spoken out at public meetings and received extensive coverage by Detroit area news outlets to bring wider attention to the cause.

Local historians, elected officials, and other community groups are also encouraging WBSD to explore options to save the building. GWBHS, Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society, and other groups have issued statements calling for the school district to sell Roosevelt to a developer that will renovate and repurpose the historic building.

Before its closure in 2022, Roosevelt was the oldest continually operating school in Oakland County. For more information about Heart of the Lakes Community's efforts to save this local landmark, visit Facebook.com/The.Heart.Of.The.Lakes.Community.



2024 Programs
May-August

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.

Apple Island Docent Training
Wednesday, May 8, 7 pm
Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road
Would you like to lead a tour on Apple Island or guide a 2nd-grade class at the Orchard Lake Museum? Come see what it's all about. RSVP by Tuesday, May 7 to contact@gwbhs.org.

Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast
Friday, May 10, 7 am
Temple Israel, 5725 Walnut Lake Road
Attend the Greater West Bloomfield Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast alongside GWBHS and celebrate individuals and organizations serving our community. Details at MichiganWeek.org.



Keego Harbor Memorial Day Parade
Monday, May 27, 9 am-12 pm
GWBHS is looking for volunteers to join them in the Memorial Day Parade on May 27. Volunteers are invited to walk (and potentially carry a large flag), bike, or drive their classic car. See GWBHS.org for updates.



National Trails Day Walk
Saturday, June 1
Orchard Lake Museum open from 9 am-12 pm
Visit the Orchard Lake Museum as you celebrate National Trails Day on the West Bloomfield Trail! Details at WBParks.org.



Apple Island Tours Return
Saturday, June 8, and Sunday, June 9, 10 am-3:30 pm
(Boat/bus driver break from 12:30-1 pm)
Self-paced guided tours of Apple Island 3:30 pm is last departure. Ticket donations: $25 adult, $15 child (ages 5-12), no kids under 5. Online reservations for members only. Details at GWBHS.org/Apple-Island-Tours/.

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

May
Sunday: 5/26
Friday: 5/3, 5/17

June
Sunday: 6/30
Friday: 6/21

July
Sunday: 7/14
Friday: 7/5, 7/19

August
Sunday: 8/25
Friday: 8/2, 8/16

Juneteenth in the WB
Saturday, June 22, 2-5 pm
West Bloomfield High School, 4925 Orchard Lake Road
Visit the GWBHS table at this community event! Details at JuneteenthWB.org.



E. LeRoy Pelletier Open House
Sunday, July 14, 1-4 pm
Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road
Rick Bartus shares facets of E. LeRoy Pelletier's life, 1868-1939. Pelletier was Henry Ford's first "PR man" and a West Bloomfield resident.



Volunteer Celebration Appreciation Reception
Wednesday, July 17, 6-8 pm
Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road
Members, supporters, and volunteers are invited for refreshments with one complimentary ticket per person for a raffle with terrific prizes. A celebratory toast for 50 years of volunteers! RSVP appreciated but not required by July 10 to contact@gwbhs.org or (248) 757-2451.

Orchard Lake Fine Art Show
Saturday, July 27, 10 am-6 pm, and Sunday, July 28, 10 am-5 pm
6668 Orchard Lake Road, #204
Visit GWBHS at this year's Orchard Lake Fine Art Show! Details at Michigan.org/Event/Orchard-Lake-Fine-Art-Show.



Car Show & Poker Rally: Things You Auto Know About Local History
Sunday, August 11, 9 am-3 pm
Start and end at West Bloomfield High School, 4925 Orchard Lake Road
Car Show: 9-noon, free to attend, $20 to compete, presented by WBHS Robotics Club. Poker Rally: noon-3 pm, free for vehicles with a GWBHS member ($25) or $30 per vehicle. Drive to historic locations and get a playing card. Best poker hand wins an awesome trophy! Details at GWBHS.org/PokerRally/.



Pine Lake Marina Tour
Thursday, August 15, 7-8 pm
Pine Lake Marina, 3599 Orchard Lake Road
($8 for residents / $10 for non-residents)
Gather at Pine Lake Marina for historical information about the longtime marina, water taxis, the camp on Pine Lake, and trolley transportation with Ron Hodess, Ron Gay, and Brian Golden. We'll walk to the nearby Interurban railway bed. Register through WBParks.org.

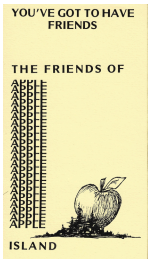
Timeline of Apple Island Activities & GWBHS



1970
Marjorie Ward Strong Woodland Sanctuary, commonly known as Apple Island (AI) was deeded to West Bloomfield School District (WBSD) with a dedication ceremony attended by Governor Milliken.

1973
West Bloomfield (WB) Optimist and Countryside Improvement Associations donate funds to purchase pontoon boats.





1974
WBSD biology students walk across frozen lake to study effects of winter weather on AI vegetation.

1976
WBHS Ecology Club students initiate the formation of Friends of Apple Island, Inc. (FOAI), a community-wide organization for all ages.



1977
WB Newcomers Club sponsors free AI tours, led by FOAI members. Girl Scouts gather trash.

1978
WBSD receives a DNR grant for 18 students to spend 40-hours weekly during the summer to extend and improve trails: place trail markers, add erosion-control landscaping, and build outhouses.

1979
70 people cross-country ski to AI, sponsored by WB Parks & Recreation and FOIA.

1980
FOAI receives a DNR nature trails grant and annually leads seasonal events.

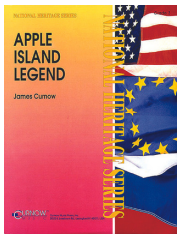
1982
GWBHS holds its first AI tours the third weekend in May during Michigan Week.

1983
WBSD high school biology students analyze AI ecology.



1994
Eagle Scouts complete a project to construct a 64-foot walking bridge over AI pond, that began in 1986.

1996
GWBHS leads tours for WBSD second-graders of AI and Orchard Lake Museum. The tours continue to the present.



1997
Orchard Lake Middle School music teacher commissions "Apple Island Legend," a musical tribute to AI history.

1998
A West-Media One grant funds a six-week WBHS cartology project using GPS to collect data, compile charts, and develop AI maps.

1999
GWBHS receives an Apple Island grant from St. Francis Foundation of Michigan (SSFM).

2001
Archaeology students from St. Mary's University & Cranbrook Institute of Science dig on AI, discovering a 19th century silver cross and silver decoration.



2003
Cranbrook and Madonna staff lead Milford and Huron Valley students on an archaeological dig, finding a military button. Madonna University offers archeology and ecology summer workshops.

2004
"Island of Time" includes a Living History Encampment at Orchard Lake St. Mary's Schools, Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast and AI tours.



2008
U-M, Madonna University, WBSD, and GWBHS offer a Great Lakes Archaeology course. Dr. David Brose leads excavation and testing of "Pontiac's Mound," found only to be a natural area.

2010
Archaeological techniques workshop students discover an American Indian campsite.

2011
GWBHS completes island safety improvements using a Scotch School student donation.



2013-2014
SFFM grants for WMU Dr. LouAnn Wurst to lead anthropology students to survey, collect artifacts, and dig test pits.



2018
Apple Island listed in National Register of Historic Places.



2019
Apple Island National Register of Historic Places Celebration.



2020
GWBHS celebrates 50th anniversary of WBSD ownership with a GWBHS video: Apple Island: Then & Now.

2021
GWBHS video: 2021 Virtual Apple Island Tours.



2024
AI Tours return, post COVID-19. WBSD receives Island curriculum project grant.

Collection Donations
They Tell Our History

GWBHS welcomes donations of local historical artifacts, which can provide needed provenance (place of origin or early history of something) to be included in exhibits. Recent donations include:



Orchard Lake Hotel postcard

Colored postcard of the eastside Orchard Lake shoreline showing the Orchard Lake Hotel, current Orchard Lake municipal site, postmarked 1909. Donated by Catherine Cangany.

Large framed aerial photo of Shady Beach Heights subdivision, platted in 1923, showing sparse cottages and homes along the Straits Lake. Non-dated picture was probably taken in the mid-1920s. Donated by City of Orchard Lake from a 1990 donation by Richard Penman.

WWII U.S. Army uniform worn by George W. Meyer, father of former WB Library Board member Thomas Meyer, who served in Paris, France against the Nazi invasion. Donated by Olga Meyer.

Michigan Military Academy helmet, believed to have belonged to cadet William Keith Naylor. Naylor attended the academy and later became a Brigadier General in the Army and noted military strategy author. Donated by Mary Fischer of Ohio in honor of Don and Hazel Burley.


WWII U.S. Army uniform


MMA helmet



DeConick Victorian Baby Carriage

Baby Carriage c. 1850-1890 used by John DeConick, a West Bloomfield farmer and community activist in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Donated in memory of Molly Rozycki by her family.

Eight binders of pictures, pamphlets, newspaper articles, booklets and flyers chronicling Keego Harbor history from 1960 to 2023, now the Barbara Kline Collection. Ms. Kline is a former mayor, councilwoman, community activist and Keego Harbor resident.

Covid Vaccination Card, listing date and kind of vaccinations and boosters to be included in our Collecting Memories files, which contain recent event memorabilia. Donated by Gina Gregory.

If donations do not fit GWBHS provenance, historical artifacts are relocated to where they are appreciated and archived. A framed picture of the 1919 graduating Class of Detroit College of Medicine and Surgery will be donated to the Walter P. Ruether Library of Labor and Urban Affairs on the WSU campus, Detroit, Michigan.

Thank You for Supporting GWBHS!

GWBHS could not serve the community without the help of our partners, donors, members, sponsors, and volunteers.

COMMUNITY EVENT PRESENTER - Neil Hepburn

DISTRIBUTION VOLUNTEERS - Sylvia Houlahan & Kathy Peltier

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

HOLIDAY HOUSE EXHIBIT PANEL - Ron Gay

MUSEUM SUPPORT - City of Orchard Lake Village

PRESENTATION & OPEN HOUSE PRESENTERS - Stacy Bahri, Diane Eanes, Carol Fink, Christy Forhan, Jan Forhan, Beth & Kevin Gault, Ron Gay, Gina Gregory, Patricia Hartwig, Patrice Steele, Sue Williams & Brian Yopp

PROGRAM HOSTS & OPEN HOUSE VOLUNTEERS - Tom Bjorkland, Ruth Du Fresne, Carol Fink, Gina & Rob Gregory, Neil Hepburn, Linda Kidd, Kathy Peltier & Karen Pushie

PROGRAM PARTNERS - Polish Institute of Culture & Research, West Bloomfield Library & West Bloomfield Parks

PROJECT SUPPORT - Hannah Dagg, Rob Gregory, Neil Hepburn, Lana LaFortune, Helen Jane Peters & Sue Williams

PUBLICITY & GWBHS CONTENT VIDEOS - Civic Center TV

SECOND SUNDAY OPEN HOUSE SPONSORS - Gino's Italian Restaurant & Petite Gardens

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

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Board of Directors

Gina Gregory	President
Linda Kidd	Recording Secretary
Carol Fink	Corresponding Secretary
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Hannah Dagg	Communications, Exhibits
Karen Pushie	Membership database

Committee Chairs

Christy Forhan	WBSD Liaison
Sue Grifor	Membership
Rick Bartus	Community Relations
Don Newman	Group Programs
Christian Sonneville	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.

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 $ _____