



the Moorings

Grosse Pointe
Historical Society
established 1945
Summer 2008
Vol. 25, No.2



Special Membership Now Available to Businesses

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society is now offering special membership opportunities for businesses.

“Our friends in the professional, financial and retail communities have supported the Society since its inception. We are delighted to be able to now offer a special membership opportunity just for businesses to recognize their backing and assistance,” said Stuart Grigg, president of the Society.

A Business Membership to the Society, available for \$100, offers many benefits, including:

- Use of GPHS Business Member logo on your website and publications
- HotLink listing on our award-winning website
- Annual listing in the Society’s quarterly newsletter, *the Moorings*, as well as e-blasts
- Recognition at the annual Pointes of History Celebration
- Discounted sponsorship opportunities (newsletter underwriting, event sponsorship, historical map, etc.)
- A framed windmill painting plaque (above)—suitable for display in your business

Contact the Society at (313) 884-7010 for more information.



Colonial French Marine fife and drum corps from Port Huron entertains the crowd with traditional music from Detroit’s past at the mini-encampment in May.

Support Needed from City Governments

Several members of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society recently spoke at the Mayors Breakfast, a gathering of city officials from the five Pointes, explaining the mission and accomplishments of the Society and asking for financial support.

We are now asking you, members, friends, and supporters of the Society, to reinforce our request by writing to the city government and asking for their financial backing. Specifically, we have asked each city government for \$5,000 per year to go toward our educational, outreach, and archival initiatives. This would create a more formal partnership between the Society and the cities, furthering the goals of each with regards to promoting and preserving the unique heritage of Grosse Pointe. Grosse Pointe Farms has already committed.

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Letter from the President

Changes at the GPHS

Change is good, which is a good thing because there are a number of them taking place at the Society. Suzy Berschback, our curator, has taken a challenging and exciting position at Beaumont Hospital Grosse Pointe. Linda Johnson, our administrator, will soon move to Boston with husband Alex, who has an exciting new job there. Suzy and Linda have truly been visionary team members, and will be long-remembered and sorely missed. Happily, Suzy will now join the Board of GPHS, hardly missing a beat.

New faces join us, and familiar faces take on different roles. Nancy Pacitto, an active docent and volunteer who was instrumental in the recent redecorating of the Provencal-Weir house interior, comes on board as Interim Program Manager for Programs and Activities. We will soon name a Curatorial Project Manager for the Digitization Project to continue digitizing the collection and coordinating online exhibits. This project has been generously supported by The Wilkinson Foundation. Our first Scholar-Intern joins us this summer -- see the article about her in this issue. And Helga Liedtke, who has volunteered in the Resource Center, and draws on a lifetime career in business management, will assume the role of GPHS administrator.

Over the summer, we will be recruiting for our first Executive Director. This move represents a Board commitment to the goals long-nurtured at GPHS, and a logical step in our organization's growth, development, and commitment to preserving and promoting Grosse Pointe history. Please see our website for additional information about this.

I hope you will join me in wishing Suzy and Linda well, and welcoming our new team members, with your support and encouragement. I look forward with great anticipation to the next phase of the Society's growth.

Stuart Grigg
President

Dear Friends,

It has been my honor to work for the Grosse Pointe Historical Society for the last five years. I am forever grateful to Stuart Grigg, who has encouraged and empowered me to put my passion for local history to work for the enjoyment and education of the community. I have made lifetime friends on the board, and with our staff volunteers and members. I am thrilled to accept a position on the board as I move to Beaumont Hospital, Grosse Pointe as Community Affairs Manager.

As I leave this position as Executive Director, I am satisfied with the growth steps we have taken in the last few years. We have completed a strategic plan and spent the last year beginning to implement it. We have won the County Commissioners' Award of Excellence from the Wayne County Council for Arts, History and Humanities for our website, newsletter and programs. We are well underway digitizing the collection for preservation and sharing with our members.

I believe we are in a good position to continue our momentum and growth. We have a dedicated board and a talented and passionate staff and growing list of volunteers. Thank you to so many friends for the honor of supporting the Society and its mission and all that we have been able to accomplish together.

Historically yours,
Suzy

The purpose of the
Grosse Pointe Historical Society
is to preserve and promote
the history of the
Grosse Pointe Community.

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The Grosse Pointe Historical Society Headquarters, Provencal-Weir House, c. 1823, 376 Kercheval Ave., is open the second Saturday of each month during special events, and by appointment. The Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Resource Center, 381 Kercheval Ave., is open Tuesday and Wednesday, 10:00AM-12:30PM and 1:30-4:00PM. Phone: (313) 884-7010

*through June 2008

**beginning June 2008

Thank You, Donors

Donations

Mr. Douglas A. Boehmer
The Grosse Pointe Academy

In Memory

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Shafer in memory of Anita Spina
Ms. Carolyn Switzer in memory of Ruth S. and Alfred B. Moran
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. in memory of Janet Wilson
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Front Porch Fund

Fox Creek Questers #216

Gifts in Kind

Mrs. Noreen Fancy
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Mr. Brandon M. Rogers
Ms. Laura Rodin



New Intern

Victoria Slater (above, left, with Stuart Grigg), a junior at Grosse Pointe South, will be interning at the Resource Center this summer. Her main duties will be to work in digitizing the collection. "The thing I love most about Grosse Pointe history is the fact that everyone has their own story, and most stories tend to be connected in some way," she said. "And because a lot of the houses are still up, and families still live in the area, it makes the history actually come alive. What really interested me about the internship was being able to learn more about the history through other people and their stories, then being able to share that information with others who are equally excited about Grosse Pointe."

New Members Join Board



Suzy Berschback, Susan Morris Hartz, and Doug Cordier

Suzy Berschback joins our board after serving as the Society's Curator for the past five years. She has coauthored two books relating to Grosse Pointe, *Grosse Pointe: 1880-1930* (2001), with Madeleine Socia and *Grosse Pointe Then & Now* (2007), with Ann Marie Aliotta. She has also written several articles for the Grosse Pointe News and many of her photos have also been featured in the paper. She was the Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator for the Grosse Pointe War Memorial from 1990 to 2000 and is the new Community Relations Manager at Beaumont Hospital Grosse Pointe.

Suzy possesses a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Michigan State University and is a graduate of Grosse Pointe South High School. She and her husband, Chip, who served as Society President from 1998-2000 and who is an honorary board member, both grew up in the community. They have two daughters.

Doug Cordier previously served two three-year terms on the Grosse Pointe Historical Society board from 2000 to 2006. A former biology teacher and radio executive, Doug is a Certified Ergonomic Consultant and principal of Cascom Group LLC, but he is probably better known around town for his real passion and culinary avocation as a chef. Doug has been teaching Italian and corporate cooking classes at the Pointe Peddler and Grosse Pointe War Memorial for twenty years. Along with teaching, Doug is also a celebrity TV chef with Chuck Kaess on "Who's in the Kitchen?" as well as culinary charity fund raiser for the Ontario Food & Wine Expo, Detroit Institute for Children, Bon Secours, Wigs for Kids and Lake Shore Optimist Club. Doug and his wife Mary Beth also lead a tour each year to Tuscany, Italy.

Susan Morris Hartz previously served one three-year term on the Grosse Pointe Historical Society board from 1988 to 1991. Since leaving our board she has continued to provide assistance to the Society by pricing antiques that have been donated for the Society's Upscale Sales.

Susan once owned an antique shop in the community and for 30 years she operated "Hartz Household Sales," during which time she conducted over 1,200 estate sales and 500 appraisals. From 1995 to 2004 she hosted "Conversations with the Collectors" on Grosse Pointe Cable. She is a current member of the Grosse Pointe City Beautification Committee. She is a graduate of Wayne State University. She and her husband, John were born and raised in the community and have been married for 44 years. They have two children and five grandchildren.

Four Historic Plaques Awarded a



Robbie Robertson House
Alden Dow, architect
741 Middlesex, Grosse Pointe Park

Alden Dow was born in Midland and studied engineering at the University of Michigan, planning on entering the family business, Dow Chemical Company. After three years in Ann Arbor, he transferred to Columbia University to study architecture. He opened his architectural office in 1934, after spending a memorable summer with Frank Lloyd Wright.

The home on Middlesex reflects Dow's philosophy of "Composed Order": The idea is to achieve harmony among the people, materials, and ideas involved. The home, the breezeway to the garage, and the landscape combine to make this unique building design a dynamic experience. The Unit Block System dominates Dow's design. He wanted to carry a bold geometric pattern through the house and into the garden outside. He cast rhomboid blocks with square faces. One horizontal course has blocks angled to the right, the following course has them angled to the left.



Grosse Pointe Public Library
Marcel Breuer, architect
10 Kercheval Ave., Grosse Pointe Farms

In 1951, Dexter M. Ferry, Jr., announced his intention to donate a building for a central library to be constructed on the corner of the high school property at Fisher and Kercheval. Marcel Breuer, a Hungarian-born architect, one of the fathers of modernism, was commissioned to design the building. He created a small, elegant structure, two stories tall, with a front facade that was partly unadorned brick to echo the traditions of Grosse Pointe building materials, and partly a series of tall windows that created a transparency inside and out.

Breuer did not want this to be just a repository of books, but a repository of active discussion of ideas. The building was to feature a large cathedral-ceiling reading room, a large children's reading room, and reference and adult reading rooms.

To preserve this landmark while creating the necessary expansion for today's needs, architects from the Boston firm Design Labs tried to imagine how Breuer would approach the project. Their expansion project will save an architectural gem and create a thoughtful new structure onto the old.



At the Society's Annual May Meeting, a special commemoration was held to honor the more than 60 homes and buildings that have received historic plaques from the Grosse Pointe Historical Society. Four new buildings were added to that illustrious list. Photos by John T. Woodhouse, Jr.

at Pointes of History Celebration



Leonard Willeke House
Leonard Willeke, architect
1100 Berkshire, Grosse Pointe Park

Leonard Willeke called the style of his new home Modern English. He was influenced by English architect Sir Edwin Lutyns and American architect Harrie T. Linberg. The U-shaped floor plan is compact and convenient and provides light and air circulation throughout the house. To insure a pleasant view of the garden from all rooms, the driveway, garage court, laundry yard, and children's play area were all located at the north end of the property.

The interior rooms are filled with walnut detail. The main hall and living room have barrel vaulted ceilings to accent the rectangular shape of the rooms. Pewabic tiles are used throughout the house. Floral and animal motifs in the paneling and plaster wall trim are designed by Willeke and typical of his work.

Willeke said he incorporated so many special features because it was to be his final home. "I have used the best and most artistic designs that I have found in my many years of study and travel abroad as an architect in this house," he wrote.



Henry Sherrard House
Unknown architect, believed to be Albert Kahn or
Mason & Rice
59 Lake Shore Rd.

Built in 1892 by Joseph Berry for his daughter, Charlotte and her husband Henry Sherrard, this home is one of the oldest surviving year-round houses in Grosse Pointe. The architecture is primarily a combination of 19th Century Shingle and Romanesque Revival styles.

The asymmetrical design of the house features projections for rooms of varying shapes, including a tower with a conical roof, a rather Victorian touch. For a time, the first floor of the tower was the office Joseph Sherrard, who lived in the house all his life, marrying late, at 55. A bedroom occupies the second floor of the office. The master bedroom, with a fireplace, faces east and offers a view of Lake Shore Rd. from an alcove with eight rectangular windows with lead glass panes.

The house was owned by the Sherrard family until approximately 1983. It was the setting for several works by author Jack Kerouac and there are stories of a ghost in the attic.



See what's new!
www.gphistorical.org

GPHS's Own Antiques Road Show

Trash, treasure, or somewhere in between? That was the question on the minds of the people who attended the Grosse Pointe Historical Society's recent antiques appraisal event.

Veteran appraiser Bob DuMouchelle of DuMouchelle Art Gallery in Detroit volunteered his time to help attendees separate the worthy from the worthless.

"I always enjoy seeing what shows up," says Bob, who also appears on the popular PBS series "Antiques Roadshow." "Even after so many years in the business, I'm still surprised at what comes out of the woodwork."

Curious collectors – most from Grosse Pointe and other nearby suburbs -- showed up on a snowy Saturday and paid \$5 for each item to find out more about their family heirlooms and estate sale finds. All proceeds went to support GPHS programs. Docent Nancy Pacitto presided over the event.

From a cow bell to a copy of the Count of Monte Cristo, the items ran the gamut from collectible to kitsch.

GPHS Board member Tom Singelyn was among those who patiently waited their turn for DuMouchelle's attention. He brought with him a family whiskey bottle, a military medal, a Disney tea set, a military print and a letter opener.

DuMouchelle was most intrigued with the letter opener, which he identified as Turkish and dated to the 19th century.

"If it's sterling, which is hard to tell, it's worth about \$2,500," DuMouchelle told him. "If it's not sterling, only \$1,500. Either way, it's a beautiful piece."

Peter Nyboer of Grosse Pointe City brought in a painting. "A neighbor lady gave it to me," he says. "With the Ashcan exhibition at the DIA, I wondered if it was the Ashcan School," he said.

DuMouchelle identified the work as one by Alexander Minewski, an American painter who lived from 1917-1979. "That could have coincided with the Ashcan School," he said. "It's an intriguing work." He valued it at approximately \$500.

Nyboer also brought in a foot warmer (\$200-\$400) and a Shaker-style box sporting the original milk paint (\$500-\$800).

Other highlights include a French mantel clock worth \$200-\$300, a 19th-century wool winder (\$400-\$600) and an original Audubon bird print – the most valuable item brought in that day.

"Audubon is widely copied, but I truly believe this one is original," says DuMouchelle. "This is a really, really nice piece, although it could use a reframing." He valued the large print at \$3,000-\$5,000 at auction.

Valerie Dodenhoff, also a board member, brought in some beautiful sterling spoons in a fitted case that were appraised at \$250 and an intricate vintage print of a Latin star chart. She expressed the feelings of everyone at the first (but hopefully not last) event.

"This is fun," she says. "I like seeing what everyone else brings in. It's just like watching Antiques Roadshow."

—*Khristi Zimmeth*



Support Needed from City Governments

continued from page one

If you would like a copy of the report given at the Mayors' Breakfast or more information on how to help with this effort, call the Resource Center, 884-7010. Below are the addresses of the city governments; address your letter to the City Council Members at:

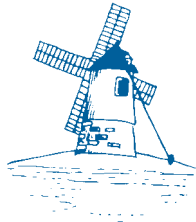
Grosse Pointe City
17147 Maumee
Grosse Pointe, MI 48230

Grosse Pointe Farms
90 Kerby
Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

Grosse Pointe Park
15115 E. Jefferson
Grosse Pointe Park, MI 48230

Grosse Pointe Shores
795 Lake Shore Rd.
Grosse Pointe Shores, MI 48236

Grosse Pointe Woods
20025 Mack Plaza
Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236



Unique Grosse Pointe Goods Available

Show your love of history and affection for Grosse Pointe with a beautiful item from our Grosse Pointe Goods store. Featuring images from our extensive archives, these items are wonderful gifts—for yourself or others. Keep cozy with a GPHS sweatshirt or baseball jersey. Adorn your walls with beautiful photos and drawings of the color Map of Grosse Pointe Township, Windmill watercolor, Grosse Pointe Summer Cottages, or Grosse Pointe Shores, circa 1920. Sip your tea from a mug with a map of the Ribbon Farms on Lake Shore Rd.

Take a look at these and other great items on our Web site, www.gphistorical.org.



Not Yet a Member? Two Convenient Ways to Join!

1. Visit www.gphistorical.org and select the link, *Join the Society, Membership*.
2. You can also fill out the form below and mail it directly to the Society.

Grosse Pointe Historical Society Membership Form

- | | | | |
|---|----------|--|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen | \$25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor | \$125.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$35.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$250.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Major Benefactor | \$500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | \$75.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (may be paid over three-year period) | \$1,000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | \$100.00 | | |

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Corporation _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ E-mail _____

Today's Date _____

_____ Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ _____

___MC ___VISA Acct No. _____ Exp Date _____ Signature _____ Amount _____

_____ I am interested in Planned Giving information

Please make your check payable to the Grosse Pointe Historical Society and send it to:
Grosse Pointe Historical Society, 381 Kercheval, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236. Thank you for your support!



Second Saturday Pastimes

On the Second Saturday of each month, drop in for our open-house tours of the 1823 Provencal-Weir House and enjoy these activities. Sponsored by the Alice Kales Hartwick foundation, these activities and the tour are free of charge but donations are suggested.

June 14, 1-4 p.m. Ice Cream Social with local folk music group Rosetta Pebble. Complimentary.

July 12, 1-4 p.m. Historical Caricatures by appointment with artist Marcella Rochon. Complimentary.



August 9, 1-4 p.m. Model T Celebrates 100 years!

Celebrate with the Model T club, see their cars and meet the members, hear speaker Mike Skinner, GPHS board member and Ford historian speak on the Model T. Complimentary.

September 13, 1-4 p.m. Guided Walking Tour of the Neighborhood surrounding the Provencal-Weir house.

Tours start promptly at 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. from the Provencal-Weir house, led by Al Dickenson. Wear comfortable walking shoes. Complimentary.

October 11, 6 -9 p.m. St. Paul's Cemetery Walk led by Amy DeWys-VanHeck, Marguerite Humes and Bill Schwedler. Tickets are \$10 per person by Oct. 8, or \$12 at the gate.

November 8, 1- 4 p.m. Legends of the Fall Local legends come to life with Genot Picor and fiddler Michael Francis. Complimentary.

Fall 2008 Dr. Frank Bicknell Lecture Series

Grosse Pointe War Memorial 32 Lakeshore Dr.

General Motors Centennial

Wednesday, September 17, 7:30 p.m.

Mike W. R. Davis, will present a program relating to his book, "General Motors: A Photographic History". The previous day, September 16, 2008 will mark the centennial of the founding of GM, the world's largest automobile manufacturer for over 75 years. Davis has authored numerous books, including *Chrysler Heritage: A Photographic History*; *Detroit's Wartime Industry: Arsenal of Democracy*; *Ford Dynasty: A Photographic History*; and *The Ford Fleet 1923-1989*.

Downtown Detroit's Movie Palaces

Wednesday, October 22, 7:30 p.m.

(note: fourth Wednesday of the month instead of the third) Michael Hauser, will present a program relating to his book, *Downtown Detroit's Movie Palaces*. In the first half of the 20th century Downtown Detroit was the place Grosse Pointers went to attend first run movies on the big screen. At its peak the area surrounding Grand Circus Park boasted a dozen palatial movie palaces containing 26,000 seats. Hauser is marketing manager for the Detroit Opera House.

Detroit's Thanksgiving Day Parade

Wednesday, November 19, 7:30 p.m.

Romie Minor, will present a program relating to his book, *Detroit's Thanksgiving Day Parade*. Since 1924, Detroit's annual Thanksgiving Day parade has delighted people of all ages. The parade's spectacular balloons, floats, bands, special guests, and holiday spirit have made it the most celebrated civic event in all of Southeastern Michigan. Minor is head archivist at The Parade Company and librarian at the Detroit Public Library's Burton Historical Collection.



Published by the **Grosse Pointe Historical Society**

Schwartz Building • 381 Kercheval Avenue

Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

(313) 884-7010

(313) 884-7699 FAX

e-mail: GPHistorical@aol.com

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