

## Welcome Maureen Devine, New Executive Director



The Board of Trustees of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society is excited to announce its new Executive Director, Maureen Devine. Devine, a native Grosse Pointer, has an extensive background in caring for art and historical collections, including 10 years at the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House starting in 1988. Most recently working in Chicago as a consultant curator to McCormick Place, Chicago's premier convention center, and as associate exhibit curator for The Glass Experience at the Museum of Science and Industry, Devine brings more than 20 years experience organizing and administering museum collections, as well as fundraising and community relations.

"Maureen has roots in the community and world-class education and experience," said Stuart Grigg, president of the Society. "She has the

proven ability to envision our future from a strategic level and to help the Grosse Pointe Historical Society take its next step toward growth and goals."

Devine started out as an artist who received her BFA in printmaking from Western Michigan University. She later focused on art history for her MA from Wayne State University and has participated in several professional development programs on museum leadership and collecting. She lives in Detroit with her husband, Larry Baranski, Director of Public Programs at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

As head curator at the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, Devine was responsible for the care and documentation of the art and historical collections, and was involved with historic preservation and public programming. She left there in 1998 and joined Driehaus Capital Management in Chicago as art curator. Driehaus' founder owns several historic buildings and an exceptional 19th century fine and decorative art collection. She was responsible for the care, research, display and documentation of the corporate and private collections in the Chicago headquarters, international offices, and private residences, as well as historic preservation of several historic structures.

"The legacy of Grosse Pointe represents a wealth of interesting social history and architecture relating to our community, as well as to the City of Detroit. This heritage reaches back to the Native American presence, to French ribbon farms, to the great houses, the auto industry, and now the new millennium. I look forward to preserving, sharing and celebrating this history," said Devine.

## Wilkinson Foundation Supports Further Digitizing, City Survey



Digitizing the collection of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society will continue as planned thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Wilkinson Foundation, endowed by Grosse Pointe residents Warren and Mireille Wilkinson. Artwork, photos, documents, books, and maps will be scanned and then made available on the Society's Web site, [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org), through an on-line search engine, for research. Additional Web galleries and exhibits may also be added. To date, the Web site has 15 online exhibits.

A portion of the grant funding is designated for continuation of a survey of the "built environment" of the City of Grosse Pointe. This study was begun by

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# Eagle Scouts Help Clear Cemetery and Host Event

Once again, the Grosse Pointe Historical Society was the beneficiary of the hard work and diligence of some local Eagle Boy Scouts. Kevin Bennett, a student at Grosse Pointe North, was a big help in preparing St. Paul's Cemetery to be ready for the Talking Headstones program held in October.

"Kevin wanted to do something for the community and really took an interest in the St. Paul cemetery that he has biked by a number of times during the many years he has lived here," according to his mother, Maureen. "Kevin has worked pretty hard to try and earn his Eagle by the age of 16 and part of that is to do a major project for the community or a conservation project."

The first weekend, Kevin and about 19 other boys weed-whacked around the grave stones, pulled weeds and trimmed back along the fence line, pruned the trees to see the headstones underneath the trees, raked and threw out trash. They added new mulch at the beginning and spoke with the neighbors who were very excited to see the work being done. The scouts found and uncovered a large Thibault grave that was obliterated by weeds. They carefully dug it out and are extremely proud of the marker.

The next week, Kevin, with the help of Mr. David and Andrew Poletis, put together a hand-made park bench which Kevin worked on for over a month and added that to the cemetery. He also flanked each side with solar lights. Then, Kevin added some flowers, continued clean up, and also added flags to the veterans' graves.

The boys finished the project by serving as tour guides for the October event, dressed as ribbon farmers. Since they were familiar with grave markers, they were able to escort family members to their particular ancestors' graves.



## *The Past for the Future: A Simple Way to Give a Legacy Gift to the Society*

"I give, devise, and bequeath the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (or \_\_\_\_\_% percent) of my net estate, as finally determined for estate tax purposes, to the Grosse Pointe Historical Society (GPHS), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization located in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, to be used in furtherance of its charitable purposes."

*We are indebted to our donors who have included the Grosse Pointe Historical Society in their wills or trusts. Insurance policies, IRAs, or annuities are an easy way to leave money to the Society. If you would like to leave a restricted gift or would like to discuss other gift planning ideas, please call (313) 884-7010.*

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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



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

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## *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.



### *Romantic Food and Wine February 14, 6:00-9:00 p.m.*

Join GPHS board member, chef Doug Cordier for a special evening. Learn the secrets of how to prepare two of Doug's favorite dishes: Shrimp Tosca and Ricotta Gnocchi with almond pesto. Included in the fun will be an Italian Antipasti platter and Blind Wine Tasting featuring special wines provided by Marc Garmo at the Village Market.

*Reservations are limited to 20 attendees.*

*Cost is \$40.00 for members, \$45.00 for non-members. Members will be given first preference.*



### *The Tinsmith and Colonial Foodways March 14, 1:00-4:00 p.m.*

Ross and Jerri Grover were re-enactors at Greenfield Village for many years. Ross is a professional blacksmith and tinsmith and will discuss all kinds of tin work. Jerri will demonstrate Colonial foodways (cooking and eating traditions) and prepare samples, with activities for children.

*Cost: \$5.00 for all guests.*

### *Glorious Gardens of Grosse Pointe April 11, 1:00-4:00 p.m.*

In the heyday of the estates and mansions of Grosse Pointe, gardens were as important as the home itself. Nationally known landscape architects, as well as local talent, were commissioned to embellish the property. GPHS Board member and estate specialist Susan Hartz will give a presentation on these glorious gardens. Refreshments will be served.

*Space is limited to 35 guests.*

*Reservations required.*

*Cost: \$10 for members, \$15 for non-members.*



Program Director Nancy Pacitto was digging around in the archives of the Main Branch of the Detroit Public Library and discovered this information for an article in the Detroit Journal on April 26, 1911.. We thought it was particularly interesting relative to today's foreclosure epidemic.

The headline reads:

## Mrs. Weir, Once Worth \$100,000, Left Almost Penniless: Loses Fight to Save Old Homestead



Mrs. Weir, widow of James Weir, a former probate judge of Wayne County finds herself penniless and alone in the world.

When her father Peter (Pierre) died in 1893, he left to Mrs. Weir a handsome tract of land in GP Village with a frontage of 150 feet on the lake shore. The recent sale of the property for \$165,000 to the Country Club by the Union Trust Co. conceals a story of hardship

and struggle that few women left alone in the world at Mrs. Weir's age have had to wage.

The piece of property has been in litigation and the objective of various creditors for 10 years, ever since Mrs. Weir, unable to stand on her feet alone, was compelled to borrow \$18,000 from William Cottrell, once prominent in Mt. Clemens, to meet her requirements. This was the fatal step that led her down the stairway to loss of fortune.

Mrs. Weir gave Cottrell a mortgage for the amount and when she found that she could not meet it she renewed it several times until the sum had increased to \$50,000. Cottrell urged her to sell the property but it had been her home since childhood and there were sentimental reminiscences connected with the place which forbade her. So Cottrell threatened foreclosure.

Mrs. Weir then appealed to Joseph H. Berry, varnish manufacturer, for help and Berry consented to aid her,

giving the Union Trust Co. a guarantee for moneys advanced on the Cottrell mortgage. The mortgage, taxes and interest kept piling up until, when Berry died, he was indebted to the Union Trust Co. \$50,000 for money advanced on the old Provencal home and farm.

In the meantime, Mrs. Weir had given Berry a second mortgage. Shortly after Berry's death, Cottrell also died and the administrator for both estates could do nothing but foreclose.

The Berry estate was compelled to pay off the Cottrell mortgage to protect itself and the entire indebtedness was thus valued to \$115,000 about the entire value of the property at the time.

Then the Union Trust Co. administrator for the Joseph Berry estate sold the property to Mr. Frederick Alger who acted for the Country Club, the price received being \$165,000.

Some five years after Mr. Berry's death, Mrs. Weir brought suit against the Berry estate, his heirs and the Union Trust Co, the Country Club and all the purchasers of the property charging them with fraud and asking for the restoration of the property.

The November 19, 1914 issue of the Detroit Journal states, Mrs. C. Weir Loses Extended Lawsuit. Judge Van Sile rendered his decision and exonerated the Country Club, Frederick M. Alger, the Union Trust and the estate of Joseph H. Berry from the charges of fraud.



## Good Enough to Eat!

The Provencal-Weir House has inspired numerous artists throughout its history, but recently, two Grosse Pointe Farms residents recreated the building in a unique medium—gingerbread. Neighbors Thom Coyle and Dennis Miriani designed their work for a gingerbread house contest sponsored by the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House in November. Their house was on display at the Ford House through early January along with other entries.



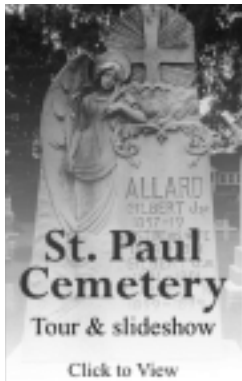
## What's New on The Web *New Online Exhibits Added to Web Site*

Three new online slideshows and online exhibits have been added to the Web recently. We invite you to log on to [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org) and view some fascinating images of our historic community from the comfort of your home. All of these exhibits were made possible by the Wilkinson Foundation.

**St. Paul Cemetery** A slideshow of headstones and history of Grosse Pointe's only cemetery. The article by J. William Gorski includes a history of the cemetery and the stories of many of the families buried there, among them Allard, Beaufait, Cadieux, Frazho, Groesbeck, Newberry, Russell and Vernier.

**My Journey: A Student's Historical Perspective of Pierce and Brownell Middle Schools and Grosse Pointe South High School** An exhibit by our summer intern, Victoria Slater, featuring historical narratives and photo slideshows of the Grosse Pointe schools she attended.

**Stonehurst and the Schlotman Family** Tour the magnificent mansion, "Stonehurst," and learn about the "other" Ford family whose estates graced the Grosse Pointe shoreline. Includes a section on the spectacular yacht, Stellaris.



*Pierce students participating in safety patrol c. 1940s*



*Tapestry of Stonehurst by Stella Schlotman*



## Regina Sublima Music Box

The Society had the great fortune to be the recipient of a long-term loan of a Regina Sublima Music Box with 30 music discs from Mike Dixon. Music is created when a perforated metal disc rotates over a set of combs and dampers, tuned in chromatic scale. It is fully operational and will be playable for tours and groups visiting the Provençal-Weir House c. 1823, where it now stands in the dining room.

The Regina Music Box company was established by German immigrant Gustave Brachhausen in 1892. Regina boxes have long been renowned among collectors for the quality of their tone.

The box has been loaned by Mike in memory of his mother, Mrs. Peter (Joan) Dixon. She had been a member of the Society since 1979.



*“1856 Temperance”* written by Dianne Pegg; Charles Moran Jr. played by Don Cillufo, Virginia Moran St. Aubin played by Tamara Connelly.



*“August 16, 1812—Fall of Detroit”* written by Dianne Pegg; Louis Beaufait played by Larry Marco, Young George Moran played by Daniel Harris, Uncle Joseph Moran played by Dante Buffalini, Young Phelice Moran played by Becky Fogelsong, Mother Catherine Campau Moran played by Delores Basile.



## Talking Headstones Event Scares Up Ancestors

October’s Talking Headstones walk through St. Paul’s Cemetery was a sell-out success, with more than 200 people attending. Among the guests were about 70 descendants of the families

buried there including Allard, Reno, Trombley, Moran, D’Hondt, Vernier, Cook, Labadie, Beaupre, Rivard, Cadieux, Trombley, Meininger, Korte, and Martin.

The event was a joint venture with the Grosse Pointe Theater, including

**Project Leader:** Mary L. Petit

**Producer and Assistant Director:** Kathy Conlon

**Stage Manager:** Mikie Pizzimenti

**Costumes:** Ginger Hupp, Make-up: Arlene Marie Schoenherr

**Stage and Lighting:** Sal DeMercurio assisted by Don Corbin, Geoff Proven, and Dale Pegg.

During a writer’s workshop this summer, six writers from the Grosse Pointe Theater created the scripts under the direction of Kathy Conlon, vice president of the Theater. They used information from the Grosse Pointe Historical Society and St. Paul Church and William Gorksi, former GPHS Board Member.

Volunteers that evening were Lynn Detwiler, Scott Vandermergel, Pam Scanlon, Chip and Suzy Berschback, and members of a local Eagle Boy Scout troop.



*“1865 Remembering”* written by Gwenn Bashara Samuel; Catherine Peltier Beaufait played by Lois Bandler, Louis Beaufait played by Larry Marco.

# GPHS Beneficiary of \$5,000 State Quester Grant



The Michigan State Organization of Questers was proud to recognize and congratulate the members of Rose Terrace Questers #1438, Fox Creek Questers #216, Pear Tree Questers #193, and Pettipointe Questers #243 as the 2008 Grant Recipient winner of \$5,000. The money was used for the restoration of the front porch of the Provencal-Weir House c. 1823.

In addition to the grant money, each of the chapters donated \$500 from their treasuries to ensure that this project would be completed in a timely manner. In total, \$7,000 was raised for the project.

Only one such grant is awarded each year, based on the need and historic value of the project, and on the ability

of the chapters to support the project. It was awarded to GPHS Program Director Nancy Pacitto, also a founding member of the Rose Terrace Questers, and Lynn Detwiler, of the Rose Terrace Questers, at the state Quester convention earlier in the fall.

*Stop by and take a look—the house has never looked better!*

*continued from front page*

## *Wilkinson Foundation Supports Further Digitizing, City Survey*

GPHS several years ago. Emphasis shifted to Grosse Pointe Farms, resulting in historic district legislation and the creation of the Beverly Road Historic District. (see [http://www.ci.grosse-pointe-farms.mi.us/historic\\_district.cfm](http://www.ci.grosse-pointe-farms.mi.us/historic_district.cfm)). The Wilkinson Foundation granted funds in 2007-08 to revitalize the City survey, and important work was begun. The current funding will allow that work to continue, with a goal of completion of the survey in 2009-10.

## *Not Yet a Member? Two Convenient Ways to Join!*

1. Visit [www.gphistorical.org](http://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

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|---|----------|---|------------|
| <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 |            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business       | \$100.00 | three-year period)                                  | \$1,000.00 |

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Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

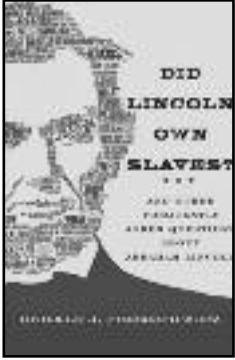
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\_\_\_\_\_ I am interested in Planned Giving information

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!

## Spring 2009 Dr. Frank Bicknell Lecture Series

Complimentary. Seating is limited



### ***Lincoln Bicentennial*** **Wednesday, March 18 7:30 p.m.**

*Grosse Pointe War Memorial, 32 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms*

Dr. Gerald J. Prokopowicz, chair of the history department at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, will present a program relating to his book, *Did Lincoln Own Slaves? and other frequently questions about Abraham Lincoln*, commemorating the bicentennial of the birth of the sixteenth President of the United States.

Dr. Prokopowicz previously authored the critically acclaimed *All for the Regiment: The Army of Ohio, 1861-1862*.



### ***Shopping in Downtown Detroit*** **Wednesday, April 22 7:30 p.m.**

*Grosse Pointe War Memorial, 32 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms*

Michael Hauser, marketing manager of the Detroit Opera House, will present a program relating to his latest book (December 2008) *20th Century Retailing in Downtown Detroit*. Mike, a Bicknell Lecturer last October when he spoke about his book *Detroit's Downtown Movie Palaces* (2006), also co-authored *Hudson's: Detroit's Legendary Department Store* in 2004.



### ***Albert Kahn, the Fords, and Grosse Pointe*** **Wednesday, May 20 7:30 p.m.**

*Edsel & Eleanor Ford House, 1100 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Shores*

During the centennial of Kahn's work with the Fords, we will explore his relationship with that family and his other works in Grosse Pointe.



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