

# History Matters



Keego Harbor • Orchard Lake • Sylvan Lake • West Bloomfield

Newsletter of Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society

FALL 2024 | CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF GWBHS | UPDATED SOCIETY TIMELINE, PT. 2 | SOCIETY PROGRAMS & NEWS | MEMBERSHIP NOTICE

## Fall Programs: Highlighting 50 Years of Local History!



### Celebrating 50 Years of History Open House

Outdoor activities, floats, and fun to celebrate 50 years!



### Presentation: Mapping Local History

Receive a free copy of our 1975 & 2024 historic sites map!



### Presentation: 50 Years of GWBHS History

See how GWBHS has shared local history!

## Pine Lake Cemetery Highlights: Laura Todd Harger

On October 5, Pine Lake Cemetery Tour volunteer docents will highlight notable community member stories. Laura Todd Harger was elected West Bloomfield Township's first female clerk at age 43, in 1919. However, she could not even vote until the fall of 1920, when the 19th amendment to the United States Constitution extending voting rights to women became effective.



Laura Todd Harger

## Window(s) to the Future at St. Mary's Academic Building

A 1905 postcard donated by Steve Hinzman of Wixom prompted another look at the majestic Academic Building on the Orchard Lake Schools campus, home of St. Mary's Preparatory, on Orchard Lake.



1905 MMA Postcard

The three-story building was the largest on the campus, one of 19 originally built on the 112 acre site by the Michigan Military Academy and completed in 1890. Its primary purpose was for classrooms and labs, offices for school officials and a library that contained over two thousand books. After the closing of the academy in 1909, it became the Orchard Lake Schools bookstore, offices, library, biology lab, chemistry and physics lab, employee residences and faculty apartments. Later the building was used as the Chancellor's office, business offices, switchboard, and St. Mary's offices for the President, Academic Dean, Admissions, Registrar, and rooms for student instruction.

Continued on Page 5



# From the Desk of President Gina Gregory

Celebrations and recognitions continued this spring! At the Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast I was pleasantly surprised to receive the Jeff Leib Volunteer Lifetime Achievement Award. Thank you for the recognition. Christy Forhan was the Dr. Seymour Gretchko Youth Advocate Award recipient. Congratulations Christy!

May through August GWBHS continued celebrating 50 years, 1974-2024, while fulfilling our Mission with usual activities and new projects highlighting our history:

- GWBHS dedicated the Holiday House MotorCities Marker outdoor panel
- The doctor's carriage float was included in the GWBHS entry, Keego Harbor Memorial Day Parade
- Docents gave Apple Island and Museum tours to second graders
- Volunteers hosted Apple Island Tours
- Board members hosted a Volunteer Celebration Appreciation Reception
- Volunteers hosted a Poker Rally: Things You Auto Know About Local History



Doctor's Carriage float



Holiday House Marker Dedication



Apple Island Tours



Annual Appreciation Reception

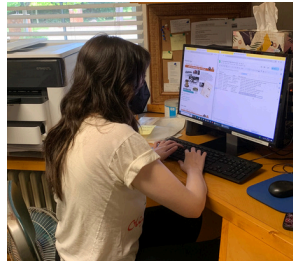
This fall we are excited to share history highlights featured elsewhere!

July 21, the public was invited to celebrate with the first congregation formed in West Bloomfield. Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian celebrated their chapel completion 150th anniversary with a day of activities.

Looking ahead, the GWBHS Annual Meeting will be held in January, 2025. Watch [gwbhs.org](http://gwbhs.org) and email notices for details.

Volunteer time seems more precious now. What GWBHS activities are sustainable now? Please consider what GBWHS activity you value and are interested in supporting. Contact Museum & Communications Assistant Anna Smith, [anna@gwbhs.org](mailto:anna@gwbhs.org), to volunteer and learn more.

# Updates from Anna Smith Museum & Communications Assistant



Volunteer Rissa Smith

We have completed work on the Michigan Arts & Culture Council and National Endowment for the Arts grant to digitize some of the Museum's collections and update existing digitized collections. Thank you to the team of volunteers who worked on this project — it wouldn't have been possible without your dedication! You can view the

GWBHS digital database with these new additions online for free at [GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com](http://GWBHS.PastPerfectOnline.com).

GWBHS is always looking for new volunteers. If you are 18+ and interested in sharing local history with the community, consider becoming an Open House Host. Training is provided! View more volunteer opportunities at [GWBHS.org/Support/Volunteer/](http://GWBHS.org/Support/Volunteer/) or contact me at [anna@gwbhs.org](mailto:anna@gwbhs.org) for details.



Volunteers enjoy helping at GWBHS programs!

## Membership Renewal Time is Now!

You can get a jump start on renewing your membership or becoming a new member now for membership through 2025. Any new membership or membership renewal submitted on or after September 1 will be effective immediately and be valid through December 31, 2025. Plan ahead now for getting a membership in place as a holiday gift for friends or family and support your community at the same time!

There are two easy ways to become a new member, renew your membership, or provide a gift membership:

1. Scan the QR code at the right or enter [GWBHS.org/Become-A-Member/](http://GWBHS.org/Become-A-Member/) in your computer's browser and fill out the form to submit your membership payment with a credit card.



2. Mail the "GWBHS Membership Form" which is included at the back of this newsletter, along with your check.

Thank you for your continuing support and I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event!

**Karen Pushie, Membership Chairperson**

**2024 GWBHS members receive a complimentary 50th anniversary pen upon presentation of your membership card at the Orchard Lake Museum!**

# 2024 Programs

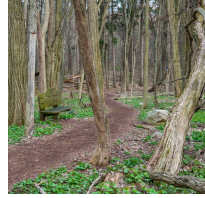
## September-December



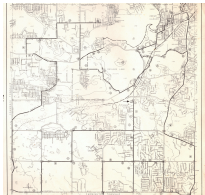
Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society hosts and sponsors programs covering a wide variety of history topics throughout the year. Visit [GWBHS.org](http://GWBHS.org) for more information and final event details.



**Celebrating 50 Years of History Open House**  
 Sunday, September 8, 1-4 pm  
 Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road  
 Enjoy soda and cupcakes, 1974 fun facts and music, and old-fashioned fun for all ages. Free admission, donations appreciated.



**Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary Autumn Nature Walk**  
 Sunday, October 20, 2-3 pm, 4700 Pontiac Trail  
 Join naturalist Carol Fink for a walk through rolling terrain and explore seasonal autumn beauty. Free admission, donations appreciated. Sponsored with Orchard Lake Nature Sanctuary.



**1975 & 2024 GWBHS Historic Highlights Map Presentation**  
 Wednesday, September 18, 7 pm  
 WB Library Main Meeting Room, 4600 Walnut Lake Road  
 Receive a free map as we review the 1975 and 2024 GWBHS historic locations map. See changed highlights! Free admission, donations appreciated. Sponsored with WB Library.

**Heroes Appreciation Breakfast**  
 Saturday, November 2, 9-10:30 am  
 West Bloomfield Middle School, 6000 Orchard Lake Road  
 At the Heroes Appreciation Breakfast visit our historical military memorabilia exhibit! Register at [WBParks.org](http://WBParks.org).

**West Bloomfield Parks Senior Health Expo**  
 Wednesday, October 2, 9 am-2 pm  
 Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital, 6777 W. Maple Road  
 Visit the GWBHS table at this year's WB Parks Senior Health Expo! Details at [WBParks.org](http://WBParks.org).



**GWBHS Military Collection Open House**  
 Sunday, November 10, 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 or donate your family military memories and objects. Free admission, donations appreciated.



**Pine Lake Cemetery Tour**  
 Saturday, October 5, 11 am-1 pm  
 Pine Lake Cemetery, 4351 Middlebelt Road  
 East side of Middlebelt Road, north of Lone Pine Road  
 Take part in a walking tour of Pine Lake Cemetery and learn the history of founding residents, prominent people, sports figures, and others with Sexton Mari Bem and docents. Optional restaurant gathering afterward. Rain or shine. \$5 cash donation, paid on-site, at the tour. Sponsored with WB Parks.



**"50 Years of GWBHS History" Presentation**  
 Wednesday, November 13, 7 pm  
 WB Library Main Meeting Room, 4600 Walnut Lake Road  
 Join us for a look back at the timeline of 50 years of collecting, preserving, and sharing the history of our communities.

**Indigenous Peoples' Day Open House**  
 Sunday, October 13, 1-4 pm  
 Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road  
 Indigenous peoples are known to have lived in West Bloomfield at the time of the first official survey in 1817. Come learn more about them! Free admission, donations appreciated.



**Vintage Wooden Toys Open House**  
 Sunday, December 8, 1-4 pm  
 Orchard Lake Museum, 3951 Orchard Lake Road  
 Enjoy our vintage wooden toy collection, along with other vintage toys, this holiday season! Hands-on activities. Engaging permanent exhibits interpret local area culture and history. Free admission, donations appreciated.

**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.*

**September**  
 Sunday: 9/8  
 Friday: 9/20

**November**  
 Sunday: 11/10  
 Friday: 11/15

**October**  
 Sunday: 10/13  
 Friday: 10/18

**December**  
 Sunday: 12/8  
 Friday: 12/20



**Volunteer Opportunities Meeting**  
 Wednesday, December 11, 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! RSVP by Tuesday, December 10 to [contact@gwbhs.org](mailto:contact@gwbhs.org).



# Timeline of the Society and Orchard Lake Museum, Part Two



**2009**  
Theme Sunday open houses

**2009**  
Receive Frances Y. Gadd Memorial bequest



**2009**  
Host 35th Anniversary Apple Pie & Ice Cream Social

**2009**  
Program collaboration with West Bloomfield Library



**2010**  
Install Archaeology Dig Box

**2011**  
Resolution: objection to Green Elementary School renaming

West Bloomfield school board reconsiders renaming Green Elementary, but decision stands

**2013**  
Install 20 outdoor MotorCities Markers, through MotorCities National Heritage Area

**2013**  
Restore "Mary and Her Little Lamb" painting



**2014**  
Receive Michigan Week Award: Community Achievement Award

**2014**  
Install outdoor Museum exhibit signs

**2014**  
Host Living With History: Historic Homes Tour

**2014**  
Celebrate GWBHS 40th & Orchard Lake's 50th anniversaries with ice cream social



**2017**  
Install Our School History panels in West Bloomfield Schools

**2018**  
Program collaboration with West Bloomfield Parks



**2019**  
Receive Michigan Week Award: Seymour Gretchko Youth Advocate Group

**2019**  
Install Green School Bell outdoor Museum exhibit



**2020-2021**  
Renovate Museum with reimagined exhibits. Add and update outdoor exhibits

**2021**  
Produce historical content videos. Collaborate with Civic Center TV

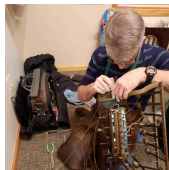


**2022**  
Repair Herschede clock



**2023**  
Digitize West Bloomfield School District collection

**2023**  
Resolution: objection to demolition of Roosevelt School



**2024**  
Celebrate 50 years of GWBHS

**2023-2024**  
Restore doctor's carriage. Install outdoor Museum lighting



Host Poker Rally: Things You Auto Know About Local History

Update 1975 GWBHS historical sites' map  
New digitization project



# Thank You for Supporting GWBHS!

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

**APPLE ISLAND TOURS PARTNERS** - City of Orchard Lake Village, Orchard Lake Schools, West Bloomfield Parks & West Bloomfield School District

**APPLE ISLAND TOURS VOLUNTEERS** - Ava Bagne, Rick Bartus, Tom Bjorkland, Jan Boyd, Katie Cangany, Matt Chaffin, Alex & Hannah Dagg, Carol Fink, Christy & Gary Forhan, Gina & Rob Gregory, Sue Grifor, Isla & Neil Hepburn, Mark Hoock, Sylvia Houlahan, Steve Kaplan, Linda Kidd, Lana LaFortune, Leslie Landau, Anita MacSorley, Riley Mahar, Kelly Mandel, Steve Missaghi, Shelby Nelsen, Don Newman, Genot "Winter Elk" Picor, Karen Pushie, Derek Schraffenberger, Sindhu Sivan, Anna & Rissa Smith, Christian & DuAnne Sonnevill, Patrice Steele, Sue Williams, Helen Zenker & Julie Zhu

**APPRECIATION RECEPTION RAFFLE DONATIONS** - Great Harvest Bread Co., Hite Photo, Petite Gardens, Stage Deli Fine Foods, Trader Joe's

**DONATION, SILVER LEVEL** - Gwynne & Jim Cherfoli

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

**MUSEUM SUPPORT** - City of Orchard Lake Village, Orchard Lake Schools, West Bloomfield Library & West Bloomfield Parks

**COMMUNITY & OPEN HOUSE PRESENTERS** - Rick Bartus & Christy Forhan

**PROGRAM HOSTS & OPEN HOUSE VOLUNTEERS** - Ruth Du Fresne, Gina Gregory, Neil Hepburn, Ron Hodess, Derek Schraffenberger, Anna Smith, DuAnne Sonnevill & Sue Williams

**PROGRAM PARTNERS** - West Bloomfield Library & West Bloomfield Parks

**PUBLICITY & GWBHS CONTENT VIDEOS** - Civic Center TV

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

**WBP ACTIVITIES GUIDE GWBHS AD SPONSOR** - Tapper's

## Window(s) to the Future at St. Mary's Academic Building (cont.)

A major renovation was done in 2018, funded by Clarence and Lillian Constantakis, (Clarence was a St. Mary's Prep graduate in the 1950s.) It is now called the Clarence and Lillian Constantakis St. Mary's Preparatory Building. Today, the building houses a student lounge, computer lab and the Principal's and secretarial offices.

GWBHS member and 1972 St. Mary's graduate, Paul Mellerowicz, salvaged one of the old windows in its frame



The newly renovated Academic Building, with the Constantakis namesake

during construction. An upper section with the top arch is now on display on the porch of the Orchard Lake Museum. According to Mellerowicz, the new windows were made by a company in Poland for an exact fit in the opening, requiring no filler. Mellerowicz has an extensive collection of photos of the entire Orchard Lake campus buildings, from its day of the military academy to today.



Window from the original building on display at Orchard Lake Museum



2018 renovation with new windows



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

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Warren, MI  
Permit # 164

**Board of Directors**

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Gina Gregory      | President                |
| 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              |
| Rick Bartus         | 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.*



**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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

