



# the Moorings

GROSSE POINTE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

established 1945

Fall 2015

Vol. 32 No. 3

## Celebrating 70 years

It was the most perfect day for an outdoor party, the weather fabulous and fun in the air.

Mike Skinner, past president, donned a white summer hat as he made Boston Coolers for the guests.

“There were wonderful volunteers who offered up hot dogs, with all the sides – chili, mustard, relish, ketchup and potato chips – all serving the public with smiles,” said Kay Burt-Willson, chair of the party.



Trustee Alesia Bicknell serves the chili dogs at the afternoon birthday party that featured all Michigan made products.

The Society featured all Michigan products at this free public event on Saturday, July 11, in celebration of GPHS’ 70th Anniversary.

Jason Parent and Pro DJ Services provided musical background for the party.

“I couldn’t resist playing musical chairs with the children.

The music that the DJ chose was just too

Continued on page 2



Researchers were available during the party to show some of the reference materials available in the Alfred S. and Ruth M. Moran Resource Center.

## News of Grosse Pointe Past

*News of Grosse Pointe Past* is a series of vignettes focusing on events and people that form the tapestry of our lives in this community.

WGPH will broadcast this production live from the steps of the Provencal-Weir House, 376 Kercheval, at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 3 for this premiere event.

An audience-interactive show, *News of Grosse Pointe Past* is presented as a live radio program based stories from *Tonnancour*, by Arthur M. Woodford and used courtesy of Peter Ruffner at Omnigraphics, Inc.

The stories represent some fact, some mystery, some unbelievable events in the life and times of Grosse Pointe.

“The Musk-rat” based on a poem by William E Baubie and “The Wreck of the *Julie Plante*” based on a poem by William Henry Drummond, relate some amusing incidents in the life of French Canadian settlers. These two works are presented by **Pat O’Brien**.

In 1897 the Detroit News and the Detroit Tribune ran several stories about “Sea Serpent Sightings on the Great Lakes”. **Mary Stelmark** is the presenter.

The radio voice of **Isabelle Donnelly** is heard in the 1796 story, “Le Lutin” (Werewolf).

From 1897 to 1928, the interurban rail system connected Grosse Pointe to Detroit. **Sue Lewandowski** presents “A Streetcar Named Grosse Pointe”.

**Richard Burt-Willson** is the announcer.

The production is the work of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society.

The program is free to Grosse Pointe Historical Society members and \$5 to non-members.

Cider and donuts will be available for purchase.



Grosse Pointe Historical Society

381 Kercheval Avenue

Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236

(313) 884-7010 Phone

(313) 884-7699 Fax



Kit Greening, docent volunteer, explains the significance of the Provencal-Weir House.

## Celebrating 70 years

Continued from cover

much fun to be able to sit still,” said Isabelle Donnelly, director of education.

There were guest societies in attendance, too. Margaret Llorens of the Daughters of the American Revolution passed out American flags to the children. And Pat Stewart, representing Alliance Francaise, provided information about the great programs they offer as well.

The party was made possible by donations from Village Market, Metropolitan Bakery, National Coney Island, Valerie Dodenhoff and the Board of Trustees of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society.



Mike Skinner serves Boston coolers to guests at the party.

## Dr. Frank Bicknell Educational Lecture Series

Detroit Metro Airport, Daniel W. Mason

Wednesday, Sept. 16, 7:30 p.m. Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Ave., GPW

Author Romulus Army Air Field served the military during World War II by transporting B-24 Liberator bombers to the East Coast, and by transferring P-39 Aircobras and P-63 Kingcobras to the Soviet Union via Montana and Alaska. During the Cold War, the airport saw a presence of nuclear weapons and the National Guard.

The airport received its current name in 1958, and by 1971 the weapons and guard facilities were gone. During the past half century, Metro has constantly upgraded technology for safety and security, and has attempted to make the passenger experience as pleasant and exciting as possible.

**Daniel W. Mason** studied history at Lake Superior State College. He is currently employed by FedEx Express. And is working with the Wayne County Airport Authority to create archives and a museum at Metro.

**Singing Wheels: August Fruehauf and The History of the Fruehauf Trailer Company, Ruth Fruehauf**

Wednesday, October 21, 7:30 p.m. Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Avenue, GPW

In 1914, Detroit-based carriage builder August Fruehauf created one of the first semi-trailers. His concept would revolutionize the shipping industry. August went from being a hard-working blacksmith to the president of a multimillion-dollar company at his death in 1939. The company passed out of family hands in 1964, and was purchased by Wabash Trailers in 1997.



**Ruth Ann Fruehauf**, the youngest daughter of Roy and Ruth Horn Fruehauf, is a graduate of Cranbrook Schools in Bloomfield Hills and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the American University in Paris.

**Christianity in Stained Glass, The Reverend Dr. Lynne Alcott Kogel**

Wednesday, Nov. 18, 7:30 p.m. Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Avenue, GPW

*Christianity in Stained Glass* examines the extensive stained glass windows of Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, a sublime marriage of color and light that seems to emanate the very notion of grace. Memorial Church contains an array of windows created by the Willet Stained Glass and Decorating Company from the 1920s to the '60s. Inspired by the storyboard windows of European churches, such as France's Chartres Cathedral, the Willet firm led a revival of translucent stained glass, instead of using the opalescent glass that was popular at the time, and created narrative window pieces for many American churches.

**The Reverend Dr. Lynne Alcott Kogel** completed her undergraduate degree at UCLA and earned graduate degrees from Wayne State University, the University of Michigan, and McCormick Theological Seminary. Dr. Kogel is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a member of the Presbyterian of Detroit.



# RIBBON FARM DAYS: Crafts, Field Trips, Stories

**R**ibbon Farms Days offered an exciting activity for young people this summer. Led by Isabelle Donnelly, director of education, each of the two-week sessions focused on themes that inspired creativity, local history and the love of learning.

“I want the children to feel they are using their talents and creativity to enhance their lives. And along the way it increases their sense of pride and well being,” said



Hayden has completed creating a batik napkin and is hanging it up to dry.

Donnelly. When the children were finished, they had created table decorations to brighten any family meal.

“Miss Izzy, my mom’s birthday is on July 7, and my dad and I are going to surprise her by setting the table with my RFD items. I am even going to pick flowers from the garden for her,” said Sarah, one of the children in this year’s Ribbon Farm Days.

Another session featured *Life in Rural Grosse Pointe*. What was life like for children more than one hundred years ago? In this session, children painted horses and built a barn for them. They also created a fox-hunter doll with red coat and black boots, and stuffed a toy red fox.

*The final session*, in partnership with the Edsel and Eleanor Ford House, highlighted Children’s Stories. The children created a fairy garden, a fairy door made of Fimo clay, and created little fairies using wooden shapes. The children read *Thumbelina* and engaged in discussions about the purpose of the story. A bus trip to the Edsel and Eleanor Ford house was scheduled to continue the conversations about “Things with Wings.”

Donnelly.

*The first session this summer focused on gardens.* The children decorated glass votives and a flower vase, and adorned a terra cotta flowerpot with glass beads and tile glue. They also created original designs on cotton napkins using clear glue and acrylic paint. To complete the garden-themed table setting, the children decorated coasters using cotton jumping



Julia proudly holds her completed batik napkin. Batik is a technique using hot wax and dye. Designs are drawn on the fabric with hot wax, and then dye is applied. The wax is a barrier to the color. Once the fabric is dry, the wax is removed by rinsing it in hot water and then drying it.

## Help Wanted

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society is looking for a few good people to volunteer for three very specific opportunities. None of the positions require more than 12 hours a month, but are essential for the smooth operation of the Society.

First, we need a **House Manager** who would coordinate the preservation and maintenance of the Provençal-Weir House.

Second, the **LaBelle Country Store** needs a manager who can evaluate the store and merchandise, investigate “unique” Grosse Pointe items, create a staffing schedule for Second Saturday.

Third, we would need an **email coordinator** who is familiar with Constant Contact. The position includes a monthly update of the email data base for Constant Contact and the posting of communications provided by the Administrator.

For any of the three positions indicate your interest with a brief statement about your qualifications in writing and send to [info@gphistorical.org](mailto:info@gphistorical.org) by Sept. 10.

## From the Moran Resource Center

It began with an email from a former resident of Grosse Pointe who now lives in Portland, Oregon.

Lornie McCormick Goodhart, wrote in the email that she had inherited an 1811 deed of Antoine Reneau’s farm that was signed by both James Madison and James Monroe. Lornie’s father purchased the deed at a White Elephant Sale several years ago.

Go to our website to view the deed. [gphistorical.org](http://gphistorical.org)



Jack McCormick and Ryan McCormick



Mercedes Kucyk, docent, directs guests to view the Harley Earl designed 1940 Buick.

## It was “Some Enchanted Evening”

It was a magical evening for all who attended the Summer Gala on June 18 at the former home of Nicole and Jim Rahaim.

The architectural jewel, designed and built by August Geiger for John B. Ford in 1929, proved a dramatic backdrop for the elegant evening.

Guests were invited to share the home and its restored and renovated interior spaces.

Jack McCormick and Jeanne Bourget provided music for patrons as they entered the home.

Out of doors, Scott Gwinnell and his band presented musical stylings of the 1940s and 50s.

In the garage and workshop, Richard Earl, grandson of Harley Earl, shared stories of his grandfather and talked about the vintage automobiles that were displayed in the motor court. An After Party in the motor court ended an incredible evening of food, beverage, automobiles and glamour.

Floral arrangements were created by Flowers for Any Event.

The party was catered and staged by Lakeland Banquet and Event Centre.

Photographers for Some Enchanted Evening were Robin Maghelsie and John Martin.



Ariel view of the August Geiger designed home in Grosse Pointe Farms.

August Geiger used the fountain, outside the front entrance, to provide a visual and auditory transition from the bustle of the street to the tranquility of the home.

Richard Mueller, JoJo Hamo, Jane Fleckenstein, John Fleckenstein near the garden fountain.



The Harley Earl 1955 Chevrolet Bel Air Coupe.



Designed for John B. Ford in 1929, the home echoes the Mediterranean villas that inspired architect, August Geiger.



1959 Corvette



A floral arrangement inspired by the home and created by Flowers for Any Event.



Beline Obeid, Tony Obeid, Dr. Devon Hoover on the Red Carpet



1955 Buick – 2 Door Riviera

Jeanne Bourget serenades the guests accompanied by Scott Gwinnell, at the keyboard, and his combo.



Stuart Grigg, co-chair, and Joe Katulic admire the 1960 Cadillac convertible.



## Securing GPHS Future

For more than 70 years, the Grosse Pointe Historical Society has brought local history to life, through its collections, programs, activities and publications.

As a way to secure this piece of the past, The Grosse Pointe Historical Society Vice President for Development, Stuart Grigg, announced at the Summer Gala that a permanent endowment fund had been created at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, [www.cfsem.org](http://www.cfsem.org).

“Your generous gift to the Endowment for the Grosse Pointe Historical Society at the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan ensures that the history of Grosse Pointe lives on in the hearts of generations to come,” said Grigg.

Learn more about the new relationship between the Society and CFSEM on Tuesday, Sept. 8, when Randy Ross, associate vice president, donor relations, meets with Trustees and members at 7 p.m. at the Provencal-Weir House.

The Community Foundation is dedicated to helping nonprofit partners grow endowment assets. Endowment provides a source of ongoing support and helps ensure stability in uncertain times. An endowment also provides a place where donors can establish lasting legacies with their support.

To make a current gift to the endowment fund, simply make a check payable to:

For information about support of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society, please contact:

Stuart Grigg, vice president, development  
[info@gphistorical.org](mailto:info@gphistorical.org)

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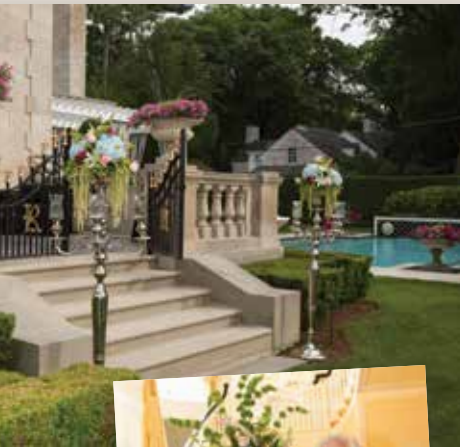
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# Gala 70th Fundraiser for The Grosse Pointe Historical Society

More photos and story on page 4.



## Grosse Pointe Historical Society

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## SECOND SATURDAY EXPANDS PROGRAM

### Second Saturday programming at the Grosse Pointe Historical Society features an expanded offering for visitors.

For the first time, the community will have access to The Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Resource Center during the Second Saturday Open House from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Displays will be set up and research volunteers will be available to help.

Some of the items available include: Abstracts - Plat Books - Subdivision Records; Native American Artifacts; Art Works; Building Plans - Renderings - Models; Decorative Arts; Manuscripts and Documents; Historic Maps - Atlases; Pamphlets; Periodicals; Photographs; Postcards; Oral Histories; Slides; Textiles and Videos.

Right across the street, the Provencal-Weir House is open for tours. Docents will walk visitors through the nearly 200-year-old home, highlighting the history of the families who lived there and the significance of the home to the community.

The LaBelle Country Store is open for business, offering merchandise that features Grosse Pointe.



The Second Saturday Children's Workshops are especially designed for children in grades 2 through 6. By crafting seasonally based take-home projects, the children create beautiful objects for their homes.

Each month's Children's Workshop begins at 1 pm and ends at 3 pm. The cost is \$20 per session for GPHS members, \$25 for non-members. Scheduled so far:

- **September 12:** Make a "Back to School" garland for the fireplace mantel or dining table from Fimo clay.
- **October 10:** Make a 'no sew' fleece pillow using special Halloween items.
- **November 14:** Create two "Turkey Votives" for the Thanksgiving table.
- **December 12:** Make angel ornament for the Christmas tree.

Workshop reservations must be made by the **Thursday** before each event. Call 313-884-7010 to reserve a place for the youngster in your life.