

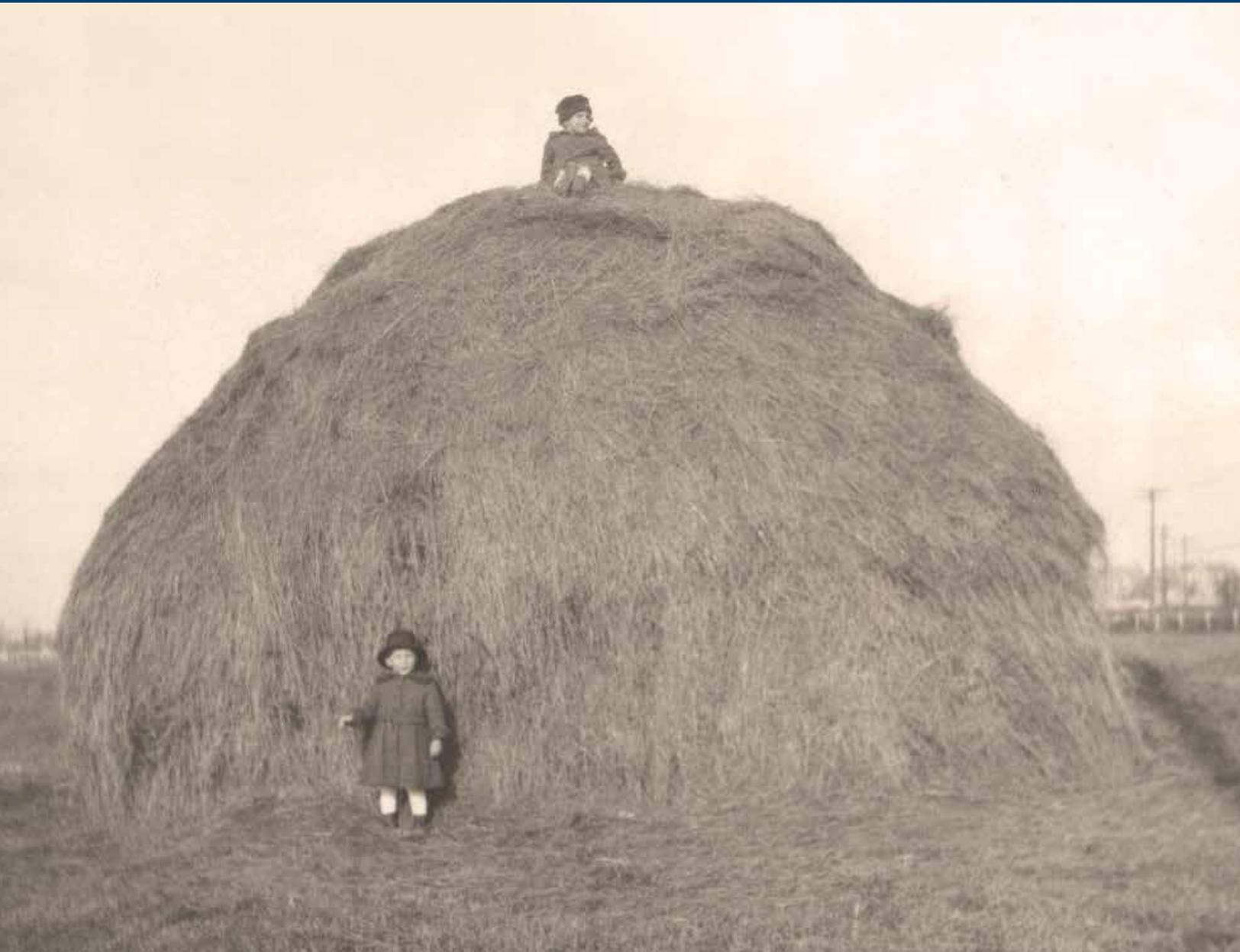


# Grosse Pointe Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Vol. 33 No. 2

Local History Brought to Life!

FALL 2016



## Memories of... **MOONLIGHT at the MANOR**

470 guests reveled on June 9 in support of GPHS. Thanks to hosts Dr. Clark Okulski & Tom Young, honorary chair, Martha Ford, and event chairs, Cathy & Rick Walker for the most-successful gala ever!

### Front cover:

When searching for an autumn scene for this issue of our newsletter, we couldn't resist this unusual photo of two children labeled, Ann and William Stevens, Lake Shore Road. We wondered how William managed to reach the top of what appears to be a rather tall haystack. We were also curious about where these two cute children lived. We found a likely match in the 1930 Social Secretary that was donated to the Grosse Pointe Historical Society by the American Association of University Women in June, 1985. A listing for Mr. and Mrs. William P. Stevens at 421 Lake Shore Road, Grosse Pointe Farms includes Miss Anne Whitwood Stevens who was attending Miss Hall's School and William Flinn Stevens who was attending Hotchkiss.

# Second Saturdays Fall 2016

Second Saturdays is a two hour class held at the PWH for children ages 7 to 12 years old. This fall will feature seasonal crafts listed below.



### SEPTEMBER 10

Bake mini streusel apple pies to welcome fall. Ages 7 and above.

### OCTOBER 8

Make tea light ghosts for Halloween! Ages 7 and above.

### NOVEMBER 12

Make a Thanksgiving Turkey Wreath. Ages 7 and above.

### DECEMBER 10

Make your very own Angel Tree Topper. Ages 7 and above.



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## Grosse Pointe Historical Society

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 Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236  
 (313) 884-7010 Phone  
 (313) 884-7699 Fax

## One-Room School Field Trips

This past year nearly 800 people passed thru the PWH for the One-Room School field trips. 28 individual classrooms came from grades 2-5 for the experience. The McGuffey Readers were read aloud, writing was done with chalk on slate, spelling bees were performed, Polly Wolly was sung, arithmetic was conducted and, of course, Betty Botter Bought a Bit of Butter was memorized. The PWH c.1823 and log cabin c.1840 were toured at length and some had time for the scavenger hunt which lists multiple items in the PWH that have to be identified. For recess the children played with our vintage wooden toys including the buzz saw, cup and ball, jump ropes and game of graces. The PWH continues to be the perfect backdrop for a wonderful field trip experience for our local schools!



The children line up for Miss Izzy and are ready to enter the Provencal-Weir House for their field trip to the One-Room School.

## Ribbon Farm Days I

RFD I was a huge success this summer. The first session is always Michigan Gardens and this year we focused on "Bird Watching". The children decorated their own bird houses, painted their



The children decorated their bird houses with paint and glass beads.

binoculars, designed bird baths using glass beads and permanent markers, and decorated their Baltimore Oriole feeders to attract the birds. The garden theme is meant to get children out-of-doors and involved in their own yards. It is a wonderful time for them to commune with nature. For a treat, mini apple pie tarts were baked using Granny Smith apples and pie crust shaped into cupcake tins for a delicious treat.



The boys delight in seeing one hundred year old photographs in 3-D thru the stereoscope.

## More Memories of Moonlight at the Manor



Gala photos by Robin M Photography

# A new home for the Grosse Pointe Historical Society

The administrative offices and collections of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society, including the Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Resource Center will soon have a new home – just across the street, in fact, at 375 Kercheval, and smack-dab across Kercheval from the Provencal-Weir House.



Photo by Renee Landuyt, courtesy Grosse Pointe News

The yellow-brick house was home for many years to the Stover family, best known to Grosse Pointers as the owners of Gene’s Party Store in the Schwartz Building, just down the street. Generations of young Pointers used their first allowance money for penny candy at Gene’s. The rustic cabin next to the house is included in the Society’s purchase. It was a horse barn moved to the current site in the 1930s when the lot was an apple orchard. The log-clad structure has served as a club-house for the Schwartz family children and later, as “Stover’s Cabin,” site of memorable parties.

375 Kercheval offers triple the current space of the current leased offices. The building will be adapted for its new uses. GPHS vice president, Jim Conway, leads the committee overseeing the project. He and society Secretary, Mary Stelmark are working with the City of Grosse Pointe Farms to assure that GPHS plans and work comply with municipal regulations and requirements.

Visionary leaders of GPHS saw the potential of the Provencal-Weir house in the 1990s when it was a private home and negotiated to purchase and eventually restore the c. 1823 Ribbon Farm house for its current use as a living-history museum. 25 years later, the acquisition of 375 Kercheval represents the next big leap forward to ensure that the history of the Grosse Pointes is preserved and made accessible to current and future generations of interested residents and visitors.

GPHS will launch a capital campaign to pay off the property and adapt it to use as an administration and collection space, and to create a permanent fund to ensuring that the mission and programs, research and collections of GPHS are protected and continue. The purchase of the property was assisted by a mortgage from Talmer Bank. “Talmer Bank was wonderful to us,” GPHS President Dr. Patricia O’Brien said. “They’re really working with the community for the community.”

## Grant Received for Digitizing Collection, Providing Online Access

The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM) awarded a grant to the Grosse Pointe Historical Society from the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation endowment at the Foundation. The \$25,000 grant will fund upgraded museum collections software and hardware, digitization of holdings in the Society’s collections and enable online access to the collection for internet users.

Stuart Grigg, GPHS VP for Development, said, “The number one activity at the Society offices, is answering inquiries... they number in the thousands each year. The Ralph J. Wilson, Jr. Online Community Access project will allow us to upgrade the PastPerfect software and equipment we use to catalog, archive and sort information about our collection. We’ll be able to store more photos, more information about objects, and share more easily with web-accessible “virtual exhibits”, slideshows, and the ability to find out selected information about our collections through web searches.



RALPH C. WILSON, JR.  
FOUNDATION

“This will increase awareness of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society and the value of the organization. We expect to attract new members and participants in activities, as well as encourage the donation of additional objects and collections for the Archives. The capabilities will let us partner with organizations of similar interests in the community – strengthening the presence of both organizations on the internet.”

GPHS extends heartfelt and enthusiastic thanks to CFSEM and the Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation for their support of our mission and the means to realize our vision!



**Ralph Harman Booth: How One Man's Vision & Effort Shaped and Guided The Detroit Institute of Arts and its Collections**

Wednesday, September 21, 2016 7:30 p.m.

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

Ralph Booth was a younger brother of Cranbrook's founder George Gough Booth, who helped establish and run Booth Newspapers. A second career, which dovetailed with his civic duties as head of Michigan's largest chain of newspapers, was his work with the arts. Having followed his brother and mentor, James Scripps, as the Scripps-Booth representative on the board of the Detroit Art Museum he quickly become Board President. In 1919 Mr. Booth accepted the challenge of leading the effort to raise the funds to transform the museum into a new "Detroit Institute of Arts". This included not just constructing a new building but also filling it with art treasures (the donation of his personal collection nearly doubled the institute's holdings) befitting a world renowned art museum.

**John L. Booth II** is the grandson of Ralph Harman Booth. He possesses a BA degree from Yale University and a JD degree from the University of Michigan Law School.

**A Perfect Union: The Centennial of the Marriage of Eleanor Clay & Edsel Ford**

Wednesday, October 19, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Eleanor & Edsel Ford House, 1100 Lakeshore Road, Grosse Pointe Shores



Edsel and Eleanor Ford

Photo courtesy of Benson Ford Research Center at The Henry Ford.

Eleanor Clay & Edsel Ford married a century ago on November 1, 1916. A decade later they planned their estate at Gaukler Point Estate, which would become such an important part of the Grosse Pointe Community. These extraordinary people were generous during and after a time of economic depression; true connoisseurs when the art world was experimenting in new directions and accomplished business people, helping to shape the modern auto industry and many local charitable organizations. Additionally, both served as trustees of their high schools, now merged into University Liggett School.

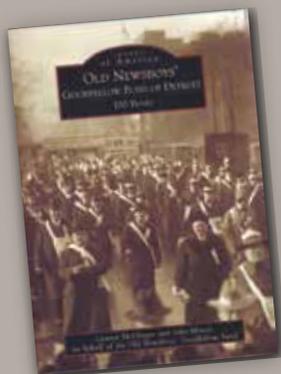
When Mrs. Ford died in 1976 the Detroit Free Press noted, "Mrs. Ford's greatest gift to the public, indeed, her greatest legacy, is her home, which she had transferred to a trust with the request that it be used for the benefit of the public." With this final act of generosity, which Eleanor Ford included in her will, this home and furnishings remain intact, as a window to the past, and to enrich the lives of future generations.

**Mike Skinner** is a Detroit & Ford history buff and is a Past President of the Dearborn & Grosse Pointe Historical Societies. He possesses a BS in Labor Relations & MBA in HR from Wayne State University.

**Old Newsboys' Goodfellow Fund of Detroit: 100 Years**

Wednesday, November 16, 2016 7:30 p.m.

Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Avenue, Grosse Pointe Woods



It started with a cartoon – "Forgotten," by Tom May – in which a poor child, too young and innocent to understand why she had not received a Christmas present from Santa, weeps over an empty stocking. It ran on Christmas Day in 1908 in the Detroit Journal, where it caught the attention of key Detroit businessmen. Deeply moved, they entered into a solemn pact to do all within their power to prevent any Detroit child from being "forgotten", forming the Old Newsboys' Goodfellow Fund of Detroit in 1914.

**Lauren McGregor** and **John Minnis** are the Assistant Editor and Editor/Publisher, respectively of Grosse Pointe Magazine. Previously, John worked at

the Grosse Pointe News for 19 years and is a staff writer for the Detroit Legal News. He possesses an associate degree from Macomb Community College; a BA in Journalism from WSU and a master's in Journalism from Michigan State University. Lauren McGregor possesses a BA in English from Michigan State University.

### *The Detroit Symphony Orchestra: Grace, Grit, and Glory*

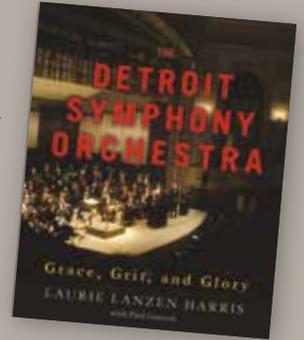
Wednesday, March 15, 2017 7:30 p.m.

Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Avenue, Grosse Pointe Woods

Now one of America's finest orchestras, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra began in 1887 as a small ensemble of around thirty-five players in a city that was just emerging as an industrial powerhouse.

This is the first history of the DSO to document the orchestra from its earliest incarnation in the late nineteenth century to its current status as one of the top orchestras in the country. This is the story of the organization – the musicians, the musical directors, the boards, and the management – as they strove for musical excellence, and the consistent funding and leadership to achieve it in the changing economic and cultural landscape of Detroit.

**Laurie Lanzen Harris** is an author and an editor of children's books and young adult books as President of Favorable Impressions. She was previously the Director of the Literary Criticism Series at Gale Research Co. and the editorial director of Omnigraphics.



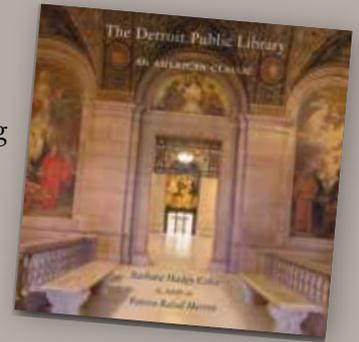
### *The Detroit Public Library (Main Branch): An American Classic*

Wednesday, April 19, 2017 7:30 p.m.

Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Avenue, Grosse Pointe Woods

For the last century, the Main Detroit Public Library has ranked as one of the most beautiful buildings in Detroit, an important landmark as well as a significant monument serving generations in Metro Detroit. The design of the Main Detroit Public Library was Cass Gilbert's Early Italian Renaissance-style vision. This book honors Gilbert's work with a chronological and photographic timeline of the conception and building, completed in 1921, the 1963 Cass Avenue addition (designed by Gilbert's son) and the library as it is today. The book goes through the library's transformative years, documenting the contributions of local and national artists such as Mary Chase Perry Stratton, Gari Melchers, and John Stephens Coppin, and includes photographs of the rooms they decorated with murals, mosaics, painted windows, bronze works, architectural elements, and ornamentation.

Author, **Barbara Madgy Cohn**, a registered nurse, has a B.A. in art history and has been a docent at the Detroit Institute of Arts since 2008. She created the "Discover the Wonders of the Detroit Public Library: An Art and Architectural Tour" and continues to serve as the director of the tour program.



### *Henry Ford II: A Centennial Historical Perspective*

Wednesday, May 17, 2017 7:30 p.m.

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

Henry Ford II, the oldest grandchild of Henry Ford I, was released from the Navy after his father, Edsel Ford I's, passing in 1943 to help run the family company. He was named President of Ford Motor Company on September 21, 1945, just three weeks after his 28th birthday. He went on to surround himself with talented managers and worked hard, putting the business first and foremost as he led the company for the next 35 years, remaining a board member and Chair of the Finance Committee until his death in 1987. Also, Mr. Ford tried very hard to revitalize downtown Detroit and certainly the Renaissance Center would never have been built without his leadership. Additionally, as a founder of New Detroit, Inc. he led efforts to identify & eliminate racial disparities by building economic equity, social justice and racial understanding.

**Mike Skinner** is a Detroit & Ford history buff and is a Past President of the Dearborn & Grosse Pointe Historical Societies. He possesses a BS in Labor Relations & MBA in HR from Wayne State University.



# News from the Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Resource Center

The Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Resource Center's library collection has been enhanced by three notable donations. We received a collection of 19th century books on Detroit and Wayne County from John Booth II and his sister-in-law, Abbe Eaton. The collections came from her grandfather, Berrien Clark Eaton who held them in his library in the home he shared with his wife, Gladys at 1018 Bishop Rd. in Grosse Pointe Park.

Berrien C. Eaton's father was president of the Eaton Clark Company, a manufacturer and importer of chemicals and dyestuffs. He was the third generation of the family to head this old and well-known establishment. He occupied the same office where his grandfather and father preceded him since 1849.

Ms. Eaton spoke fondly of her grandfather and remembers him coming down the stairs saying good morning and blowing kisses. "I think he'd be very happy to know these books are in the capable hands of the GPHS. His family history was so very important to him."

The books include a scrapbook describing the history of Detroit to 1824 with newspaper clippings from the late 1800s (see the illustration) and a Directory of the City of Detroit for the year 1837 that was reprinted in 1937.

We are very pleased to have this addition to our collection and we thank Abbe Eaton for her generosity.



Illustration of Detroit from the early 1800s. Taken from the Eaton scrapbook donated by Abbe Eaton.

The second donation began with a phone call from Barry Puckett, the librarian of the Frederick G. Ruffner, Jr. Collection. Fred Ruffner along with his wife Mary started Gale Research Company, a publisher of library reference information. They had collected a personal reference library of thousands of books. Upon his passing in 2014 his sons, Peter and Rick began to manage the collection. Barry stated that Peter invited us to come and take a look at books relating to Grosse Pointe history. So, on a hot afternoon Kit Greening and Izzy Donnelly eagerly drove downtown to the warehouse to view the Ruffners' collection.

As we entered the enormous space, we were stunned by the thousands upon thousands of books housed in the library. Peter had a section of books set aside for us to examine. Kit and Izzy were like children in a candy store. We received ten boxes of books and periodicals pertaining to Detroit and Grosse Pointe institutions and history including: *When Eastern Michigan Rode the Rails Book Two*, *Detroit: A Chronological and Documentary History 1701-1976*, *Detroit and Vicinity Before 1900 an Annotated List of Maps*, and the *Third Annual Report of the Secretary of State of the State of Michigan 1870*. We are grateful that Peter and Rick Ruffner offered this generous donation to our collection.

The third donation came from frequent donor and good friend of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society, Mike Skinner. Mike invited Izzy Donnelly to accompany him to Shaw's Books, located at 14932 Kercheval in Grosse Pointe Park, where he purchased several volumes including, *Bresser's Directories from 1953-1957*, *Grosse Pointe Hardware Store Magazine 1937*, *Master Plan of Grosse Pointe Shores 1991*, *Mildred Sawin Briggs Sketch of an Extraordinary Teacher*, by Mildred E. Willison, *DuMouchelle's Auction of Stonehurst 1974*, *Celebrating the History of Grosse Pointe Woods 2000*, *The Sycamores 1981 detailing descriptions of the property and site plans*, and *Lochmoor Club 65th Anniversary 1917-1982*.

We thank all of these generous donors. It is contributions like these that make the Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Resource Center such a remarkable place.

## Thank you Fox Creek Questers!

The Provencal-Weir House parlor rug was missing for a few weeks. It is back in place after a beautifully completed restoration of its mitered corners and edge binding.

We sincerely appreciate the generosity of the Grosse Pointe Fox Creek Questers, who provided the financial support for this restoration. The Questers is a non-profit international organization founded by Jessie Elizabeth Bardens in 1944. Its purpose is to educate, through research and study of antiques, and to donate funds to the preservation and restoration of memorials, historic buildings and landmarks. Today there are approximately 900 Questers chapters in the United States and Canada, including 69 throughout Michigan.



# DOCOMOMO comes to the Grosse Pointes

By James Conway

What is Do.co.mo.mo? The unfamiliar word is an acronym for an international organization called “Documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the modern movement.” Early in 2016, I was contacted by Deborah Goldstein, president of the Docomomo US/Michigan chapter to ask if the Grosse Pointe Historical Society would co-sponsor and conduct a tour visiting eight identified important modernist buildings in the Pointes. The tour had a local sponsor in Lynn Baker-Hunter of Grosse Pointe’s Johnstone & Johnstone Realtors. The annual national Docomomo conference took place in Detroit from June 9 to 12.

The GPHS board agreed to co-sponsor the tour scheduled for Saturday, June 11th. The tour proved popular with the conference participants and three buses were scheduled. Trustees Kay Burt-Willson and Mercedes Kucyk, besides myself, each hosted a bus for the tour.

The day of the tour, buses departed from the RenCen and each took a slightly different route to avoid congestion at the various sites. The GPHS tour guides presented information on sights and landmarks the buses passed by on the East Jefferson trip out to the Pointes.

Featured in the Park was a drive by of two modernist homes designed by Michigan’s own architect who studied under Frank Lloyd Wright, Midland’s famous Alden Dow. Still in the Park, the buses drove by the former home and design creation of the late Detroit area architect William Kessler. He designed Detroit’s College of Creative Studies main center and many other well-known Detroit modernist landmarks.

The tour buses moved on to the city of Grosse Pointe’s fabulous Parcels home directly on the lakeshore. The work of famed architect Paul M. Rudolph, a student of Harvard’s Walter Gropius, the 1970 residence features a multiplicity of

interior levels with huge windows commanding splendid vistas of Lake St. Clair.

Moving on, we visited the Grosse Pointe Library System’s Central Branch. Designed by Harvard’s Bauhaus-influenced Marcel Breuer the building was completed in 1955. The library tour was led by experienced guide James Moffett. Tour members were allowed to go through the normally private staff offices and meeting rooms and saw original modern design furniture and architectural details.

The last two buildings were private residences which our groups were allowed special open house tours. First was the two-story Koebel House in Grosse Pointe Farms, which is a preserved jewel from 1939, designed by the father and son team of architects Eliel and Eero Saarinen. They are known respectively for work at Cranbrook Institution and the GM Tech Center.

Still in the Farms, the groups then went through the 1950 McLucas Home, the work of architect Alexander Girard. The one story home, full of modernist furnishings, also featured a visit with local textile design maven and store owner, Ruth Adler Schnee. She told of her experiences as a pioneer in modern design in metro Detroit for decades.



Parcels House (1970)



McLucas House (1950)



Ceiling detail, Central Branch Library (1955)

(All photos courtesy of Quinn Evans Architects)

## History Pop-Up Tours Debut



GPHS has a new program: History Pop-Ups! These debuted at 59 Lakeshore Rd. and continue with a tour of 30 Preston Place. Join these hour-long tours which satisfy the craving, “I’d love to see what that looks like inside!”

History Pop-Up tours will happen when they “pop-up” and be promoted via e-mail and social media, with online ticket sales exclusively. Limited tickets. Don’t miss them!

Sign up for e-mail at [www.gphistorical.org](http://www.gphistorical.org)

Friend us on Facebook!

Photos by Barney Nowicki with First Impression Photography

## COLLECTION WISH LIST

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society is actively collecting. Our collection should have ties with local history. "Just old" doesn't qualify, no matter how nice an item is! We're always seeking:

- Historical photos of interiors and exteriors of homes and businesses
- Historical street views and water views
- People engaged in activities
- Historical family photos (with names and places)
- Photos of historical events
- Blueprints of Grosse Pointe houses

Special requests:

- Social Secretaries: 1924, 1934, 1942, 1954, 2003
- Polk Directories: any year, especially older volumes

## Grosse Pointe Historical Society

381 Kercheval Avenue  
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**E-MAIL:** [info@gphistorical.org](mailto:info@gphistorical.org)

## THE HISTORIC GROSSE POINTE RADIO THEATRE

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society has assembled a cast of volunteer actors who will delight their audience with a presentation of a live radio program. Stories about Historic Grosse Pointe Past... from sea monsters to street cars, and even French Legends. The fun awaits!

- Hour-long program
- Short stories
- A humorous slant on it all!
- This living history
- No microphone or screen setup required.



Mom, she said there are reports of *sea serpents* in Lake St. Clair!!



BOOK

THE HISTORIC GROSSE POINTE  
RADIO THEATRE

Contact: Kay Burt-Willson  
[suite2006@live.com](mailto:suite2006@live.com)

## Help the Grosse Pointe Historical Society by shopping!

Type in [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com). You'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping as Amazon.com, and Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to GPHS.

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the Grosse Pointe Historical Society every time you shop, at no cost to you. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation".

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