President's Column By Mary Seeger

As I write this column, Grand Rapids is paying tribute to the late President Gerald R. Ford. Like many other individuals and organizations in the area, your Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council has particular connections to the Fords: first because our board meets at the Presidential Museum and we hold programs there; secondly because we were greatly honored

to have Mrs. Ford as our kickoff speaker for LEGACY 2000.

Beyond those local ties, however, all women owe Mrs. Ford a debt of gratitude for her courageous public stances on issues of importance to us all. She campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment; she encouraged the inclusion of women in the national service academies. She has been candid about her breast cancer and her

chemical dependence, causing many to seek the help they need, including at the center she founded in California.

I urge you to read or re-read her two books, *A Glad Awakening* and *The Times of My Life*. Betty Ford is most deserving of her congressional and other national honors, and we are proud of her as a Grand Rapids woman in the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame.

Winter 2007

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Follow the Money By Diana Barrett

Brown Home entered my life when my mother became a Brown Home lady in March of 2001 after suffering a stroke.

Why were the letters WH&H embedded in the façade of a building named Brown Home? I learned that they stood for the Woman's Home and Hospital, its earlier name, and that Brown Home had been built with money obtained as the result of a notorious trial.

In 1846 a few women met in the "Prospect Hill" schoolhouse to start a society for benevolent purposes. During the following years the society evolved into the Woman's Home which cared for a few women at a time in various rented or donated locations.

By 1891 the Board of Managers of the Woman's Home realized the importance of owning a building and maintaining a permanent location. They purchased a fourteen-room building at 69 Bostwick Avenue for \$6000 where they remained until 1916.

In June of 1891 James H. (Jockey) Brown died a few blocks away at 126 S. Ionia. He left a large estate valued at \$200,000—most of it earned by trading in real estate and lending

continued on page 10

The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council would like to take this opportunity to thank the Gerald R. Ford Museum staff for allowing us to meet at their facility.

Please accept our sympathies at this sad time.

Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council is launching a new research project ...

By MargEd Kwapil

GGRWHC is developing, in cooperation with the Grand Rapids Public Library, an archive of biographies of women who have been important, in various capacities, to the history of Grand Rapids. We have numerous candidates for these biographies, but we lack the womanpower to do the research. We are offering GGRWHC members an opportunity to hone their research skills, or acquire new skills, by helping to create this new archive.

On January 20, GGRWHC and the Public Library hosted a workshop to train volunteer researchers for this project. Library staff conducted the workshop, teaching volunteers to use all the library resources to dig out information, develop sources, follow up leads and produce reliable material from

... and we need a few good women.

which we can build biographies of the various subjects.

After the training, GGRWHC volunteers will supervise the continuation of the project, offering regular guidance and encouragement to researchers. Volunteers will be asked to make a commitment to the project but the rules and regulations will be lenient, schedules flexible, supervisors knowledgeable, tolerant and good natured. Rewards will be acquisition of new skills, a working knowledge of the resources of the library, making the acquaintance of some very interesting people past and present, and the satisfaction of helping to create a permanent record of the accomplishments and contributions of many of the community's female citizens of the past.

Are you interested in conducting research and helping the Women's History Council write biographies? A second workshop is being planned for the spring.

Kwapil at 616/949-8649 to reserve your space.

MI-Stories.com Owners John and Jennifer Morrison

MI-Stories.com owned by John and GGRWHC Board Member Jennifer Morrison will help people record events that are special in their lives.

"MI-Stories.com's audio CDs offer the feel of listening to oldtime radio while letting your imagination paint the picture of what you're hearing. Compared to books or videos, they also require the least investment of your money and time to produce," according to Jennifer. John explains, "MI-Stories.com creates custom CDs with you or your loved one telling stories from life. These stories can be as broad as a general overview of life, or as focused as a specific vacation, your faith journey, or any other part of your life that you want to share."

John and Jennifer's quiet manner will put a person at ease. They will lead people through the interview process and talk with you about what you want on the CD before they do the actual interview.

Jennifer has recently published the book *Caring Community, The History of Clark Retirement Community* celebrating 100 years of Clark Retirement Community. This book is very informative and an easy read.

For more information you can email them at info@mistories.com or call them at 616/248-2706.

Women's History Month Calendar of Events

Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council and The Grand Rapids Historical Society

The Variety of Women's Contributions to Grand Rapids Architecture, and the Specific Case of 1920s Home Designer Fannie Boylon, by Rebecca Smith-Hoffman, Principal, Past Perfect, and Marcella Beck, Grand Rapids Public Library. From raising money for the institutional homes of clubs and churches to drawing up inspirational housing plans themselves, Grand Rapids women historically have helped shape their built environment. Rebecca Smith-Hoffman will survey the wide array of women involved as architects of community pride, and Marcella Beck will report on prolific designer Fannie Boylon. Self-taught, Boylon was the brains behind some 1200 technologically progressive and aesthetically distinctive homes built in Grand Rapids between 1910 and 1930.

Thursday, March 8, 7:00 p.m., Gerald R. Ford Museum

Actors' at Spectrum Theater

Fat Pig, a play by Neil LaBute. A classic boy meets girl in any big city in modern America—with one exception—girl is overweight and boy is concerned about appearances. The writer of such films as *In the Company of Men* and *Nurse Betty*, LaBute's "view of men and women is unsparing—holding up a pitiless mirror to ourselves" (Journal News) "There is no playwright on the planet these days who is writing better than Neil LaBute." (The New Yorker)

Thursdays-Saturdays, March 22-24 and 29-31, 8:00 p.m., Spectrum Theatre

Tickets cost \$22 with reduced tickets available for students and seniors. Call 616/234-3946 for reservations or information.

Calvin College

Stitch 'n Bitch and the Happy Hooker: Feminism and Women's Crafts, by Ruth Groenhout and Christina Van Dyke, both Professors of Philosophy at Calvin College. Why do so many self-identifying feminists quilt, knit and crochet? In this talk Ruth Groenhout and Christina Van Dyke share their own stories and discuss how handcrafts have served two vital purposes in U.S. history: individual aesthetic expression and community-building. Both as a means of expressing deeply held values and as a way of women from different ages, classes and ethnicities to come together, handcrafts have long provided otherwise-marginalized women with concrete opportunities for empowerment.

Wednesday, February 28, 3:30 p.m., Meeter Center Lecture Hall

From Bewitched to Buffy: Growing up Female with the Mass Media, by Professor Susan Douglas, from the University of Michigan. The Program will review the mixed messages in the mass media that surround girls and women as they grow up and will examine women's love-hate relationship with the media. The talk will consider the often inadvertent consequences of these images, including their relationship to the rise of the women's movement in the 1970s and the



emergence of "post-feminism," and will then examine the contradictory messages facing young women today, which include the pressure to be "supergirls."

Tuesday, March 13, 3:30 p.m., Commons Lecture Hall

Calvin College continued

Who's Having This Baby?: How Care and Control Work in Birthing Practices, by Professor Helen Sterk, Communication Arts and Sciences Department, Calvin College. Although women are the ones giving birth, they're rarely the ones in control of the event. Through stories gleaned from the 130 interviews she did with women on their experiences of giving birth, Helen Sterk suggests ways in which care can replace control, leading to a good birth, both for the mother and the baby.

Wednesday, March 28, 3:30 p.m., Meeter Center Lecture Hall

Iron-jawed Angels, Movie introduction and discussion led by Kristen Kobes-DuMez, History Department, Calvin College.

Thursday, March 29, 7:00 p.m., Bytwerk Theatre

Contact Christiana deGroot, cdegroot@calvin.edu for more information.

Circle of Crones

The Three Stages of a Woman's Life. A panel dialogue with a maiden, a mother and a crone. These panels will explore the continuum of life using the 3 stages of maiden, mother and crone. We will explore how aging impacts women in our culture and how we can support and honor one another through our life cycles

Tuesday, March 6, 6:00-8:00 p.m., Schuler Books & Music, 28th Street

Thursday, March 8, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Schuler Books & Music , 28th Street

Free event; registration requested.

What Does It Mean to be a Crone? Join other women in exploring the possibilities for the last third of life – the time when we reap the wisdom from long years of experience, when we recognize our passion and our gifts that we can share with others. Reflect on four important questions that arise as we claim our cronehood.

Sunday, March 11, 1:00-3:30 p.m., Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St. N.E.

Free parking at GRCC ramp on NE corner of Fountain & Bostwick

Cost: \$20.00

Community Croning Ceremony. The Community Croning Ceremony, sponsored by the Circle of Crones, is a festive ritual honoring and celebrating the wisdom and experience of older women. An invitation to attend this celebration is extended to any female over the age of 10 years who would like to acquire a new appreciation of the wisdom of womanhood in later years. Festive attire is appropriate.

Sunday, April 29, 1:30-3:30 p.m., Fountain Street Church, 24 Fountain St. N.E

Free parking at GRCC ramp on NE corner of Fountain & Bostwick.

Free event, but free will donations will be gratefully accepted at the door.

To register or for more information, contact Chris Belding at 616/887-7854 or <u>belmor97@msn.com</u> or send a check for \$20.00 made payable to *Circle of Crones* to Chris Belding, 21 – 15 Mile Rd NW, Sparta MI 49345.

Women's History Month Calendar of Events continued

The Grand Rapids Community College Bob and Aleicia Woodrick Diversity Learning Center

The Struggle for Equity in Education: A Defining Moment in Chicano History, with Paula Crisostomo. As a high school student in the '60s, Paula Crisostomo led 20,000 Chicano students from five East Los Angeles high schools in the first major protest against racism and substandard teaching in their schools ever undertaken by Mexican-Americans – a watershed in the struggle for equal rights. Her story has been made into a 2006 HBO movie, *Walk Out*, directed by Edward James Olmos. The story, told through Crisostomo's voice, illustrates a seminal point in the fight for educational equity in the Chicano community. This event has also been the subject of numerous books and featured in the PBS documentary *Chicano: Taking Back the Schools*. Crisostomo is the Director of Government and Community Relations for Occidental College in Los Angeles, providing leadership and direction for the college's community outreach, including local and federally sponsored services and government relations.

Wednesday, March 14, 7:00 p.m., GRCC Applied Technology Center, Banquet Rooms

Free and open to the public.

Salute to Women Reception. The Community College will honor four outstanding women (alumna, students, employees, and former employees) who are exemplary in their roles as professionals, volunteers, or agents of change. Celebrate the diversity of the accomplishments of women throughout the College and encourage young women to pursue pathways to achievement.

Tuesday, March 27, 1:00-3:00 p.m., GRCC Applied Technology Center, Banquet Rooms

Free and open to the public. Contact phone for both events: 616/234-3390 or visit <u>www.grcc.edu</u>.

Grand Rapids Community College Women's Studies Program

Unsung Music by Women Composers, a recital. Performers will include Alicia Eppinga, cello, Leslie Van Becker, viola, and Mary Scanlan, piano, with assisting artists from the Grand Rapids Symphony Orchestra.

Thursday, March 15, 7:30 p.m., GRCC Music Center Recital Hall, 142 Ransom N.E., Room 200

Free to the public.

Grand Rapids Public Library

Fresh Water: Women Writing on the Great Lakes, Alison Swan, editor of *Fresh Water: Women Writing on the Great Lakes*, along with a number of the book's contributors, including Swan, Heather Sellers, Judith Minty and Linda Nemec Foster, will read from this new collection of personal essays. This program is sponsored by the Vander Veen Center for the Book and the Ryerson Library Foundation.

Wednesday, March 7, 7:00 p.m., Main Library, 111 Library St. NE

The lecture is free and open to the public. For more information call 616/988-5400 or visit www.grpl.org.

Taste of Soul Sunday, a sampling of African-American art, music, literature, history and food.

Sunday, February 18, 1:00-4:00 p.m. , Main Library, 111 Library St. NE

See page 8 of the newsletter for an article about the event.

Women's History Month Calendar of Events continued

Grand Rapids Women's Chorus

Women's History Month Benefit Concert, for *Women for Women International*. The Grand Rapids Women's Chorus has invited Sistrum, the women's chorus of Lansing, to join with them as they perform *International Songs for Peace*. The event will also feature speaker Shadia Kanaan's speaking on *Through the eyes of a Palestinian Woman*. The evening performance will include Middle Eastern drumming, poetry, and a special appearance by *Girl's Inc*.

Saturday, March 3, 7:30 p.m., doors open at 7:00 p.m., St Cecilia, Royce Auditorium

Free will donations will be taken at the door.

Grand Valley State University Women's Center and Women and Gender Studies

Vagina Monologues. The GVSU Women's Center presents the Vagina Monologues as part of the GVSU V-Day College Campaign. Running for the sixth year at GVSU, the Monologues raises over \$12,000 yearly to STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN. Come be a part of the V-Day College Campaign at GVSU the performances are:

Wednesday, February 14, 7:30 p.m., Louis Armstrong Theatre, GVSU Allendale Campus Friday, February 16, 7:30 p.m., Wealthy Street Theatre, Grand Rapids Sunday, February 18, 2:00 p.m., Wealthy Street Theatre, Grand Rapids

To purchase tickets, call 616/222-4000 or go to the Star TicketsPlus website: www.starticketsplus.com.

For more information, call the Women's Center at 616/331-2748 or check out the V-Day website: www.vday.org.

Hungry for More, by Robyn McGee. Speaker Robyn McGee addresses the issues of anorexia, bulimia, and compulsive overeating, as it relates to college students and African-American women in particular. Until recently, these conditions were thought to be exclusively for the "white and middle class." However, with the pressures of college and as young women enter the corporate world, more African-Americans and Latinas are engaged in unhealthy eating and body image. Using a number of film clips, Robyn engages the audience in a dialogue about body image, especially how family, friends, and the media influence the ways in which we see our physical, emotional and spiritual selves.

Monday, February 26, 7:00 p.m., Cook-DeWitt Center, Allendale Campus

There is no cost.

Women's Center Tea Party. Please join other activist women, students, faculty, and staff as we celebrate a centuries-old tradition of combining tea parties with discussions of literature, politics, and reform. There will be entertainment, scrumptious food, and an opportunity for interaction among diverse women.



March 13, 3:00 p.m., Kirkhof Center, Room 204

Please RSVP by phone to the Women's Center at 616/331-2748 or by e-mail at womenctr@gvsu.edu. Co-sponsors include: The Women's Center, Women and Gender Studies, the Grand Rapids Chapter of the American Association of University Women.

Guerrilla Girls. The Guerrilla Girls are a group of anonymous females who take the names of dead women artists as pseudonyms and appear in public wearing gorilla masks. They use various mediums to expose sexism and racism in politics, the art world, film, and the culture at large. Through

Women's History Month Calendar of Events continued

Grand Valley State University Women's Center and Women and Gender Studies continued

Guerrilla Girls continued. the use of humor they convey information, provoke discussion, and show that feminists can be funny. The costumes are used so that the audience focuses on the issues rather than the actor's personalities.

March 21, 7:00 p.m., Kirkhof Center, Grand River Room

Alien Nation! Natives and Exotics in an Age of Globalization, As a part of the Women in the World of Science Program, Dr. Banu Subramaniam, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. This talk explores the relationship of women/gender and science by analyzing the case of invasive biology. How have our biological theories of nature, its evolutionary ad demographic histories shifted over time? What conceptions of biology, evolution and nation underpin our assumptions? Drawing on the literature on evolution, ecology, science and ethnic studies, this talk explores the historical, political and cultural specificity of our fear and anxiety surrounding immigration, of plants, animals and humans.

Thursday, March 22, 7:00 p.m., Kirkoff Center, Grand River Room

Voigt House

What Price Beauty? This program will explore the lengths some Victorian women went to achieve the ideal look of the day—corsets, Belladonna in the eyes, lead to whiten skin and more! These practices will be compared to modern day procedures such as tanning and cosmetic surgery. The program will be part of the regular tours given at the Voigt House and open to the public.

Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and 1:00-3:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Sunday of the month, 115 College SE

Admission: \$3.00 adults, \$2.00 seniors and students 6-17. Group tour reservations can be made by calling the Voigt House at 616/456-4600.

Fashion Doll Tea. The Voigt House will have a special program explaining the changes in women's fashion throughout the Victorian Era. The tea will include a tour of the Voigt House and "What Price Beauty?" Dolls will be used to demonstrate the clothing styles worn during six decades of the Victorian Era.

Wednesday, March 28, 7:00 p.m. at the Voigt House, 114 College SE

The fee for the tea is \$20 and reservations are required.

Women's City Club

Emily Clark, by Jennifer Morrison. Emily Clark was a well known philanthropist and founder of Clark Retirement Home. A book has been written about her and will be on sale at the program.

Wednesday, March 7, 11:00 a.m., with lunch at noon. Women's City Club Auditorium

Cost: \$16. Reservations are needed. Call: 616/459-3321

Contact Barbara Hudson, 616/827-2748 or hudsonb1@sbcglobal.net

Women's Resource Center

18th Annual Employer Awards Recognition Luncheon, Keynote Speaker, Kendra Todd, President of The Kendra Todd Group Inc. and Winner of Donald Trump's hit reality show *The Apprentice*.

Wednesday, March 7, 11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m., DeVos Place, Grand Gallery Room

Individual tickets \$50.00. Reserve your tickets now at www.grwrc.org

Grand Rapids Public Library's Events Celebrate African-American History and Culture By Kristen Corrado

During the month of February, the Grand Rapids Public Library will hold a series of events exploring African-American history and culture. The events will include an art exhibit by local artist Jon McDonald; programs for children and teens: a film festival: and the second annual Taste of Soul *Sunday*—a sampling of African-American art, music, literature, history and food. This year the events will focus on the musical contributions made by African-Americans. The events are funded in part by a grant from the Ryerson Library Foundation and are free and open to the public.

Taste of Soul Sunday is an annual event that features food sampling from local restaurants, lectures by local authors and artists, music and children's activities. Taste of Soul Sunday will be held on February 18 from 1-4 p.m. at the Main Library. Local musicians Carolyn Quinn (gospel), Dave Humphrey (spirituals), Sweet

Willie Singleton (blues and jazz), and Kevin Murphy (R&B) will explore the history of African-American's contribution to music. Dr. Steeve Buckridge and Dr. Freddie Lee Johnson will present African-American history lectures. Artist Jon McDonald will discuss his artwork inspired by the Blues. Gad Holland will present the history of Idlewild, Michigan and how this community became a hot spot for wellknown African-American musicians in the 1920s and 30s. There will be African dance lessons with Alethia Smith and children's arts and crafts projects. Area restaurants Jamaican Dave's, LoLo's and Wing Heaven will provide food sampling.

During Taste of Soul Sunday, local African-American families are asked to bring in their oldest and most important family photographs, documents and artifacts related to Grand Rapids to be scanned and added to the Library's local history collection and to be included on the Grand Rapids Historical Commission's website. The first 50 people to bring in their photos will receive a complimentary CD of the scanned photos.

On display throughout the Library's eight locations will be a series of watercolor paintings by local artist Jon McDonald. These paintings were inspired by McDonald's travels throughout the United States, visiting Blues bars, Blues festivals and the traditional "juke joints" of the American South, investigating the culture that surrounds the Blues. The result of his travels is the exhibition Jon McDonald: The Blues, a series of thirty watercolor paintings

Throughout February there will also be an African-American Film Festival. The films include *Lady Sings the Blues* starring Diana Ross on February 4 at 1:30 p.m. at the Main Library; *A Raisin in the Sun* on February 25 at 1:30 pm at the Main Library; and a special presentation of *Jubilee Singers: Sacrifice and Glory* with a discussion after the film by Dr. Veta Tucker, a professor at Grand Valley State University. The film and discussion will be held on February 22 at 7:00 p.m. at the Main Library.

The events celebrating African-American heritage and culture will be held throughout February at various Grand Rapids Public Library locations. The programs are free and open to the public. For more information, call 616/988-5400 or visit our website at <u>www.grpl.org</u>. The Grand Rapids Public Library connects people to the transforming power of

New Book

Bold Women in Michigan History

by Virginia Law Burns,

160 pages 6 x 9

Published in 2006.

On the cover Gladys Beckwith says, "Thoroughly readable and well-researched ...This book belongs in our libraries, our classrooms, and our homes."

Cost \$12.00

Schuler's will order

Share Your Family's Stories By Ruth VanStee and Diana Barrett

The Grand Rapids Historical Commission wants to tell the story of Grand Rapids on their new website. African-Americans have been a part of that story since the 1850s.

Bring in your oldest and most important photographs, documents, and artifacts related to Grand Rapids or the place where you or your ancestors lived before arriving here.

Bring them in to *Taste of Soul Sunday* at the Main Grand Rapids Public Library, on February 18, from 1:00-4:00p.m. Historical commission members will scan them while you enjoy the events of the day.



For example:

Photos:	Documents and artifacts:	
Family members either candid or portrait photos	Interesting letters especially those about significant events or military letters	
Buildings, houses, schools, businesses, street scenes, farms etc. (especially those that no longer exist)	Immigration or naturalization papers	
	Membership cards	
Photos depicting clothing of earlier eras	Awards/certificates/medals	
Military photos	Local campaign materials	
People at work or at play	Programs from important meetings or events	
People celebrating (weddings, gradua- tions, birthdays, christenings, etc.)	Early school annuals	
Holiday photos	Scrapbooks	
Church, synagogue, or mosque photos	Unusual artifacts related to your family history (early diary, significant quilt,	
Club or organization photos	treasured book)	
School events and students	The second s	
Sports events		
Transportation: local scenes with cars, trucks, wagons, trains, planes, buses, streetcars, boats, horses, mules, etc.		
Old picture post cards of Grand Rapids		

GGRWHC Mission Statement and Meeting Dates

The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council is dedicated to educating the community and celebrating the legacies of local women, preserving knowledge of their past and inspiring vision for their future.

Regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, except June, July and August, at 4:00 p.m. in the Michigan Room at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.

Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council 143 Bostwick NE Grand Rapids, MI 49503 616/234-3603 www.ggrwhc.org		
Officers		
President: Vice President: Secretary: Treasurer:	Mary Seeger Falinda Geerling Wanda Toohey Olave Kathy Rent	
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Ex-officio Member		
Twink Frey		
Administrative Assistant		
Merry Malfroid		

Follow the Money continued from page I

money. A widower, he left his estate to one daughter, Margaret Haines, with only a tiny provision for his other daughter, Alice Hayden. Alice contested the will.

Both sides enlisted the cream of the city's legal profession; four attorneys for Alice, including the mayor, E. F. Uhl, and six for Margaret. The trial began mid-February of 1892. The court heard and the papers reported (in depth) all the dirty linen of the Brown family, both true and imagined. Alice accused Margaret of poisoning her father's mind by telling him that she was not his daughter. Friends and relatives testified about Mrs. Brown's relationship with her doctor who Margaret had supposedly claimed was the real father of Alice.

The jury quickly reached a verdict on March 12. The GR Daily Eagle reported, "At the verdict the crowd of spectators broke into tumultuous applause. Men and women cheered or threw their hats in the air . . . the reception of the result was one of the most dramatic scenes ever witnessed at the trial of a civil case in this city."

Alice won. Margaret appealed the case to the Michigan Supreme Court. She said she'd rather give all the money to the lawyers than give Alice a penny. In April of 1893 the higher court upheld the earlier verdict that the sisters should share equally.

Alice left her estate to the Woman's Home for a new building IF they would name it after her father. They did, and Brown home at 1425 E. Fulton was completed in 1916. How ironic that Alice, considered so fun-loving and profligate that her father denied her in his will, kept his name alive in a way that brought comfort to so many women for almost one hundred years. Sadly, Brown Home closed its doors in November of 2002.

When I read the newspaper reports of the trial, I imagined myself sitting among those women who came to court everyday to support Alice Hayden. I, too, would have cheered and thrown my hat in the air.

Nonprofit Organization U. S. Postage **PAID** Grand Rapids, MI PERMIT No. 372