

Annual Meeting and Membership Campaign in May

**GREATER GRAND RAPIDS
WOMEN'S HISTORY
COUNCIL**

143 Bostwick NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.234.3603
www.ggrwhc.org

Officers

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Vice President: Kyle Irwin
Secretary: Wanda Toohey Olave
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Ex-officio Member

Twink Frey

Administrative Assistant

Merry Malfroid

Annual Meeting

You are cordially invited...

The Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council will hold its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 11, 4 to 5 pm in the VanderVeen Center for the Book on the third floor of the Grand Rapids Public Library. President Mary Seeger will share what the history council has been involved in during the past year and our plans for the coming year. Treasurer Judy Lloyd will explain the change in the fiscal year. Plans are already beginning for **LEGACY 2006**.

Meet the new candidates for the Board:

Ina Burmeister – head of the Intercity Christian Federation, a publicist, and a history major.

MargEd Kwapil – former GGRWHC Board member who is interested in returning. She is a docent at the Meyer May House and is involved in quilters' events and appraisals.

Darlene Lee – a freelance reporter for the Flair section of The Grand Rapids Press and enthusiastic supporter of women's issues.

Light refreshments will be served.

Mark your calendar today and plan to attend.

President's Corner

Mary Seeger

Spring is here and with it the beginning of a new membership year in the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council. We'll be approaching local history organizations and area colleges and universities to highlight our website and other activities, and to expand our membership.

As you affiliate with us for the coming year, please know that your interest and your contributions are welcome, and that your support of women's history is much appreciated.

Mary A. Seeger

History in the Making

Every month this year the Board has been treated to a short history lesson at the beginning of the Board meeting. Below are excerpts from the January, February, March and April *History in the Making* segments.

January 2004 *The Historical Commission* by Barbara McGregor Packer

Originally established in 1962 to write a history of Grand Rapids and develop a collection of local history material, the Grand Rapids Historical Commission has undergone several transformations in its 42 year history. A formal Commission of the City of Grand Rapids, the Historical Commission is comprised of 13 members, appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Commission. Gene Smary is the current Commission chairperson.

The work of the Commission focuses on collecting, preserving, and presenting a wide range of local history information and materials. Of great importance to the Commission is its work with ethnic groups and community organizations - gathering the diverse stories of those who make up our community.

The Commission publishes a variety of books on the history of Grand Rapids and its people, and develops curriculum resources for use by area schools. Most recently published, "Grand Rapids and Its People," a third grade curriculum text and accompanying disc of supplemental teacher materials. It was published in collaboration with the Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids Public Library, and Kent Intermediate School District.

February 2004 *Farm Women* by Nelle Frisch

Writing *Celebrate the Harvests* in 1994 with Don was great fun. We went to Michigan farm markets, farm festivals and talked to women about produce and exchanged recipes. I got interested in the lives of farm women and what these women did on Michigan farms, especially in Kent County. I had kept up with many of them and called them again to see how their lives had changed in the last 10 years.

The Robinettes have a Centennial farm. Marg Bethel and Ed have "retired" and still live in the big house. But most days they are there to greet visitors to their orchard even though their kids have taken over. Bethel says farms have to be all about "fun." They have a store, bakery, lunchroom and trails through the orchards.

Kent Trails is a program in the fall where about a dozen farms are open to "city folk" and it's all about "fun." There's scarecrow making, apple picking, mazes to walk, hayrides, pumpkins, squash, cider and home-made jams to buy.

Many farm women run shops to sell their products. Dona Maier makes maple candy, nuts and sells their maple syrup. Brenda Hefron has opened four meat markets in Grand Rapids to sell their beef.

The women on the "Ridge" have gotten very political, gone to Washington and Lansing to protest the impact of foreign fruits and juices for sale in our groceries. They are active in protecting farm lands from going to "condos."

These women are truly remarkable.

March 2004 *History Mysteries* by Mary Seeger

At the March board meeting, Mary Seeger spoke on "history-mysteries", those novels that are set in earlier periods. She recommended particularly the work of Miriam Grace Monfredo, whose novels are set in Seneca Falls, N.Y., in the 1800's and feature librarian Glynis Tryon.

Mary suggested starting with the first book in the series, *Seneca Falls Inheritance*, in which Glynis meets Elizabeth Cady Stanton at an historic 1848 meeting on women's rights. The series continues with *North Star Conspiracy*, which includes the story of the Underground Railroad. Here is accurate history interwoven with fiction by an excellent writer.

April 2004 *Theatre Scenes in Grand Rapids* by Norma Brink

Grand Rapids is rich in its theatre. Broadway Theatre Guild annually brings to the DeVos Performing Arts Center four touring companies in hit Broadway shows for several performances.

Local theatre is in production continually throughout the year. Grand Rapids Civic Theatre is in its 78th season, and is the third largest civic theatre in the United States (based on total annual budget and attendance – 100,000 theatre-goers see the Civic's plays and musicals annually). The Theatre's home is the magnificent historic Majestic Theater over 100 years old and originally built for legitimate theatre productions. It is located in the downtown area. In addition to six main-stage productions, the Civic features two major Children's Theatre productions and a Summer stock season with two shows.

Circle Theatre, in its 52nd season, moved in 2003 from its previous long-time location in John Ball Park to a new state-of-the-art building on the beautiful campus of Aquinas College. Circle presents five major productions from May through September, as well as three children's plays during the season. During the fall and winter, Circle also sponsors touring children's productions for school groups.

From September through May, Actors Theatre presents five shows. Their productions are more unusual and challenging than the better known plays and musicals. Actors could be called the "Off-Broadway" Theatre in Grand Rapids. They perform in a beautiful new theater, Spectrum, right in downtown Grand Rapids. Spectrum Theater is also used by Heritage Theater for some of its five productions from May through October. Heritage, now in its 10th season, exclusively presents Classical theatre. Those not performed at Spectrum Theatre are staged at the newly renovated Wealthy Theater.

Wealthy Theater and Spectrum Theater are also the location for three productions yearly by Jewish Theatre. Unfortunately, we have just learned that the Wealthy Theater will be closing because of lack of funds to support it.

There are several smaller, but growing, theatre groups throughout the city.

Also of excellent quality are the productions by Grand Valley State University, Calvin College, Grand Rapids Community College and Aquinas College.

It's rare that there's an evening when at least one theatre group is not performing in Grand Rapids.

Remember to renew your membership

Membership Campaign

The GGRWHC Board has changed the fiscal year from October 1-September 30 to July 1-June 30. The membership year will be the same.

The Membership Campaign will kick off at the Annual Meeting in May. If you paid your membership after October 1, 2003, it will not expire until June 30, 2005.

Membership rates:

Sponsor	\$100.00
Contributor	\$ 50.00
Basic	\$ 25.00
Student	\$ 10.00



History in the Future (Calendar of Events)

MAY 2004

Annual GGRWHC Membership Campaign

- 11 4pm GGRWHC Board Meeting, VanderVeen Center for the Book, 3rd floor, Grand Rapids Public Library
 - Annual Meeting

SEPTEMBER 2004

- 14 4pm GGRWHC Board Meeting, The Michigan Room Gerald R. Ford Museum

OCTOBER 2004

- 15 4pm GGRWHC Board Meeting, The Michigan Room Gerald R. Ford Museum
- 29-30 Great Lakes History Conference

NOVEMBER 2004

- 16 4pm GGRWHC Board Meeting, The Michigan Room Gerald R. Ford Museum

DECEMBER 2004

- 12 4pm GGRWHC Board Meeting and Holiday Party, The Michigan Room Gerald R. Ford Museum

Suffrage Centennial '99 Re-enactment GRTV, Cable Channel 25

Monday, April 26, 6pm
Wednesday, April 28, 2pm
Saturday, May 1, 8pm
Sunday, May 2, 4pm



Interesting Websites

Are you looking for something to do this summer? Look on this website www.hsmichigan.org/calendar.php to find a calendar of events.

Another great website is The American Association of University Women Online Museum. Check it out at www.aauw.org/museum/

Do you have a favorite website that deals with women's history? Email the web address to Merry Malfroid at malfroid@triton.net.

Woman Pins®

Your purchase of this pin benefits the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council, an organization dedicated to celebrating the legacies of local women, preserving knowledge of their past, and inspiring visions for their future. Our projects include a Bibliography of materials on local women, an extensive oral history project, LEGACY (a huge triennial celebration of Women's History Month) and support of other local history projects.

All pins are unique as no two pins are alike. The women depicted on the pins are multi-cultural and represent a variety of activities. These very colorful pins are only \$14.00. To see the pins, contact Fran Pepper at 616.234.3908. They make great gifts!



**Greater Grand Rapids
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LEGACY 2006

Even though ***LEGACY 2006*** is almost two years away, the Board of the Women's History Council is already beginning to make plans. In the fall of 2004 a Chair will be appointed and committees will be formed. In early 2005, there will be a kickoff inviting people to participate in ***LEGACY 2006***. The kickoff will most likely be a breakfast or reception.

Your support of ***LEGACY 2006*** would be greatly appreciated. If you can contribute funds or time, please complete the form below and return it to: **Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council, 143 Bostwick NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503**

Name _____ E-mail Address _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Day phone _____ Evening phone _____

Enclosed is my contribution for ***LEGACY 2006*** \$ _____

I would like to serve on a committee. My interest is in _____ (example: fund raising or publicity)

Thank you very much.

***The Mission of the
Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council***

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 visions for their future.