GGRWHC Winter 2004

# Celebrate Women's History Month

# GREATER GRAND RAPIDS WOMEN'S HISTORY COUNCIL

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

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# Featured Biography Sister M. Aquinas Weber, OP By Barbara Robinson

Sister Aquinas is one of our Oral History stars. She has been a tireless and enthusiastic worker in the Grand Rapids community for many, many years. She enthusiastically has added her wisdom, creativity, and "can do" attitude to whatever program she undertakes.

She was the first woman to be on the Board of Directors of Old Kent Bank. Come Christmas time the men were non-plussed as what gift to give her. The men had all received ties, so they gave her one too.

She spear-headed the revival of the Eastown area since Aquinas is a near neighbor and students enjoyed going there. She led in the establishment of a very popular program, the Emeritus College, at Aquinas.

As a child, she was the first girl in a large family of boys all living in a small town in northern Michigan. She was encouraged to follow her own star. In her case it was into the Dominican Order where she began as an elementary teacher at St. Stephens. Then she became involved with Aquinas College and served in different capacities as the college grew and expanded, the most recent being Chancellor of the College.

Sister Aquinas serves as an example of women who so unstintingly offer their talents to make Grand Rapids a stronger and better place for all of us and we are proud to know her.

# President's Corner Mary Seeger

Although 2004 has just begun, we are already planning events for the month of March, Women's History Month, and you'll find a calendar of events in this issue of our newsletter.

National Women's History Month began in 1978 as a single week in one county in California. The week of March 8 was chosen because it included International Women's Day. The United States Congress resolved in 1981 to make the week a national celebration, which was expanded to the full month of March in 1987.

Women's history has emerged only since the 1970s, part of a larger movement that transformed history, largely political history to that point, into "the new social history", which also includes a broader spectrum of American life, such as the media, urban life, and ethnicity.

Our organization is also a product of the new social history, as are our oral history and bibliography projects. Please join us and our sister organizations in the March celebration!

Mary A. Seeger

# Women's History Council Celebrates Women's History Month A Walk with Gwen Frostic, presenter Jennifer Morrison

When Gwen Frostic died a day before her 95th birthday in 2001 she was known worldwide for her work as a nature artist; left Western Michigan University thirteen million dollars, the school's largest single gift ever; and had given her name to the Woodland Shade section of Frederik Meijer Gardens. During her first year of life, however, Frostic had contracted a mysterious, life-threatening illness which medical science in 1901 could do little to help. She survived, but was left with so profound a physical handicap that teachers predicted she would never be able to write as much as her own name. But today many recognize Gwen Frostic's unique signature as well as her distinctive block prints of plants and animals.

As a single woman during the 1950s and in a small, rural area far from her home, Frostic developed a business based on her art. Later from a fieldstone and timber workshop near Benzonia she employed over fifty people and used fifteen Heidelberg presses to produce twenty-two books of prints and verse, postcards, placemats, and calendars which she sold in all fifty states and dozens of foreign countries. By the time of her death, Frostic had earned multiple honorary degrees, been inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame, and been honored when, in 1978, Governor Milliken proclaimed May 23rd Gwen Frostic Day in Michigan.

Jennifer Morrison interviewed Gwen Frostic extensively during her tenure as curator of the Benzie Area Historical Museum in Benzonia. Morrison, in her seventh year at the Local History Department of the Grand Rapids Public Library, has her Bachelor of Arts in public history from Western Michigan University and her Master of Arts in public history from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio, and has over twenty years experience working in historical organizations throughout Michigan. Morrison and her husband, John, own AfterWord, Professional Historians, LLC, a service that helps people preserve their life stories in audio or print.

On Thursday, March 11, 7:30 pm, at the Gerald R. Ford Museum, Jennifer Morrison will use slides to discuss how Gwen Frostic grew from a handicapped child, from whom little was expected, into a woman of many accomplishments. Hers is an amazing story involving art, attitude, and a red-winged black bird. The program is free and a reception will follow.

#### Barbara Robinson on WUOM

Charity Nebbe interviewed Barbara Robinson regarding the Oral History for the GR Women's History. The interview, which took place last fall, aired on Charity Nebbe's program on January 23. If you would like a copy of the interview, contact Charity Nebbe at WUOM.

Public Museum of Grand Rapids Norton Mounds Cultural Resource Research Project Submitted by Debra Muller, Norton Mounds Project Manager and GGRWHC Board Member

Few people in this region are aware of, or have visited, the Norton Mounds along the Grand River west of downtown Grand Rapids. Built 2000 years ago as a burial site for Hopewellian residents of the region, the Mounds are one of the most significant historical sites in West Michigan. Maintained by the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, Norton Mounds is one of only 35 national historic landmarks in the State of Michigan and the only one exclusively related to Native American people.

While the site is currently closed to public access, the developing Millenium Park will soon surround it on three sides. With this in mind, the Museum has undertaken the Norton Mounds Cultural Resource Research Project to document the site, and plan for its future management. As the site is a National Historic Landmark, the project is based on public direction. Your input is critical for the future of the site. The project has been made possible with a grant from the Michigan Department of Transportation. Already completed is a detailed report that compiles into a single document all known legal, historical, archeological, and Native American accounts of the site.

The Museum is currently hosting discussions with advisors from every recognized tribal group in the state, as well as the National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, Kent County Parks, archeology experts, and government agencies who have a stake in the ways the site will be preserved and made accessible to visitors in the future. A Master Site Preservation and Maintenance Plan will be completed in the future.

The Museum is also hosting Public Forums for education and information on the site and its' future. To participate and share your concerns, please attend:

# Wednesday, February 11, 2:00 and 7:00 pm Public Museum of Grand Rapids

A public questionnaire is also being distributed that will provide further direction to the Museum. You can find a copy of the questionnaire on page 3. To learn more and to participate in the public questionnaire, please visit the Museum's website, www.grmuseum.org, for updates.

#### NORTON MOUNDS QUESTIONNAIRE

To assist the Public Museum of Grand Rapids in the preparation of a Norton Mounds Master Plan, your opinions, concerns and suggestions are important. Please take a few moments to fill out this brief questionnaire to advise the Museum in this process.

The development of the new Millennium Park will attract public visitors to the Norton Mounds site as never before. In view of this:

 Should the Norton Mounds site be open to the general public for viewing? Y Yes Y No Comments:

Should public access be restricted? If so, how so?
 Y Yes Y No Comments:

3. Should there be an Interpretive/Education Center? Y Yes Y No

4. Should an Interpretive Center be located at the Norton Mounds site or within the Millennium Park?

Y At the Norton Mounds Site Y Off-site but within the Millennium Park Comments:

5. Should the education be focused on the Hopewell Culture, the Hopewell Culture plus the Native Americans or on all people: Hopewell, Native American and immigrant?

Y Hopewell People Y Hopewell plus Native American Y Multi-Cultural Comments:

There are environmental concerns at the Norton Mounds site presently. Poison Ivy, trees, shrubs and the West Nile Virus are threatening. What are your recommendations on:

6. Should the site be cleared and presented as closely as possible in its original state?

Y Entirely cleared to its' original state
Y Left as is with natural and foreign growth Comments:

Should a place for ceremonial use be considered?
 Y Yes Y No Comments:

Past controversy regarding the scientific studies that have been conducted at the Norton Mounds site has not allowed for the development, education and use of the site. What are your feelings about:

8. Should there be continued future scientific studies at the site? Y Yes Y No Comments:

- 9. What reasons are valid for future scientific studies at or nearby the site?
  - Y None
  - Y Only if new archaeological technology is introduced
  - Y Only if the studies will reveal lifestyle and health benefits for all people
  - Y Only if the reasons are specific, educational and approved by an appropriate public group
- 10. Should previously removed materials be allowed to be studied in the future?
  - Y No, they have been studied enough
  - Y Yes, with no restrictions
  - $Y\quad \hbox{Yes, if new technology is introduced}$
  - Y Yes, if the criteria is specific and for the benefit of all people

Comments:

- 11. The Public Museum of Grand Rapids has followed the requirements of NAGPRA. With this in mind, what are your views and comments on repatriation of the previously removed items? Comments:
- 12. What else should be considered for the long-term site preservation and maintenance of the Norton Mounds National Historical Landmark and the Norton Mounds Master Plan? Comments:

The Public Museum of Grand Rapids thanks you for your participation. Please let us know if there are any other ways that you could be of service by contacting Debra Muller, Norton Mounds Project Manager at 616.456.3586 or email @ dmuller@ci.grand-rapids.mi.us The survey can be faxed to the attention of Debra Muller at 616.456.3873 or mailed to the Public Museum of Grand Rapids, 272 Pearl Street, NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504.

## Women's History Month Calendar of Events

## Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council

A Walk with Gwen Frostic, presenter Jennifer Morrison Jennifer Morrison will use slides to discuss how Gwen Frostic grew from a handicapped child from whom little was expected into a woman of many accomplishments. Hers is an amazing story involving art, attitude, and a redwinged black bird.

Thursday, March 11, 7:30 pm Gerald R. Ford Museum

The program is free and a reception will follow. (See page 2 for more information)

#### **Croning Events**

# "Wise Women: Calling All Crones." Mr. Webster, Please Update Your Dictionary!

According to Webster's Fourth Edition New World College Dictionary (2001) a crone is "an ugly, withered old woman, hag." The true meaning of the word crone since ancient times means "female leader, counselor, healer. Experienced and wise." Croning is a formal ritual about accepting the passage from knowledge to wisdom and recognizing that wisdom comes from experience. It is an announcement of passage, a celebration of power, passion and purpose of ancient female wisdom. Find out more about Croning by attending the following events.

An Evening of Book Reviews Thursday, March 4, 5 to 6 pm Schuler's Books and Music on 28<sup>th</sup> Street

Workshop: What Does it Mean to Be a Crone? Saturday, March 13, 10 am to noon Fountain Street Church

Cost: \$10

### Grand Rapids First Community Croning Ceremony Sunday, April 18, 2-4 pm Fountain Street Church

For more information on these programs, contact Janet Crump, 616.682.8324; Pam Daugavietis, 616.942.1135; Johanna Sizich, 616.475.5771; Mary Thompson, 616.459.8386 ext 227; Bunny Voss, 616.331.6631

# Women's Resource Center

Employer Recognition Awards Conference and Luncheon, Luncheon Keynote Speaker Bobbie Gaunt, recently retired CEO of Ford Canada and Vice President of Ford Motor Company.

Tuesday, March 30 Conference, 7:30-11:15 am Luncheon, 11:45 am-1:30 pm DeVos Place, Convention Center

# Women's City Club

Women Artists, presenter Sara Albert
Sara Albert, who has taught art history for Aquinas
Emeritus College, has chosen some famous women artists
such as Mary Cassatt, Georgia O'Keefe, Frida Kahlo and
Judy Chicago and some not so well known women in art,
Artemesia Genteleschi, Alice Neel and Marian Schapiro.
Come celebrate these artists who have made their mark on
history of women in the arts. You may want to take notes
so bring your pens and note pads. Sara will furnish slides.
Wednesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31, 1:30 pm
Women's City Club, 254 E. Fulton

Cost: \$50 for five lectures; send your advance registration to Classes Chair, Women's City Club. For more information contact the Classes Chair at the Women's City Club, 616.459.3321.

# **Grand Valley State University**

Please check the website www.gvsu.edu/women\_cen for up to date information

# International Women's Day

International Women's Day is a time for Grand Rapids and surrounding communities to celebrate, educate, and become active around women's issues. This day will also be a time to support women in their struggles and celebrate them for their achievements.

Monday, March 8, Location to be announced

# Women's Center Tea Party

Sponsors: Women's Center and Women and Gender Studies.

This event brings together women activists, teachers, and students to participate in a centuries-old tradition of combining tea parties with discussions of literature, politics, and reform. Entertainment, desserts and refreshments are FREE. To register to participate, contact the Women's Center at 331.2748 or e-mail us at womenctr@gvsu.edu.

Wednesday, March 10, 4 pm Pere Marquette Room, Kirkhof Center, Allendale Campus

#### **AAUW Chapter Meeting**

Co-Sponsors: Women's Center and the Local Grand Rapids Chapter of the AAUW.

The American Association of University Women (AAUW) is a national organization that promotes education and equity for all women and girls. The AAUW's commitment to these issues is reflected in their public policy efforts, programs, and diversity initiatives. The meeting at the GVSU Women's Center is for the AAUW Grand Rapids Branch. Stop by to find out what they do, how to get involved, and to share your ideas on initiatives needing attention.

Wednesday, March 10, 6 pm GVSU Women's Center, 161 Kirkhof, Allendale Campus

#### Women's History Month Calendar (continued)

### Grand Valley State University (Continued) Susan Gubar (a founding mother of women's studies)

Co-Sponsors: Joseph Stevens Freedom Endowment, GVSU Honors College, Arts and Humanities Division, Women's Center, and Women and Gender Studies Program. One of the pioneers in feminist literary studies, Susan Gubar, is best known for her collaboration with Sandra Gilbert, whom she met in 1973. Their highly acclaimed *The* Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (1979) was a runner-up for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. Gubar's recent works include Racechanges: White Skin, Black Face in American Culture (1997), which analyzes cross-racial performances in the arts, and Critical Condition: Feminism at the Turn of the Century (2000), which discusses the dilemmas facing feminist theory in the new millennium. Most recently, she published Poetry After Auschwitz: Remember What One Never Knew, a study of North American and English poets who have responded to the Holocaust in their work, serving as "proxy-witnesses." Her talks at GVSU will address respectively Holocaust poetry and the state of contemporary feminism in the university.

"The Long and the Short of Holocaust Poetry" Wednesday, March 10, 7:30 pm Loosemore Auditorium, Pew Campus, Grand Rapids

"A Feminism of One's Own"
Thursday, March 11, 1 pm
Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center, Allendale
Campus

# Rebecca Walker, National Speaker

Named by Time Magazine as one of the fifty future leaders of America, Rebecca Walker is an important younger voice calling for social change and personal transformation. An author and activist, Walker publishes widely as the cofounder of the Third Wave Foundation, the only national, activist, philanthropic organization for young women aged 15 to 30.

Thursday, March 18, Time TBA Grand River Room, Kirkhof Center, Allendale Campus

# Women's Retreat with Tess Marshall, "Flying By the Seat of My Soul"

Tess Marshall is an expert on helping others reinvigorate their lives and work with joy and meaning. She has dedicated her life to teaching people how to be outrageously happy at home and at work. This women's retreat will be based on Tess' book, *Flying By the Seat of My Soul*. Participants will receive a workbook, lunch and a ton of practical knowledge.

Saturday, March 20, Time TBA (morning) Location TBA

Women Pioneers Panel (faculty members from history) Thursday, March 25, 12 pm 104 Kirkhof Center, Allendale Campus

#### Advocacy Training with Jean Doss (lobbyist)

Co-Sponsors: Women's Center and Grand Rapids National Organization for Women (NOW) Chapter.

Sharpen your grassroots lobbying skills and increase your understanding of current public policy issues of concern to women in Michigan. Lobbyist Jean Doss will give a brief review of the legislative process. There will be in-depth exploration of grassroots advocacy planning, strategies and tools; hands-on advocacy experience including role playing and message development on current issues of importance to women, and review of current legislative issues of interest to women and girls in our state.

Thursday, March 25, 7-8:30 pm 215/216 Kirkhof Center, Allendale Campus

#### Phenomenal Woman Program with Multi-cultural Assistants

(speaker yet named)

Friday, March 26, time TBA Location TBA

For more information contact Marlene Kowalski-Braun at 616.331.2748

# Grand Rapids Community College Grand Rapids Community College Diversity Lecture Series IX: Cristina Garcia, "Beyond the Hyphen: Identity in the Age of Multi-culturalism"

In 1960 Cristina Garcia's family fled Cuba in the wake of Fidel Castro's Communist revolution. Drawing on her personal experiences in an expatriate family with strong connections in Cuba, Garcia has become one of the world's best-loved novelists. Her novels *Dreaming in Cuban* and *The Aguera Sisters* trace the pain and promise of national detachment, as well as the delicacy and strength of family ties across generations.

Wednesday, March 10, 7 pm Applied Technology Center

Admission is free. For tickets call the GRCC Diversity Learning Center at 234.3390

# Grand Rapids Community College's Sixth Annual Salute to Women Reception and Awards

GRCC is celebrating the excellence of GRCC women: current employee Laurie Faber Foster, former employee Dr. Shirley West, alumna Jean Reed Bahle, and student Crystal Knoll.

Tuesday, March 23, 1-3 pm Applied Technology Center Admission is free

"Girls & Bullying" by Dr. Marcia McEvoy Thursday, April 29, 6-8 pm Applied Technology Center Auditorium Grand Rapids Community College

Free and open to the public

#### Try this guiz from the National Women's History Project

- 1. Who was the first woman appointed to serve as a Supreme Court Justice?
  - a. Geraldine Ferraro
  - b. Ruth Bader Ginsberg
  - c. Sandra Day O'Connor
  - d. Margaret Chase Smith
- 2. In 1920 the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment became part of the Constitution and expanded democracy by guaranteeing women's rights to vote. How long did it take for women to win the right to vote?
  - a. 22 years
  - b. 12 years
  - c. 52 years
  - d. 72 years
- 3. Harriet Tubman was one of the major "conductors" on the Underground Railroad. Which of the following did she also accomplish?
  - a. was a nurse, spy and scout for the Union Army
  - b. rescued over 300 enslaved peoples
  - c. returned to the South 19 times
  - d. all of the above
- 4. In what year did the National Women's History Project spearhead the movement for what became National Women's History Month?
  - a. 1920
  - b. 1970
  - c. 1990
  - d. 1980
- 5. Who were the three First Ladies who attended the National Women's Convention at Houston in 1977 and worked for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment?
  - a. Hillary Clinton, Rosalyn Carter, Lady Bird Johnson
  - b. Betty Ford, Pat Nixon, Nancy Reagan
  - c. Hillary Clinton, Betty Ford, Rosalyn Carter
  - d. Betty Ford, Rosalyn Carter, Lady Bird Johnson

- 6. Why was the month of March chosen to be National Women's History Month?
  - a. Spring is a good time for new ideas.
  - b. There are no specific national holidays during March.
  - c. March 8 is International Women's Day, which was the initial focus.
  - d. Students need to celebrate after the winter months.
- 7. In what year did the Equal Credit Opportunity Act make discriminating against women illegal?
  - a. 1920
  - b. 1950
  - c. 1974
  - d. 1985
- 8. August 26 is celebrated as Women's Equality Day to commemorate
  - a. the work of women during World War II
  - b. the flappers of the 1920s
  - c. the contemporary Women's Rights Movement
  - d. the anniversary of women in the United States winning the right to vote
- 9. The National Women's History Project's mission is to celebrate and recognize women's historic accomplishments. To help achieve this goal the NWHP's website provides contact information for which of the following?
  - a. Women's History Museums
  - b. Women's History Organizations
  - c. Women's History Performers
  - d. All of the above
- 10. Who was the first African-American woman to win an Olympic gold medal in track and field?
  - a. Wilma Rudolph
  - b. Jackie Joyner Kersey
  - c. Florence Joyner
  - d. Alice Coachman

Answers: 1 – c Sandra Day O'Connor; 2 – d 72 years; 3 – d All of the above; 4 – d 1980;

5 – d Betty Ford, Rosalyn Carter, Lady Bird Johnson;

6 – c March 8 is International Women's Day, which was the initial focus for the first

Women's History Week; 7 - c 1974; 8 - d The anniversary of women in the US winning

the right to vote; 9 – All of the above; 10 – d Alice Coachman

# 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.

### Has your membership expired?

If you have an asterisk (\*) by your name on your address label, it has.

#### Your membership includes:

GGRWHC Newsletter

Please Print

- Photo Exhibit of 12 outstanding community women
- Documentation of Oral Histories by local women
- Educational Programs

- GGRWHC annual events
- Maintenance of historical archives of women in the Grand Rapids area

Renewing your membership is as easy as completing the form below and mailing it with your check to Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council (GGRWHC), 143 Bostwick NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503.

Name	_ E-mail address
Address	
City/State/Zip	
Phone (work)	(home)
Membership Level and Type:\$100 Sponsor	\$50 Contributor\$25 Basic\$10 Student
Other:	New MemberReturning Member
I am also interested in participating on the following committee(s):Bibliography/Oral History	
DevelopmentLegacyNewsletterN	lominationsOutreachPublicity
Research/Recognition	
Office Use Only:	
	Acknowledged Added to PML

# History in the Future (Calendar of Events)

#### FEBRUARY 2004

10 GGRWHC Board Meeting, VanderVeen Center for the book, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Grand Rapids Public Library

#### **MARCH 2004**

Women's History Month (see pages 4 and 5 for some of the scheduled events)

9 GGRWHC Board Meeting, VanderVeen Center for the book, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Grand Rapids Public Library

#### APRIL 2004

13 GGRWHC Board Meeting, VanderVeen Center for the book, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Grand Rapids Public Library

#### **MAY 2004**

#### Annual GGRWHC Membership Campaign

- 11 GGRWHC Board Meeting, VanderVeen Center for the book, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Grand Rapids Public Library
  - Annual Meeting
  - · Election of Officers

#### 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 Women's History Council 143 Bostwick NE Grand Rapids, MI 49503 Nonprofit Organization U. S. Postage

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# History in the Making

History in the Making are short presentations about women in history or historical events in the West Michigan area. The first program was presented at the September 2003 meeting. The public is invited to attend the board meetings to hear these presentations.

The February meeting will feature Nelle Frisch presenting Farm Women. Certainly farm life and those who lived the life are one of the backbones of US culture and society. Nelle explores the subject for Women's History month to give us a picture of a part of our country's heritage and base. Today, farm women may live different lives but the basics are still the makeup of small towns and communities across the country. Nelle traveled the state to record and comment on different celebrations of crops and the growth of certain items. From that study and travel, a cookbook evolved from many of the interviews.

In March, Mary Seeger will present *History-Mysteries*. These mysteries are written by women about women detectives. Mary works in the field of detective fiction, murder mysteries, and this type is a relatively new development. Many of these mysteries include very accurate background information on women throughout history.

Norma Brink will present *Current Status of Theatre in Grand Rapids* at the April meeting. She will profile the theatre scene in the Grand Rapids area – who and where are the city's "legitimate" theaters, and what and when are their productions.

# In Memoriam

Carol Josephson passed away on Friday, September 26, 2003. She organized and was a charter member of the Gerald R. Ford Republican Women's Club, past-President and board member of the National Federation of Republican Women, and a member of the League of Women Voters. Carol was honored by the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council as one of Twelve Outstanding Women. (See more information on the web page www.ggrwhc.org)