

LEGACY 2006 – Women's History Month – March 2006

President's Corner

This is an exciting and busy time for the Greater Grand Rapids Women's History Council. Preparations are shaping up for LEGACY 2006, a triennial celebration of Women's History.

The opening breakfast will be held on Wednesday, February 22nd at the Eberhard Center, 301 West Fulton. Elaine Didier, Director of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum, will be the keynote speaker.

Organizations have been submitting programs that will be held during Women's History Month. Lots of exciting are presentations being offered. We hope you will be able to take time out of your busy schedule to attend one or two.

The most up to date information will be on our web page, www.ggrwhc.org. Check it out to see if new programs have been added.

Mary A. Seeger

In this issue you will find:

- Information about two new board members
- Information about LEGACY 2006

Mary Jane Dockeray, Naturalist and Environmentalist By Gloria Slykouse

Nothing is accomplished unless somebody cares and Mary Jane Dockeray cared enough to visualize and spearhead the building of Blandford Nature Center.

Before Mary Jane had even graduated from Michigan State University, she was a summer program instructor at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. She became Curator of Natural History there upon graduation. About that time she made a conscious decision that she couldn't handle both marriage and a career. She loved what she was doing. "It was never stagnant," she said. Every day for 19 years she visited four schools a day educating children about birds, animals and the environment, long before it was the fashionable thing to do. Frank DuMond, the Museum Director, gave her complete freedom. His motto was: "Learn at least one new thing everyday." Before she knew it, she had 100 different programs she was taking into the schools and the community.



When on a field trip on the West Side, she'd take students to the woods on the old Collins farm by the golf course, an area she herself had played on as a child. One spring in 1964 she saw surveyor's stakes. Mary Jane immediately traced the owners, Mr. & Mrs. Victor Blandford, who told her they'd been thinking about donating 10 acres to the city for a park. "Really," replied Mary Jane. That was the beginning of Blandford Nature Center with the complete support of the new Museum Director, W. D. Frankforter. Today the Center encompasses 143 acres of diverse habitats, an interpretive center, and several historic buildings. There are programs for school children and for adults, festivals, nature trails, family programs and Civil War Reenactments.

Mary Jane retired after a busy career. She has touched innumerable lives. In the late 50s she conducted a weekly radio program Nature Spy. She taught classes in geology and science methods for Michigan State University, 1957-79.

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Mary Jane Dockeray continued

Dear to her heart is the National Audubon Society and she used her vacation time to lecture on the Society's Wildlife Film Series throughout the United States and Canada, 1961-72. She began work on her Ph.D. in 1971. About the same time she wrote a book, *Let's Go Exploring*, outlining family and class field trips in the area for the West Michigan Environmental Action Council for which she earned credit toward her degree. An updated version was published in 1995.

She has received too many awards to name, except two of which she is most proud: a Delta Kappa Gamma International Scholarship in 1971 toward her Ph.D. work, the 1985 Michigan Audubon Society Outstanding Member Award, and a Mary Jane Dockeray Scholarship established by friends to recognize outstanding high school seniors planning on science careers. Her professional memberships include the Michigan Audubon Society (Board of Directors), the National Audubon Society, numerous environmental, museum, and parks societies, as well as an appointed member of the 1985-88 Governor's Wilderness & Natural Areas Advisory Board.

"If people can become better informed about the natural world around, they'll take better care and their lives will be richer," Mary Jane said. "It's my firm belief that everyone literally needs to have their feet on the ground before they can make informed decisions about the environment."

(To read more about the Twelve Outstanding Women, go to www.GGRWHC.org and click on Projects)

Membership Campaign

Our membership campaign begins in June. If your address label has an asterisk, your membership is now due.

Membership rates:

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

Two New Faces on the Board

Falinda Geerling has been a member of the GGRWHC since the first triennial city-wide celebration of Women's History Month in 1991. She has served on the higher education committee for those events. For almost seven years, Falinda was an adjunct instructor, teaching mostly communication courses at two local colleges. Now in her eighth year, she is one of three full-time writing specialists in Spring Arbor University's Adult Studies Program (an accelerated bachelor's degree-completion program). Two years ago Falinda earned her doctoral degree in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education from Michigan State University. In addition to teaching, Falinda serves as an Eucharist minister at the Church of the Holy Spirit. She is married and has three adult children. Her oldest, a daughter, blessed the family with a wonderful son-in-law four years ago. Falinda also recently adopted a six-year-old shih tzu, named Alphie. He's the first pet for both her husband and herself. Falinda has fallen in love with Alphie. Her husband still won't admit to even liking him, but he sure acts as if he does.

Veronica L. Kandl is the History Curator at the Public Museum of Grand Rapids where she performs research, maintains and enlarges the Museum's artifact collections and develops permanent and temporary exhibits. Ms. Kandl received her Master's Degree in Historical Administration from Eastern Illinois University and her Bachelor's of Science Degree in Environment, Textiles and Design from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with an emphasis in historic clothing, textiles and interiors. Prior to joining the Public Museum staff, she worked at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the Chicago Historical Society and the Henry Ford Museum. Ms. Kandl had been on the Board of the Costume Society of America and the Historical Administration Program Association.

LEGACY 2006

*You are invited to the Legacy 2006 Opening Breakfast
Wednesday, February 22, 2006, 8 a.m.
at the Eberhard Center, 301 West Fulton*

*Keynote Speaker: Elaine K. Didier, Ph.D., Director
Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and Museum*

Cost: \$25

*Send your check, made payable to GGRWHC, to:
GGRWHC, 143 Bostwick NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503*

Registration deadline February 15, 2006

No tickets will be mailed.

Contact Breakfast Co-chairs

Mary Seeger, marybill6977@charter.net

Debra Muller, dimmuller@ci.grand-rapids.mi.us

Fran Pepper, fpepper@comcast.net

for more information.

Thirty-two organizations have submitted programs to be included in the LEGACY calendar. The list of participating organizations includes:

Actors' Theatre	Hope College Women's Studies Center
Aquinas College, Jane Idema Women's Studies Center	Humanities Council
Black Women's Roundtable	Kent County UAW CAP Council
Calvin College Gender Studies Minor	Lakeside Organization
Clark Retirement Community	Michigan State University
Darling Communications	Michigan Women Studies Association
Delta Centre for Arts and Cultural Affairs	Negro Business and Professional Women and AAUW
Fenna Diepshuis Stoub	Public Museum of Grand Rapids
Frederik Meijer Gardens	St. Cecilia Music Society
Gilda's Club of Grand Rapids	The Zonta Club of Grand Rapids
GRTV	Torch Club
Grand Rapids Business Journal	West Michigan Academy of Music for Girls
Grand Rapids Community College	West Michigan Quilter's Guild
Grand Rapids Sister Cities International	WGVU
Grand Valley State University Women And Gender Studies Center	Women's City Club
Hadassah	Women's Resource Center
	World Affairs Council

GGRWHC Board Meetings

4 p.m. The Michigan Room, Gerald R. Ford Museum

February 14

March 14

April 11

May 9 (Annual Meeting)

Women's History Month Presentation

Viva Flaherty: Early 20th Century Feminist, Pacifist, Progressive, Social Activist, Michael Johnston

Thursday, March 9, 7:30 p.m., Gerald R. Ford Museum

Grand Rapids Historical Society
Calendar of Events
Co-sponsored by the Gerald R. Ford Museum
All programs meet at the Gerald R. Ford Museum at 7:30 p.m.

February 9

Michigan's Environmental History, David Dempsey Author of *Ruin and Recovery*.

Dempsey lived in Michigan for 47 years and has been involved in environmental organizations since 1982. He will tell the story of the cycle of resource exploitation and conservation from the early days of statehood to the present, showing the development of the conservation ethic in Michigan. Free and open to the public.

March 9

Viva Flaherty: Early 20th Century Feminist, Pacifist, Progressive, Social Activist, Michael Johnston.

Johnston is a historian of the Labor Movement in Grand Rapids. For the Woman's History Month, Johnston will focus on Viva Flaherty, who worked in the early 1900s for social justice for the working and immigrant classes. When the 1911 Furniture Workers Strike occurred, Viva was directly involved so that in the end she could write the "true history" of the event. Come and hear more about this forceful and courageous woman. Sponsored with the Greater Grand Rapids Woman's History Council.

April 13

Grand Rapids History Through Vintage Postcards, Thomas Dilley.

Dilley is a Grand Rapids Historical Society Board Member and local attorney, postcard collector, and author of recently published book, *Grand Rapids in Vintage Postcards, 1890 - 1940*, will use his extensive postcard collection as historical documents illustrating Grand Rapids history.

May 11

Time and location to be determined.

Grand Rapids Historical Society Annual Meeting and Banquet.