



# WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Many people gave in various ways at the recent Ann Arbor Home and Leisure Living Show to benefit Washtenaw County Historical Society.

The show's promoters, the Danoviches, arranged the benefit auction, donated booth space to the Society as well as the first two hours' gate receipts. Commercial exhibitors donated goods and services to the auction. The auctioneers donated their services. A number of members and friends staffed the booth throughout the three-day show and some donated items to auction as well. Finally those who attended, bought and donated cash. Our sincerest thanks to all.

— Leigh Anderson

## DIGGING FOR ROOTS? WORKSHOPS MAY HELP

If you're digging for your roots, you may find help at two day-long genealogy workshops here in May.

The Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County and Women's City Club are co-sponsors of one to be conducted by Everton Publishers of Salt Lake City at 9 a.m. Tuesday, May 8, at the City Club. Reservations, due May 1, may be sent to Mrs. Carole Callard, 1033 Pomona, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 with \$8.50 which includes lunch and a packet of materials.

The New England Historic Genealogy Society will conduct a seminar at 9 a.m. May 19, at the Michigan League. Advance registration may be made by sending \$15, non-refundable, to NEHGS, 101 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass. 02116 and indicating you want the May 19 Ann Arbor workshop. Migration patterns and census records will be discussed in the morning, military and church records in the afternoon.

## HOME SHOW AUCTION, GATE, BOOTH NET \$1,766

Washtenaw County Historical Society gained \$1,766.11 as a result of the Ann Arbor Home Show, which featured an auction of items donated by the exhibitors for the benefit of the Society.

The auction netted \$1,412. Gate receipts for the first two hours of the show, donated by the show promoters, Pat and John Danovich, publishers of *Ann Arbor Scene* magazine, added \$245.50 and picture sales and donations at the WCHS booth, \$108.61.

Local auctioneers Lloyd Braun and Jerry Helmer also donated their services. A list of the auction donors was not available at press time although each has received a thank you letter from President Leigh Anderson.

The booth exhibit was set up by Wystan and Catherine Stevens and Carol Freeman was chairman of staffing it. Those who "manned" the booth besides Mrs. Freeman and her husband, Glen, were Ethelyn Morton, Dorothy Ouradnik, Kathy Gordon, Janet Rocco, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Warzynski, Dr. and Mrs. William Bender, Patricia Austin, Bruce Perkins, Winifred Favreau, Robert Lytle, Lois Foyle, Harold Jones, Louisa Pieper, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Gamble, Mr. and Mrs. Wystan Stevens, Leigh Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Lacy, Jeannette Merri-man, Judith Burd, Mary Heald, Herbert Pfabe and David Pollock.

## GSWC TO HEAR MISS PUGH

Mary Jo Pugh, reference archivist of the Michigan Historical Collections in Bentley Library on the U-M North Campus, will speak at the Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County meeting at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, April 22, at Washtenaw Community College.

## AN ART SCHOLAR LOOKS AT WASHTENAW GERMANS: SAWYER TALK APRIL 24

A look at the local German element from a different perspective will be presented at the WCHS meeting at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 26, in Liberty Room at Great Lakes Federal by Charles H. Sawyer, retired director of the U-M Museum of Art.

Professor Sawyer's topic is "The Germans in Washtenaw County: Some Comparisons and Reflections on Their Domestic Architecture During the Nineteenth Century."

He first became interested in the Germanic influence on architecture, furniture and household objects while serving as Green Honors Professor at Texas Christian University in 1973. Since then he has extended his study from Texas to Ohio, Indiana and Michigan.

He is a native of Massachusetts and graduate of Yale University. His graduate work and distinguished career is outlined in *Who's Who in America*. He was dean of the School of Fine Arts at Yale when he came to the U-M, first as Dean of the School of Architecture and Design in 1956, then art museum director from 1957-72. He also was professor of art and of the history of art here.

## SPRING OPEN HOUSE SET

Cobblestone Farm will have its spring open house from 12 noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, May 13, Mother's Day. Exhibits will include dolls from local doll collectors, Margaret Smith's Schoenhut collection of wooden toys. The Herb Study Group of the U-M Botanical Gardens will serve homemade herb tea and cookies with the proceeds going for an herb garden in front of the house.

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY NOT WITHSTANDING

## SHE TURNED ADVERSITY, JUNK TO TREASURE



Gift wrap design echoes Treasure Mart 'Treasures'

Treasure Mart at 529 Detroit Street, a thriving Ann Arbor institution for the past 19 years, grew out of a family situation of multiple illnesses that would have devastated many persons.

Demaris Cash, its founder, told the story at the March WCHS meeting. Some might describe it as an antique shop or resale consignment shop. Mrs. Cash calls it a junk shop.

About sixteen years before she founded the business in 1960 she had had her first child, Janice, at age 38. Doctors had assured her there was nothing wrong with Janice who inexplicably fell down—that all children fell down and she was just too old and nervous.

That was until one day the late Dr. Thomas H. McEachern met Janice, 3½, and her mother at old St. Joseph's Hospital and personally escorted Janice down the long hospital corridor to see an ear specialist for her earache.

In spite of the fact the doctor took her hand she fell down three times. "I've never seen a man's face change so quickly—by the time we got to the ear specialist that man's face was ashen.

"I said, 'What is it, a brain tumor instead of an earache?'"

"He said, 'No, I think it's worse than that.'"

"It turned out to be this queer thing called muscular dystrophy. I had never heard the word. I looked it up in the dictionary. It means ceasing to function. The prognosis

was if she lived to nine or ten, she would be completely paralyzed."

"It wasn't easy to take. Finally, Dr. McEachern was at our house one day because Janice had a cold. He said, 'It's just a bad cold but I'm more concerned about you, Mrs. Cash. Have you looked at yourself in the mirror?'"

"If I had a child who only had six years to live, I think I would make each moment as happy as any child has ever known. You have the ability. Why don't you reform yourself?"

"They were the most wonderful words ever issued. I got down on my knees and prayed. I had a physical to make sure there was nothing wrong with me and from then on we lived it up. Now Janice is 35. She was married for nine years, now runs an antique shop at Ybor City in Tampa, Florida and she'll be home next week to visit. She drives a big van and a little car. She does walk with a walker—something that resembles a very light weight wheel chair. She puts her arm under it, lifts it into the car and away she goes.

"Two days before we moved into our present home, my mother fell and broke her back plus her arm in two places. So I had mother, Janice, and another little girl born when I was 45—that's Elaine who is in Treasure Mart with me now—at home and Travis (her husband) starts coming down with heart attacks.

"It didn't look very encouraging that he was going to be here long

and I had two girls to educate. I couldn't go back into teaching because I had the house to run. I didn't know what to do.

"I'm a born scavenger and I made the rounds of such places as University surplus every week. I had seen some beautiful lighted, mahogany cases with angled-glass sides for \$10. I'm sure they came out of the science museum because they still had sand in them.

"I couldn't get them out of my mind." She mentioned them at a luncheon one day at Dorothy Purdy's for Eleanor Dorsey who was new in town. Mrs. Dorsey said, "Demaris, why don't you open a resale shop? Ann Arbor needs one."

"I went right to the telephone and bought the cases. I remembered an old building on Detroit Street and rented it that very afternoon.

Friends she wanted to go in with her, for various reasons decided not to.

Looking over the building one day she decided it would be nice to have a white fence in front. About an hour later an antique dealer friend invited her some place and hearing her wish for a fence, said she had 60 feet of fence which had been standing against her garage for the last eight years. She bought it.

Meanwhile, someone told Grace Bigby about her. Mrs. Bigby called and said, "We've never met but I've heard such nice things about you. I would like to become a partner.

I have a skate exchange that will run itself about six months of the year, the other six months I need some support.

"From the very beginning everybody sent us things. It's been a success. We do a two-thirds turnover of stock every month. If you bring something in, half the time it doesn't even get through the front door. It's sold out in the lot."

"One day Hazel Proctor walked in when there was a beautiful Allmendinger organ there (made in Ann Arbor). Hazel said, 'Oh, I wish we could have this for the historical society.' I said, 'Just hand me the ticket. I turned then to a young couple deciding if they could afford to buy it and said, 'We're buying this for the historical society. We haven't any place to put it. Would you like to take it home until we build? That's where it is now.'"

"Remember when you had a calling card? The next thing I have to give to the Society is the original old printing mechanism that made them. I have Bertha Muehlig and half of Ann Arbor. They saved the cards so when you wanted more they'd know what to make.

"I do appraisals. We travel anywhere. Another beautiful thing that came in from Jackson was a chest. The second drawer pulled out and down to become a desk. One of the desk drawers had a card which said it was repaired in Owosso, Michigan, in 1929. A card on the bottom said it was made by the Ann Arbor Cooperative Lumber Company on Detroit Street in 1870.

"Wystan Stevens is trying to help me figure out whether it was in our building or The Tree—they are the two oldest buildings." (The Tree is a used clothing shop run by her husband, Travis, now a hale 83.)

"One old lady of 86 told me she had peeled peaches in our building once. At the turn of the century it was Barnard's Toy Manufacturing which later moved

to Detroit. The building was originally built by Rheads—that is still in the brickwork at the back."

When she and Mrs. Bigby were getting ready to open the business, Elaine's dancing teacher, Lou McCush, asked her to get a crystal chandelier for his mother's birthday the following week.

That night her husband who had been ill all day collapsed in the kitchen of an apparent heart attack. The hospital assured her they thought it was flu. She came home "thanking the Lord I still had a husband."

That night as she reviewed her day and prayed as usual she added a postscript: Lord, do you know if there's a crystal chandelier anywhere?

Next morning after getting the girls off to school and checking on her husband at the hospital, she was painting the fence at Treasure Mart about 10:30 when a man walked in and said, "Good morning, could you sell for me a crystal chandelier?"

That was her first sale. "I get goose bumps when I think of it. If that isn't a minor miracle I've never heard of one."

The Detroitier noticed their "open soon" sign when he came to Ann Arbor Fruit and Produce which owns the building and still uses the basement.

His mother-in-law had given his family the chandelier which was unsuitable in their home but he didn't dare sell it there because she might know and object.

She advised her listeners to be wary and know the value of their things, and offered to advise them. She recalled how her aunts in Pennsylvania had unknowingly sold "cut and pressed glass, bone dishes, Grandfather's Civil War letters, the original county atlas signed by the first judge and an 81-year-old doll probably worth \$500 by itself for \$55.

When Mrs. Groomes died her things were sent to Treasure Mart. Her daughter seeing her mother's oak pedestal table there, said, "Why Mrs. Cash, you

have \$350 on mother's table. She only paid \$15 for it. At that price, you'll never sell it." It was sold within the hour along with all the other dining room furniture.

"I was in an Ann Arbor antique shop one day and noticed some things didn't have any prices on them. 'Are they new,' I asked.

"No we bought them locally and we don't want them to know what we have on them."

"No antique dealer is going to pay what you will get at Treasure Mart. We give you 75 cents on the dollar. We take 25 cents for doing the work, 35 cents if we have to go out and get it."

Of junking, she said, a true junker's wildest dream is to come home with something that nobody but nobody knows what it really is.

She showed an assortment of things including some of her prize what-is-its. They included a brass ear trumpet, a gadget to keep stiff shirt fronts from flying up in the face as in old Mack Sennet comedies, a skirt collector to hold up voluminous skirts if perchance milady wanted to scrub the kitchen floor, and a tummy-reducer.

Of her earrings, she recalled that when Janice was little, a friend in Guatemala sent her a box of tiny dolls. Mrs. Cash hung them on dangle earrings which Janice enjoyed seeing her wear.

She had thought wouldn't it be fun if I could call these "dolls for dystrophy" and take in some money for this darn disease. She and Janice were at a Hudson's Thanksgiving Day parade when a woman admired them and asked where she got them.

She said, "I make them. Perhaps you noticed my little girl is handicapped. I call them dolls for dystrophy. The woman ordered two pair at \$3 each.

Next day she bought up all the dangle earrings in town, wired Guatemala for more dolls and was in business, eventually selling a quarter million dollars worth.



## CITY'S 'LIVING PAST' HIGHLIGHTED IN MAY

"Ann Arbor's Living Past," theme of a photography contest sponsored by the Ann Arbor Historic District Commission at Kempf House, might well be the general theme of its May Preservation Month activities.

Three panel programs on older homes are planned plus walking tours and a plant sale to raise money to redo Kempf house gardens as they were originally.

The home series will be at 7:30 Thursdays May 10, 17 and 24 in the conference room of the new Ann Arbor Fire Hall. Topics, respectively, are "Why Live in an Older Home?", "Buying, Financing and Maintaining the Older Home" and "Dating the Older Home." WCHS will attend the latter one for its May meeting.

Walking tours of the Ann and Division Streets Historic Districts will leave City Hall at 1 p.m. May 6 and 12. There is a 50 cent fee.

Donations are welcomed for the plant sale Friday and Saturday, May 11 and 12. It will be 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and from 9 a.m. on Saturday. Refreshments will be served at all activities.

Photos, due Monday, April 30, will be on display at the public library through May. Prizes include a \$100 gift certificate. For more information telephone 761-4510.

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## HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

**Chelsea Historical Society** — A special meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, May 14, at the Chelsea Methodist Home. Wylan Stevens, local historian, will present his slide show, "Washtenaw's Tombstone Treasury" in the game room. Refreshments will be served.

**Dexter Historical Society** — Classes are scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays May 5 and 19 at the museum on how to make band boxes. They are wallpaper covered cardboard boxes of various sizes in which 19th century ladies kept their hats and other items "band box fresh." Mrs. Linda Kotarba and daughter Laurie of Farmington will teach. Each session is a complete course in itself.

The class grew out of an exhibit at the recent arts and crafts fair which drew an estimated 2,000 people, President Wallace Fusilier said. Landscaping sessions are planned at the museum in May, with volunteers from Boy Scouts, Kiwanis and the historical society.

**Manchester Historical Society** — 8 p.m. Monday, April 23, at Emanuel Church.

**Milan Historical Society** — 7:30 p.m. third Wednesday of month at Milan Community House.

**Saline Historical Society** — 8 p.m. third Tuesday of month at Saline High School library. Sandra Hansen of Dexter, a landscape architect, will speak in May on

landscaping older homes.

**Ypsilanti Historical Society** — Ivor Schmidt of Schmidt's Antiques, the largest antique dealer in the midwest, will speak at the general meeting from 3-5 p.m. Sunday, April 22, at the museum. It is to be a kind of show-and-tell program and members may bring items they would like to know more about.

Norma Cichanski will speak Sunday, April 29, on cooking and decorating with herbs. Her program will be 2-4 p.m. at the museum.

The museum is featuring a display of inkwells this month. May exhibits will include toothpick holders, old toys and thistle pattern pressed glass.

## HEADLINES DATED

The headline, "CASTRO SPURNS AMERICA" was in the January 2, 1909, Ann Arbor Daily Times News. "COCAINE GRIPS U.S. ARMY" was in the January 13, 1913 edition. Castro was a colorful former governor of Venezuela who was given a hard time by customs when he came to New York to visit.

## MAY WCHS MEETING

The May 24 WCHS meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. at the new central Ann Arbor Fire Hall in conjunction with the Ann Arbor Historic District program, "Dating the Older Home" in observance of Preservation Month.

WASHTENAW COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEETING

8:00 p.m. THURSDAY

APRIL 26, 1979  
Liberty Hall

Great Lakes Federal Savings  
Liberty at Division  
Ann Arbor, Michigan

M/M Lawrence Ziegler  
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