



# IMPRESSIONS

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER • SEPT./OCT. 2004

PRESIDENT'S LETTER • JUDITH CHRISMAN

## A Summer Summary

*You may notice changes in your newsletter. We have not found an editor to replace Susan Wineberg so we are preparing a 'newsletter by committee'. If you or someone you know would be interested in becoming our new editor, please call 734-662-9092 or email us at [wchs-500@ameritech.net](mailto:wchs-500@ameritech.net).*

After supper and election of new officers, Patricia Austin read two special resolutions presenting Susan Wineberg and Pauline Walters with life-time memberships in the Society for all of their contributions as Editor and President, respectively. Pauline Walters was also presented with a brass plaque to be placed on the 'History Making Contributor' square in the garden.

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### INFORMATION

Published Seven Times A Year  
From September-May.

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Annual dues are: individual, \$15; couple/family \$25; student or senior (60+) \$10; senior couple \$19; business/association \$50; patron \$100.



Iris Gruhl recruited a group of teens from the YMCA Youth Volunteer Corps.

### Annual Meeting A Great Success

The annual meeting, Wednesday, May 19, held at the Perry Building was a great success. Before the potluck supper, Myron Guttman, director of the International Consortium of Political and Social Research (ICPSR), welcomed the members and gave a short talk about the renovation of Perry School. Richard Reichman, architect, told about how the building was reduced to a shell and the whole interior was redesigned. The leaded glass windows were retained and many traditional school design motifs were incorporated. After the talks, Mr. Guttman led members on a tour of the building.

### Iris Gruhl Master Gardener

The summer months brought a wonderful new volunteer. Iris Gruhl, a Master Gardener, took us on as her garden project. After meeting with our garden committee to see what was needed, Iris devised a plan to improve the appearance of the lawn extension areas along Beakes and Main. These areas had turned to weed after a hard winter killed most of the myrtle planted there. Iris recruited a group of teens from the YMCA Youth Volunteer Corps and some of our board members to remove

the topsoil along the roads, leaving about a foot along the sidewalks undisturbed.

She then laid a fabric groundcloth over the area and added weed killer. A second group of Y volunteers covered the whole extension area with mulch. Sedum was planted along the undisturbed strip. The sedum will eventually spread to cover the area.

Thanks to Iris and all of her volunteers our curb appeal is much improved. Incidentally, the topsoil that was removed was not wasted. It was piled near the road with a 'free top soil' sign and it all disappeared.

*Continued on page 4.*

SPEAKER • SUSAN GOTT

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN:

# Where Do We Go From Here?



*Susan Gott*

On Sunday, September 19, 2004 about thirty members and guests gathered in the Hanson Room of the Glacier Hills Retirement Community to hear Susan Gott, University Planner at the University of Michigan, speak about: "The University of Michigan: Where Do We Go From Here?" She was assisted by her



The Academic Center is currently under construction on State Street between the Hartwig Building and Yost Arena. Construction began in summer 2004 and will be completed in December 2005. The architect is Jickling Lyman Powell.

colleagues, Julia Truettner and Sven Sawin, who operated the PowerPoint system.

Her talk was interesting and very timely. The *Ann Arbor NEWS* had published a major article about the building plans of the U of M in that day's paper. Ms. Gott had a wide variety of images projected onto the screen and described "what had been" and "what will be"

around the university. As in the past, her talk was taped for transcription and inclusion in this newsletter.

However, the tape recorder malfunctioned and the voice is overlaid with the noise of the motor of the recorder. Sadly, at this time we cannot publish the talk. We are looking for assistance in finding a way to purge the tape of the noise. If that proves possible, the text of the talk will be made available to members at a later date.

As a solution for future talks, the Society is researching obtaining a digital recorder and, perhaps, voice recognition software. Our two previous editors, Alice Ziegler and Susan Wineberg faithfully transcribed previous lectures for the newsletter. Now we must find a less work intensive way to publish the monthly talks. These transcriptions have been the heart of our newsletters and we intend to continue them to the best of our ability.



Weill Hall, the future home of the Ford School of Public Policy, will be located at the northeast corner of State and Hill Streets. It will serve as a gateway to Central Campus from the south. It was designed by Robert Stern. Construction will begin this fall and is anticipated to be completed August 2006.



The new Computer Science and Engineering building is under construction on North Campus. It is located just west of the H. H. Dow building on Hayward Street. It was designed by Diamond & Schmitt, and will be completed in winter 2006.



Upgrades for the School of Public Health include renovations to the original 1940 building (Vaughan) and a major addition which straddles Washington Heights and connects to the 1971 building (Francis). The addition will not impede the flow along Washington Heights. Construction was begun in summer 2003 and will be completed in fall 2006. The architect was Centerbrook.



The Life Sciences Institute and the Palmer Commons, sited along Washtenaw Avenue across from Palmer Field, are visible in this photograph from September 2004. Both were designed by SmithGroup with Venturi, Scott Brown and Associates. LSI was begun in fall 2000 and completed fall 2003; Palmer Commons was begun winter 2001 and completed spring 2004.



The Reflecting Pool is shown in this photo from September 2004. Situated on North Campus between the Phoenix Lab, Cooley Lab, and Lurie Engineering Center, it was built in 1997.



The stormwater detention system was built in the summer of 2004 and is located between the Art and Architecture building and the Engineering Research buildings on North Campus. Stormwater from the central area of the campus flows into the detention system, which consists of three cells. The cell system slows down the flow of water, modifies its temperature, and allows particulate matter to settle out. Eventually, the water slowly flows to the Huron River.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER • JUDITH CHRISMAN

## A Summer Summary

*Continued from page 1.*

### Cries and Whispers Quilt Show

Our summer exhibit, 'Cries and Whispers' and a quilt show brought in many visitors. 'Cries and Whispers' is an exhibit about the Underground Railroad which was on loan from the African-American Museum. During the summer that museum, which has no home, sponsors bus tours of Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti underground railroad sites led by Mrs. Willie Edwards. We were pleased to display their exhibit and become a stop on the bus tour. In addition we displayed our large collection of quilts and used the opportunity to dispel some of the myths about quilting.



Cries and Whispers Quilt Show

items from Martha Kemp, toys and a bib from Evelyn Diesenroth, a doll from Robert Fisher and miscellaneous articles pertaining to the Eberbach family from John Schaupner.

With the help of board member, Cynthia Yao, we were able to find a wonderful new storage area to replace the rooms at Willow Run which is closing.

Sweepster, Inc., has provided us with a great space in some unused offices in the rental area of their facility. The area is clean, secure, heated (or cooled as necessary) and accessible at all times including evenings and weekends. Willow Run served us well from 1975 but was only open weekdays, was a 20 mile drive one way and this past winter was not

heated. The new facility is only five miles from the museum. The Society is grateful to the University of Michigan for renting us storage for so long, to Sweepster, Inc. for the new storage, and to the fine crew from Corrigan Moving Systems who moved our artifacts for us.



Donated by Evelyn Diesenroth

### Recent Donations

As curator I continue to inventory, catalogue and store our vast collection of artifacts. Recent donations include an old electric mixer from William and Marlene Prince, a 1941 wedding dress from Elizabeth Benford, a 1905 wedding dress (wedding of Martha Warner and James Campbell) and other

JUDY CHRISMAN

## A Piece Of The Past

Museum guides often have stories to tell about artifacts on exhibit. But are they always accurate? This black-painted Windsor high chair has always been known as Orange Risdon's high chair. Orange Risdon was a surveyor who surveyed a large part of the Michigan Territory in 1825. In 1832 Risdon platted Saline which included a portion of the 160 acres of land he had purchased in 1825. The Risdon family moved from Leroy, New York and settled in Saline.

Further research has turned up another possibility for the chair. This story indicates that Dr. Elnathan and Betsy Judd, who married in 1802, bought the chair from their neighbors who were from England. The chair was passed down in the Judd family and brought to Michigan in 1837. In 1851 Gertrude Betsy Judd, granddaughter of Dr. Judd, married Lewis Cass Risdon, son of Orange and Sally Risdon.

What is the real story? We will probably never know. We do know that the chair was donated by descendants of Orange and Sally Risdon so it is probably safe to say that it was part of a Risdon household at some time.

The chair is an early American-made Windsor, once called Philadelphia chairs, with Pennsylvania characteristics such as legs which end in ball feet inserted into holes bored through the seat and a horse-shoe-shaped saddle seat. Windsor chairs were made in England as early as the 1720s and began to be made in America by the 1740s. They were popular because of their strength, comfort and economic price. Each chair is made of a variety of readily available woods and were usually painted. They have been a popular chair from 1755 to the present.

# Program Schedule 2004 • 2005

Vice president and Program Chair, Ralph Beebe, has planned interesting programs for the coming season. All programs are held the third Sunday of the month at 2:00 PM. The talks are free and open to the public. Members receive a post card prior to each talk with instructions on how to reach the lecture. Light refreshments are served.

**SUNDAY • NOVEMBER 21**  
2:00 PM  
"ARTRAIN USA"  
NEW Center • 1100 N. MAIN ST.  
ANN ARBOR

Debra Polich, Director of the Artrain, will talk about the Artrain and its traveling art exhibit.

**SUNDAY • FEBRUARY 20, 2005**  
2:00 PM  
MICHIGAN THEATER  
"RESTORING  
A COMMUNITY TREASURE"  
603 E. LIBERTY STREET  
ANN ARBOR

Russell Collins will talk about restoring the Michigan Theater



**SUNDAY • MARCH 20, 2005**  
2:00 PM  
BENTLEY HISTORICAL LIBRARY  
"TOUR of LIBRARY EXPANSION"  
1150 BEAL AVE,  
UM NORTH CAMPUS  
ANN ARBOR

Director, Francis X. Blouin, will describe the work performed to expand the library.

**SUNDAY • APRIL 17, 2005**  
2:00 PM  
BROOKHAVEN MANOR RETIREMENT COMMUNITY  
"LOST ANN ARBOR"  
401 E OAKBROOK  
(near Eisenhower/Briarwood Mall)  
ANN ARBOR

Susan Wineberg, newsletter editor emerata and current Board Member of WCHS, will talk about her newly published book, *Lost Ann Arbor*. Susan describes buildings that have been demolished in Ann Arbor.

**WEDNESDAY • MAY 18, 2005**  
6:00 PM  
Our Annual Meeting and Election of Officers will be a pot luck supper and at a yet to be determined site.



ALICE CERNIGLIA  
CURRENT EXHIBIT:  
**The Last Battle**

Six decades after World War II, time has dimmed many veterans' memories of their service in Europe. For Mr. Tony Vaccaro, however, the war is nearly as vivid now as when he was fighting it. Unlike other former GIs recalling the war, Vaccaro photographed his experience in battle using an Argus C-3 camera made in Ann Arbor.

This exhibit presents 60 of Mr. Vaccaro's pictures (of the over 8,000 taken) of "The Last Battle." As a member of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, fighting through France into Germany, Mr. Vaccaro documented the final stages of World War II in the European theater.

The exhibit also includes information from Washtenaw County's participation in this conflict. Local World War II artifacts such as a scrapbook of local newspaper stories, ration books, a Merchant Marine uniform and an American Red Cross nurse uniform can be seen. There is a special area honoring Mildred Radawiec MacGregor, of Ann Arbor, who was a surgical nurse for the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group from 1942-1945. She has loaned us the uniform that she wore (and still wears when she gives talks at occasions such as Memorial Day celebrations).

The exhibit runs through November 14, 2004. Mr. Vaccaro's photographs are on loan from the Yankee Air Museum and the camera is on loan from the Argus Museum in Ann Arbor.

Photo Far Left: Risdon Family high chair.

Photo Left: Army uniform worn by Mildred Radawiec MacGregor, currently 94 years old.

INFORMATION • 734.662.9092

# Volunteer Opportunities

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR.** Yes, we are hoping a person will come forth, a volunteer, to coordinate a team that would put together our newsletter, *Washtenaw Impressions*, seven times a year. We already have two volunteers that would like to work under a leader—would a volunteer editor please step forward?

**GREEN / BROWN THUMB HELPERS.** The gardens around the Museum are now ready to be put to rest for the winter. We would like volunteers to help with the cleanup. We will gather at 9:00 AM on Saturday, November 6. Bring your gloves and rakes. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

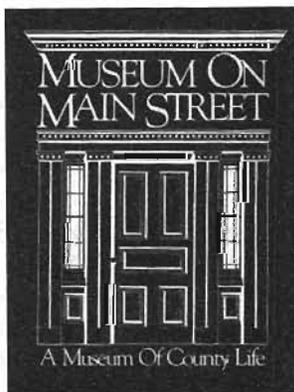
**ASSISTANT MEMBERSHIP CHAIR.** We are seeking a person, computer literate, who would like to learn the ins and outs of being an assistant membership chair. The Society has excellent museum-specific software which keeps track of members, donations, thank you notes and mailing labels. The work is somewhat seasonal—greatest the month after the membership letters are sent out in early January. The work must be done at the Museum.

**HOUSEKEEPING ANGELS.** There must be a person or a team of two that really love making things neat and clean. Our Museum would welcome a team that would come in bi-weekly and spend a couple of hours shining up the place. We would truly appreciate these people.

**HANDIMAN.** Also, there are often small things that need repair, repainting and such. We are seeking an on-call person who is good at tinkering. Specifically, right now we need to have our Hodge doll house re-wired. The tiny lights are powered by batteries and the wiring needs attention. Needs to be done by mid-November.

## Mission Statement

*The purpose of the Washtenaw County Historical Society is to foster interest in and to elucidate the history of Washtenaw County from the time of the original inhabitants to the present. Its mission shall be to carry out the mandate as stated through the preservation and presentation of artifacts and information by exhibit, assembly, and publication. And to teach, especially our youth, the facts, value and the uses of Washtenaw County history through exhibits in museums and classrooms, classes, tours to historical places, and other educational activities.*



### WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### “ARTRAIN USA”

SUNDAY • NOVEMBER 21 • 2 PM

#### SPEAKER

DEBRA POLICH

DIRECTOR OF THE ARTRAIN

NEW CENTER

1100 N. MAIN • ANN ARBOR