



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fred Liimatta



My wife Anne recently found a letter from former OCPHS president Gretchen Adler originally printed in the November 1979 Oakland Gazette. In lieu of imparting my own words of wisdom, I would like to share with you this message from Gretchen, who remains a cherished member of this society.

Her advice is just as appropriate for Pine Grove today as it was 35 years ago. All I can say is...ditto! - Fred

Dear members,

Twelve years ago this month my neighbor, Betty Adams, asked me to help decorate the Wisner Home for the Victorian Christmas. I didn't know what the Wisner Home was or what I was getting into. It has been twelve years of a lot of hard work and long hours but it has also meant a lot of fun and laughter and the friendship of so many truly dedicated and knowledgeable people.

As your new president, I hope to make many new friends through and for Pine Grove. So much has been accomplished, so many hurdles have been overcome, yet like the woman whose ironing basket never seems to be empty, there is still a great deal to do. I'd like to list some areas to which I feel we must give particular attention in the year ahead.

1) *Membership – We must broaden our outreach in the county. By making Pine Grove more visible through greater service and increased programs, we can attract greater interest. We must also pursue business and corporate support for our efforts. I am constantly aware of people and groups who, like myself 12 years ago, never heard of the Wisner Home.*

2) *Restoration – The strides made in the restoration of Pine Grove have been monumental.*

Our efforts to maintain what we have must continue and increase. These efforts should include not only the physical property itself but the wealth of artifacts and library materials we have and are collecting. As the depository for historical materials relating to Oakland County, we must increase our efforts to make these materials more accessible to the public. This can be accomplished by increased programs, exhibits and library research.

3) *Finances – Restoration, maintenance and increased programs mean greater financial expenditures. Our budget now is very tight. We must find new ways to increase our financial support. Increasing and broadening our membership will help achieve this. Which brings us back to #1 on the list.*

I would ask all of you to help. Volunteer one day a week or even a month at Pine Grove doing a job in an area that interests you. If possible, increase your financial support. And last but not least, talk about Pine Grove to your friends, neighbors, relatives and business associates. Spread the word about our efforts. History is not just a subject in school-it can be fun and our past relates to all of us today. (Gretchen Adler, 1979)



A "GRANDE" NIGHT TO REMEMBER
Anne Liimatta (Board Member)

Do you like to get rid of "stuff?" Do you smile when you survey your newly empty garage (there's room for the vehicles now!) Have you called the kids over recently to remove their sports trophies, bug collections and boxes of old toys from your basement? If so, as "good junk" continues to show up around the house, each of you Society members has a standing invitation to share some of it with Pine Grove! We will turn your unique items into museum funding and you will get the tax deduction!

Over the years, OCPHS members have generously answered the call for donations of items to put in our summer White Elephant sales. Considerable dollar amounts have been reaped from these traditional affairs. In recent years we've hosted small auctions that ended up being quite popular and lucrative. The latest success was our October 4th event *A "Grande" Night To Remember* in downtown Pontiac at the Lafayette Grande Banquet Facility, housed in the historic 1927 Masonic Temple. We had our largest crowd yet with almost one hundred in attendance, all interested in food, fellowship, "fun"d-raising and fantastic deals.

The crowd showed up early for the 6:00 event in order to browse live and silent auction items up for sale in the Grande's stunning white and gold dining hall. A number of guests dressed for the vintage costume contest and the mood was lively! A pleasant buffet dinner was offered and lured guests to colorful tables for socializing with friends and fellow bidders before the main business of the evening began – the live antiques and collectibles auction. If you were there, you were having a good time!

Museum fundraiser Bill Clink and his brother Bob, radio personality from California, were emcees for the night. They handled the entertainment and showing of auction merchandise while doing some bidding themselves. Auctioneer Fred Liimatta moved things along quickly. Hard-fought battles over such items as a one-of-a-kind fire hydrant sculpture, Victorian marble-top dresser and a 60's living room set raised a friendly ruckus, but the most fabulous surprise of the night was the contest over a vintage 5' plastic Santa Claus lawn ornament which finally sold for

\$100! A great donation for Pine Grove! An aged "Ming" vase in beautiful condition received the highest bid of the night, going for over \$1800! You never know what will show up at one of Fred's auctions, but you can bet there will always be surprises!

The night was over in a flash, ending at 10:00 with a long line of customers handled swiftly by cashiers Amy Annett, Kari Vaughan and Wesleyann Johnson. Congratulations to the auction planning committee of Bill, Fred and Sponsorship Chair/Hostess Linda Porter for putting together an event that will be hard to top.

Back to the beginning: If you are not a tosser, are you a saver...of anything? Start planning now to tackle a clothes closet or attic with mass confusion; do some serious reorganizing, de-cluttering and ditching of that hoarder instinct. Then make plans to be generous with your aged, unique, no-longer-needed belongings. Call the museum and donate for our April 2015 auction in the Carriage House. Come have fun watching your own items bring in cash for the Wisner Home. Every penny earned for the operation and maintenance of our special historic property is a penny well spent!

Long live OCPHS, the memory of the Moses Wisner family and the history of Oakland County!



OCPHS wishes to thank the following sponsors of our fall auction. Their in-kind and monetary donations allowed us to put on a truly "Grande" event for you!

7 North/Russ Barr LLC (Pontiac)
Avon Donuts (Pontiac)
Calabrese's Pizzeria (Waterford)
Carl's Golfland (Bloomfield Hills)
Charlie Johnson (Pontiac)
Christopher & Roselyn Northcross (Pontiac)
Deirdre Waterman, Mayor of Pontiac
Drayton Plains Nature Center (Waterford)
Erebus Haunted Attraction (Pontiac)
Joe's Army Navy (Waterford)
Mom's Attic (Pontiac)
On The Hunt Antiques (Waterford)
Peels' Garden Center (Waterford)
Quality Brake Service (Pontiac)
Spinning Jenny's Antique Mall (Clarkston)
Take Away Trash Service (Pontiac)
Waterford Hill Antiques (Clarkston)
Waterford Hill Florist & Greenhouse (Clarkston)

A very special thanks to premier sponsor Frankly Antiques, located in Dixieland Flea Market.

OCPHS also thanks Bob Clink for providing the evening's entertainment and the Lafayette Grande Banquet Facility for their hospitality.



IN REMEMBRANCE...

OCPHS extends condolences to the family of Dorris Evelyn Gaines, a member in good standing who passed away on November 22nd at the age of 76. Dorris was born in Stoddard County, MO in 1938 and worked for many years at the Oakland County Sheriff Department and Health Services. She was a resident of Oxford at the time of her passing.

We also send get well wishes to former OCPHS president and current board member Brian Golden as he recovers from shingles, and to our historian extraordinaire Charlie Martinez who is slowly but surely on the mend from pneumonia. Charlie wants everyone to know he misses his friends at Pine Grove and looks forward to finishing another interesting and educational article for the next issue of the *Gazette!*



(Marge proudly accepts her award. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Michigan.)

OAKLAND COUNTY HISTORY ADVOCATE RECEIVES TOP AWARD

At the Historical Society of Michigan's annual State History Conference in September, the coveted 2014 Distinguished Volunteer Service Award was bestowed upon White Lake Township resident Marge Sawruk. The award recognizes individuals and organizations that have made notable contributions to the appreciation, collection, preservation and promotion of state and local history. When the 1855 Historic Fisk Farm in White Lake was threatened with demolition, Sawruk's efforts were instrumental in saving it. She also initiated efforts to save the 1876 Thompson One-Room School, currently located at Fisk Farm. Marge is secretary of the White Lake Historical Society, newsletter editor, author of the society's activity book and gives tours of the Fisk Farm campus. OCPHS congratulates Marge on her award and extends a heartfelt thank you for her work on behalf of Oakland County history!

Thank You For Supporting OCPHS!

Amy Annett (Treasurer)



With year-end fast approaching, we want to express our heartfelt thanks for your financial support. By joining, visiting, donating and volunteering you show that you believe in our mission of preserving and conveying Oakland County's role in the evolution of American history. Your generosity provides the means for all of our endeavors at Pine Grove, and we are truly grateful.

At the beginning of this year, we set ambitious goals for funding, staff hours, membership, attendance and programs. While we haven't met all of them, we're realizing much progress. The year 2013 ended with a \$6,000 operating deficit, but we are very close to eliminating that shortfall this year thanks to the hard work and financial support of so many of you. If you have yet to renew your membership or wish to give a gift in 2014, it's not too late for your contribution to make a difference this year.

Incredibly, we are about to close the books on our 140th year. As we look toward 2015, we recognize that we could not continue this Society without your support. From all of us at Pine Grove...thank you. May you have a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year.

Membership and Donation Form

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Send my *Gazette* via: U.S. Mail Email

Please Make Me a Member! (indicate level):

- \$15 Student
- \$20 Individual
- \$20 Non-Profit Organization
- \$35 Family (two adults & minor children)
- \$100 Patron
- \$200 Benefactor
- \$500 Friends
- \$500 Corporate Sponsor
- \$Gift Membership (provide recipient's name & contact info):

Please Accept My Donation! (indicate preference):

- \$ Annual Giving (general operating costs)
- \$ Fill In the Gap (expanding hours & services)
- \$ Preservation (historic buildings & contents)
- \$ Where Needed or Other (specify):
- \$ In Memory of / Honor of (provide name):

What Prompted Your Support? (check all that apply):

- Interest in Oakland County History
- Invited/Introduced by Member/Friend
- Received Copy of *Gazette*
- Attended Event or Tour
- Research Library / Archives
- Newspaper / Magazine Article
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Website / Facebook
- Other (specify):

Mail this form with check payable to OCPHS to:

Oakland County Pioneer & Historical Society
405 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue
Pontiac, MI 48342

For your convenience you may also join or donate online at www.ocphs.org. Thank you for your support!

We are a 501(c)(3) organization
Donations are tax deductible in accordance with applicable law

OCPHS' 2014 Victorian Open House
Barbara L. Frye (VOH Planning Committee)

Queen Victoria, a diminutive woman, ruled the British Empire from 1837 to 1901. She gave her name to an era and a certain elegant style of living.

Moses Wisner was elected the 12th Governor of Michigan in November 1858 and served from January of 1859 to January of 1861. His home in Pontiac, Pine Grove, served as the Governor's Mansion because a suitable residence in Lansing did not exist at the time. The Wisners entertained high-ranking officials of state and their home was up for the task in fitting style.

Welcome to Pine Grove and OCPHS' annual Victorian Open House! Make merry!



(Flag folding ceremony)

This year the mansion is dressed in modest Victorian style. The main porch is hung with cedar roping and there is a large evergreen wreath on the door. Rather than a single tall tree this year, there are two tabletop trees decorated with hand-made ornaments and *carte de visite* images of the Wisner family, one in each parlor. In the front hall is a graceful arrangement of red roses and freesia against a background of pine boughs. The dining table is set with green and gold china, accented with red and green glassware. On each plate is a traditional gold "Christmas cracker" decorated with a tiny pinecone. The centerpiece is a delight of red roses and traditional winter greens.

So much to see!

Mannequins located in several rooms are adorned with some of the period gowns in the Society's collection. Many items not previously on display can be seen in the upstairs bedrooms. An added feature of the family showcase in the curio cabinet is information about Moses' first wife Eliza (Richardson) Wisner. You never know what new delight is awaiting your visit.

The summer kitchen is a must-see on the tour. The West girls have it smelling delightful with freshly peeled apples and real butter made in a period butter churn!



(Dwight Keith & board member Ann Johnson in the Wisner Mansion)

Our one-room schoolhouse is decorated to reflect a 1940's classroom, with paper chains, cut-out paper snowflakes and tissue paper candles in the windows. This year marks the 73rd anniversary of the "Day of Infamy." The glass case at the back of the schoolhouse holds an exhibit titled "Remember Pearl Harbor-7 Dec 1941," dedicated to informing guests about what happened in Hawaii that terrible day. Around the room are 54 images representing veterans from many conflicts who are relatives of OCPHS members - "Honoring All Who Have Served." Many veterans are on hand to tell their stories.



(Informative schoolhouse exhibits)

Our Carriage House is a blizzard of paper snowflakes, hand cut by a dedicated volunteer. Cookies and cocoa are enjoyed by visitors and served by volunteers and the Pontiac High School JROTC. Downstairs is the Farm Museum, and guess what? A 1901 Standard Vehicle carriage!

So many things to see and hear: Veterans, musicians, dancers and Santa too, in a mere 4 hours! I have barely scratched the surface describing the wonder that is the Victorian Open House.

I will be back next year!

See you then!

(Images on this page courtesy of Frye Photo)

Sounds of Silence
Fred Liimatta

A Navy friend of mine was assigned to the salvage of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. One must remember that many years and a few beers can alter any eyewitness account, but his most vivid memory is the sound of the trapped sailors beating on the hull of the ship. Because of the presence of live munitions and the risk involved, they were unable to save those brave Americans. For days they could hear the desperation of the lost. Eventually it stopped. We remembered that day at our Victorian Open House. Over 40 military men and women stood at attention as the flag was raised to half mast. These folks represented the American Legion, VFW, JROTC, Pontiac Vet Center, Agent Orange Riders and all branches of the service. A bell was rung 7 times for the 7 Pacific islands attacked that day. Present was a Gold Star parent (son lost in Afghanistan), a prisoner of war (10 months in North Korea), Purple Heart recipients and, of, course, Ralph the Rooster. Every American that has put on the uniform and taken the oath to protect and defend our country is willing to risk a similar fate. That, boys and girls, is how we remain the land of the free and the home of the brave.



Cocoa, Cookies & Coffee in the Carriage House
Charlotte Cooper (Board Member)

I am a relatively new member of OCPHS and I ask for donations of cakes for the Summer Social and cookies for the VOH. Because the membership never fails to supply all that is needed, this is a pleasant duty. We received too many cookies to count – about 2,000 by our estimate! The cocoa, cookies and coffee served during VOH are perfect for warming up, socializing and making new friends. Guests and volunteers enjoyed visiting the Carriage House, decorated in snowflakes. One child said, “It’s a blizzard!” I wish to thank Jo Pate for keeping

things organized, and the Pontiac High School JROTC for serving beverages and keeping the cookie trays full. Thanks to our guitarist Kevin for providing lovely background music and performing Jingle Bells with the JROTC. Where are the extra cookies? A portion were given to the JROTC, who love cookies in typical teenager fashion. The rest have been frozen for future use. I send sincere thanks to every one of you who supplied cookies for VOH. You’re the best!

Super Volunteer Spotlight

Jolly Old St. Nick has never let a good child down, and this year he didn't let OCPHS down either! When our regular Santa fell ill, the answer to our prayers came in the form of Bo Young, proprietor of Pontiac's Downtown 51 Grille. Bo, at the last minute, threw on his costume and posed for photos with the children attending our VOH, smiling the entire time! For his service, he received a complimentary membership. Behind every good Santa is an even better Mrs. Claus, played by member Annie Hunt. Annie carved out time from the bedside care of a sick family member to attend our VOH, gave our new Santa a whirlwind training and paid out of her own pocket for all of our guests' Santa photos. Annie and Bo, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



(Annie Hunt and Bo Young pose with teens from Pontiac High School's JROTC. Courtesy of Frye Photo.)

**Our terrific sponsors have done it once again!
With their generous support, our Victorian Open House was a wonderful event for the community!**

Commercial Sponsors
Meijer (Rochester Hills)
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**Take Away Trash Service/Fred Liimatta
(Pontiac)**
On The Hunt Antiques/Ron Hunt (Waterford)
Service Glass (Pontiac)
Leslie Electric (Pontiac)
Vintage Press/Skip Upcott (Pontiac)
Real Estate One/Ron Newman (Clarkston)
Gordon B. Shlom D.D.S., P.C. (Waterford)
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(Auburn Hills)**
7 North/Russ DiBartolomeo (Pontiac)
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Frye Photo/Barbara L. Frye (Pontiac)
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Karen Jorgensen

In Memory Of...

Bruce Annett, Sr (Bruce & Amy Annett)
Frank Bach (Bruce & Amy Annett)
Kitty Daggy (Fred & Anne Liimatta)
W.E.C. Huthwaite (Motoko Huthwaite)
Bob Nelson (Fred & Anne Liimatta)
Gale & Connie Scafe (Joyce E. Scafe)
Diane Walker (Fred & Anne Liimatta)
Mike Willis (Fred & Anne Liimatta)

From the Development Team

Bill Clink (Co-Chair)

Once again it's time to give an update from OCPHS' Development Team. On behalf of the group, it's my privilege to bring you the report. When one sets out to grow oak trees, patience is required. This year we have prepared the soil and planted several delightful acorns. As time progresses the seedlings will grow and bear fruit. What a blessing it is to be able to develop in the shade and protection of the mature who have laid the groundwork with care and attention.

We made several large strides in 2014. We have established a good rapport with the city of Pontiac and its leaders, with the downtown business community and the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce. Our very successful fundraisers have brought in new friends and raised our cash flow to keep us moving forward. Even our community outreach events, the Summer Social and Victorian Open House, have generated cash to help our operations.

Through the dedicated efforts of Vice President Mike West and his team, we now have a Standard Vehicle carriage and are working toward restoration. We are in the process of acquiring additional parcels of land that will increase the safety of our property and help cement good relations with our neighbors. The communication and support from Oakland County has enabled us to greatly improve our grounds with help from WWAM. We have a grounds team who hope to be able to take further action to beautify our lovely estate. Thanks to our new friends in the facilities industry, we are receiving help to repair furnaces and have been able to fix the bathroom in the mansion for our gift shop bargain hunters. The Pioneer Pop-Up space in downtown Pontiac has allowed us to have accessible evening hours which we hope to take advantage of in the coming months. We look forward to having more students attend tours both downtown and at Pine Grove.

All of these great successes are a result of your dedicated effort and financial support, and we could not have achieved them without you. As we look to a new year and make plans for 2015, we hope that we can count on your ongoing support and, if possible, perhaps a little more. We are very close to having 2014 end in the black for the first time in a long while. Any support you can give to put us over the top is greatly appreciated. We have many opportunities for growth in 2015 and we are excited to meet new friends of history. Be on the lookout for someone near you who would enjoy a membership to OCPHS. If each of us brings in one new person, we can double our membership and come close to achieving President Liimatta's thousand-member goal.

Much like the pioneers who came before us, we are hard at work planting the acorns that will become mighty trees and which will last long past our time. It has been a pleasure and honor to serve you and am looking forward to the new year. Best regards!

Gravesites For Sale

OCPHS is offering for sale gravesites and monument space in Pontiac's Perry Mount Park Cemetery. Sites are located in Section 1, Lot 196, graves 1, 4, 5 and 6. Monument space is for one above-ground marker, located in the center of the lot. Market value for gravesites is \$1,000 each; monument space \$425. All reasonable offers will be considered. Sales proceeds benefit OCPHS. Payment must be made by cash or certified check; we regret that we are unable to accept installment payments or credit cards. Graves may be purchased separately or as a group.

Photos and maps of the gravesites are available at our office. For further information, please give us a call and ask for Amy Annett, Treasurer.



2015 Board Meeting Schedule

The Board of Directors has established the following meeting schedule for 2015. Board meetings are open to the membership and we encourage participation from you!

*Wednesday, January 21 @ 4:30pm

*Saturday, February 21 @ 9:30am

*Wednesday, March 18 @ 4:30pm

*Saturday, April 18 @ 9:30am

*Wednesday, May 20 @ 4:30pm
(Annual Meeting & Election)

*Saturday, June 20 @ 9:30am

*Wednesday, July 15 @ 4:30pm

*Saturday, August 15 @ 9:30am

*Wednesday, September 16 @ 4:30pm

*Saturday, October 17 @ 9:30am

*Wednesday, November 18 @ 4:30pm

*No December meeting

OCPHS is pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since our last publication:

Murrell, Heather (Lake Orion)
Taylor-Woody, Judy (Richmond, TX)
King, James (Auburn Hills)
Hoffman, Pauline (Bloomfield Hills)
Webb, Darius (Pontiac)
Beyrand, Hailey (Pontiac)
Kovaleski, Chuck & Becky (Orlando, FL)
Broadus, Mary (Rochester)
Woodward, Dave (Waterford)
Moss, Jane Marie (Bloomfield Hills)
Milliken, Gerald & Family (Chelsea)
Kosmowski, Daniel (Allen Park)
Milton, Lisa (Bloomfield Hills)
Derby, Roger (Bloomfield Hills)
Broderick, Elliott (Clarkston)
Wolicki, Dale (Oxford)
Forstad, Larinda (Lutz, FL)
Hammons, Randy (Clear Lake, WI)
Reyna, Annie (Amelia, VA)
Platz, Daniel (Rochester Hills)
Haberman, Samuel & Family (Birmingham)
Need, Greg (Bloomfield)
Keith, Dwight (Waterford)
Snook, Gerald (Rochester)
Larson, Larry (Clarkston)
Katkin, Diane (Bloomfield Hills)
Krause, Jeannine (Birmingham)
Young, Bo & Family (Royal Oak)
Henk, Kathie (Pontiac)
Sterritt, Linda (Pontiac)
Demark, Marge & Family (Bloomfield)
Bandy, Bruce (Lake Orion)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events...

Sunday, January 11 -

Small Talk - "Beyond D Day"

Presented by Raymond Tarabusi (WWII veteran)

2:00 pm

Admission: \$5

Sunday, February 15 -

Small Talk - "The Underground Railroad: The Michigan Connection"

Presented by Willie Payne (author, historian & former mayor of Pontiac)

2:00 pm

Admission: \$5

Sunday, March 15 -

Small Talk - "Sanitation Commission"

Presented by Annie Hunt (OCPHS member)

2:00 pm

Admission: \$5

OCPHS Officers and Board of Directors

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EXPECTING THE UNEXPECTED -
CLOSING REMARKS FOR 2014
Fred Liimatta

We have come a long way in the last 140 years. A constant in life is change.

Adjusting to different economic, social, political and even religious climates is critical to our survival. Our core values cannot be compromised. Moses Wisner believed in our country and dedicated his life to changing it for the good. We must accept nothing less of ourselves.

We believe preservation of the past leads to enrichment of the future. Not too long ago due to vandalism, declining membership and loss of our insurance we were thinking the unthinkable...closing our doors. Many museums and libraries have unfortunately done so. To remain relevant, adjusting to change must be embraced. This sounds like an oxymoron for a museum!

"He who serves best will last" (old tennis proverb). Can you see us with 1,000 members and a \$100,000 budget?

Thanks for an exciting year!



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Twitter

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