



ViewPoints



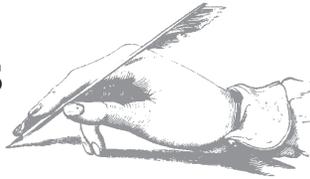
March 2007

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AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS/MARBLE CLIFF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Society Members,

What winter weather we have had! I don't remember Grandview Heights schools having two consecutive calamity days since I've lived here these 23 years. Soon the snow will melt and provide water for all the wonderful spring flowers. I can hardly wait each year for my lilacs to bloom so I can have vases full of fragrance all over the house. With warmer weather will come my favorite part of spring: when everyone comes out of their houses on evening walks, visiting on front porches, and dinners al fresco. It is always fun to see our city center buzzing with customers at one of our many fine restaurants.

The Society board has been working on our usual ongoing projects, such as our website ghmchs.org (Have you visited lately?), cataloguing incoming donations of memorabilia, sales of our publications, and answering requests for information. In addition, we continue to work with Grandview City administration on its new preservation legislation. After all, that's what makes Grandview so special: Norman Rockwell charm.

Board member Tom DeMaria recently gave a presentation about local history to students at Stevenson Elementary School. (See page 3) It has long been a goal of the society to encourage the education of our youth in the story of their own community. We are thrilled that the schools are joining us in our efforts!

The most important current project is preparation for our 2007 Tour of Homes on Mothers' Day, May 13. We are seeking your help as docents, sponsors, and other tasks. If you have an interest in being part of the 'task force' please let me know. For more information, see elsewhere in this ViewPoints, and watch the local newspapers.

A warm welcome to new Life Members: Ralph W. and Ann T. Anderson, and Teresa and Brian Biernat. Also, a warm 'welcome home' to Win Keller; GHMCHS founder, who has again become a Grandview resident, and has rejoined the GHMCHS board.

As always, thank you for your continued support! I welcome any questions, comments, or suggestions from any of you. If you can contribute in any way to our work, we would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Tracy Liberatore
President

2007 THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS/ MARBLE CLIFF HISTORICAL SOCIETY TOUR OF HOMES

MOTHER'S DAY EVENT

Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society's 2007 Tour of Homes is scheduled for Mother's Day, May 13, from 1 to 4 p.m. With the gracious cooperation of the owners this year's tour will feature four Grandview Heights homes, and a Marble Cliff site, for many years an office building, but originally built as the residence on a several acre estate. Construction dates range from 1908 through the 1920s. Styles of homes range from 'manor house' through Prairie Style and Arts and Crafts to a smaller residence with wonderfully idiosyncratic interior detail, designed by an architect for his own unique home. All locations on this year's tour have been remodeled to some extent. As usual, the stories of the various transformations, and the survival of original detail, add to the interest of the tour.

Planning and research are now in full swing. Chairperson Patrick Mooney assisted by Ruthanne James and Jeri Diehl Cusack and house captains are working with home owners to uncover new information. In several cases, research is bringing to the forefront information about some lesser known early Grandview residents, several of whom moved to other locations after participating in the early development of Grandview and Marble Cliff. Examples include Horace Willoughby (Ross-Willoughby company); Chester A. Niple (co-founder of Burgess and Niple); Ralph Kempton, longtime architect at 50 West Broad Street; and the William K. Lanman family (Columbus Bolt Works and associated industries).

Our research goal is to provide as full a history of each site as can be had. If any reader happens to be a former resident of any of the tour sites, or knows anything of the history of the house, the chairpersons and house captains listed on the insert would be eager to hear from you. The insert includes locations, house captain contact information, and some early research data. Look for more complete information about Home Tour details and the stories of the homes themselves in *ThisWeek Grandview* as we move through March and April toward the May 13 Home Tour date.



This issue sponsored by

GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL



A Portrait of First Community Church: the Early Years

by Jackie Day Cherry, First Community Church Historian

First Community Church has impacted the Tri-Village area so significantly through the years that it seems fitting to recall its early history. The year was 1909 and life was good in the growing communities of Grandview Heights and Marble Cliff. Anyone wanting to participate in religious activities, however, had to take a street car downtown to attend church. The idea of holding Sunday School classes at Harding School on Fairview Avenue germinated on one of those rides, and the first session was held April 18. Soon all the classrooms were filled with both adults and children, and conversation began to center on the advisability of organizing a church.

A Methodist minister from downtown preached a few sermons before the decision was made to canvass area residents to determine their denominational preference. Postcards were mailed to each household asking if they favored establishing a church, what denomination was preferred, and whether they would support it even if it was not the denomination of their choice. Responses from 175 people representing 103 families indicated twenty-one denominational backgrounds with a majority of nine favoring the Congregational Church.

The local committee met with clergymen and lay leaders at First Congregational Church on March 8, 1910. After a resolution to establish a church was adopted, the Congregational Building Society voted to fund one third of the cost of buying the land and erecting a church. Meanwhile, services continued at the schoolhouse. On Sunday, April 25, Dr. Washington Gladden, the nationally prominent minister of First Congregational, presided as 87 persons united to become charter members of Grandview Heights Congregational Church.

Although Fred Brownlee, a young protege of Dr. Gladden, was still a student at Union Theological Seminary, he agreed to preach during the summer while he was home on vacation. His enthusiasm made him the perfect choice to be the first minister for the new church, and he was ordained in October. Two lots at the corner of Lincoln Road and First Avenue were purchased for \$1000 and the cornerstone was laid on April 23, 1911. The building was dedicated on December 3. Fred Brownlee led the young congregation until October 1914 when he left to complete his seminary studies.

Rev. Oliver Weist, who succeeded Brownlee in 1915, made innumerable contributions to the life of the Tri-Villages during his sixteen-year ministry. He believed that the church should do whatever was necessary to meet the needs of the community at

large. One of the first undertakings was to collect enough books to establish a library in 1916 that served the area until the Grandview Library opened in 1924. Another example of the church's public service involved *The Community News*, a weekly newspaper published at the church, and distributed to residents for \$1.00 a year. It grew in size and influence until it was sold in 1928 and became the Tri-Village News. Weist even made his family's farm available as a camping site for the children.

Groups outside the church were encouraged to use the building for meetings. The Men's Brotherhood, a forum for many civic projects, was open to all men of the villages and met monthly

at the church where dinner was served by members of the Women's Guild. The guild welcomed all women to join in promoting the welfare of the church and community. During these years many Italian families had settled in Grandview after finding work in the Marble Cliff quarries. The Catholic Welfare Board undertook the task of teaching American customs and English through visiting their homes. They learned that many children had to remain in first grade for an unusually long time because they couldn't speak English. The Women's Guild took on the project of locating a kindergarten teacher for these children and paying her salary.

Another Guild undertaking was utilizing the church kitchen to operate a tea room that provided lunch, dinner, and deli service.

Rev. Weist, who was a professional singer before entering seminary, also contributed his musical talent and experience. He formed a choir for adults and children which he personally directed for five years. He also organized and led a community orchestra and men's chorus. The organ was made available for anyone to play so long as they scheduled practice time with the church's secretary.

June 16, 1916 was the first Field Day, a tradition lasting ten years which grew out of a decision by teachers that they would plan something bigger and better than the usual Sunday School picnic. A queen reigned over the day's festivities, which included a parade, field events, dinner at the church, a baseball game, and concerts. The name of any female between the ages of 9 and 40 could be placed on the ballot for 25 cents, and a nickel bought 100 votes for a favorite candidate.

Field Day in 1919 ended with a movie, another innovation of Oliver Weist. He thought it would be a good idea for a committee to choose films suitable for family viewing and then show them at church. These weekly movies became so popular that a second showing was added. Subsequently, movies were shown every Saturday night till 1926, when the Grandview Theater opened.



Grandview Heights Congregational Church dedicated December 3, 1911.

(to be continued)



NEW DISCOVERIES

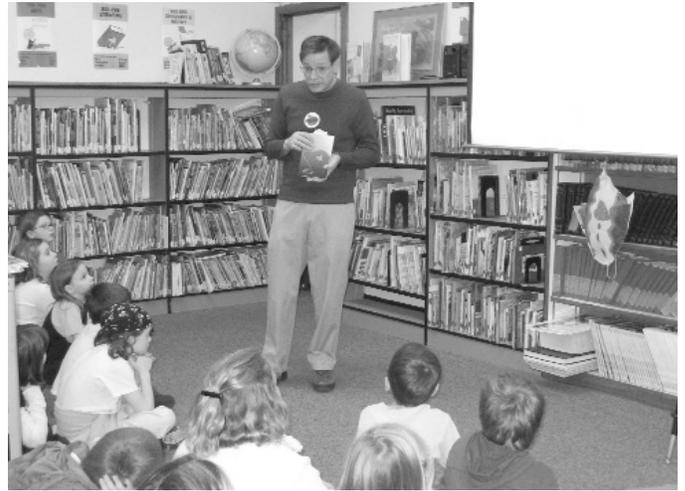
by Tom DeMaria

Sharing Grandview Heights and Marble Cliff History

The new discovery for this *ViewPoints* is more personal than historical. I discovered that my greatest thrill from serving on the board comes from sharing Grandview Heights and Marble Cliff history with our youngest citizens. Debbie Farynowski, R. L. Stevenson Elementary School librarian, recently asked me to speak with the entire third grade class and their teachers to help them prepare to write a series of plays regarding Grandview history (see right).

Grandview and Marble Cliff history has been part of the school's curriculum for many years, but this year's project utilizes play writing. We met in the library and reviewed the GH/MCHS website, recent publications, and other resources. Students and faculty were surprised to learn that they are reviving a long ago R. L. Stevenson tradition of writing plays that dates back to the school's beginning in 1927. From the beginning of planning for the school in 1923, to its opening in 1926, and until the opening of the term in 1938, students and staff dutifully maintained a scrapbook of each year's major events. Each year the students wrote, acted, and presented original plays to the community. The first production during the 1927-1928 school year was the operetta, *Peter Rabbit* (see below). Proceeds from the operetta were used to buy curtains for the stage. The 1929 production was *Robin Hood*, followed by *Johnny Apple Seed* in 1930. [The entire scrapbook can be accessed on our web page (<http://www.gbmchs.org/tour/pages/stevenson.html>) and is well worth exploring. It contains accounts of other productions, photographs, playbills, and even scripts. The costumes were exceptional.]

Based on my brief introduction and the question and answer session in the library at the end of February, this year's third graders will develop a series of plays with themes focused on either the Urlin family, the Bank Block, Street Cars, or the



Tom DeMaria and Stevenson students at question and answer period.

development of Grandview Heights City School system. Students were amazingly attentive, extremely interested, and asked many thoughtful and occasionally humorous questions. It interested me that they can relate to local landmarks by association: Mr. Urlin donated McKinley Field where most of the students play ball, and the Bank Block is clearly associated with a favorite new ice cream parlor.

I am looking forward to returning to Stevenson School to review their progress and offer further assistance. It is time well spent and a worthwhile endeavor for GH/MCHS to promote our mission even to our youngest citizens.



1927 Peter Rabbit characters on steps of Oxley Road entrance to R. L. Stevenson School



1929 Robin Hood characters



BECOME A MEMBER

of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society!

Please complete the information below and send with your check made out to: **GH/MC Historical Society**
Mail or drop off at the **Grandview Heights Library,**
1685 West First Avenue, Columbus, OH 43212

NAME _____

SPOUSE
(IF COUPLE MEMBERSHIP) _____

ADDRESS _____

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Please check the appropriate membership box:

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| YEARLY DUES (OCT. 1-SEPT. 30) | ONE-TIME PAYMENT |
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Contact Editor Patrick Mooney
(614-225-0130) for any interesting article
ideas or to discuss photo contributions.

Reminder to Annual Members

Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society membership year runs from October through the following September. The mailing label on this newsletter shows the expiration date of your membership. Your continued support is solicited and very much appreciated.

GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL VICTORY BELL TOWER COMMEMORATIVE BRICKS AND TILES

Touchdown Club and GHHS PTO are taking orders for personalized bricks and granite tile. Your name, message, class, or business can be permanently remembered in the courtyard surrounding the Stegmeier Victory Bell Tower, south of the high school football field.

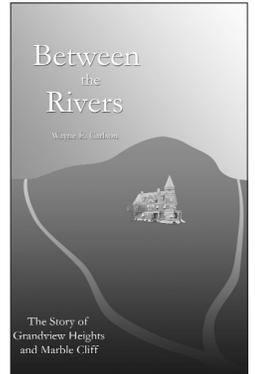
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For detailed information, contact Jack or Tracy Liberatore at 488-0425 or email: tliberat@columbus.rr.com

BETWEEN THE RIVERS The Story of Grandview Heights and Marble Cliff

Our latest book publication, *Between the Rivers*, created by board member, Dr. Wayne Carlson, details the development of our communities through a combination of historically accurate research and vintage photographs & images. We will deliver to Grandview-area addresses for \$11.95 per copy. Others send \$13.95 to include postage and handling.

Please make checks payable to **GH/MC Historical Society**. Mail to GH/MC Historical Society at 1685 West First Avenue, Columbus OH 43212 OR call Ruthanne James at 614-486-6456.



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