



ViewPoints



April 2014

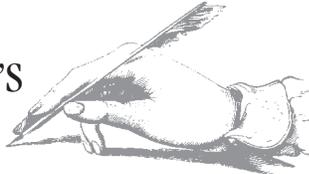
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AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS/MARBLE CLIFF HISTORICAL SOCIETY



PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Members:

Greetings! What a perfectly awful winter this has been! Cold and so much snow! I am certainly looking forward to little green buds popping out on bushes and trees and I look forward to walking about in Grandview!

The board has been working on our usual activities, but has also updated some of our procedures. The Society website has been updated and the Archives Committee has been at work several days a week in the room—scanning, digitizing and filing hard copy of material. We are nearer to the goal of being totally online for the public!

We also have some interesting side ventures! We have been working with WOSU on their series: "Columbus Neighborhoods." The Tri-Village area will be featured in one of the series, which is very exciting! It will not air until 2015, but is a high quality and wonderful series. So check out another episode!

The Society has also donated prints of artwork from last spring's Home Tour to the Education Foundation, which brought the foundation a bit of profit. I do love how community volunteerism works hand in hand with the different organizations!

Please check the Society showcase in the high school. Tom DeMaria updates the case frequently, and it is definitely worth a trip to the high school to see! We thank Tom for his time in this effort.

Jane Harris and Ruthanne James have updated the Bank Block breezeway showcases, so we hope you will take time to view it the next time you're on the Avenue!

Finally, the Society wishes to thank the Todd family for their gracious and generous donation of historical Todd-Paddock family memorabilia. This is a very large and significant donation, and will be well cared for, as well as being a unique source of community history research.

In closing, I wish you a relaxing and fun spring. Spend lots of happy times with your loved ones and friends! That's what life is all about!

Sincerely,
Tracy Liberatore, President



You are invited to join the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society in commemorating the Grandview Heights Public Library's 90th birthday on April 8th. Important dates and figures from the Library's past will be highlighted, as will lesser known facts about the innovations, programs and services which have shaped the Library's progress and success over the last nine decades.

90 Years of Collections & Connections: The History of the Grandview Heights Public Library

Tuesday, April 8th at 7 pm

Library Meeting Room

presented by Jeri Diehl Cusack, GH/MCHS Trustee

Jeri Diehl Cusack joined the Grandview Library staff in October 1984 and spent her career there as a librarian, fund raiser and community liaison. After retiring in 2009, she served as Development Officer for the Grandview Library Foundation Board through 2012. Jeri now enjoys speaking at libraries and other sites throughout the State of Ohio on a variety of U.S. Presidential history topics. She serves on the Executive Committee of *The Eleanor Roosevelt Val-Kill Partnership* and was recently named our Society's Public Relations Chair.

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HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY, GRANDVIEW LIBRARY!

by Jeri Diehl Cusack, MLS

As the calendar turned from 1922 to 1923, leaders of the Grandview Heights/ Marble Cliff community were surely pleased to observe the early phases of construction of their new high school. Voters had approved a levy the previous November. Soon, however, attention turned to another amenity residents thought would further enhance their collective lives: a public library. Lucky for them, the then State Librarian of Ohio lived in Grandview Heights.

On January 11, 1923, the aforementioned official, H. S. Hirshberg, proposed plans to the Board of Education for a community library. Not only did he receive their approval to proceed, but he was appointed chair of a group of seven library trustees. A .6 mill levy was soon approved to fund the project. That money would become available the following May.

Meanwhile, work on the high school continued to progress toward completion, allowing its doors to open to students on September 17, 1923. The building would be formally dedicated on March 7, 1924. Just as soon as the 1923 - 1924 school year ended, it would be time for the Grandview Library's operation to begin.

In May of 1924, a librarian named Helen Kramer, on temporary leave of absence from the Marion Public Library, arrived to organize the new library. With funding in hand, she supervised the purchase and installment of furniture and equipment, and selected and processed the initial collection of materials.

On June 16, 1924, Miss Kramer's book collection debuted in the second floor study hall of the high school. An account from the June 20th edition of the Community News reported that although Alleyne Higgs was the first person to register for a library card, it was June Thornburg who had the honor of actually checking out the first book.

Within months it became apparent that the growing library already required more space, a pattern that repeated itself again and again between 1925 and 1928. Several librarians also came and left, while the library moved to three nearby locations, all on West First Avenue and all rented: first at street address 1660, then at 1644, and finally at 1500, at the corner of Grandview Avenue. Meanwhile a branch library had been established within the Robert Louis Stevenson Elementary School in 1926.

Although unnamed at the time, a benefactor eventually offered to donate land at the southeast corner of West First and Ashland Avenues on which to build a permanent library facility. All that was needed was voter approval of a funding issue which appeared on the ballot not once, not twice, but three times in the late 1920s. Unfortunately, the first two attempts were not successful.

The final attempt came in the fall election of 1929. The Northwest Kiwanis Club spearheaded and promoted the \$41,000 bond issue which appeared on the November ballot. Approval,

however, was dependent on receiving a full 55% majority vote in favor. 863 votes were cast "for" and 717 votes "against", thus falling six votes shy of the number needed for passage. Although a recount was requested, the Grandview Library was destined to remain in rental space for almost another seven years.

In time, one of the New Deal programs established during the first administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1933 - 1937) offered another library funding option. Federal dollars became available through the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and brought new life to the dream of a community library. In 1935, with approved financing of \$18,000 from the WPA for salaries, supplemented by a local contribution of \$12,500 for material and equipment, the construction of the Grandview Library at long last commenced.

A WPA supervisor by the last name of Vogel arrived in town to oversee the library project - as well as other municipal work which included new storm sewers, sidewalk improvements, and widening a portion of Northwest Boulevard from Goodale Boulevard to West First Avenue. Mr. Vogel originally had 20 laborers assigned to the library project, a force which eventually grew to a total of 30 men.

Bids were let and the official ground breaking ceremony for the new library was held on Tuesday, December 10, 1935. The first concrete was poured on December 20th. Winter weather soon delayed the library project's progress, but by February one could discern the outline of the structure at last. As the spring of 1936 arrived, then turned into summer, the new Grandview Heights Public Library slowly began to take shape from the basement up.

With the able assistance of Library Director Josephine Swinehart, whose service eventually spanned from 1928 to 1960, the building project neared completion by July of 1936. Planning began for a dedication ceremony, while details like painting, installation of lighting fixtures and other decorative touches were finalized. Meanwhile another \$3,500 in federal funding was received, which allowed for the binding and classification of the library's magazine collection.

The Grandview Library was officially dedicated on September 14, 1936, complete with a WPA band performing on site for entertainment and many floral pieces adding to the celebration's décor. 2,000 people attended the festivities while a total of 909 items were checked out that day.

There was also a bit of intrigue at the dedication: an arrangement of sunflowers "mysteriously disappeared" according to the following week's edition of the Community News. Speculation included the notion that the act indicated some partisanship regarding the upcoming presidential contest between FDR, who was seeking reelection, and his Republican opponent, Governor Alf Landon of Kansas, who used a sunflower as his campaign symbol.



“Disappearance of the sunflower display at the new Grandview Library opening might be laid to the ‘party loyalty’ of a WPA worker as rumored. If this be the case such loyalty will be of short life. Should the completion of a job remove him from the government payroll prior to Election Day, he will undoubtedly be displaying the Landon emblem with pride.”
— *Community News*, September 18, 1936

Only years later would the identity of the benefactor who had donated the land for the Grandview Library, finally be revealed. As might have already been suspected by many, he was none other than George Cambridge Umlin, founding father and prosperous real estate developer, who had removed a “rickety old barn” from the southeast corner of Ashland and West First Avenues, in order to allow the construction of what would become the community’s brand new center of recreational reading and lifelong learning.

The Grandview Library continued to show gains in local usage and stature in the weeks, months and years that followed. By 1941 an addition to the southwest corner of the building allowed for a new reading room which eventually became the Library’s Reference Room. A branch library located at Miller Park in neighboring Upper Arlington also opened that year – and caused a name change to the Grandview Heights/Upper Arlington Public Library

Once the Miller Park branch at 1991 Arlington Avenue opened, it followed that other locations in Upper Arlington came along as that community expanded rapidly post World War II. Over the next two decades, a “book station” was situated in First Community Village and small branch libraries opened in both the Tremont Shopping Center and the Lane Avenue Shopping Center before a larger, permanent library building was constructed at Tremont and Northam Roads.

Back on West First Avenue, a memorial park was erected in 1948 adjacent to the “Main Library” in honor of local service

members who had lost their lives in combat. Dedicated on May 23, it featured a bronze plaque listing honorees plus marble benches and urns. (Note: This park was later relocated to the municipal green space where Northwest Boulevard intersects Oxley and West Second Avenues and rededicated on May 27, 1970. Its move allowed space for further Library expansion projects in the 1970s and 1980s.)

In 1960, Josephine Swinehart left the Library’s employ and William Bacon became the next Library Director. By the mid-1960’s Upper Arlington residents began demanding representation on the Library’s Board of Trustees and ultimately, autonomy. This resulted in legal action which allowed the Upper Arlington Public Library to become its own independent system in 1967.

Mr. Bacon resigned that April and in July 1967, Jane McCarthy, longtime children’s librarian, was named the Grandview Library’s Acting Director. Kathryn Hannon joined the staff as the new Director later that same year.

As of 1968, the Grandview Heights Public Library once again had but a single location at 1685 West First Avenue, but it would continue to evolve as the years passed. By the 1970s, it became locally well known for such specialties as its wide collection of cookbooks and a vast array of 16 millimeter films which were used by educators from all over Franklin County. It also boasted a reputation for particularly personalized service.

The next several decades would bring major advances in library technology along with new formats, advanced services, and well-attended programs. Many of these factors contribute to the high regard the Grandview Library has recently enjoyed on the state and national level, and all of which are now the norm for what many area residents consider one of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff community’s most valuable assets.

(To be continued in the next GH/MCHS newsletter.)

Library Memories

by Peggy Eagle

My early memories of The Grandview Heights Public Library include a small brick building near the northwest corner of West First Avenue and Oakland Avenue. I didn’t visit the library very often. I guess I had my own supply of Nancy Drew mysteries and Bobbsey Twins, among my favorites. I was also a little scared of the lady in charge, Josephine Swinehart. She was pretty much the stereotypical librarian—no talking, and scary looks. My memory is really blank about the library during my high school years, because we did have a nice school library with a librarian named Mrs. Tobias.

When my husband and I bought our home on Elmwood Avenue we were only three blocks from the library. The head librarian was William Bacon, who spent most of his time in his office and was much busier with his stamp collecting than with the library. In 1964 he hired Betty

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



A feature of the new children’s room in 1972. Peggy Eagle painted this 18’ by 7’ mural featuring characters from favorite children’s books of the time, chosen by longtime children’s librarian Jane McCarthy, who had appointed Peggy as Circulation Manager in 1967, during Jane’s tenure as interim library director.



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 Public Library,**
1685 West First Avenue, Columbus, OH 43212

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Library Memories CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Bernard and me as part-time workers.

At that time the Grandview Library had three branch libraries in Upper Arlington: Miller Park, Lane Avenue, and Tremont. After a few years Upper Arlington got the state to grant them their own library district, and Grandview Heights Public Library no longer had to order and process books for them.

Not long after, Grandview Heights Public Library underwent a major expansion. The details escape me, but over my years on staff we expanded to the rear, then to the sides, and then up! In the first major expansion I remember everyone on the staff working very hard moving books, getting used to the new entrance, reference room, children's room, audio-visual department, circulation desk and technical services department.

During my years the development of new services was important. We started "home bound" service, and "talking books" for patrons with vision problems. We began a collection of Large Print books as well. Volunteers made deliveries to "shut-in" patrons, and ironically, I even delivered books to Josephine Swinehart, who by that time was homebound.

All our new programs and expansions were strongly supported by the library's Board of Directors. We worked to improve services and community involvement with outdoor "fairs," book sales and concerts. These are still very popular. And there are those wonderful folks, Friends of the Library, who help a lot.



Editors Note: Peggy Eagle retired in 1991 after 27 years on GHPL staff, most of that time as Circulation Manager. She is fondly remembered as a "creative force" and as a librarian who did not insist on silence!

Peggy Eagle and Jeri Diehl Cusack at Peggy's 1991 retirement.

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The Grandview
 Heights/Marble Cliff
 Historical Society

