



ViewPoints



September 2007

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A N OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS/MARBLE CLIFF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society ANNUAL MEETING

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2007
2:00 P.M.

GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY
MEETING ROOM
1685 WEST FIRST AVENUE

“Communities of Distinction” a presentation by Jeffrey Darbee

A discussion of how historic preservation makes a core contribution to creating livable communities today. Jeffrey Darbee is founder, with his wife Nancy Recchie, of Benjamin D. Rickey & Co., providing a full range of historic preservation consulting services since 1980. Jeffrey Darbee is the author (with Nancy Recchie) of *Taking the Cars: A History of Columbus' Union Station*; *German Columbus*; and the upcoming *AIA Guide to Columbus* (Ohio University Press, October 2007).

Benjamin D. Rickey & Co. is currently under contract as a consultant to Grandview Heights City Council. The firm has worked primarily in Ohio (e.g. OSU's Thompson Library, Ohio Statehouse, Ohio Judicial Center) and South Carolina, with additional projects in Pennsylvania, Florida, and New Jersey.

All those interested in maintaining Grandview's unique character as a community are invited to attend this presentation. The Society's programs are always open to all.

The meeting will include a review of GH/MCHS 2006-2007 activities, and refreshments. Society publications will be available for purchase.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members,

A busy and hot summer it was for all! The cooler evenings signal students returning to school, and football games, as well as other fall sports. Grandview won its first away game — hopefully our boys are on a winning streak!

The May Home Tour was a raging success once again. Nearly 500 people attended the event. We thank all our sponsors for their donations which are so very helpful in subsidizing our costs. The Home Tour is vital to the Society as our major fundraiser. The Society was also a presence at Music on the Lawn Concerts as well as the Lazy Daze of Summer festival. Our participation was quite profitable in terms of new memberships and publication sales. Each time we participate in a public event we make the society known to those who might not have been previously familiar with our existence and our work. Many thanks to Jeri Diehl Cusack and Ruthanne James who coordinated our participation in these events.

Ruthanne James and Pat Mooney refreshed our display cases in the Bank block “breezeway,” so be sure to take a look at them soon. Additionally, Tom DeMaria designed a historical display in the front hallway at the high school, which you will not want to miss! High school Key club members are still searching out any older graduating class composite photographs for their project. The goal is to have them all reframed and hanging in the hallway. If anyone can donate one, or allow borrowing for copying, please contact me or Steve Andersson, the high school principal.

We welcome new Society life members Ralph and Ann Anderson.

As always, I welcome your comments, questions, and contributions to the Society.

Sincerely,

Tracy Liberatore, President
Email: tliberat@columbus.rr.com



This issue sponsored by

GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL



A Portrait of First Community Church: The Transition

The story of how Grandview Heights Congregational Church was founded in 1910 has already been told. Basically, when the residents of our community decided that there was need for a church, they chose the democratic method of canvassing all the homes to determine which denomination was desired by the greatest number of families. With the preference favoring the Congregational Church, a committee approached Dr. Washington Gladden of First Congregational Church downtown. The young congregation flourished and grew, finding many ways of serving the community at large, especially under the leadership of the Reverend Oliver Weist. In addition to serving the spiritual needs of his flock, Mr. Weist believed that a church should also meet the social needs of all the people within the surrounding community. Thus, the church had started a library and newspaper, organized an orchestra and choir, showed movies, instigated Field Days, and provided a meeting place for Scout troops, the Men's Brotherhood and the Women's Guild which were open to everyone.

Because of the high level of involvement in every facet of community life, this congregation felt that they were indeed "the community church". The report of the Board of Trustees at the 1915 annual meeting stated, "This church was organized for every person in this community. When you establish your residence here, we ask you to join with your neighbors for one good strong church, one where you can get acquainted, where you can attend easily, and where you feel you are part owner and for whose success you will work with all your heart." With the building of a Methodist church just a few blocks away later that year, Weist noted in his 1916 report that we were no longer, "the" community church. "Yet the services offered to residents were far more than worship alone.

There was a strong postwar feeling following the Great War that Christians should get together and emphasize the things upon which they agreed rather than keep alive and magnify their differences. They had learned that they could do greater things when united than when separated. The war, with its emphasis on cooperation, community service, efficiency and economy, did much to show that differences could be submerged in the interest of a greater cause.

Members of Grandview Heights Congregational Church came to the conclusion that one large church could accomplish more than several smaller ones. In December 1918, following a congregational vote, the trustees approached the Methodist church with a proposal to amalgamate the two congregations and establish one community church. When the announcement was made at a congregational meeting that the Methodists had declined the proposal, a motion was offered to sever ties with the Congregational Church, and establish a Community Church, undenominational in its relation, to take the place of the present church. The vote in favor of the motion was unanimous.

Oliver Weist frequently wrote that nothing is so powerful as an idea whose day has come. That day arrived for the 350 members of his flock on February 12, 1919, when a new constitution and creed were adopted. All sorts of names had been suggested, but the

story goes that after a lengthy committee meeting, Professor Wendell Paddock remarked that he had always wanted to belong to a "first church." All of his friends belonged to a first church, so why not become First Community Church, and so we did! On March 5, the Ecclesiastical Council of the Congregational Church gave their blessing and wished "God speed through all the possibilities and promises of the new venture to serve the Kingdom."

The new church faced criticism from some clergymen who said that it was a social club, not a real church. Others accused it of not being spiritual. The response to such criticism was, "Come and see. Let the work speak for itself." By January 1920 it was obvious that the community church concept was sound. During the first year 119 new members joined the fellowship which was made up of nearly twenty different denominations. The church was on a firm financial footing with all bills paid and a budget of \$10,000 oversubscribed. It had also undertaken several ambitious mission projects.

There were three principal reasons behind the early success of First Community Church.

- 1) This was a new growing area populated mainly by young families. As Mr. Weist said, "It was almost unprecedented for a community to have a voice as to what kind of churches would be in their midst, yet the wishes to the people were heard."
- 2) The leadership, vision, and courage exhibited by Oliver Weist galvanized not only the church, but the entire community.
- 3) The congregation itself was vigorous and enthusiastic. Most of the men were in professional and business fields. An early Grandview mayor stated that when good men were needed in Columbus, they imported them from Grandview. With the encouragement and example of Rev. Weist, church members worked tirelessly as "doers of the word, not hearers only."

First Community Church continued to expand and serve. A large, new church was built on Cambridge Boulevard and dedicated in 1926. The innovative ministries of Dr. Roy Burkhart (1935-1957) brought new vigor and insights. An article in the February 5, 1949

Saturday Evening Post related the fact that 96% of the high school students in Grandview and Arlington attended its youth programs. In 1950 it was named as one of the twelve great churches in America in a poll of 100,000 clergymen conducted by The Christian Century. Through the years members became involved in a variety of new ministries - Village Little Theater, Vaudvillities, The Tri-Village Trading Post, Pastoral Counseling Center, First Community Village, Project Amigos in Latin America, Deep



Mens Choir — Oliver Weist directing (1921)



2006-2007 GH/MCHS Report to Members

Another busy and successful year! Here are the highlights:

- 2006 Annual Meeting was September 17 in Grandview Heights Public Library. In a departure from our usual program format, the meeting featured informal presentations and artifact sharing by board members at “stations” throughout the library. Featured was a 100th Anniversary birthday cake, signaling the finale to Grandview’s year-long celebration of its centennial of incorporation. The event was well-attended and much enjoyed.
- The weekly feature, Moments in Time” in *ThisWeek Grandview* continued to provide fascinating bits of local history to readers. Content for the feature is provided by the Board member team of Carlson and DeMaria.
- Our “occasional” newsletter, *ViewPoints*, continued publication with Patrick Mooney as editor and Grandview resident Melissa Rady continuing to provide design and production services gratis as a contribution to the community.
- Sales of Society publications did well this year, thanks mainly to Ruthanne’s James’ creative merchandising of “packages” of our books offered at a discount. Some were sold to area real estate agents. A printing of additional copies was necessitated by a near sellout of *Italian Heritage. Between the Rivers* continues to be a best seller.
- Board members Jeri Diehl Cusack and Ruthanne James coordinated the Society’s participation in the library’s series of Music on the Lawn concerts and the Lazy Daze of Summer Festival. Our participation in events like these keeps the Society in public view.
- Win Keller, a founder of GH/MCHS in 1976, is again serving on the Society Board after her return to Grandview Heights residency in the fall of 2006. We regretfully accepted the resignation of Joe Miller, who has moved to another community. Mary Burkey has also resigned from the Board due to pressing responsibilities as director of special projects with the American Library Association, which she pursues in addition to her full-time job. We express much appreciation to Joe and Mary for their past contributions, even as we welcome Win back to service to the community.
- Membership chair Karen Riggs reports: “GH/MCHS currently has 168 members - including 78 lifetime members and two organizations - in 124 total memberships. Members are located in Central Ohio and in states across the country, including Maine, Virginia, Michigan, Texas, Florida, California, and Washington.”
 New Society lifetime members this year were: Ralph and Ann Anderson,
- Treasurer Tom DeMaria, who is rigorous at ensuring our fiscal responsibility, indicates that the society is in excellent financial condition.
- Operetta:** Subsequent to Tom DeMaria’s talk on local history with the third grade class from Stevenson Elementary School, the students presented an original operetta entitled “Choices, Changes, Rearranges” on Tuesday, May 22 in the school auditorium. Their story was written to celebrate Grandview Heights and Marble Cliff history. Setting was the Grandview Public Library. The title reinforces that the choices people made yesterday affect our lives today, and the choices we make today can affect tomorrow. All 71 students created and participated in the multimedia presentation, which included original songs, a slide show, and various dance routines. Operas and operettas are a long-standing tradition at R. L. Stevenson Elementary School, dating back to the school’s opening in 1927, when they were used as fundraisers. Recently they have become part of the local history curriculum. GH/MCHS is thrilled to be involved with this project and is looking forward to next year.
- GHHS Showcase:** GHHS Principal Steve Andersson is a history buff and recently allocated a showcase in the front hallway for display of GHHS memorabilia from our collection. Tom DeMaria filled the case with football memorabilia to coincide with the recent dedication of the Anderson Field in Bobcat Stadium. Tom plans to rotate the displays quarterly, and hopes to focus on all aspects of the high school history. The current display has attracted a lot of attention and there have already been requests for memorabilia from school plays.
- By far the largest project of the year just ended was the very successful 2007 Tour of Homes, which involved months of dedicated work by Society board members, and the generous contribution on Tour Day, May 13, of time and hospitality by almost 50 volunteer docents. As usual, research on this year’s homes provided much additional historical material for our files, including Abstracts of Title, photographs, biographical information about former owners, and more.
- The Society’s triennial Tour of Home is made possible only by the willingness of home owners to open their homes to visitors. This year we express great appreciation to residents Damon and Ann Baker, Michael and Megan Bills, Win Keller, Michael and Karen Riggs, and to Dr. Kathryn Gardner, owner of Marble Cliff Manor, LLC.

Griha in India, radio and television broadcasts of worship services, Rifiki Project in Africa, building houses in Mexico, Prayers and Squares Quilt Ministry, aiding flood victims, and working regularly with a number of agencies to feed and shelter the homeless. With the construction of a second church campus in 1991, First Community is now one church in three locations:

Marble Cliff, Hilliard, and Camp Akita. Today, under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Richard Wing, its members remain involved in many ministries that serve the wider community, the nation, and the world as they seek to live out their own faith and fulfill the vision of early leaders.



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 _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please check the appropriate membership box:

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

YEARLY DUES (OCT. 1-SEPT. 30)

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Couple \$15.00

Organization \$25.00

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

ONE-TIME PAYMENT

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Couple \$150.00

Organization \$500.00

Benefactor \$1000.00



ViewPoints is an occasional publication of the Grandview Heights/Marble Cliff Historical Society.



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Contact Editor Patrick Mooney
(614-225-0130) for any interesting article
ideas or to discuss photo contributions.

E-MAIL REQUEST

We are compiling an e-mail directory to improve our communications.

Please include your e-mail on membership renewal form, or e-mail

President Tracy Liberatore at:
tliberat@columbus.rr.com.

Thanks!

PATRICIA TODD

Longtime GH/MCHS member and enthusiastic supporter Patricia Todd died in August.

She was a descendant of the Wendell Paddock family, early Grandview residents and significant in community development. Professor Wendell Paddock is credited with creating the name for First Community Church in 1919. Mrs. Todd's family suggested donations to the Society in lieu of flowers. We are grateful to the family for the suggestion, and wish to express our appreciation to those who have made donations.



Reminder to Annual Members Renewal time is here!

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.

If you are not a member but have been receiving ViewPoints as a courtesy, may we invite you to participation as a Society member?



1685 WEST FIRST AVENUE
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43212

The Grandview
Heights/Marble Cliff
Historical Society

