

# THE STRAIGHT FARMHOUSE CRIER

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ISSUE 1



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## **How We've Grown!**

We now have 120 members of the Friends to date!

You are invited to become a Straight Farmhouse Volunteer.

*Thank you!*

We extend our very special thanks to those volunteers who have helped tremendously at the Farmhouse, enabling us to receive our Certificate of Occupancy! We could not have accomplished this without your help!

## Who, What, Why, Where, When?

### **History**

Why buy an 1866 farmhouse? Will anyone notice if it is torn down or turned into a business? We have lost others. Maybe people only care when they are old and realize how important the past is to the future. No, many of our



young people feel preserving their history is important. Maybe it's time to recognize all the history in our town. We are a small city, a small community, and that can be a wonderful thing. Sometimes when we think of unique places, we think of Northville or Plymouth because they have preserved their history. Well, what's stopping us?

We have a fantastic opportunity because we have a Farmhouse that is rich in history. Did you know we have traced the Straight family from New York to Nankin Township -- later, Garden City -- and to Ypsilanti? Daniel Straight and his four brothers, Enos, Matthias, Charles, and Zacharias came to Michigan from Essex, New York in the early 1830's, settling in our area on a Land Patent granted by the U.S. government. In 1866, Daniel built the Farmhouse and sold it to his son, Oscar, in 1869. The house and property remained in the Straight family's ownership until Oscar's mother, Mary, died c. 1909, ending her life lease. Her grandson, Marshall, then sold the house and property.

### **General Store**

Ever been in a General Store? We will have a General Store in the Farmhouse and we plan on naming it the Lathers General Store. The Straight Family shopped in the local general store. It was called The Lather's store.

*Continued on page 3, see "General Store"...*

## In Progress...

The plan for the first floor of the Straight Farmhouse is to restore it back to its original state. A plan is presently being developed by Mr. Bill Cowden of Accent Remodeling on Lilly Road in Canton. Mr. Cowden has spent several hours at the house. He has discovered many interesting features, such as the original floorboards and the locations of the original stairways leading to the cellar and second floor. If anyone in the community has specific knowledge of the floor plan of the Farmhouse, we would very much like to hear from you! Mr. Cowden is generously donating his services for this restoration project!

Another service being donated is the design of a new logo for the Straight Farmhouse. This is being created by Mr. Mark Schildberg, who works at the Houston, Texas office of J. Walter Thompson. Mr. Schildberg is a former Garden City resident.

The Friends were looking for someone to replace a deteriorating window near the home's front door. Mr. William Niemi of California (son of Mr. John Niemi, Chairman of the Garden City Historical Commission) has commissioned an artist to design an *original* leaded glass window for this space which he will be donating to the Farmhouse in honor of his father.

## The Garden City Garden Club

Keep an eye on the grounds of the Straight Farmhouse this spring. Thanks to the Garden City Garden Club, it will be exploding with color! The Garden Club planted over 100 bulbs donated by English Gardens. The Garden Club has also worked very hard over the past summer beautifying the grounds.



The Detroit Executive Service Corps has agreed to assist the Friends in Board Development,



Fund Development and a Marketing Plan. The DESC is a non-profit organization of volunteer executives who provide management counseling exclusively to nonprofit

organizations. They are objective, third party mentors who will assist the Friends in increasing effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition, the DESC has provided the Friends a course in grant writing for nonprofit organizations. The objectives were to understand program planning, grant components, and where to find potential funders. This is a wonderful opportunity, and we look forward to their continued guidance.

*“General Store” continued from page 1*

The Westland Historical Museum even has records of items the Straights bought, and they are making us a copy of the actual bills of sale.

### **Tours**

We hope to have a self guided tour to historic areas of Garden City. We envision visitors using either a CD or cassette to hear the historic facts about each location they drive to. Have you seen the home in Garden City that has a tunnel that was used during prohibition? Those on the tour will! The tour will conclude by going out to *Newburgh Cemetery* where the Straight Family has a plot.



### **Our Youth**

Garden City school children may one day visit the Farmhouse as part of their curriculum to learn about their City. They will be able to see a Michigan Cellar and how people lived back in the 1800's. And best of all they will be learning right in *their* own city, Garden City.

### **When?**

These are only a few of the ideas we have. So when is all this going to happen? The Friends have achieved the goal of purchasing the house. We plan to temporarily lease space in the annex to help with expenses, however, we have a \$370,000.00 mortgage and the cost of renovation facing us. We need your support in order to realize success. So say “Yes! I want to be part of history and help preserve the history of our city” either with a monetary donation, or a donation of your time (*see form below*). Keep in mind, we are a 501c3 non-profit organization and all gifts are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please remember us in your Christmas giving and throughout the year!

***Some men see things as they are and say, “Why?” I dream of things that never were and say, “Why not?” - George Bernard Shaw***

I am interested in learning more about serving as a Straight Farmhouse Volunteer:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

***Please mail to:  
The Friends  
30721 Bock  
Garden City, MI 48135***

***Don't measure yourself by what you have accomplished, but by what you should have accomplished with your ability.  
--John Wooden***

## Meet the Board of Directors of the Friends

**Frieda Affholter** -- Retired secretary, bookkeeper, and receptionist; Frieda has two sons; member of Garden City Rock & Mineral Club; a volunteer for nearly eight years at the Garden City Historical Museum. Frieda is a resident of Westland, Michigan.

**Carol S. Bird** -- Graduate of U of M and EMU; retired classroom teacher; secretary of the Garden City Historical Commission; member of the Historic District Study Committee. Carol began playing the organ in her church at age 12! Her parents moved to Garden City in 1925. Carol has three children and she has lived in Garden City since 1933.

**Gerald Collins** -- Dr. Collins and his wife, Dr. Susan Collins, and son, Diego have been Garden City residents for the past two years. Jerry is a professor in the departments of Education and Business at Madonna University and serves as the Director of Student Teaching. They consider Garden City their home and are interested in preservation of historical treasures and also further development for the city.

**Muriel Grima** -- Retired Assistant Vice-President of BankOne; member of the G.C. Library Board; President of the Northville Waterford Bend Questors, an organization dedicated to restoration and preservation. Muriel attended Michigan State Normal (now known as EMU). Muriel has two children, and she has lived in Garden City since 1961.

**Gerald Marquette** -- Senior Certified Commercial Specialist for DuPont Tyvek® with Hansen Marketing Services, Inc.; Jerry is also a guest faculty at Lawrence Technological University; Vice-President (Industry) of the Construction Specifications Institute; was a brick mason for eighteen years; he has lived in Garden City since 1962, and is married with one son.

**Mary Jane Schildberg** -- Retired small business owner; former trustee of the G.C. Board of Education; former G.C. City Councilmember; member of the Board of the G.C. Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence; member of the Michigan Archaeology Society. Mary Jane graduated from the University of Maine, and has lived in Garden City since 1961. She is married and has two children.

## Craft Classes

Virginia Melcher of Belleville, taught four craft classes in November. Attendees learned to make Victorian Christmas stockings, nativity figures, decoupage Christmas plates, and poinsettias.

Those who attended enjoyed her crafts so much, that Virginia has been asked to come back in the spring and teach more classes.

If you would like to be notified of the dates/times of the spring classes, or if you have any questions, contact Muriel Grima at (734) 427-7099.



## Shopping in the Lathers General Store

Some of the items available for purchase include:

- Coffee Mugs with the Farmhouse imprinted -- \$5.00.
- Pens in forest green make signing your name a breeze -- \$4.00.
- Garden City-opoly -- a Monopoly game with board spaces sponsored by businesses in our city, churches, service organizations + patrons listings -- \$20.00.
- Calendar -- the first in a series of calendars published by the Friends and featuring the "Grand Ladies of Garden City" -- photos of historic homes and their histories -- \$10.00. (Bet you thought we meant calendar girls!) *See page 7 for more on the calendars.*
- Paver bricks -- to be installed in a walkway on our grounds, engraved with wording of your choice: 4" x 8" with 3 lines, 12 characters per line, including spaces and punctuation are \$50.00; 8" x 8" with 6 lines, 12 characters per line, including spaces and punctuation -- \$75.00. (Order forms are available in our store at the Farmhouse.)



Questions? Please call Muriel Grima at (734) 427-7099.



### Don't Forget!

The Garden City Historical Museum is still located in the Log Cabin and open for your visit! Stop by and say 'Hello'. They are open every Wednesday 1-4 p.m.

They would love to see you.

### The Historical Commission is:

- John Niemi- Chairman
- Dr. Francis Schmitt- Vice-Chairman
- Carol Bird- Secretary
- Charles Skinner
- John Kerstetter
- William Brooks
- Jim Burklow



# FOR LEASE

## Plan for Straight Farmhouse Annex

The Board of Directors are planning to offer a number of offices in the Straight Farmhouse annex for lease to help offset the costs of the purchase and operation of the facility. The available office space would be ideal for small business or professional office needs. Rates begin at \$250/month.

Do you know someone who needs office space? For more details, or to schedule a time to view the available offices, call Jerry Marquette (734) 522-1226.



*The First Ladies at the Victorian Tea*

*Please turn to back cover for full story*

# The 2005 Calendars are Here!

The 2005 Garden City Historical Museum Calendars are now available!

These calendars are the result of extensive research (research performed by Carol Bird) into the history of some of Garden City's oldest (and most beautiful) homes.

Each month features a different home. There is a beautiful photo of the home (photography by John Brumann) as well as a brief history and interesting facts on the featured home.

The calendars will be an annual item. Watch future editions of the *Farmhouse Crier* for next years theme.

Many thanks to the owners of the homes used in the calendar. We appreciate your sharing your homes with us!

Calendars are on sale now at the Farmhouse Gift Store, Misty's Cards and Gifts, Orin Jewelers, Garden City Library, and Standard Federal Bank. They will be available through the month of January (or while supplies last.) The cost is only \$10. A great gift idea!

For more information, contact Carol Bird (734) 427-8386.



## Victorian Tea

The Friends hosted a Victorian Tea at the Farmhouse on Sunday, December 5, 2004. The farmhouse was beautifully decorated for Christmas by Designer, Vicky Clark with decorations on loan from Orin Jewelers. Two rooms of the house featured displays of authentic clothing from the 1800's. The clothes came from the private collection of Pam Yockey.

The "Petticoat Ladies" (in authentic costumes), portrayed five former First Ladies. They made their way to each room and presented their histories and anecdotes of their lives in the White House with their husbands, former Presidents of the United States.

Each table had been decorated in a different holiday theme by its hostess. The hostess then served tea and cookies to the invited guests at her table.

Guests (that numbered over 50!) voted on their favorite decorated table. Guests also had the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets to win a variety prizes, ranging from custom pottery by Judy Buresh, a Pfaltzgraff cheese plate and server, Bed Bath and Beyond Gift bag, and antique glassware, to name just a few.

"We had a great time! When are we doing this again?" was the comment expressed many times.



*Victorian Tea Times*