



The Herstory Chronicles

Newsletter of the Women's History Project of Northwest Michigan

July 2011

About our speaker

Anne-Marie Oomen is author of two memoirs, *Pulling Down the Barn* and *House of Fields*, both Michigan Notable Books, and *An American Map: Essays* (all Wayne State University Press); and a full-length collection of poetry, *Uncoded Woman* (Milkweed Editions).

She also is represented in *New Poems of the Third Coast: Contemporary Michigan Poetry*, and edited *Looking Over My Shoulder: Reflections on the Twentieth Century*, an anthology of seniors' essays funded by the Michigan Humanities Council.

She has written and produced seven plays, including the award-winning *Northern Belles* inspired by oral histories of women farmers, and *Whaddaya Give!*, a regional musical.

She is faculty editor for the *Interlochen Review*, founding editor of *Dunes Review*, and former president of Michigan Writers, Inc.

She serves as instructor of creative writing at Interlochen Arts Academy and at the Solstice MFA at Pine Manor College, and Artistic Director of the

(See About our speaker on p. 3)

Anne-Marie Oomen is keynote for annual meeting

WHP is proud to announce that **Anne-Marie Oomen** will be the keynote speaker for this year's Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 22, from 11:30 AM to 2:00 PM at the History Center of Traverse City. Oomen is well known in our region as a passionate poet, playwright, memoirist and speaker. Her topic will be **"Making Your American Map: How to Travel with All the Grandmothers Looking On."**



The WHP Annual Meeting will begin with a delicious luncheon, followed by a short business meeting and our special keynote speaker. Oomen will have her books available for sale after the talk. So, save the date: **Saturday, October 22**. Information about reservations will be in the September newsletter.

Growing up Native American in Michigan

The book discussion group will discuss the book *Keewaydinoquay, Stories of My Youth* on Friday, July 22, from



12–1:30 PM at the History Center of Traverse City.

Keewaydinoquay Peschel was a woman of both Native American and white descent who lived in Michigan and Wisconsin for most of the span of the 20th century, dying in 1999.

She was born on Garden Island (part of the Beaver Island archipelago) but attended public school for a time in Northport. She also lived in Ann Arbor, Leland,

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President's Corner—

Celebrate local history

by Kathi Houston, president

After a long awaited spring, we are enjoying the start of a much anticipated and promising summer. In the greater Traverse area, there is no end to the opportunities for spending your free time and imagination exploring spaces and places dedicated to celebrating local history.

As you are making plans, include the History Center on Sixth Street in Traverse City, which houses memorabilia dedicated to featuring the history of women who influenced life in the greater Grand Traverse area.

Go to the second floor of the former Carnegie Library and take a look at the display case that was created by Board members Nancy Bordine and Tina Tank featuring an array of shoes that could tell many stories.

In addition to that glass case, there are other specific items and memories shared through oral histories, which make our history project rich with long and deep connections. From stories of early farmers to modern political families, the women who brought us together live on through the collection. Don't miss a chance to visit!

Take a look at our website too where you can check out the list of over sixty women whose stories have been collected and catalogued.

The board will reconvene in September when we'll make final plans for the annual meeting about which you can read more in other places in this newsletter.

Enjoy the next couple months and keep women's history in your mind as something you look to see in all areas of your life!



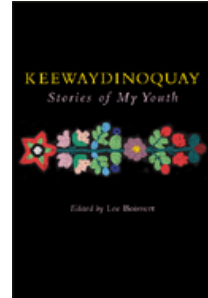
Growing up... continued from p. 1 and Milwaukee.

Her stories are funny, poignant, and well worth reading. Each one gives us a little more insight into what it must have been like growing up as a young Native American girl in northern Michigan.

Ms. Peschel learned about herbs and healing at an early age. She then went on at the age of 57 to study anthropology, earn a Master of Education Degree from U of M, and finally a Ph.D. in ethnobotany.

Come discuss her book with us. The History Center of Traverse City is the former public library building on 6th Street. Some people bring sack lunches—a beverage and dessert are furnished.

Most of our local libraries hold this title, plus Horizon Books will give you an extra 10% off if you tell them you're with the Women's History Project Book Discussion Group. Remember you needn't have read the book to attend, but reading it makes the discussion that much more interesting.



Mark your calendar...

September 12

Board meeting. Mon., 2:00 PM. *History Center*

October 22

Annual Meeting with lunch and a speaker. *History Center*

November 14

Board meeting. Mon., 2:00 PM. *History Center*

WHPNM Mission

To preserve and recognize the contributions of women to their families and communities in northwest lower Michigan.

Book group plans for the future

In October, we will discuss *A Short History of Women: A Novel* by Kate Walbert. After that, we are looking for your ideas for more great titles.

We discuss four books per year and alternate between fiction and non-fiction.

We like to focus on books by or about Michigan women, but a good book concerning women's history in general will work.

Some titles that have been suggested so far include:

- *Day After Night* by Anita Diamant. Set in 1945, in the summer following the end of World War II in Europe, *Day After Night* tells the stories of four young Jewish women—survivors of four different kinds of hell. They make their way to Israel where they confront an uncertain future haunted by the past.
- *The World Before Her* by Deborah Weisgall. Weisgall sets George Eliot free in this richly imagined account of the writer's late and unsatisfactory marriage to a much younger man. Interwoven with a parallel story of present-day May-December marital ennui, *The World Before Her* offers considerable wisdom and plenty of wit, with a precisely rendered Venice as the backdrop.

(See Book group on p. 4)

Support the History Center

In response to the decision of the Traverse City Commission to eliminate subsidies to the History Center beginning in 2012, Kathi Houston wrote this letter to Bob Knechel, president of the the History Center:

June 19, 2011

Dear Bob,

Our Board met recently and part of the discussion included concerns about what is happening at the History Center. The challenges you have had to face both in needing to replace the Executive and now to find a new way to secure funding for operations are surely overwhelming.

We are very interested in how the process of moving forward is being developed. To that end, we would like to be included in meetings and discussions if that is alright with you.

I am relatively new to the organization and understand there used to be a "partners" group but don't know if there is a current way we could participate. I would appreciate it if you could inform me as to meetings, planning sessions or other events that could help us be better informed and perhaps part of the solution to this difficult situation.

Both individuals and the Board as a whole feel the History Center is a valuable and important resource to the community. We would like to offer our support and skills when it comes to finding ways of providing stability in making it available for generations ahead.

Kind regards,
Kathi Houston, President

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Interlochen Writer's Retreat.

She and her husband, David Early, have built their own home in Empire, Michigan, where they live with a small politically opinionated cat named Bootros Bootros Kitty.

links:

- Website: www.anne-marieoomen.org
- Audio interview on nonfiction: <http://ipr.interlochen.org/files/media/mediafile/April2010%20.mp3>
- Written interview on poetry: <http://www.thedailypage.com/daily/article.php?article=6047> <http://www.riverandsoundreview.org/Nonfiction/Issue1/Oomen.htm>

To order books, go to <http://wsupress.wayne.edu/books/1027/American-Map> http://www.milkweed.org/component/option.com_phpshop/page.shop_browse/category_id,27/Itemid,40/



Book Group continued from p 3

- *Adventure Bound: A Father and Daughter Circumnavigate the Greatest Lake in the World* by Carl Behrend. Author of two books, this first one is a true story of how he and his 18-year-old daughter, Naomi, circumnavigate Lake Superior, the greatest and most perilous lakes in the world. A folksinger and author, Carl Behrend brings to life true stories and legends from a wealth of Great Lakes history. He lives in the Upper Peninsula.

Ann Swaney and Martha Vreeland are co-chairs of the discussion group. Be sure to weigh in with your suggestions. If you have any questions or book suggestions, please call 995-1065.

Looking for an oral-history coordinator

WHP needs someone to help coordinate the oral history project. Some of the things to be done include:

- Connect interviewers to those who are willing to be interviewed
- Follow up with getting the interviews transcribed
- Master the tape recorder technology

If you are interested, please contact Karen Anderson, kanderson507@att.net.

Board of Directors

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Dues payable to WHPNM;
send to address below.

Thank you for your support!



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