

# Grand Rapids Audubon Club

## Brief History

*The following article about the history of GRAC written by former archivist Henry Van Goor first appeared in the November 1967 Caller and was revised for the March 1970 issue.*

In the archives scrapbook is an old membership list of 1913, which has some 77 names on it. We do not have much information about the Club activities of that date. It apparently became defunct during WWI, for a clipping reads in part, "The organization meeting (1925) was well attended by new members, as well as those formerly affiliated with the local Audubon Society, which flourished for several years prior to the war. There are 90 members of this old society still residing in Grand Rapids."

This second organization lasted until 1943. Quoting from an excellent article written by Jim Ponshair and Peter Hovingh, in their interesting work, *Afield With Nature*, December 1953 issue, "The second organization was founded in 1926 and lasted until 1943. The Grand Rapids Audubon Club held their meetings in various homes of the members, at the YMCA, the Kent Scientific Museum (the Grand Rapids Public Museum on Jefferson SE), several churches and schools. The Club met once a month, except during the summer, and had their annual dinner in May and one of less importance in January. They elected officers in May. On December 10, 1928, there were 145 members in the Club.

"Since at that time the winters were very severe, the Club's main project was winter bird feeding...The Grand Rapids Audubon Club took many hikes, often all day hikes...Some of the speakers to the Club were David Spencer, Charles D. Nelson, Walter Hastings, Ben East, Frank L. DuMond, Prof. J.W. Stack of Michigan State College (now MSU), Dr. Miles Pirnie, Clayton W. Bazuin, and John H. Baker (Pres. of the National Audubon Society). On May 12, 1934 the Club had a joint meeting with the Michigan Audubon Society.

"In 1943, the Grand Rapids Audubon Club disbanded because they had a hard time to find a place to hold a meeting."

We have minutes and treasurer's reports from this Club and a blue scrapbook. The officers of this Club while it existed are listed below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Sec.-Treasurer</b>
1926-27	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Harry L. Creswell	Marian W. Gross
1928-29	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Frank L. DuMond	Myrtle Church
1929-30	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Frank L. DuMond	Myrtle Church
1930-31	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Frank L. DuMond	Myrtle Church
1931-32	Frank L. DuMond	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Alta Harrison
1932-33	Frank L. DuMond	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Alta Harrison
1933-34	Clayton W. Bazuin	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Alta Harrison
1934-35	Clayton W. Bazuin	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Alta Harrison
1935-36	Dr. Ward L. Chadwick	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Alta Harrison
1936-37	David Spencer	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Jessie Deuel
1937-38	Evelyn Adams	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Eleanor Field
1938-39	Mrs. Norman English	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Eleanor Field
1939-40	Mrs. Norman English	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Eleanor Field
1940-41	Miss Claire Walper	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Emma A. Grocock
1941-42	Miss Claire Walper	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Mrs. Pauline Califf
1942-43	Charles D. Nelson	Mrs. Harry E. Hosken	Mrs. Pauline Califf

According to our scrapbook, the Club was reactivated again in 1951. This quote from a Grand Rapids Press article:

**BIRD LOVERS TO ORGANIZE – DuMond Will Revive Audubon Club**

“Actually it will be an entirely new organization,” Frank L. DuMond says. “The old Club has been defunct since 1943 when it was forced out of existence by WWII curtailments.”

“But at its peak, the local group organized in 1926, led the Audubon clubs of the state with a membership of 150. DuMond was its president several years and headed the Michigan Audubon Society five years. Its year round program of winter meetings and warm weather field trips will be used as a pattern for the new organization. Large turn-outs for the spring bird hikes, sponsored by the Museum the last few years, indicate there is much local interest in ornithology, DuMond points out.

“Grand Rapids, once the Audubon leader in the state, is conspicuous by its present absence of a bird study group,” the Museum Director states. “We know there’s much interest in birds and nature in general here. Let’s get it concentrated into an Audubon Club.”

We have minutes, financial records, a scrapbook, *Callers* and membership lists for this Club.

Since this reorganization, we have excellent minutes and financial records and other records of the Club’s activities. This proves that we have had excellent leadership for the past 18 years, and the interest shown, especially in conservation, indicates that the Club should continue for a good many years with no sign of becoming defunct.

The officers of this Club who have served from 1951 through 1969-70 are:

<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Sec.-Treasurer</b>	
1951	Dr. Richard H. Meade	Eleanor Burgess	Julia Barnes	
1952	Dr. Richard H. Meade	Bernard Gryska	Julia Barnes	
1953	Bernard Gryska	Agnes Kugel	Julia Baker	
1954	Harry F. Stiles	Norma Raby	Betty Olds	
	(1½ yrs-5/55)			
<b>Year</b>	<b>President</b>	<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Treasurer</b>
1955	Norma Raby	Ben DeVries	Betty Olds	Alice Weschgel
	(May '55)			
1956	Norma Raby	Arthur Sherk	Charlotte Chandler	Chester Bergman
1957	Ralph Baldwin	Joe Martin	Charlotte Chandler	Chester Bergman
1958	James Ponshair	Arthur Sherk	Charlotte Chandler	MaryJane Dockeray
1959	Arleen Sweet	Dean Avise	Marion Jennings	Katie Chase
1960	Arleen Sweet	Dean Avise	Marion Jennings	Katie Chase
1961	Chester Bergman	Alex Hook	Donna Milbourne	Marge Simmons
			(Illencik)	
1962	Chester Bergman	Alex Hook	Marion Jennings	Marge Simmons
1963	Joan Wolfe	Marion Jennings	Dorothy Brant	Jack McMurphy
1964	Joan Wolfe	Marion Jennings	Dorothy Brant	Ernie Hoover
1965	Doug Smith	Jack McMurphy	Charlotte Chandler	Arleen Sweet
1966	Doug Smith	Jack McMurphy	Marge Simmons	Arleen Sweet
1967	Jack McMurphy	Mary Jane Dockeray	Betty Romph	Henry Van Goor
1968	Dean Avise	Dorothy Brant	Betty Romph	Henry Van Goor
1969	Dean Avise	Dorothy Brant	Teresa Buist	Marion Jennings

*Editor Comments:*

*How right Henry was those 29 years ago! We're still going strong and in 2001 we celebrated our 50th anniversary!*

Note that the following present members were also members of the original 1951 club: Char Chandler, Katherine Chase (*deceased*), Bernie Gyska (*deceased*), Alex Hook (*deceased*), Charlotte Johnson (*deceased*), and Jim Ponshair. (Jim was only 14 years old at the time and the bylaws had to be rewritten lowering the age limit allowing him and his friend, Peter Hovingh to join the club.)