



# The Herstory Chronicles

Newsletter of the Women's History Project of Northwest Michigan

September 2015

## Elections and changes at Annual Meeting

The nominating committee—Jane Purkis, Ann Swaney, and Etta Rajkovich—recommends the election of Karen Anderson, Amy Barritt, Nancy Bordine, Kathi Houston, Mary Murphy, Jane Purkis, Etta Rajkovich, and Rebecca Reynolds to the Women's History Project of NW Michigan Board for the upcoming year. An organizational meeting of the board will be held in November.

Elections will take place at the Annual Meeting in October. Nominations will be accepted from the floor.

The WHP board recommends that Article 4, Section 4.1d of the By Laws, which states "No person shall serve as a director for more than eight consecutive years" be deleted. The reason for deletion is difficulty in identifying members interested in serving on the board.

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## Annual Meeting & Lunch

Saturday, October 24

11:30 AM-2 PM

**COST: MEMBERS \$15; NON-MEMBERS \$20**

Community Room, Traverse Area District Library  
610 Woodmere Ave., Traverse City

## Annual Business Meeting and Election of Board

### Program

## From the Pentagon to Air Force One: Experiences in the U.S. Air Force

Speaker: CMSgt Rose W. Hutchinson

Hutchinson will share her experiences as the first female steward to fly aboard Air Force One, including trips to China and Iraq.



See page 3 for more information about her.

## Luncheon

Catered by Centre Street Café

Reservations are required by October 20.

Send your check with reservation form, found on back page and on the website: [www.whpnm.org](http://www.whpnm.org).

Call 947-5178 for more information.

## Filling our summer with memories and expectations

By Amy Barritt

In a typical year, summer finds the WHP Board swamped with life and we enjoy our hiatus from monthly meetings. This year was an exception, as your vigilant board members managed to accomplish a number of tasks, setting us up for another fast-paced and fulfilling year of oral history gathering.

A special thanks goes to Etta Rajkovich, treasurer, for her diligence concerning the oral history program. In addition to training our new oral history interviewers, Etta worked with applicants through Michigan Works, and WHP is now contracted with Jessica Hodges to transcribe oral histories. Welcome, Jessica, and thank you for your service!

The WHP board also authorized the purchase of a new digital recorder and an external hard drive. The purchase of the new digital recorder brings our number of recording devices to three. We will be contracting with an outside vendor to digitize the 60-some oral histories that we have on cassette tape to a more stable digital format, and plan to have that process rolling by mid-fall. Those digital copies will be stored on the hard drive, and we hope to make them available in their entirety online as well.

In the meantime, the oral history collection is still available to researchers through the History Center. Contact archivist Peg Siciliano for access at [archives@traversehistory.org](mailto:archives@traversehistory.org).

Another thanks is due to Karen Anderson and Ann Swaney, our Book Group co-chairs. Together, they organized a wonderful event at the Park Place on July 17, and invited Victoria Brehm, editor of the *Women's Great Lakes Reader*, to meet with the group.

In addition to discussing her work and ongoing research, Brehm revealed herself to be an alumnus of NMC! In the Club's history, they have only been addressed by an author (or editor) of the work being read one other time. This was certainly a very memorable occasion. Please read more about this event in this month's newsletter.

The next year is going to be a prosperous year for the WHP, and we hope you'll choose to be an active part of it! Our Nominating Committee is actively accepting nominations for board members, and we are all looking forward to seeing you at this year's annual meeting!



## Calendar

### October

**12 Board Meeting.** Mon., 2 PM.

**24 Annual Meeting & Lunch.**

Sat., 11:30 a.m to 2 p.m. \$15.

*From the Pentagon to Air Force One: Experiences in the U.S.*

*Air Force.* Speaker: **CMSgt**

**Rose W. Hutchinson.** Business Meeting & Election of Board.

RSVP by Oct. 20 (see p. 1).

**23 Book Discussion.** Fri., NOON.

*The Invention of Wings* by

Sue Monk Kidd. *Thirlby Room at Library*

### November

**9 Board Meeting.** Mon., 2 PM.

### December

**28 Newsletter deadline.** Mon.

### January

**11 Board Meeting.** Mon., 2 PM.

*Place TBD*

**20 Deadline for articles for newsletter.**

## WHPNM Mission

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

## Join WHPNM

Seniors: \$10

Students: \$10

Other individuals: \$15

Business/Organization: \$25

Dues payable to WHPNM.

Send to P.O. Box 4463

Traverse City, MI 49685

Thank you for your support!

Send articles and announcements for the

January newsletter to Sandy,

[sansep19@earthlink.net](mailto:sansep19@earthlink.net), or

contact her at 421-3343.

Next deadline is December 28.

Those accepted are subject to editing for length and content.

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## CM Sgt Rose W. Hutchinson shares experiences in U.S. Air Force

*From the Pentagon to Air Force One* is the theme of a talk by CM Sgt Rose W. Hutchinson at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 24.

Hutchinson will share her experiences as the first female steward to fly aboard Air Force One, including trips to China and Iraq. Hutchinson was a steward on Air Force One during the Carter, Reagan, and George H. W. Bush administrations.

When Hutchinson joined the United States Air Force in 1964, she was one of only 3,000 women in that branch of the service. Hutchinson began her career in the Air Force at the Pentagon, where she served for 11 years in personnel assignments spanning from secretarial work to assistant to the Secretary of the Air Force.

In 1976, she joined the 89<sup>th</sup> Military Airlift Wing at Andrews Air Force base, where she and one other woman were the first female stewards admitted to the Wing—but she was the first female steward to fly on Air Force One. From 1977 to 1991, she was a flight steward, and her job was to provide luxury air service to members of the federal government.

On her first presidential flight, she visited Portugal with President Carter. Typically, her flights were with members of Congress but she occasionally served aboard the president's plane, Air Force One. Her assignments included traveling with Secretary of State James Baker in 1991 to Syria, England, and Canada to advise U.S. allies of the war about to begin in Iraq. She also traveled with President Ronald Reagan to

the People's Republic of China. She flew with Olympic teams and various foreign dignitaries during her 16 years as flight steward.

Before Hutchinson retired in 1992, she had logged 6,000 hours of flight time and was promoted to Chief Master Sergeant with responsibility for 107 staff and seven planes on base.

In the 24 years since her retirement, Hutchinson has spent her time volunteering for the American Red Cross, Child and Family Services, Women's Resource Center, the State Theatre, and the Traverse City Film Festival. She was inducted in to the Traverse City Central High School Hall of Fame in 2012.

*(Information from Karen Anderson, Record-Eagle, and The Ticker)*

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*The interviews were done in March & June 2008 by Caroline Hirth*

I had a twin. We were born in Duluth, Minnesota, in 1923. I was a brunette and my twin was blonde. She had curly hair and I had straight hair. She was left-handed and I was right-handed. Mother baked two cakes for our birthday: a chocolate one for me and a white one for my twin. Then, instead of a dime in the cake, she'd put a nickel in each cake. We had a lot of fun with eating seconds to find those nickels.

My father was a CPA, a bookkeeper with Iron Range up in Hibbing, Minnesota. My mother taught school up there before she was married. She walked about two miles to school, and back.

We lived about three doors from

the Lester River, which drained into Lake Superior only a block from us. We'd spend a lot of time swimming there, even in the cold water. We were on a dead-end road, with only two of six families that owned cars. So we were able to play softball in the road.

We didn't have a car until I was a senior in high school. We took the streetcar most of the time. In Duluth, there's quite a hill. We had about four blocks from the streetcar that we had to walk up to our junior high. Then from senior high we had to walk just two blocks up the hill on the east side. We had a lot of hills to climb.

Our English teacher was such a nice gal. She would be human and let us look out the window to see the shipping traffic. She would stop class so that she could show us the cutters

coming through to cut the ice when the ore boats were coming through.

We went through the Great Depression, but everybody did so we didn't think that anything was really wrong. We'd had hand-me-down clothes from our sisters. Mother belonged to a sorority in college and one of her friends would send us clothes. We'd be quite excited about that 'cause we'd get fairly new clothes. So that wasn't bad at all. I remember wearing snow pants that my mother made from striped pants that were my dad's. When I went to wear them, some of the kids started teasing me. And I just laughed because I thought, "Well, they're in the same boat as I am," so it didn't matter.

They closed one of the mines when my dad was working there, but he

*(See Oral History on p. 4)*

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### Oral History continued from p. 3

knew there was still plenty of ore in the mine, so he bought a lease on it. During World War II, iron ore was needed to make steel for the ships and things. Apparently Dad made enough money and we got a car, and we got college and different things like that. So that worked pretty nicely.

I'd had two years of college and I thought that I wanted to write. But then I was afraid that I wouldn't make any money at it to support myself. And I didn't know what I wanted to do.

At college they'd send you out on jobs every three months. So I worked in New York City, doing office work with the Girl Scouts. My leaning was really toward sports, but I didn't want to be a physical education teacher. We had all old-maid schoolteachers. I was afraid I'd be an old maid. That was one reason I didn't want to teach.

So during 1941, Pearl Harbor happened. Then all the fellows left, or many of them did. There were three times as many fellows as girls in the service, which was ideal for the women. My twin joined the Waves and my brother was in the Marines. So I decided to join the Marines.

I was in the Marines for four years. We were able to choose where we went, and, since I had family in California, I went out there. I dated a lot, especially in the service. And I loved to dance. We'd go to the big band dances after hours in San Diego, and it was just wonderful.

My last year at the University of California was with physical therapy in San Francisco's Medical Center. A friend of mine there asked me to go skiing. I got on the bus and this fellow smiled at me and I thought,

he doesn't know me and I don't know him. But then he kept hanging around, especially at mealtime. And that was my future husband.

There was a big sign up in the ski lodge that said, "Sierra Club formal dinner dance at the hotel Claremont in Berkley," and I thought, "Gee, I hope he asks me." And he did. So ever since that we dated.

He was a forester working with the U.S. Forest Service in San Francisco. He asked me my address and I said I think we're at 313 Alcatraz. He says, "cell number?", and I knew he had a good sense of humor.

After we got married, he got promoted to Washington, D.C., and worked in the Department of Agriculture, where the U.S. Forest Service was. So we lived in Maryland. We both love nature and the woods. So I think we were a good team.

He loved the U.P., and wanted to get back to Michigan. Northern Minnesota and Northern Michigan are a lot alike with lots of lakes and woods and rivers. When we'd go on vacation, we'd drive up to the U.P. to see his folks, camping along the way. And one place was Traverse City; we liked it and that's when we decided to retire here.

I really liked my physical therapy work, especially working with people. I worked with adults with polio and with cerebral palsy, but mostly children. I've worked with adult multiple sclerosis patients also. It's satisfying to get some results that they are getting better all the time. But with polio, several patients died, especially ones that were in the iron lung. So that was sad for us, but mainly for their families. I've worked with hospitals in Oakland, San

Francisco, Maryland, Traverse City, and Kalkaska.

I tried out for the Rotary Show. If you're going to do that you either have to be very good or very bad. I'm not really bad, but I have a voice that can get very off-key, and so I tried. Jim Beckett and I sang, "Indian Love Call." He was quite short, and I, being tall, was funny.

One time I sang by myself, "Bird in a Gilded Cage," with a cage on top of my hat, and I'd let it 'peep' every once in a while. I'd sing and it'd go 'peep'. One time I wore hosiery over my head and then wore this wig and this hat. When I bowed at the end, the hat fell off and the wig fell off and I got the biggest laugh. I've had a lot of fun with the skits.

A woman should be herself, and follow through if she has a real desire for something. If you are at all interested in writing, put down the things that have happened in your childhood; and do it while you are still young and remember a lot of those things. Be friends and make friends and value your friends. It's really doing unto others (what) you like to have them do to you. I think if we pay attention more to these things it would help our country, help us all.

My mother hung clothes out and had to dry them on the radiator in the wintertime. All these machines that help us now would have helped her a lot. I think now we depend so much on machines that we're too fast; we want to do things too fast and we're stressed. We're a lot more stressed than before when we could sit under a tree and just think.

*(See Oral History on p. 5)*

## Board of Directors

### Officers

**President:** Amy Barritt

**Vice President:** Nancy Bordine

**Secretary:** Martha Vreeland

**Treasurer:** Etta Rajkovich

### Directors

Karen Anderson

Kathi Houston

Jane Purkis

### Newsletter Editor

Sandra Seppala

## WHP Book Group

### Women's Great Lakes Editor Delights, Inspires

By Karen Anderson

When the WHP Book Group gathered in April to discuss *The Women's Great Lakes Reader*, we had record attendance and participation. Everyone had a favorite passage, person, idea to discuss and we each felt enriched by what others had to say.

No wonder we were eager to meet Victoria Brehm, the editor of that remarkable book, when she was a guest at our July meeting at the Park Place. Book group co-chair Karen Anderson introduced Victoria by quoting from her book, a comment from the Chippewa woman Nodinens

from the mid-1850s: "We took only food that was light in weight, such as rice and dried berries, and we always took a bag of dried pumpkin flowers, as they were so nice to thicken the meat gravy in the winter."

Victoria's book was portable like the rice and dried berries, Karen said, but like the pumpkin

flowers, it had thickened our understanding, nourished our souls.

Victoria began her presentation by saying, "Ask me questions!" There were plenty—and each answer was full of research, insights, humor—and paths to more questions.

We learned that she has just published *Star Songs and Water Spirits*:



*A Great Lakes Native Reader* and is at work on another collection. Here's what she said about the new book in a follow-up note to co-chair Ann Swaney:

"I'm not sure how much the book group learned, but it was a marvelous re-education for me. When I got home, I looked over the book I'm currently working on, *The Best Great Lakes*

*Sailing Stories*, and realized there were sections without any women at all! So I went looking for stories for the "War on the Lakes" section and promptly found the narrative of a woman in the Siege of Detroit that is really well-written and engaging."

This gives you a taste of her enthusiasm and curiosity. Ann and Karen think there might be another visit from Victoria Brehm in the future of WHPNW—if we can only get on her schedule!

The group will discuss *The Invention of Wings*, by Sue Monk Kidd at the next discussion on Friday, October 23. The group will meet at noon in the Thirlby Room at the library. For more information about the book group, please call Ann Swaney at 223-7489.



## Oral History continued from p. 4

If I could go back and change anything in my life, I think that I would try to work harder on everything that I do. I sort of just enjoyed it, but I think I could have really gotten to know other people and their problems more. Friends are really important. Mine have just been great; I should be as good of a friend.





Women's History Project of Northwest Michigan  
P.O. Box 4463  
Traverse City, MI 49685

**Women's History Project of NW Michigan  
Annual Meeting Reservation & Membership Renewal Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Number attending: \_\_\_\_\_ *(please print names of guests below)*

Meeting reservations, members **(\$15 each)**: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting reservations, non-members **(\$20 each)**: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues for 2016: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total amount enclosed:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Seniors: \$10
Students: \$10
Other individuals: \$15
Business/ Organization: \$25

**Send your check to WHPNM, PO Box 4463, Traverse City, Michigan 49685 by October 14.  
Space is limited! Call 947-5178 with questions.**

**Print names of guests here.**

*WHPNM is a 501(c)(3) organization.*