



History Explorer

Historical Society of Greater Lansing

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April 2016

Upcoming Events

Ink Trails II: Michigan's Famous and Forgotten Authors

Thursday, April 28, 2016, 7:00 p.m.

Library of Michigan, 702 W. Kalamazoo Street

The Historical Society of Greater Lansing and the Library of Michigan are hosting Dave and Jack Dempsey, authors of "Ink Trails II: Michigan's Famous and Forgotten Authors" at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, April 28 at the Library of Michigan, 702 West Kalamazoo, Lansing MI. The event is free and open to the public.

The book is the second in the Ink Trails series and explores the life and writings of 17 Michigan authors, both forgotten and luminaries.

Ink Trails II looks at four authors with ties to Michigan State University and East Lansing who created literary treasures. Glendon Swarthout, author of "Where the Boys Are" and "Road to Cordura," the MAC graduate, muckraker, and Pulitzer Prize winner Ray Stannard Baker, Emma Gertrude Shore Thornton, a poet, MSU Professor and an advocate for peace and Russel Kirk, author of the seminal book "The Conservative Mind" are all included in the new volume. Kirk is an MSC graduate and was owner of Red Cedar Bookshop.

Other authors include Detroit's Donald Goines, considered one of the first authors of the "pimp" novel, children book author Frances Margaret Fox from Mackinaw City, bodice ripper author and educator Mary Frances Doner, also of Mackinaw City, and of course, Ernest Hemingway.

Valerie Marvin, Society president, said "The book is a delightful look at both famous and overlooked authors. It is filled with tidbits about authors and poets and will lead to further adventures in reading."

David Dempsey, an environmental consultant is the author of six books including the 2009 Michigan Notable Book Winner "William G. Milliken: Michigan's Passionate Moderate." He co-edited the 2014 Michigan Notable Book "The Great Lake Sturgeon" and co-authored the award winning "Ink Trails I."

Jack Dempsey, is an Ann Arbor attorney, and author of several books on Michigan and the Civil War. He is also the chair of Michigan History Foundation, vice president of the Michigan Historical Commission and was chair of the Michigan Sesquicentennial Commission. He has also won Michigan Notable Book Awards for "Ink Trails I" and "Michigan and the Civil War."

Lansing Has Fun Exhibit

HSGL is grateful for your patience regarding our *Lansing Has Fun* exhibit. We are working to update our exhibit, and plan to have a new offering available at City Hall soon. We'll be doing a large update for spring and summer in May, and then will update the exhibit again in the fall.

How MSU Turned Spring Break Into A Cultural Phenomenon

By Bill Castanier

When 1961 arrived it had already been a long winter for MSU students. Madras, Bermuda shorts and the limbo were still a dream. Until then MSU students were plugging jukeboxes with nickels to listen to Connie Francis sing her dreamy, romantic ballad “Where the Boys Are,” which charted No. 1 in 15 countries.

Across Grand River couples held hands while waiting for tickets at the Campus Theatre to see the new movie *Where the Boys Are*. A few in line had already read the *New York Times* best-selling book, written by an MSU professor who based his novel on an actual spring break experience of his students in Fort Lauderdale.

The couples made casual talk about how the opening scenes to the movie showed snow whipping around Berkey Hall and that a character in the movie, TV Thompson, was from Michigan State.

Many students were already making Spring Break plans, ready to pack their Coppertone, pile six into a car and drive more than 30 hours non-stop to Florida for a week of fun in the sun.

The book, the movie and the song “Where the Boys Are” would catapult spring break from a fling for rowdy swimmers from “elite” Eastern schools to a cultural rite of spring for all college students. MGM’s movie, starring George Hamilton, Yvette Mimieux, Paula Prentiss, Jim Hutton and singing star Connie Francis, earned the studio its biggest box office of the year.

Swarthout was a newly-minted associate professor teaching an honors English class in 1958 when he overheard one of his students talking about spring break.

When he asked the students for more details he invited himself to join them in Fort Lauderdale, according to his spouse, MSU graduate and writer Kathryn Swarthout, now deceased.

“Glendon had heard a young man from Jackson with a red sports car talking about spring break,” she



recalled. “He is responsible for the novel.”

Professor Swarthout had already written two novels. *Willow Run* was based on his and Kathryn’s experience building B-24 bombers in Ypsilanti during World War II and *They Came To Cordura* (1958) was made in to a successful movie starring Gary Cooper and Rita Hayworth.

Prior to that, his short story “A Horse for Mrs. Custer” had also been made into a movie.

Swarthout was an avid researcher, according to his spouse who was with him when he spent three months in Mexico doing research for *Cordura*, which was about General Pershing’s search for Pancho Villa.

Professor Swarthout, applying the same principles to his new project, packed his bags, flew to Florida and spent one week observing his students and writing detailed character sketches and an outline for his book “Where the Boys Are”. He may have written the book, but TIME magazine laid claims for creating the title in a 1959 article on spring break. When the writer asked one coed why she went to Fort Lauderdale, she had answered “That’s where the boys are.”

Talking about the book in a 1985 interview with Larry King Swarthout said his students “were fun, they were kicks, and they kept talking about spring vacation in Fort Lauderdale. It occurred to me I’d like to see what they did. So I asked...if I came down if they’d show me around. They told me where to stay, they met me at the airport and I had a week with them.”

Emerging from the rigid 1950s, Swarthout’s novel would create quite a stir due to its frank portrayal of sexuality and the growing social consciousness of college students.

But the movie, dramatically different, less salacious, and often corny, would create even a bigger stir and together they would help create modern spring break. Swarthout’s book was even over the top for the famed director of B movies Joseph Pasternak. Pasternak said in a *Miami Herald* interview in June 1960, just prior to beginning filming for the \$1.4 MGM movie, that “When the book came out we thought it was a little too risqué, but it was cleaned up to suit the family trade.”

Prior to the 1960 publication of the novel, the beach town of Fort Lauderdale hosted an estimated 15,000 students. The year after the movie and book came out more than 50,000 students would descend on what was once this sleepy town. At its height in 1985, 370,000 students would make it their destination.

Both the movie and the book tell the simple story of a group of students (Tuggle, Merritt, Ryder, TV Thompson, Melanie and Angie) mostly Midwesterners, in search of fun in the sun. The book and the movie

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script differ dramatically, but that never bothered the author.

A full one-third of the book never made it into the movie with the script writer opting for the more comedic elements over running guns to Castro in Cuba and the girls pontificating about responsibility.

The more chilling pregnancy of one of the girls also never found its way into the movie but a disturbing date rape did.

The movie, which soon would be replicated by innumerable beach blanket and surf movies, helped launch the careers of a number of stars and starlets. Pasternak's low-budget (\$1.4 million) "Where the Boys Are" would become the number-one grossing low-budget movie for MGM.

Paula Prentiss, George Hamilton, Dolores Hart, Yvette Mimieux, Connie Francis and Jim Hutton (TV Thompson) would all make their mark in this comedic farce. Hutton, playing a Midwestern college kid from MSU, was not always on his best behavior and in both the book and movie he was a con-man and cad.

Such obscure cultural references and phrases and words such as "babyroo" or "bang your pipes" can make the book tough going for a modern reader. (The book is out-of-print and only available in an e-book format).

Although generations of MSU students have been led to believe that the opening snow scenes of the movie were shot at Berkey Hall, it is not the case.

Prentiss in an interview said, "I'm so sorry to tell you so, but it was shot at a back lot in L.A." Most of the footage, except for exterior shots, was shot on a sound stage in Culver City she said. For several decades MSU students would point themselves out in the movie, even though filming actually didn't start until late June.

"I never went to spring break and had never been in a movie before. It was my first big break," Prentiss said.

She said the movie helped create the mystique of the perpetual teenager.

At the time of the interview in 2011, she said she still kept in touch with many of the original cast (several have died) and admires greatly the decision of co-star Dolores Hart, in what could've been a movie script, to enter the convent in 1963. Hart is the prioress of an order of Roman Catholic nuns. "She sort of always presented a wonderful radiance."

One of Prentiss' most lasting visual memories from that time is of George Hamilton, who played Ryder, Hart's suitor in the movie, holding up aluminum foil to his face "to make him more bronze".

Prentiss had not read the book prior to beginning the shoot, but read it during the shooting. She recalls how Joe Pasternak the director changed her last name from Ragusa to be more Hollywood sounding. "He liked alliteration," she said.

Prentiss was studying drama at Northwestern when she was cast to be in the movie.

"Pasternak wanted someone who was tall and with big feet, that was me." She said in one scene the director even had her stand on a box to appear even taller.

Because of the scenes shot in Lauderdale, some spots like the Elbo Room (not Elbow as appears in much of the media coverage) would become legendary. The two-story Elbo Room bar which appears in both the book and the movie is still open, in the same spot, today.

And to think this was all started by a somewhat nerdy professor who as an undergraduate paid his way through the University of Michigan playing an accordion in a dance band in northern Michigan resorts and Grand Rapids.

When the book and movie were released back-to-back many reviews were blunt in their assessments calling the movie "risqué", "dismal" and "preoccupied with sex": A Detroit News reviewer said that the new book would not add to the author's reputation.

Letters both acclaiming and decrying the movie and the book poured into MGM and the publisher.

In particular former MSU coeds who had taken classes from Swarthout wrote to tell him how much they liked the book.

One wrote about "the school, the dorms... and the 10' o'clock crush tubbings and Dr. Glendon Swarthout, who, above all will never be dull."

Another student of his, recalls coming back late from spring break offering up car trouble as an excuse.

She agreed to write a 5,000 word essay on her experience in Florida. "I might add that had I known the context of the book at the time I'm sure I could have added much flavor to my paper."

In response to a somewhat scathing review in TIME magazine, Swarthout wrote: "Merritt asks me to pass on to what she calls TIME's "sweet nurdy middle aged critic this clue:

"For group dynamics in cars, back seat better. Less dashboard damage." The reviewer said that Swarthout's middle age was out of touch when he wrote about back seat amour.

The TIME reviewer even had the nerve to slander MSU's nascent Communication College calling TV "a hotshot who is majoring in something called "Communications"

But when the movie premiered in December 1960, all the major trade papers and daily newspapers were quick to publicize it. One reason was major cast members had been beating the publicity drum by barnstorming the country. Prentiss said, "We were on the road for six or eight weeks and we stopped at every newspaper, radio and TV station we could."



Treasures From The Vault

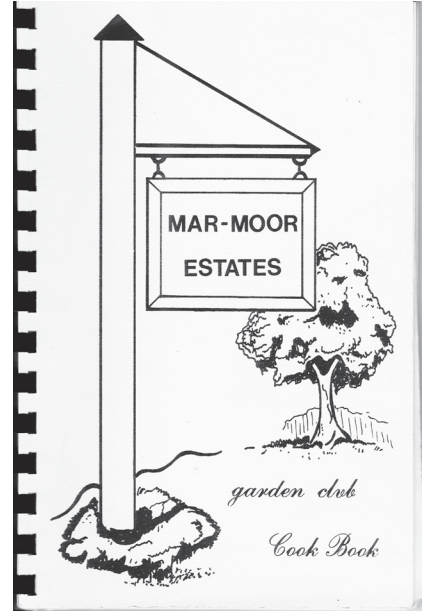
Mar-Moor Estates Garden Club Cook Book

by Mary L. Kwas

Small clubs were always looking for ways to raise funds. One popular method, particularly among clubs with largely female membership and during the last half of the 20th century, was to compile and sell club cook books. These cook books could range in size from large ones of several hundred pages, often with higher production values and desirable old family recipes, to small books of less than 100 pages compiled in a member's home. They were usually soft-covered and bound with a plastic spiral.

The Mar-Moor Estates Garden Club joined the trend and produced their own small cook book. Mar-Moor Estates is a subdivision located between Waverly and Willow streets, just outside of Lansing in Eaton County. The 71-home subdivision was developed in the mid-1950s to mid-1960s by Marguerite Moore (1907-1984), a noted Lansing real estate developer. Many subdivisions in the Lansing area were developed at the same time to provide housing for the post-World War II families with their Baby Boom children. An article in the *Lansing State Journal* on January 1, 1959, noted that housing starts in the previous year amounted to 1,200 private residences and apartment buildings. This number was down from the all-time high of 1,827 units started in 1955. New subdivisions included not only Mar-Moor and River Ridge in Delta Township, but Hillbrook Park in Haslett, Tacoma Hills in Okemos, Whitehills Estates in Meridian township, Sunset Hills and Waverly Heights in Lansing, and many more.

There is no publication date in the Mar-Moor Estates Garden Club Cook Book, but based on the kinds of ingredients in the recipes, it probably dates to about 1970. The 69-page cook book consists of 102 recipes divided into the following categories: Cheese Dishes and Hors d'oeuvres, Salads, Meat Dishes, Vegetable Dishes, Breads and Muffins, Desserts, and Miscellaneous. The small book



was produced on a typewriter, with upper case titles and the names of contributors. There are numerous typos, corrected by hand with ball-point pen, and standardized recipe formatting is a little weak, leading to amusing descriptions.

Typical of the 1960s and '70s, the recipes make use of convenience foods. Common ingredients include cream cheese, cottage cheese, Jell-O, instant pudding, canned pineapple, canned mandarin oranges, and canned fruit cocktail. Canned mushrooms seem to appear in everything. In addition, cream of "whatever" soup was a favorite. Among the 44 recipes of the meat and vegetable dishes, cream of mushroom soup was called for 5 times, cream of chicken soup 3 times, cream of celery soup 2 times, and cream of potato soup and cream of shrimp soup once each. And one recipe allowed the preparer a choice of either cream of mushroom or cream of chicken soups.

While the recipes were fairly simple, there was one ambitious recipe called "Coquilles Saint-Jacques A' la Parisienne" or "Scallops with Mushrooms in White Wine Sauce" that covered two pages. A few of the more unusual recipes called for zucchini blossoms, sorrel leaves, or dandelion leaves. The cook book ended with a recipe for home-made finger paint and another for a Play-Doh-like compound that we used to call "salt ceramics."

Following are a few of the typical or amusing ca. 1970s recipes.

Jewish, Italian, American Chicken & Rice

1 can cream of mushroom soup
2/3 cup milk
1 cup long grain rice or minute rice
4 oz. can mushrooms, undrained
1 envelope onion soup mix
(left off: chicken pieces, butter, paprika)

Blend mushroom soup and milk. Combine soup mix and rice and add to liquid. Add mushrooms and liquid last. Pour into baking dish and place pieces of chicken on top after brushing with melted butter or margarine and sprinkle with paprika. Bake 1½ hours at 325°. Serves 4-6.

Molded Tomato Soup Salad

1 envelope Knox gelatin
1 can (small) tomato soup
1 3 oz. pkg. cream cheese
(left off: cold water, salad dressing, diced celery, onion, green pepper)

Heat tomato soup and add gelatin which has been dissolved in ¼ cup cold water. Cut cheese and add; stir on low heat until cheese melts. Fold in ½ cup salad dressing, chopped (diced) celery, onion, green pepper. Chill.

Tuna Casserole

(and you think you know how to make tuna casserole!)

1 can chunk tuna
1 can chop suey vegetables
1 can mushrooms
1 can mushroom soup (probably "cream of")
1 Tb. soy sauce
1 can chop suey noodles

Mix first 5 ingredients together plus ½ can of noodles. Put in baking dish. Place balance of noodles on top. Bake 30 minutes in preheated oven 325°.

Pistachio Cake

2 boxes instant pistachio pudding mix
3 scant cups of milk

Mix above according to directions on box.

Add 1 big Cool Whip
(left off: angel food cake, Heath bars)

Slice 1 loaf-size angel food cake. Spread pudding mix over 1st layer, after putting 2nd layer on, frost top & sides with above. Crumble 3 Heath bars & put on top. Best if made a day ahead and refrigerated.

Leprechaun Libation (St. Patrick's Punch)

Put softened ½ gallon of lime sherbet in punch bowl. Add 32 oz. bottle each of 7-Up & Ginger-ale. (Vodka is optional!)

And the following is my favorite recipe in the book, not for what it includes, but for what it leaves out. The ingredients list was a puzzle until I read the entire recipe. It is written exactly as it appears in the cook book.

Holiday Sauerkraut

1 lb. can sauerkraut (drained)
1 lb. can tomatoes (chopped)

Sauté in butter 2 or 3 chopped onions, & 1 chopped green pepper, small can of mushrooms (drained). Add caraway seed, sugar if you like. Combine in casserole & bake 350° for 1 hour covered; then ½ hour uncovered.

If any readers were once members of the Mar-Moor Estates Garden Club or know anything about it, a note to the author would be much appreciated.





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