

Currents

The Newsletter of the Center for Great Lakes Culture

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August 2004

Announcing Great Lakes Folk Festival 2004!

This free, unique fusion of arts fair, music festival, county fair, multi-ethnic festival, hands-on activity workshops and celebration of cultural heritage will be held Aug 13-15, 2004 in downtown East Lansing.

The Great Lakes Folk Festival showcases the traditional cultural treasures of the nation's Upper Midwest and a sampling of the best of traditional artists from around the country and the world.

The festival encourages cross-cultural understanding of our diverse society through the presentation of musicians, dancers, cooks, storytellers and craftspeople whose traditions are rooted in their communities.

The festival includes 100 musicians or dancers in groups who perform at least twice and sometimes as many as four times over the weekend, traditional and other food vendors, craft vendors and many other individual artists/demonstrators. There are five performance stages (including one with a 2,400 sq. ft. dance floor), a children's hands-on activity area, crafts demonstrations, and crafts marketplace. In addition there are special programs every year, which feature some aspect of traditional culture.



► More information on the Great Lakes Folk Festival can be found at the official website of the Festival, www.greatlakesfolkfest.net.



Under the direction of the MSU Museum's Michigan Traditional Arts Program--a statewide partnership program with the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (MCACA)--the festival also represents partnerships of civic, business, education and arts agencies. Collaborators for planning the Great Lakes Folk Festival include: The City of East Lansing, WKAR/Radio, MATRIX: The Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences Online, The Ten Pound Fiddle, Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Michigan Humanities Council, and provincial and state folk arts programs of the Great Lakes region. The Center for Great Lakes Culture will also play a key role in shaping the GLFF with a diverse array of the experiences, expressions and the vitality of traditional cultures in America.

GLFF Showcases Nearly 50 Music & Dance Performances

The festival showcases performers who learned their skills within distinct communities and remain rooted in those communities. Their exposure to performance skills is usually at an early age, learned firsthand (often within their own families) and what they perform is an integral part of their particular culture.

In this modern world, traditional musicians have easy access to other music styles beside their own and their music often incorporates new influences. They often perform for audiences outside their own community. But the core of what traditional musicians do continues to be the music that expresses the aesthetics and musicality of their community.

This festival presents artists who best maintain their allegiance to their traditional roots. For more information on 2004 performers go to the Great Lakes Folk Festival Website at: www.greatlakesfolkfest.net.



The Center for
MSU Museum
Michigan State
University Museum
East Lansing, MI
48824
greatlakes@cal.msu.edu
www.greatlakes.msu.edu

CGLC EVENTS

Aug 13-15
East Lansing, MI
Great Lakes Folk Festival

REGIONAL EVENTS

Aug 8
Skokie Public Library
Skokie, IL
Songs and Images of Mexican Labor in Illinois

Aug 12-14
Cheboygan, MI
US Cost Guard Mackinaw Reunion

Aug 14-15
Pointe Aux Barques Light Station, MI
Heritage Days

Aug 19-22
Mackinac Island, MI
Getaway to Mackinac Island
Motor coach tour from Cleveland to Mackinac Island.

Aug 20-22
Dunkirk NY
Dunkirk Lighthouse Festival

Aug 22
Toledo, OH
Toledo Harbor Light Cruise aboard the Sandpiper to see Toledo Harbor Light.

Aug 21
Houghton, MI
Lighthouse Extraganza Cruise
Keweenaw Excursions

Sept 1-2
Algoma & Kewaunee, WI
Lakeshore Maritime Heritage Festival & Lighthouse Walk

Sept 8
Palatine, IL
Lighthouse Legends

Sept 8-29
Bayfield, WI
Annual Apostle Island Lighthouse Days



Dr. C. Kurt Dewhurst, Director

In You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of Imagination, edited by Katherine Harmon, Steven S. Hall has written, "Like Memory, geography is associative. In this process I call orienting we all carry a personal atlas in our brains (which obliges this psychic gazetteering because it happens to be the most sophisticated, supple map-making device ever created)." The Center for Great Lakes Culture continues to explore the personal geographies that shape the identity of our region. In recent months, the Center Steering Committee has initiated some new projects to better understand the history and cultural life the Great Lakes region.

One project involves the development of a new film series on the history of the Great Lakes region. Working with David Mrazek, and independent film producer in California, a multi-part documentary series of films is in development designed to provide a broad treatment of the sweep of history of life in this region. Center advisors are playing a role as advisors in this new series that will be designed to be used with high schools and the general public audience.

Another new project is a traveling exhibition on the natural and cultural experience of life on the islands of the Great Lakes region. Dr. Karen

Vigmostat is working with Dr. Gail Vander Stoep and me on this project that will focus on a selected group of islands in the Great Lakes to convey the diversity of both natural and cultural life on these islands via photographs, fieldwork interviews, artwork, and archival records. This exhibit will be done in cooperation with the Michigan State University Museum.

The Center has launched work on a conference on Great Lakes Foodways to be held in East Lansing, Michigan in fall of 2005 or early in 2006. Center Advisors, Drs. Yvonne Lockwood and Peter Berg, are leading this effort. It promises to be groundbreaking regional food conference exploring the food traditions of the Great Lakesregion.

In this newsletter, you will find profiles of the 2004 CGLC Annual Awards for Best Books (fiction, poetry, and non-fiction) and Best Exhibition. In each of these works, the associative power of geography is very apparent. Whether it be a history of early settlement, summer camp experience, or automotive culture, these authors and curators contribute to our shared understanding of the place we call the Great Lakes.

I want to invite you to share updates on your work on the Great Lakes. Join us as we seek to more effectively "map" the cultural expressions of the Great Lakes.

 Collections

Web Site Review: Cleveland Memory Project

www.clevelandmemory.org

This deep and well-stocked site provides access to resources from the Cleveland State University Library's special collections. Here one can browse a massive archive of thousands of images, including the Cleveland Press Collection, a newspaper archive of 500,000 photographs (about 1700 of which can be browsed and searched here), and the Cleveland Union Terminal Collection, including hundreds of photographs chronicling the construction of the Terminal Tower project in the 1920s. The site also features some three dozen online galleries and collections, including a valuable online finding aid to the Annals of Cleveland (a Depression-era index of early Cleveland newspapers), ethnic histories of Hungarian and Irish populations in the city and of their artistic and cultural activities (with a remarkable set of images from the cultural gardens collection). The site also provides a growing electronic book collection consisting of HTML-rendered pages of historical books about Cleveland and its communities. Site navigation is generally quite good and predictable, with minimal-click access to inner pages and resources. Metadata and cataloguing information accompanying digital materials is full and useful, with some exceptions for earlier images that would require additional background research to locate more detailed information. Some inner pages containing small collections of links to related photographs do not link back to previous pages and have not been updated in a while. Of special interest to teachers and students are the online exhibits that recombine materials from within the collections, an indication of tremendous potential that online repositories can offer to users. Eventually, one hopes that the CSU library will enable visitors to create their own on-site secondary collections of links within these resources, which could form a valuable and unique finding aid for others to follow.



Sept 10-12

East Coast Wisconsin
2nd Annual Lakeshore
Maritime Heritage
Festival & Lighthouse
Walk
The Lakeshore
communities of
Algoma, Kewaunee,
Two Rivers,
Manitowoc,
Sheboygan and Port
played an important
role in Wisconsin's
maritime history.

Sept 15

Skokie Public Library
Skokie, IL
*Songs and Images of
Mexican Labor in
Illinois*

Sept 16

Wood River, IL
Lighthouse Legends

Sept 16

Ellwood House
Museum
Dekalb, IL
*Generations of
Gentility: Illinois
Women in Song*

Sept 17

Jacksonville, IL
Lighthouse Legends

Sept 17-Oct 24

Goderich, Ontario
Marine Heritage Festival

Sept 18

Big Sable Lighthouse
Ludington, MI
Bus Day to Big Sable
from Ludington State
Park.

Sept 19

Toledo, OH
Toledo Harbor Light
Cruise aboard the
Sandpiper to see
Toledo Harbor Light.

Sept 19

Southern Illinois
University
Springfield, IL
Dennis Stroughmatt,
Words, Wood, and Wire
exhibit.
Southern Illinois
history through the
use of songs, musical
instruments, and a
variety of audiovisual
displays.

Sept 25

Houghton, MI
Fall color tour and
sight seeing of ten
Keweenaw Peninsula
lighthouses aboard
the Keweenaw Star.

Winners of Fourth Annual Awards Competition

Outstanding books and museum exhibition celebrate unique culture of region

The Center for Great Lakes Culture at Michigan State University has announced the winners of the fourth annual Great Lakes Culture Awards. The awards recognize books and museum exhibitions that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of the cultures of the Great Lakes region.

The nomination deadline for next year's competition is Dec. 1; nominations should be made directly to the Center for Great Lakes Culture. Further information is available at <http://www.greatlakes.msu.edu>.

CGLC BEST BOOK AWARD FOR NON-FICTION: *The Living Great Lakes: Searching for the Heart of the Inland Seas* by Jerry Dennis, published by Thomas Dunne Books, 2003. This book by a Michigan author is one of the most complete books ever written about the history, nature and science of the remarkable Great Lakes. Among its numerous positive reviews is this one from Booklist: "Dennis surveys the Inland Seas through the viewpoint of his lake-faring rambles in three different vessels: schooner, racing yacht, and voyageur canoe. As he passes the numerous spectacular sights the Great Lakes afford sailors, Dennis recalls their associated history in a vibrant blend of personal observation and geological, historical, and environmental anecdote."

CGLC BEST BOOK AWARD FOR FICTION: *How to Fly* by Rachael Perry. Published by Carnegie Mellon University Press in 2004, this collection of stories recounts the lives of healers, ice sculptors, visionaries and rainmakers in Michigan. Perry is an important up-and-coming writer who explores the lives of the people of the Great Lakes region in sensitive and perceptive ways.

CGLC BEST BOOK AWARD FOR POETRY: *You Can't Go Back, Exactly*, by Louis Daniel Brodsky. First published in 1989 and republished by Time Being Books in 2003, this volume of poetry describes the experience of youthful summers in Wisconsin at Camp Nebagamon for Boys. The poems capture the camp experience and the lasting impact of this popular phenomenon in the Great Lakes region.

CGLC BEST EXHIBIT AWARD: "Shared Waters: Natives and French Newcomers on the Great Lakes," an exhibition sponsored and exhibited by the Fort Miami Heritage Society in St. Joseph, Michigan. Although the exhibit focuses on events in the coastal region of southwest Michigan, specifically Fort Miami and Fort St. Joseph, its subject is regional in scope, addressing interactions between native nations and the French as they moved through the Great Lakes region to develop trade, establish missions and colonize this part of the "New World." The exhibition also serves as a catalyst for the presentation and discussion of themes and issues of cultural diversity and inclusiveness.

"There is a growing body of new work on the culture of the Great Lakes and creative expressions related to life in this region. This group of awardees represents a rich resource for those interested in better understanding life and the people of the Great Lakes region,"
- C. Kurt Dewhurst, CGLC Director

INSIDE CGLC

Conference to Explore Foodways of the Great Lakes Region

The Center for Great Lakes Culture will be presenting a conference on the food traditions of the region in the fall of 2005 or winter 2006. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear academic papers, presentations on regional foods, and to taste samples of selected foods from the region. The conference will also include opportunities to learn more about the of Michigan State University Library's nationally recognized recipe book collections and the foodways collections of oral histories and related documentation of the Michigan State University Museum Traditional Arts Archives. A special tour of selected sites in Greater Detroit and East Lansing will also be included.

The conference co-chairs are Dr. Peter Berg, Director of Special Collections, MSU Libraries, and Dr. Yvonne Lockwood, Curator of Folklife, Michigan State University Museum. Both also serve as Advisors to the Center for Great Lakes Culture.

More information on the conference registration will be released in late fall 2004. Watch the CGLC web site for details.

Oct 1

Southern Illinois University Springfield, IL
Banjovi, Words, Wood, and Wire exhibit.
 Southern Illinois history through the use of songs, musical instruments, and a variety of audiovisual displays.

Oct 5

First Presbyterian Church Chicago Heights, IL
Folk Songs of the Great Lakes Region

Oct 5-10

Manitowoc, WI
Manitowoc Submarine & Shipyard Workers Reunion

Oct 8-10

Alpena, MI
Alpena Lighthouse Festival

Oct 23

Port Huron, MI
Port Huron Marine Mart
 Buy and sell books and other Great Lakes shipping memorabilia.

Further events and a continuously updated calendar can be found on CGLC's web site at: greatlakes.msu.edu/calendar/

Communities and Culture: Creating and Sustaining Communities

The Center for Great Lakes Culture has been collaborating with the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs and the Salzburg Seminar to develop a series of seminars to address and identify key strategies that foster engagement of communities in the arts, specifically marginalized communities. This will include strategies that increase access to cultural resources, develop effective leadership for cultural workers and cultural administrators, and carry out capacity building measures that maximize the creative potential by identifying and tapping into individual, institutional and community resources.

In Fall of 2005 or early 2006, the Salzburg Seminar will convene an international group of cultural workers, artists, community development practitioners, scholars, foundation representatives, and corporate and political leaders. The session will examine how culture defines and reaffirms communities, promote best practices, and energize individuals and organizations dedicated to empowering communities through the arts. It is hoped that this will be the first of a series of sessions.

The initial session will provide 40 cultural workers, artists, scholars, and community, foundation, corporate and political leaders an educational, practical forum for discussion and shared expertise addressing many of the challenges associated with communities and the arts. Themes for discussion will include:

- community empowerment strategies and the interplay and interaction between authentic communities and cultural institutions;
- relevancy and sustainability of both the cultural activity to the community and
- the cultural organization itself;
- the need to develop new cultural policy that highlights cultural democracy, diversity, and the necessity to give access to multiple voices; and
- the necessity for skills retooling of cultural workers and cultural administrators.

Format for Seminar sessions is plenary lectures by renowned faculty followed by small-group work and informal optional meetings. For this session, small group work will take the form of reflective art-making and experiential work. Emphasis will be placed on the discussion of issues and solutions rather than presentations. Participants, or Fellows, will be INTERNATIONAL mid-career cultural workers and artists who can benefit from global exposure as well as community, foundation, corporate and political leaders and future leaders. Because of the Seminar's international reputation, admission to sessions is highly selective. For this session, the Seminar will recruit and accept applications primarily, but not exclusively, from cultural institutions, community development organizations, academia, government and arts policy-making entities (local, STATE, national and international ARTS AND CULTURAL AGENCIES), and business. Geographic distribution will be widespread. More information on this seminar series will be shared on the CGLC web site in the coming months.



The Center for Great Lakes Culture
 Michigan State University Museum
 East Lansing, MI 48824
greatlakes@cal.msu.edu
greatlakes.msu.edu

Name
 Organization
 Address
 City, State Zip