the Society News

Vol. 2 No. 1

PO Box 44 Harsens Island MI 48028 www.HISCFHS.org Email@hiscfhs.org Editor: Michele Komar

HISCFHS Board of Directors

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Jan 22, 2011 General Meeting 2pm @ Lions Hall a publication of the Harsens Island – St. Clair Flats Historical Society

January 2011

from the president

Just got that E-mail again from our Editor Michele Komar, "Hi Gary, it's that time". Why is it that we put off what we know has to be done? I responded to Michele with you will have it by Wednesday. I guess that is just human nature. So let me begin by wishing everyone a very happy holiday season and a prosperous New Year. Looking back over 2010 our Society has grown to over one hundred members. One hundred four to be exact, of which, fifty five are Charter Members. Because of a decision at our first meeting in December of 2009 to have Charter Memberships we now have a substantial balance in our bank account. We have outgrown our first By-laws and the By-laws committee I appointed last October has nearly completed their revisions. The committee will present our new proposed By-laws to the Board on January 6, 2011. If all goes well a mailing will be made to the entire membership and be voted on at our General Membership Meeting on January 22, 2011. A lot of hard work has gone into our new proposed By-laws; we are a very different Society then the group that said OK to our first By-laws back in the early days of 2010.

I could spend a lot of time writing about what has been done during 2010, but that would just be a rehash of what you already know. What is going to happen in the new decade we enter in 2011 is what I choose to write about this month. 2011 will be the year that either makes or breaks your Society. It will prove to everyone who has already joined our Society and those still to join that we are for real. So get ready to put on your old clothes, the ones you save to paint in. At the December Board meeting it was decided to try to lease the Fire Hall and spend some of our funds. Bernard Licata was given authority to act on behalf of the Society, contact the present owners and see if they would lease the building to the Society. He was met with a favorable response from the owners and told to contact Pat Smith their agent. This was done and a lease agreement drawn up for a period of twelve months, beginning March 1, 2011. We have a home for at least a year at a cost we can afford. Now we must get busy and come up with the necessary funds to purchase the Fire Hall at the end of our lease. This will truly be the decade of change for your Society. We are for real not a *cont. pg 4*

Billboard Magazine Chronicles the Decline of Tashmoo Park - Part 2

While doing some research on Tashmoo Park, your editor came across a series of snippets published from 1943 through 1957 in Billboard magazine. Billboard was founded in 1894. Originally titled Billboard Advertising it was a trade paper for the bill posting industry. Within a few years of its founding, it began to carry news of outdoor amusements, a major consumer of billboard space. Eventually Billboard became the paper of record for circuses, carnivals, amusement parks, fairs, vaudeville, and other live entertainment. The magazine began coverage of motion pictures in 1909 and of radio in the 1920s. From 1961 through today, Billboard is devoted entirely to the music industry. This is Part 2 of a two part series.

Aug. 13, 1948 – Roller Rink Doubles Biz on Mich. Island

DETROIT, Aug. 6.-Addition of a roller skating rink to the picnic facilities at Tashmoo Park on Harsens Island has meant an increase of 100 per cent in business over the last year, according to Harold Lightbody, vice-president of the operating company. The park in the St. Clair River delta, 40 miles northeast of Detroit was at one time one of the major amusement parks in the Motor City area, with daily service by three or more boats from Detroit and Port Huron. It had been closed for some time.

Last year, it was operated strictly as a picnic park by the then new owners, headed by Don Zimmer, of the Don Zimmer Trailer Company, and Lightbody. This season, the former pavilion type ballroom, closed for several years, has been restored and converted to a skating rink, with juke music.

Actual operations on the island, accessible by car and ferry from the mainland, are in charge of Peter Krispin. Plans for next year call for continued operation primarily as a picnic park. The spot is situated in the heart of the St. Clair Flats, famed resort area.

Sept. 11, 1948 – Michigan Showman's Association, 3153 Cass Ave, Detroit

Mr. and Mrs. John McKee, McKee Shows, Wayne, Mich.; Jack and Bessie Gallagher, at Tashmoo Park, while the Playland Shows were playing there.

Nov. 6, 1948 – Paul Greeley, business manager of Tashmoo Park, Harsens Island, has joined the promotional staff of the Zimmer Trailer Company as contact man with show people.

June 11, 1949 – Plans for Tashmoo Park, former major funspot on Harsens Island in the St. Clair River, remain uncertain. Spot was taken over last year by a group headed by Don Zimmer. Paul Greeley, business manager for Zimmer, says the spot may be converted into a trailer camp.

Dec. 17, 1949 – Tashmoo Funspot, Detroit, May Be Launched in 1950

DETROIT, Dec. 10.-Plans for the reopening of Tashmoo Park on Harsens Island at the mouth of the St. Clair River, 40 miles north of Detroit, are being made for 1950. Key factor is the tentative plan of the Detroit & Cleveland Navigation Company, major passenger ship operators on the Great Lakes, to operate one ship a day, with a possible second if traffic warrants, to the island, giving daily service for the first time in a decade.

Accessible only by a boat, the park gradually ceased operation as a full scale amusement operation, and became a picnic spot only. Present plans include installation of rides and other regular park attractions.

Feb. 4, 1950 – Tashmoo Re-Opening Plans Hit By Zimmer's Illness

DETROIT, Jan. 28.-Plans for the reopening of Tashmoo Park on Harsens Island have been deferred by the illness of Don Zimmer, president of the operating company. Zimmer, now in Fort Myers, Fla., is recuperating from a heart attack.

Mrs. Paul Greeley, wife of the park business manager, who doubles as secretary of the Michigan Showman's Association, will visit Zimmer as soon as his condition permits, to confer on plans for the season.

Feb 11, 1950 - Steamer Firm Takes Option on Tashmoo

DETROIT, Feb 4. – Hopes for a revival of the largescale operation of Tashmoo Park on Harsens Island were hypoed this week with the grant of a 60-day option for the sale or lease of the spot to the Ashley & Dustin Steamer Company by Don Zimmer, park owner.

According to Nicholas M. Constans, general manager of the Ashley & Dustin Company, plans are to sublease the park proper. Park has operated only as a picnic spot in recent years. Illness of Zimmer, now in Florida, has been the big factor in delaying 1950 plans. The steamer company plans to operate the steamer Put-In-Bay to the park on a daily schedule, as well as nightly moonlight sailings, Constans said. Additional trips will be made Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays to Port Huron, Mich, with a second boat, the Wayne, to be used as needed to provide additional access to Tashmoo from Detroit as well as Port Huron.

March 18, 1950 - A&D Line Names J. Hoppin

DETROIT, March 11. – John H. Hoppin, former press agent has been named assistant general manager of the Ashley and Dustin Steam Line, which is taking over Tashmoo Park for active operation again this summer.

April 22, 1950 – Detroit's Tashmoo Leases Concessions to Stapleton

DETROIT, April 15 – Concessions at Tashmoo Park here have been leased to Charles Stapleton, merchandise supply man, according to N. M. Constans, park head. Deal was closed this week.

Tashmoo will be revived as a regular amusement park this year for the first time in more than a decade. Constans plans to book rides on a concession or lease basis.

Ad – Rides Wanted for Tashmoo Park. Merry-goround, chairplane, ferris wheel, kiddie rides, etc. Attractive proposition for complete season or long-term lease. Our potential patronage is the Detroit Metropolitan area. Daily cruises from Detroit. N. M. Constans, 120 Bates Street, Detroit 26, Michigan.

May 6, 1950 – Detroit Season Launched Early

DETROIT, April 29.- Local park season got off to an unexpectedly early start with a surprise week-end opening by Walled Lake Park.

At Tashmoo Park in the St. Claire River delta, the new management, headed by N.M. Constans, is converting the steamer Put-In-Bay from coal to oil fuel in preparation for the first season of regular service between the park and Detroit in a decade.

July 15, 1950 (re: July 4)

Detroit Parks found the going a little rough. Turnouts were heavy Monday night but a mid-evening shower killed possibilities. In general, holiday business at Edgewater, Jefferson Beach, Walled Lake and Tashmoo, was no better than a fair Sunday. Spending on concessions was up somewhat, but the over-all picture was held down by the weather.

Nov. 25, 1950 – Hotel Burns at Tashmoo Island Spot – Op Not Planning To Rebuild; Loss May Affect Park

DETROIT, Nov. 18 – The Island House, 103-yearold frame hotel which was the nucleus of Tashmoo Amusement Park near here, was destroyed by fire Saturday night, 3 weeks after it was closed for the season. Firefighting equipment, ferried to Harsens

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Island in the St Clair delta, where the hotel was located, failed to save the property.

George Haddad, owner, said he does not plan to rebuild. Loss of the hotel and its bar and restaurant may be a blow to the park, taken over last season by N.M. Constans, who planned a major expansion program.



Aug 12, 1950 – Arley Fleming May Take Post As Detroit Op

DETROIT, Aug 5. – Arley Fleming, former operator, former operator of Tashmoo Park near here, may return as manager, according to Nick Constans, new owner.

Constans has been a ship operator and uses the S. S. Put-In_Bay to carry patrons to the island spot. He plans to turn the park over to an experienced amusement operator. Fleming operated Tashmoo as a picnic spot until Constans reopened it this year as an amusement park.

Showboat cruises aboard the Put-In-Bay were started this week and will run on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday nights. About 650 persons took the \$2 trip on each of the first two nights. Billed as Captain Andy's Moonlight Showboat, the offering is a minstrel show produced by Stuart F. Piggins and featuring Frances Kaye, Rose Lumetta, John LaDuke and William Glaza.

Constans said public interest in the park is growing and that a major revival is anticipated next year.

Mar 11, 1950 - Resume Boat Service To Detroit

DETROIT, March 4.-Resumption of boat service to Tashmoo Park was confirmed Thursday (2) by Nicholas M Constans, president of the Ashley & Dustin Steamer Line, who has an option on the park. Closing of a deal for purchase of the park from the Zimmer Trailer interests is expected soon.

The Put-In-Bay, formerly in Lake Erie service, will be used for daily runs to the park from Detroit, Constans said. Deal was signed Wednesday with the city for lease of dock frontage and offices at the foot of Bates Street, until the property is taken for a future civic center project.

May 20, 1950 – Alexon Manages Tashmoo Spot

DETROIT, May 13.-Appointment of James Alexon, former carnival ride operator, as manager of Tashmoo Amusement Park at Sans Souci near here was announced this week by N. M. Constans, head of the Ashley & Dustin Steamship Line. The latter has taken over the park and is readying it for the first season of park-scale operation in more than a decade. Alexon had an Octupus with the Playland Shows last season.

Existing and new buildings will be used. Plans are being made to add rides and concessions as well as a roller rink.

Park's formal opening probably will be held in early June. However, inauguration of steamer service from Detroit has advanced actual opening. Picnics are booked for Fridays and Saturdays starting this week although the bulk of major facilities will not be ready until after Decoration Day. A program to reacquaint the public with the park will be launched at that time.

June 24, 1950 – New Ops Add Rides for Bow At Tashmoo – Cele Marks Grand Opening

DETROIT, June 17. – Informal opening of Tashmoo Park on Harsens Island at the mouth of the St. Clair River, was held yesterday, marking the return of this spot to regular park operation for the first time in over a decade.

In recent seasons it has been principally a picnic park but a construction program has been underway for several months to rebuild and install attractions to make __ general park under new owners, Ashley & Dustin Steamship Company. Nicholas M. Constans, company president, is in charge of operations.

Grand opening will be held a ___ private cruise June 24, when the steamer Put-In-Bay, makes its ____ trip on a regular schedule, continuing on to Port Huron and return. ___ date with tickets restricted to members of the Marine, Detroit and Michigan Historical societies and with special events program.

Being installed are an Octopus, owned by James Alexon, park manager, and a Merry-Go-Round, owned by Tony Carlton. Some additional rides are to be booked.

Attractions policy has been made with Hill's Society Circus, including two elephants, and a dog and pony act, booked in for the season, owned by Bill Hill, played ___ Garden Bros. Circus in Canada.

Feb. 24, 1951 – Tashmoo Spot Up For Sale

DETROIT, Feb. 17.-Tashmoo Park, pioneer local area spot in Lake St. Clair, will remain closed this season, according to present plans, and is being put up for sale by the Zimmer Trailer interests, who own the site.

The park was operated with a minimum of rides and concessions last season by the Ashley Dustin Steamer Line, with excursion service on the S. S. Put-In-Bay seven days a week, for the first time in many years. The results, however, proved so unprofitable that Nicholas M. Constans, president of the ship company, dropped the venture and returned the park property to the owners.

The Put-In-Bay will return to her old run, providing regular direct service to Cedar Point, O., three days a week, to Put-In-Bay, O., four days and on Saturdays to Port Huron, Mich. This will give Detroit direct access to two major park areas in Ohio for the first time in three years.

March 3, 1951 -

Still in the discussion stage is excursion boat service out of Detroit, Toledo and Cleveland. Melrose Management took over here too late last year to arrange boat bookings but will seek such arrangements for 1951. Steamer Put-In-Bay, which last season operated between Detroit and Taskmoo Park, will bring 2,500 students here from Toledo June 19. (Cedar Point)

June 13, 1953 – Tashmoo Stays Closed

DETROIT, June 6.-Tashmoo Amusement Park, on an island in Lake St. Clair, will remain closed for a second season, according to present plans of the owners. Sale of the boat which previously ran to the island has ended mass transportation facilities for the spot. ad from 1950

TASHMOO PARK

Sans Souci, Mich.

This old established park, with an enviable reputation, will reopen with daily boat trips from DETROIT and PORT HURON: featuring large industrial picnics, celebrations and special events.

Excellent proposition for MERRY-GO-ROUND FERRIS WHEEL KIDDIE RIDES

All Merchandise Concessions open. Food Concession on boat also open.

A wonderful opportunity for **ROLLER RINK OPERATOR**

Must hear from you immediately, No phone calls or wires.

James Alexon, Gen. Mgr Box 84 San Souci, Mich.

from the president cont. from page 1

not a group that just holds meetings and talks a lot. Like I said, get your old clothes ready with your help we can get the Fire Hall ready to hold our March General Meeting and fundraiser, it will be special.

What else will happen in 2011, the first year of our decade of change, is up to each and everyone one of you. Our new By-laws will call for an election of a new Board of Directors. That will happen in August at our Annual Meeting. Some of our present board members may choose to run again. Others will choose to only support our Society and let others take up the torch. Between now and that meeting in August of 2011 there is a lot to do. I hope to see you at our January General Meeting; we have a lot to talk about and a lot to get done in 2011.

- Gary Grout



From a 2005 online Auction from Hake's Collectibles. It sold for \$121.64.

7/8" with c. 1896 Whitehead & Hoag backpaper also reading "We Are Going To Tashmoo Park 9 A.M." Beautiful sky and green trees plus large pavilion with American flag on rooftop. Foreground rear view of 3 girls with skirts pulled up and 3 boys with rolled pants legs, all wading in wavy water. From Michigan.

Fact and Romance of Harsens Island Indians Loved It Old Mother Rood and Her Dead Papoose Harsen Homestead Tragedy Part 2

The Society President, Gary Grout, has contributed an article printed over 100 years ago. As it is rather lengthy, we will print it in installments. Here is Part 2 from the *Detroit News Tribune*, Aug. 30, 1896, page 16:

There is an oil painting hanging in the legislative hall at Lansing of a picturesque character and a typical specimen of the Indian woman of half a century ago who was well known to all the pioneer residents of Harsen's Island. Old Mother Rood belonged to the Chippewa tribe. Her home was on the Indian reservation south of Sarnia. She died at Port Huron several years ago at the age of 115.

Let me describe her from memory. Short and squat of figure, a square bronzed face with narrow black eves glittering between the half-closed lids, high cheek bones, long, coarse black hair plaited in a thick braid which hung down her back and great brass hoop rings in her ears. Her broad flat feet were encased with buckskin moccasins, decorated with colored porcupine quills and beads. Above these were the wide bead embroidered broadcloth leggings, which reached to the ankles and flapped back and forth with a regular movement as she walked. The narrow skirt of the same material, elaborately trimmed and fringed with beads, reached just below the knee. Overlapping this for a short distance below the waistline was a blouse, or "short gown" as the residents called it, made of gaudy, large-patterned calico. Around her neck were many strings of beads of all colors and sizes hanging low down in front over the blouse. And outside of all this was the heavy woolen blanket, spread out to its full size over the head and shoulders, drawn tightly across the back and held together in front with her large copper-colored hands. A great bundle of baskets, or corn husk and rush mats, was held in place by a band of bark across the forehead.

Happy were the little Island children when they were allowed to swap a loaf of quash-e-gttn (bread), a piece of cocoosh (pork) or a pan of nip-po-nin (flour) for a bright colored dinner or work basket. And happier yet when they saw the old dame pitch her camp in the edge of the apple orchard near the beach. Then it was "hurrah" for the succotash feast which they knew awaited them.

In front of the camp on the clean white sand she built her fire. From a pole resting on two crotched sticks driven into the ground hung the polished brass kettle containing the savory mess. Old Mother Rood was scrupulously clean and when the luscious succotash was dished up with the wooden spoon into the bright tin cups, the most fastidious guest could not resist her hospitality.

On rare occasions during the sugar season there was added as dessert the little birch bark mokoks filled with powdered maple sugar.

The Grave in the Woods

Hanging from the limb of a nearby apple tree was the bark hammock in which the little papoose, wrapped like a mummy in blankets, was fastened with strips of tanned deerskin. Back from the river a short distance, under one of the largest apple trees, was a little mound which marked the resting place of another papoose who had roamed over the happy hunting grounds for many moons.

With the opening of the apple blossoms each year, old Mother Rodd made her appearance and celebrated the anniversary over that little mound with the customary pow-wow, chanting songs and indulging freely in "santa -waba".

Two or three days were spent in this manner until her voice became weak and the firewater gave out, when she would cover the grave with Indian food and leave it until the apple blossoms came again.

Next month: The story of the Harsen Homestead Tragedy



This is not Mother Rood but I had a space to fill!



Calling All Aspiring Storytellers

Do you have a family story to tell? Any skeletons to rattle? Do you have a passion for the Island you want to share?

Maybe some old time photos? Email us at <u>Email@hiscfhs.org</u>

July 1923 Metropolitan Section (News Tribune?)

SOUVENIR HUNTERS TAKE INDIAN RELICS THAT U. OF M. MUSEUM WOULD TREASURE

Skeletons Found on Harsen's Island at Least 250 Years Old

Expert opinion now attributes an age of 250 years or more to some of the older Indian remains and relics uncovered within the last two weeks on Harsen's Island, half mile north of Tashmoo Park.

As soon as officials at the museum of the University of Michigan were informed of the rich strike of relics they rushed one of the experts, **E**. F. Greenman to the scene. He arrived too late to see some of the most interesting finds, which souvenir hunters had carried off, but he was able to dig up other material on the same Indian burial ground which he stated to be of great value from the archeological viewpoint.

Fifteen skeletons and skulls have been found, and a large assortment of articles buried with the Indians. Each one of which offers an illuminating clue regarding the life and history of the redskins who inhabited this part of the country 200 or more years ago.

"It is my opinion that Capt. William Smith's property, Harsen's Island, was a camping and burial ground used by the Indians for generations, very probably as long as there have been Indians in this part of the country, asserted Mr. Greenman, after carefully investigating.

Canoe Traffic Heavy.

"There was undoubtedly a great deal of canoe traffic between Lake St. Clair and Lake Huron in prehistoric times and this knoll which is said to be the highest point on Harsen's Island, offered a convenient stopping place between the two lakes.

"There is a tradition among the people on Harsen' s Island that Fr. Marquette, the brave French missionary, who traveled from Quebec down the Mississippi as far as Memphis, stopped on the island during the trip.

"There are no indications that the site is a part of ancient mound culture, examples of which were existing near the mouth of the River Rouge until recent times. The site of the excavation is not an artificial mound such as existed in great numbers on the old Hubbard estate in Detroit near the present Michigan Central depot. The place is merely a natural rise in the ground about four feet high --probably a sand deposit of glacial origin or deposited by ancient wave action.

"A very interesting thing was found and put in cases with labels classifying them according to classic on Indian archeology.

"But now through carelessness and idle unthinking curiosity, many valuable specimens and much important information has been lost. Found in one of the graves is a piece of what I take to be copper ore. It is a specimen of fine copper, weighing about three pounds, far away from its point of original derivation. This illustrates the traffic which went on between distant sections of the country.

"Such traffic undoubtedly did exist between even such far removed regions as Wyoming and New Jersey."

15 Skeletons Found.

"It is to be greatly regretted that an archeologist was not called as soon as it became apparent that an Indian burying ground had been discovered. Fifteen skeletons were unearthed with accompanying pottery, beads and other trinkets and immediately seized upon by relic-hunters, who took them piece by piece, in all directions. In two weeks they will tire of looking at them and give them to the children to play with or put them up in the attic. The collection intact would have been invaluable to the museum at the University of Michigan. Thus the finds would have been the Michigan Indian of 200 years ago has been forever lost."

Mr. Greenman's trip to Harsen's Island was not without result, however. Six cases full of material were gathered and shipped to the university .

He stated that two distinct periods were represented in the finds. Old crumbling bones and relics date back several hundred years. Then a later period was also represented. Bone beads were found, but also glass ones. A pewter dish was excavated, also gun flints, a rosary cross covered with verdigris and copper utensils.

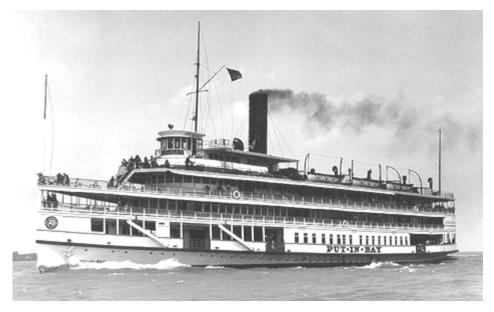
Jacob Harsen, asserted Mr. Greenman, came from Holland and settled on the island about 1787. He traded with the Indians, specializing in guns, as he was a gunsmith. His son, grandfather of Capt. James Stewart of Algonac, was Indian interpreter for Gov. Lewis Cass. The island was granted to the original Harsen as a gift by the British.

HISCFHS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME:	Annual Membership Dues renewable March 15
SUMMER ADDRESS:	renewable March 15
CITY: <u>Harsens Island</u> STATE: <u>MI</u> ZIP: <u>48028</u>	Individual: \$15.00
HOME PHONE:	Family: \$20.00
CELL:	Business: \$25.00
E-MAIL ADDRESS:	Patron: \$25.00
MANENT ADDRESS: Life Membership	
CITY:	Life Individual: \$150.00
STATE: ZIP:	Life Family: \$200.00
PERMANENT PHONE:	Benefactor: \$500
PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND WITH CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO:	Building Fund Donation
HISCFHS	Amount: \$
P.O. BOX 44	Ainount. ş
HARSENS ISLAND. MI 48028	

The HISCFHS is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Put-In-Bay



America was dance-mad in 1911. Oliver S. Dustin, general manager of the Ashley & Dustin Line, saw the way the winds of the new decade were blowing. He wanted a dancing ship. He got it too, in the Put-in-Bay. The central portion of the promenade deck was devoted to the ballroom. On a ship that measured 240 feet from bow to stern and 60 feet across the beam, that was a lot of dance floor. Dustin also arranged for sliding glass doors around the dance area. It could be shut off from stormy winds without impairing the dancers' view.

The rival was the Tashmoo that went into service 10 years before Put-in-Bay and competed for its passengers. Their regular runs kept them apart. The Tashmoo headed upstream to the St. Clair Flats and Port Huron, while the Putin-Bay was going down to Lake Erie.

After the Tashmoo sank in 1936, the Put-In-Bay took over the bulk of the service for the Flats. The Put-in-Bay was sold for scrap in 1953, towed into Lake St. Clair and burned so its steel hull could be recycled. Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society PO Box 44 Harsens Island MI 48028

The Society 2011 Meeting Dates

Board Meetings – Readers Cove Membership Meetings – Lions		<u>Lions Club</u>	
January 6	2 PM	January 22	2 PM
February 12	2 PM	February 26	2 PM
March 12	2 PM	March 26	2 PM
April 9	2 PM	April 23	2 PM
May 7	9 AM	May 28	9:30 AM
June 4	9 AM	June 25	9:30 AM
July 2	9 AM	July 23	9:30 AM
August 6	9 AM	August 27	ANNUAL MEETING
September 10	2 PM	September 24	2 PM
October 8	2 PM	October 22	2 PM
November 12	2 PM	November 26	2 PM
December 10	2 PM	December	No Meeting

Meeting dates may be subject to change