

The SOCIETY PAGES

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Grand Opening Celebration

by *Bernard Licata*

We had 323 visitors tour the Museum on Opening Day...from Ribbon Cutting at 12:00 Noon to 4:00 PM. We had another 15 or 20 stragglers who looked through the Museum while clean-up was underway.

It looks like we added 21 new members and some donations to the Building Fund.

Special thanks to our Event Chairman, **Ruth Roth**, and her team that included: **Kathy O'Connor, Barbara Persyn, Doris Jackson, Doreen Miller, Marie Eidt, and Nancy & Bernard Licata.** Volunteers supporting the foodservice effort were: **Ron Wludyka, Ruth & Ken Roth, Janie & Art Armstrong, Doreen & Chuck Miller, John Eidt** and **Kathy O'Connor.** **Karen Smith** was a trooper...she manned the retail sales counter in the Museum all afternoon and **Gary Grout's** granddaughter, **Cheryl Lynn Dewley,** monitored the flow of traffic into the museum.



Nancy Boulton, left, was presented with a Founders plaque by Gary Grout for her Vision and Determination in getting The Society underway.

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From the President

Now is the time to focus on raising funds to purchase the old Fire Hall. As directed by our membership, the Board of Directors entered into a 12-month lease beginning in March of this year. To make the old Fire Hall a permanent location for our Museum, we must raise \$140,000 as the purchase price. The Society has a pledge from the Karen and Drew Peslar Foundation of \$25,000 toward that goal. We also have received over \$3,000 in additional contributions to our building fund with more to come. We would like to accomplish this by our General Membership Annual Meeting in August.

You will soon receive a fundraising brochure which will be mailed to all property owners on Harsens Island. As a 501(c)(3) your contribution to the building fund can be tax deductible.

One of our major fundraisers is the Rum Runners Party to be held at the Middle Channel Country Club on June 25. Tickets are \$35 per person and tables seating 6 or 8 people are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. A silent auction and 50/50 raffles are being planned and items and services are needed for the auction. 1920's dress is appropriate and prizes will be given for the best dressed. Contact Nancy Licata (810-748-1825) for your dinner tickets and selection of Pickerel or Prime Rib on the menu. See our ad on page 4. We hope to see everyone there!

The Grand Opening of our museum held on May 28 is behind us and the doors are open to the public on weekends from 12-4 pm. Volunteers are needed to staff the museum and should contact

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the Society Pages

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Lucy Burby-Mastro - 810-748-8977

Donations Needed

If you have an item you would like to donate or loan, please call Nancy Boulton at 810-748-3802.

- Tashmoo Park
- Hotels
- Ferry Service
- Bars and Speakeasies
- Ships, Lighthouses
- Coast Guard
- Party/Grocery/Other Businesses
- Marinas/Boats
- Clubs/Organizations
- Schools
- Family History/Photos
- Hunting/Fishing
- Firefighters/Police
- Surrounding Islands
- Reference Materials/Books
- Farms
- DNR
- Churches
- Ice Jams
- Old Club

From the President continued

Nancy Boulton at 810-748-3802 for orientation and assignments.

The only business item conducted at the May 28th General Membership Meeting was to finalize the slate of candidates for next year's Board of Directors. Members who will be voted on to fill the two vacant positions are Nancy Boulton, Otto Jensen and Karen McIntosh. The two candidates elected will serve a three year term. After a call for nominations from the floor, the nominations were closed. Ballots will be available on our web site as well as at the museum a mailing to the membership is being discussed by the Board. The two candidates elected will be announced at the August General Membership Annual Meeting. The new Board will then select its Officers for 2012.

- Gary Grout



HISCFHS Board of Directors

John Chamberlain, John Eidt, Nancy Boulton, Lucy Mastro, Nancy Licata, Bernard Licata, Gary Grout and Chris Wludyka enjoy a sip of champagne at a museum preview on the eve of the Grand Opening Celebration.

Grand Opening Celebration

by Bernard Licata

continued



Distinguished guests included Joanne Shirkey from the Clay Township Board and Township Supervisor, Jay DeBoyer. At noon, we held a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony with Jay DeBoyer doing the honors.

Mike Joye, Firefighter, EMS, Battalion Chief with the St. Clair Shores Fire department and longtime Harsens Island resident conducted the Flag Raising Ceremony with a group of Veterans assisting. Father Sig and Pastor Eldridge offered the Invocation.

We were pleased by the large group that attended from the Algonac-Clay Historical Society.

Dazee the Clown entertained the kids and Randy and son Keith provided musical entertainment with folk music.

The Museum has a small gift shop that features a variety of Island lore such as Tashmoo paperweights, framed Tashmoo Park ride tickets, Historical Society hats and calendars, a replica of the 1914 Steamer Tashmoo Dining Room Menu, First Nation Ojibwa, Native American Educational Books, Video and Children's Crafts as well as a limited number of Native American (Walpole Island) arts & crafts along with art created by member and graphic artist Larry Zelensky that includes note cards and prints of Harsens Island points of interest.



The original 1938 Dedication.



From the 2011 Grand Opening Celebration.

THE ROARING 20s

The Roaring Twenties is a phrase used to describe the 1920s, principally in North America, but also in London, Berlin and Paris. The phrase was meant to emphasize the period's social, artistic, and cultural dynamism. The era was notable by several inventions and discoveries, unprecedented industrial growth, increased consumer demand and aspirations, and significant changes in lifestyle and culture.

The gloom of World War I was over and the spirit of the Roaring Twenties was marked by a break with traditions. New technologies, especially automobiles, moving pictures and radio proliferated. Formal decorative frills were shed in favor of practicality. At the same time, jazz and dancing rose in popularity. As such, the period is also often referred to as the Jazz Age. Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington were nationally known names.

Radio became the first mass broadcasting medium. Radios were expensive, but their mode of entertainment proved innovative. Radio advertising became the means for mass marketing. Mass production made technology affordable to the middle class. The automobile, movie, radio, and chemical industries skyrocketed during the 1920s. Of chief importance was the automobile industry. Before the war, cars were a luxury. In the 1920s, mass-produced vehicles became common throughout the U.S. The automobile industry's effects were widespread, contributing to such industries as highway building, motels, service stations, used car dealerships and new housing outside the range of mass transit.

Hollywood boomed, producing a new form of entertainment that shut down the old vaudeville. Watching a movie was cheap and accessible; crowds surged into new downtown movie palaces and neighborhood theatres, with even greater marvels like sound appearing at the end of the decade.

Telephone lines also were being strung across the continent. Indoor plumbing and modern sewer systems were installed for the first time in many regions.

Immortalized in movies and magazine covers, young women's fashion of the 1920s was both a trend and a social statement, a breaking-off from the rigid Victorian way of life. These young, rebellious, middle-class women, labeled 'flappers' by older generations,

RUN RUNNERS PARTY

To Benefit
The SOCIETY
HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR PLAZA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JUNE 25 2011

Middle Channel Golf & Country Club
2306 Golf Course Road
Harsens Island, MI 48028

6 pm Cocktails - 7 pm Dinner
Prime Rib of Beef or Pickeral

Prohibition Era Attire Suggested: Prizes Awarded to Best Dressed Male, Best Dressed Female & Best Dressed Couple

Charleston Dance Competition & Prizes
Silent Auction - 50/50 Raffles
Musical Entertainment & Dancing

Reservations/Information:
Call Nancy at [810] 748-1825

* After June 18: Tickets \$45

\$35* per person before June 18

All profits go toward The Society's efforts to purchase the San Souci Fire Hall as our permanent home & museum.

did away with the corset and donned slinky knee-length dresses, which exposed their legs and arms. The hairstyle of the decade was a chin-length bob, of which there were several popular variations. Cosmetics, which until the 1920s was not typically accepted in American society because of its association with prostitution, became, for the first time, extremely popular.

Trends and Fads

Mahjonn and Yahtzee
Dancing and Dance Marathons
Flagpole Sitting
Miss America contests
Crossword Puzzles
Book-of-the-Month Club
Time Magazine, Reader's Digest
Charles Lindbergh
Ty Cobb, Babe Ruth



1920's Terminology and Slang

The term *rum-running* is more commonly applied to smuggling over water; *bootlegging* is applied to smuggling over land.

It is believed that the term *bootlegging* originated during the Civil War, when soldiers would sneak liquor into army camps by concealing pint bottles within their boots or beneath their trouser legs. The term *rum-running* most likely originated at the start of Prohibition in the United States (1920–1933), when ships from the western Bahamas transported cheap Caribbean rum to Florida speakeasies. A theory is that the term *speakeasy* was simply derived from a patron's manner of ordering alcohol without raising suspicion—bartenders would tell patrons to be quiet and speak easy.



The term *blind pig* originated in the United States in the 19th century; it was applied to lower-class establishments that sold alcoholic beverages illegally. The operator of an establishment (such as a saloon or bar) would charge customers to see an attraction (such as an animal) and then serve a “complimentary” alcoholic beverage, thus circumventing the law.

The difference between a speakeasy and a blind pig was that a speakeasy was usually a higher-class establishment that offered food and entertainment. In large cities, some speakeasies even required a coat and tie for men, and evening dress for women. But a blind pig was usually a low-class dive where only beer and liquor were offered.

Blind pigs continue to exist in the United States today. Some people sell alcoholic beverages for off-site consumption from their homes (often at double the retail price, or more) during hours when legal sellers are closed by law. ■

ace: one-dollar bill

all wet: incorrect

beat one's gums: idle chatter

belt: a drink of liquor

big cheese: important person

bootleg: illegal liquor

brown: whiskey

brown plaid: Scotch whiskey

bum's rush: ejection by force from an establishment

choice bit of calico: attractive female

clam: a dollar

coffin varnish: bootleg liquor, often poisonous

dead soldier: an empty beer bottle

dogs: feet

doll: an attractive woman

drum: speakeasy

ducky: very good

giggle water: booze

gin mill: a seller of hard liquor; a cheap speakeasy

glad rags: “going out on the town” clothes

hair of the dog (1925): a shot of alcohol

hip to the jive: cool, trendy

hooch: booze

hooy: nonsense; very popular from 1925 to 1930

on the lam: fleeing from police

punch the bag: small talk



Rum-running and Prohibition

Prohibition of alcohol, often referred to simply as prohibition, is the practice of prohibiting the manufacture, transportation, import, export, sale, and consumption of alcohol and alcoholic beverages. The term can also apply to the periods of history during which the prohibition of alcohol was enforced.

Formed in 1896, the Michigan branch of the Anti-Saloon League was the most effective means by those that favored prohibition. Working largely through churches, this group ran a strong campaign against liquor. Backing any candidate that favored prohibition, they soon swayed large blocks of voters to their cause. By 1911, half the counties in Michigan were dry. Michigan led the nation by being the first in the country to become dry on May 1, 1918 a year before the country did in 1919. Michigan was also the first state to vote for the repeal that became effective in 1933.

The Detroit area including the Detroit River up through Lake St. Clair and the Flats continuing up the St. Clair River to Port Huron became the center for smuggling in liquor from Canada. Less than a mile wide in many places, the waterways were home to marinas, shipping ports and thousands of private docks. Much of the shoreline was sparsely settled and had endless landing places for small boats with shallow drafts that could evade the larger police and Coast Guard vessels. Numerous creeks, canals and tall marsh grass provided additional cover. These waterways carried an unbelievable 75% of the liquor supplied to the United States during prohibition. By 1929, illegal liquor was the second biggest business in Detroit at \$215 million a year, second only to auto manufacturing.

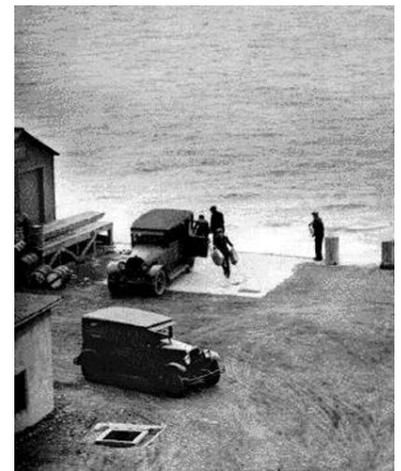
Blind pigs and speakeasies flourished. People drank everywhere, from speakeasies to private clubs, to established restaurants, to storefronts – and of course they drank at home. Cocktail parties were all the rage and workmen wanted beer with lunch or dinner. One could buy a shot from a car in the parking lots of the Hamtramck auto plants or in one of the four hundred 'soft drink parlors' licensed in that city in 1923.

During the early years of prohibition, smuggling liquor was often a family affair. Rum-running mostly took place at night to avoid detection but as faster boats became available, smuggling ran around the clock. During the winter, trucks and cars with their doors removed for safety reasons made the run across the frozen waterways. By 1923, organized crime had a toehold in the business and developed more sophisticated techniques. Flashing colored lights, certain clothes hung on a clothesline and radios were utilized as well as women and children to throw the officials off the scent.

The crime wave of the 1920s was directly attributed to the ban on liquor. One of the most notorious gangs in Detroit was the Purple Gang. When the opportunity came along to "import" liquor from Windsor, the Purple Gang was organized – and ready. They would soon dominate the business and connect with Al Capone's Chicago syndicate.

By the early twenties, the Purples had developed an unsavory reputation as hijackers, stealing liquor loads from older and more established gangs of rumrunners. Anyone landing liquor along the Detroit waterfront had to be armed and prepared to fight to the death, as it was common practice for the Purples to steal a load of liquor and shoot whoever was with it.

The stock market crash in 1929 together with the start of the 10-year Great Depression signaled an end to the Roaring Twenties and an era in bootlegging that will never be seen again. ■





Women's Fashions

Dress and skirt hemlines rose annually throughout most of the twenties decade. After starting from just above the ankle, and gradually rising to knee level, hems fell again briefly in the late 1920's; also sleeveless dresses were introduced and became very popular almost immediately. Brighter colors, simpler designs, beads, fringe, new synthetic materials like Rayon, new cuts and styling were incorporated in dresses made from considerably less yards of material than had been used previously. French fashion designers established themselves as the leading worldwide trend-setters in designing clothing fashions for both women and men.

Paper template dressmaking patterns were introduced to make it easier for women to create the new style fashions at home. Millinery correspondence lessons, like those published by the Woman's Institute of Scranton, Pa were extremely popular and enabled women to save money by designing and making their own hats, or even start their own millinery business.

1920's jewelry designs took their inspiration from, and were influenced by, popular subjects of the day, like - nature, the Orient, and ancient Egypt. Simple jewelry designs based on geometric shapes and incorporating semi-precious stones were in style. Platinum was the "in" metal of the 1920's. Flappers typically wore long strings of beads. Beautiful jeweled brooches and long pins were used to help hold clothes in position, while also doubling as dress ornamentation.



Beaded handbags and purses in stunning colors and patterns, lined with satin or silk, were all the rage during the 1920's. Beaded belts, bracelets and necklaces complemented the pretty handbags and purses. If you couldn't afford to buy the latest in beaded fashion accessories, you made your own!

Ladies hats started off the 1920's decade with wide brims and ended up with little or none. Short hair styles meant that close fitting felt cloche hats in colors to match the colorful dress ensembles were more popular than the traditional wide brimmed style of hat.



In the 1920's short hair for women was in and rapidly took over from the previously fashionable long hair styles. Although considered very radical by many in the early 1920's, bobbed hair quickly became the desired standard for young girls and young women in their twenties, but was also very popular with middle-aged women in their thirties and forties. The original plain bobs eventually gave way to much more attractive shingled bobs or incorporated waves and curls using sophisticated cuts to add style and interest. Hairstyles like the Bob, finger wave, Marcel wave, and shingle were the most popular hairstyles of the 1920's with numerous variations of each. ■



Men's Fashions

Fashion for men in America during the 1920's was greatly influenced by prominent figures and heroes of the era. Many athletes defined a man's dress. Football players Red Grange and the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame, for instance, influenced the style of coats like the raccoon coat and the camel hair polo coat. Two well-known golfers, Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen, popularized knickers. Known as plus-fours, plus-sixes or plus-eights, these baggy, comfortable short pants became very popular. The plus name referred to how far below the knee the fabric hung, before being secured around the leg. Topped with loose, comfortable sweaters, this new casual look gave men a lot more freedom.

Knickers, in turn, influenced another fashion change. College students at Oxford were forbidden to wear knickers, so they wore long trousers with wide legs. The legs sometimes measured 22 to 40 inches around at the cuff. These "Oxford bags" could be easily worn over the top of the forbidden knickers. It didn't take long for these wider trousers to catch on.



By the second half of the decade suit jackets were fitted to the waist in either a single or double-breasted style. They were unpadding and lightweight. Fastenings went high onto the chest, arranged either as two or three single buttons, or in double rows. Trousers were worn rather short. It was okay for the socks to show. Cuffs were starting to make an appearance at the bottom of the pant legs. Trousers developed a crisp crease down the front, creating a striking silhouette. The crease remained even as trousers got fuller. Shirts had an attached collar, and were either in plain or striped cotton. Colors were subtle for shirts and suits. Blues, browns, greens... light colors like cream, beige and tan were very popular. Knit sweaters and socks were much brighter. Instead of the heavy wools of earlier periods, tweed became very popular. Tweed is a hand-woven fabric made of wool that originated in Scotland. Flannel was another popular fabric of the time. Made of soft, comfortable wool with a slight nap, flannel was the fabric of choice for trousers in all types of weather.

Accessories were important and made the man. Shoes were often two-toned or had a fringed tongue. Ties and bow-ties were a necessary part of the wardrobe. Gloves were a part of an outfit, or were used for various tasks like driving. The well-dressed man never left the house without a handkerchief tucked neatly into his jacket pocket.

No man of any class was out in public without a hat. In summer, light blazers were topped by a Panama straw hat or the shallow, flattop, stiff-brimmed hats called either boaters or skimmers, depending on the brim's width. Autumn and winter were all about the felt fedora, worn with panache by gangsters but beloved of all men for their style and comfort.



Many men wore their hair smooth and plastered down, keeping it neatly in place. The hair was often brushed back from the face, and parted on either left or right side. The hair was somewhat longer near the front, shorter in the back, and much shorter or even shaved at the nape. Mustaches and beards were also popular, particularly among older men, though not as much as before. Some young people wore mustaches to make them look older. ■



2011 Activities & Events Calendar

Museum Open Saturdays and Sundays from Noon – 4pm

Volunteers are needed to staff the museum and should contact Nancy Boulton at 810-748-3802 for orientation and assignments. Visit our gift shop!

June	25	RUM-RUNNERS PARTY - Fundraiser at the Middle Channel Golf Club
	<i>25</i>	<i>9:30 AM General Membership Meeting</i>
July	3	HOT DOG & ICE CREAM SOCIAL: 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM -- Fundraiser
	<i>23</i>	<i>9:30 AM General Membership Meeting</i>
August	6	Society Booth at FIELD DAY -- Stop in for Free Peanuts & Popcorn Day at the old Fire Hall
	13	Society Booth at BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL -- Stop in for Free Peanuts & Popcorn Day at the old Fire Hall
	21	ANNUAL MEETING & GALA EVENT: Dinner Dance & Entertainment -- Fundraiser -- Details TBD
	<i>21</i>	<i>4:00 PM General Membership ANNUAL Meeting</i>
Sept	3	PARADE DAY -- Hot Dogs & Potato Chips - Peanuts & Popcorn Day
	<i>24</i>	<i>2:00 PM General Membership Meeting</i>
Oct	9	HOT SOUP & MUSIC -- Details TBD
	<i>22</i>	<i>2:00 PM General Membership Meeting</i>
Nov	6	<i>2:00 PM General Membership Meeting</i>
Dec		No General Membership Meeting