

The SOCIETY PAGES

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A LOOK BACK AT 2011

January

Our President at the time, Gary Grout, passed along these prophetic words in the **From the President** column in the January 2011 issue of the *Society News*.

“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. A lease agreement has been 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.”

February

Clay Township was contacted and we found the following information on the Fire Hall. In 2001 Electrical, Mechanical and Plumbing permits were issued for the following work: New Furnace, Air Conditioner, Water Pump & Smoke Detectors, New Sink, Toilet, and Hot Water Heater. There is no city water connected to the building but there is a water line which runs from the building to the South Channel. We will see if this line can be used; as a renter connecting to the city water would be very costly for the Society. Several other Island contractors have been contacted for their thoughts on what we need to open the building to the public.

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From the President

As we enter the 24th month in the germination and growth of an **idea** and **vision** to create a Historical Society and Museum dedicated to Harsens Island and the St. Clair Flats, I am mindful of the energy and selfless dedication each of you has contributed to helping get us to where we are today.

We have come a long way and as we continue to press forward, new doors will open and we will achieve the goal we have set for ourselves to make the Old Fire Hall in Sans Souci our permanent museum. (Admittedly, we have not figured out exactly how we will get there yet...but please know that your dedicated board continues to work on it every day.)

Some days...the old brain gets tired...so I would ask each of you to send me an e-mail with just **one new idea** on how to make the Historical Society a resounding success and find the dollars to purchase the building for the Museum.

Recall the heading on this column a couple months ago....

“Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.”

General George S. Patton

E-mail your **idea** to me at: licata@comcast.net
Have a safe, warm and fun holiday season with family and friends.

BEST WISHES and

A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR TO ALL.....
bernard and his faithful companion, wife and best friend **nancy**

the Society Pages

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Square Dance Recap

We swung our partners; dosado'd and ate *finger licken* fried chicken with all the fixins'. On Saturday night, November 19, 90 folks gathered at the Lion's Hall where we square danced the night away and had a great time!

Thanks to our fabulous caller, **Walt "No Problem" Zatorski** and **Algonac Liquor** for the fine food, the evening was a grand success. Our guests were having so much fun they asked us to do this event monthly, so watch The Society Pages and we will try to repeat this event over the long winter months.



A LOOK BACK AT 2011

March

We officially received the key to the building on March 1, 2011. A lot of work needed to be done before we could move in. There were moisture problems, cracks - both exterior and interior, the grounds are overgrown, problems with the septic, plumbing, heating and cooling systems. March proved to be too cold to do much especially since the furnace needed to be fixed. On a positive note, the bylaw revisions were accepted by the membership allowing for better corporate structure. Workdays were scheduled and donations for the museum and building fund were trickling in.

April

April proved to be a big month for renovations. We had a fleet of volunteers scraping, repairing and painting both inside and out.



The overgrown shrubs were removed and landscaping was done. A 1963 Chevy Suburban Rescue vehicle was donated by Bob Williams. It will need a bit of TLC to fix it up.

May

After 2 months of hard work, the Old Fire Hall was rededicated at the Grand Opening Celebration held May 31, 2011. 323 visitors toured the museum that day.

We received a \$500 grant from the Algonac Clay Community Fund to be used toward signage and display.



June

On June 25 the Society held a sold out Rum Runners Party that featured a best costume contest, silent auction and a delicious dinner at the Middle Channel Country Club. Look for this to be an annual event!



June continued

June also saw the museum open on weekends and attract a large number of visitors. Contributions and donations continued to arrive. We received a pledge from the Karen and Drew Peslar Foundation of \$25,000 toward the \$140,000 purchase price of the old Fire Hall that houses our museum. A Building Fund mailing went out and resulted in many donations.

The Wednesday Night Social Hour started. This informal event was open to all and the only requirements were to bring a lawn chair, your beverage and some hors d'oeuvres to pass. Folks could tour the museum and just relax and meet new friends and neighbors. This event occurred twice a month through September.



E.J. and Roderick McKnight
Best Dressed Couple
2011 Rum Runners Party

July August

July was Election of Directors and the results were announced at the August Annual Meeting. Bernard Licata was installed as the new President with Gary Grout moving to Chairman. Bob Williams, from the Stewart Farm, was brought on board as 2nd Vice President.

September

Museum attractions continued to bring in a record number of visitors. Membership numbers climbed up close to 200. The Society participated in the Turkey Shoot Parade as well as helping the Lions Club out with the children's games over Labor Day weekend. The Wednesday Night Social Hour wrapped up as a successful summer event.



Bernard and Nancy Licata
Lions Club Turkey Shoot Parade

The Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society
Presents

THE NIGHT THE FITZ WENT DOWN!

The story of Great Lakes Freighter Edmund Fitzgerald on Lake Superior during the storm of November 1975

featuring special guest speakers:

Malcom McAdam
Member of Shipmasters, board member of the Great Lakes Maritime Institute, and chairman of the Lost Mariners Remembrance program at the Dossin Museum on Belle Isle



Captain Donald Erickson of the SS William Clay Ford who on the night of November 10, 1975, with his crew, voluntarily left safe harbor during the furious storm to search for possible survivors of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

Saturday October 8 2011 [4:00-5:30pm]
Lions Hall / 262 Lacroix Road / Harsens Island MI 48028

October

The first event in our newly formed Speaker Series was a hit with close to 200 people attending – some from out of state!

It featured the first-person account of **Captain Donald Erickson** of the **SS William Clay Ford** assisted by **Malcolm McAdam** from the Great Lakes Maritime Institute. Captain Erickson related the terrible weather conditions of the night of November 10, 1975 and the futile attempt to rescue 29 lost souls from the icy depths of Lake Superior.



Captain Donald Erickson
with the **SS William Clay Ford**

November

Another sold out event for the Society! This proved to be such a popular event that it was suggested to become a monthly event throughout the winter months. The Lions Club also benefitted by running the beverage bar as they did for the Fitz event.



SQUARE DANCE AND FRIED CHICKEN DINNER

presented by the HARSENS ISLAND ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Grab your favorite gal or favorite guy, and join us for a huge 'lickin' - foot stompin' good time!

We've even hired an honest to goodness professional 'caller' to guide you through the steps.

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 19 ONLY \$15.00 PER PERSON
6:00 - 10:00 in the evening
CASH BAR

Lions Hall
262 Lacroix Road / Harsens Island MI 48028

For more information or to purchase tickets contact:
Nancy Licata at [248] 770-2103

December

An Antique Sale is planned for December 3 and the museum is decorated for the holidays. We are open by appointment during December. Visit our gift shop!

There are only three months left until our lease expires and there is still a lot of money to raise before then if we want to purchase the Old Fire Hall and make it ours.

We don't know what the New Year holds but are optimistic that all will work out. We encourage you to volunteer or donate to the Building Fund. ■

Join Us on Facebook!

Search for us on Facebook, Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society, for all the latest news.



*Happy Holidays
and Best Wishes
to all our Members
this Holiday Season*

The Night the Fitz Went Down

DVD Order Form:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ e-mail: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Great Holiday Gifts & Stocking Stuffers



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Proceeds

to
the

BUILDING
FUND

Please reserve the following number of copies for me:

Qty:	Minimum Donation Each	Amount
_____	\$20.00	_____

Pick-up at Museum

Mail to above address:
ADD: \$5.00 Shipping & Handling

For Museum Use:

Check #: _____ CASH: _____ Member Taking Order: _____

Mail orders: Send form and checks to:

Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society
PO Box 44
Harsens Island MI 48028

2011 Activities & Events Calendar

Dates and locations subject to change

Museum Winter Hours

Open by appointment in December 2011, January and February 2012

For museum information, contact Nancy Boulton at 810-748-3802

Contact us at email@hiscfhs.org

**General Membership Meetings held at the Old Fire Hall
3058 S. Channel in downtown Sans Souci**

Dec	3	Christmas Sale at the Museum
	-	<i>No General Membership Meeting</i>
Dec	10	Board Meeting – 2pm