

The SOCIETY PAGES

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Pictures From The Attic

The Chris Craft By Joyce Hassen



The poor boat has never had a proper name, although everyone in the family refers to it as "The Chris Craft" - and everyone knows exactly which boat that means.

When my Mom turned 16, my grandparents decided to get her a boat for her birthday. Spending the summers on Harsens Island, who needed a car?

Herman Muellenhagen (my mom's uncle) worked as a Line Supervisor at the Chris Craft plant in Algonac. Herman's wife, Ethel, also worked at the plant as Chris Smith's secretary. The couple was close with my grandparents. The four of them conspired; Herman would oversee building a rowboat for his niece.

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From the President

Thank you fellow islander, friend and neighbor, **Art Woodford** for the very informative presentation on **Tashmoo Park** and the steamer **Tashmoo**. I'm sure the attendees learned a lot about the history of our Island and what it was like 100 years ago....I certainly did. Art's book tells it all and it is available for purchase at the museum.

Prints of the steamer **Tashmoo**, by graphic artist **Larry Zelensky**, and signed by Art Woodford are now available. Also; artist and historian, **Peter Rindlisbacher**, our last speaker who helped The Society commemorate the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812, has granted The Society copyrights to his painting: **Race Around the South Channel Lights, circa 1900**. Please see page 3 for more information on how to acquire these treasures.

Welcome home to all of our summer-time residents...we missed you. The Historical Society has a great line-up for this summer that spans from educational to cultural and fun events. We hope you will be a part of these activities.

The Society membership continues to grow with new members. A few of you have not renewed your membership and we hope you will in the near future....we need everyone's support to make your Historical Society and Museum a success.

Michele Komar, Editor of *The Society Pages* has taken on a new responsibility as Chairman of the Membership Committee. We are pleased that Michele has taken this important position. In conjunction with improving our communications and value to you, our membership, a few changes will be made as we move forward. Michele will be asking your input on how to improve The Society's communications and understand your perception of highlights and lowlights as you see the Society and Museum serving you....as well as how we can continue to improve. Michele will also be incorporating additional 'membership-perks' into programs going forward.

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The Society Pages

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Join us on Facebook!

Museum Happenings

The museum is now open for the season. New displays and new items are available to peruse. The museum would like to have a display celebrating the 4th of July. If you have any old photos or items that you could loan, contact Nancy Boulton.

Volunteers are needed to help man the museum. You don't need to have an encyclopedic knowledge of island history. We are just looking for some friendly folks that could spare a couple of hours on a weekend. Training is provided.

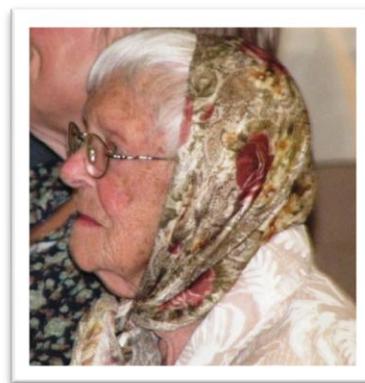
Membership Survey

Please take the time to fill out our Membership Survey. We would like to know how our members feel about a variety of subjects in an effort to improve our service to you. Also, starting with the July issue, The Society Pages will only be sent to members. For the past two years we have distributed the newsletter to over 300 people on a monthly basis. We feel it is time to limit its exposure as a Member Benefit.

We would also like to thank **Bob Williams** and **Larry Zelensky** for the new look of our website. Good Work!!

Lecture Series for May - Art Woodford

We had a nice turnout for this series on Tashmoo: The Park and The Steamer on May 12. See our photos below.



Atha Walker, 89, remembered riding on the steamer *Tashmoo*.

We brought our museum store to the event and did very well! It was run by Chris Wludyka and Nancy Bolton.



Art Woodford, at the podium

From the President *continued*

One item that your board discussed and agreed to is that *The Society Pages* will now become a 'member-only' perk. The website will host only prior-year editions of the Pages publication. Those of you who are not members may purchase a copy of the monthly *Society Pages* newsletter at the Museum for \$3.00.

Get ready for the **Rum Runners Party**...it will be bigger and better than last year's fun event. This year will feature a number of auctions/raffles for such items as guns, kayaks, fishing gear and other sporting equipment, as well as prints by the famous artist & historian Peter Rindlisbacher. Purchase your tickets early for this event scheduled for Saturday, June 23 to be held at the Middle Channel Golf Club.

Also...mark your calendars for July 14 to see and hear **Robert McGreevy**, marine artist and historian who will present the fate of the **Steamer Key Stone State - November 1861**. Bob will also conduct a book signing of his recent publication: ***Legends of the Lakes, an Illustrated History*** by Robert McGreevy.

Your Historical Society continues to grow and be more effectively managed. It can only continue this path with your help....not only in the dollars you contribute, but in active participation. Help us help you by taking-on a project....we have a number of them lined up, but not enough volunteers to chair the projects. Phone or e-mail me any time. We welcome your involvement.

bernard

Lecture Series - historic prints now available

Our Lecture Series is not only bringing the community educational programs, it is now producing additional rewards. Graphic artist, **Larry Zelensky**, has designed a print of the steamer **Tashmoo** to commemorate the lecture by Arthur Woodford in May. The print of the steamer Tashmoo (signed by Art Woodford) is available at the museum unframed for \$10.00 each.

Peter Rindlisbacher, our April speaker has granted The Society copyrights to his painting: **Race Around the South Channel Lights, circa 1900**. Prints will be available at the museum in the near future. A print of this painting of the South Channel Lights is one that many Islanders will want in their collection. Price TBD....more information to follow. The Society is pleased and thankful for the generous contributions made by these individuals.

Doorprize Winner – Chuck Brockman

Chuck Brockman was the winner at the May Speaker Series. The print is an original design from Larry Zelensky. Chuck is the Founder and President of SOS Channel Lights for the past 22 years.



Pictures From the Attic *continued*

Herman decided the 14 foot Kit boat would be perfect, and perfect he made her. He handpicked each piece of wood, making sure the grains matched...especially on the deck. She was put together on the line between a couple of 50 footers, carefully supervised along the way. I can image what that line looked like with a 14 foot Kit boat between the 50 foot elite yachts, probably getting more attention from the workers!

The big day came, though early in the year. She was put in the water in the Petrequin canal, and a proud and happy girl rowed her to the boat house in the snow. Despite being launched on a cold day, she has been the focal point of summer, meaning blue skies, bluer water, and 'freedom' to generations of us kids....the stories she could tell...and the secrets she keeps.

On Sunday, it is a family tradition to "turn the boats around" before putting them in the boathouse for the week, why would you turn around in the canal, when you could take a quick ride down to the end of the canal and around channel marker 13...that extends the week-end at least 15 minutes!



My Grandfather worked in a factory and Monday morning came early, so Sunday at 3:30, not 3:35...they left the cottage for home. On one particular Sunday, as my Mom was turning the Chris Craft around, probably about 3:15...she ran into her boyfriend (my Dad) out in his boat as she rounded Marker 13...well, one thing lead to the next and 20 minutes later, they're down by the Old Club. Oooooops. I can only imagine the sinking feeling my Mom must have felt as she looked up and saw by Grandfather's boat barreling down the South Channel toward her.

A man of few words but intimidating presence, when they got back to the boat house, Grandpa said "Tie her good and tight, it will be a long time before she's out again" and got into his car.

The next week-end, early Saturday morning, my Grandma rescued my Mom from her grounding with the simple words to my Grandpa, "I have bottles to return, Judy is taking me to Upmal's." Well, you obviously took the boat to Upmal's, so the Chris Craft was out of the boathouse and never looked back!

Fast forward to the late 1970's, the Chris Craft was sporting a new Mercury engine, a possessed engine that had trouble starting and staying running. Even the factory gave up. It was evening and I took the Chris Craft out for a short run into Little Muskamoot Bay, when the engine stopped...again. We started rowing back. Despite how gorgeous the Chris Craft looked, she is NOT easy to row! As darkness set in, I looked up and here comes my Grandpa barreling down toward me. Understand my Grandpa NEVER, EVER took his boat into Muskamoot, because it was too shallow.

He towed me home and once in the boathouse, he checked things over and in his calm but intimidating way said, "Next time, check the gas before you go out." Oooops, at least I wasn't grounded! But to this day I don't believe I ran out of gas...like I said, the engine was possessed.

Today, the Chris Craft spends quieter days...sort of...she still makes regular trips to Little Muskamoot and now my kids take her to Upmal's... I mean, Riverside. The highlight of her summer now is the Labor Day parade in San Souci. Last year, my Dad drove her in the Antique Boat parade, then managed to get her pulled from the water and put on a trailer in time to be in the street parade too! That may be a record? ■



Joe Sent Me *courtesy of Wikipedia*

The popular saying, "Joe Sent Me", was used to gain entry to speakeasies, blind pigs, clubs or joints. By 1928 there was anywhere from 16,000 to 25,000 in the Windsor-Detroit area. There was a club for everyone. There were some in the slums and some in Detroit's most prestigious neighborhoods. Criminal gangs often owned the clubs and provided protection from police and other gangs. Independent stills still needed to pay most criminals for protection and insurance that their delivery would arrive from Canada. Gambling also played a significant role in speakeasies; the one arm bandit, poker, blackjack and roulette were popular among higher-class blind pigs.

The lure and attraction of speakeasies during the prohibition is not difficult to understand. The commonly accepted attitude towards drinking and minimal penalties for drinking made it worth consuming. The thrill of it appealed to the young and they were rarely embarrassed to have their names in the paper.

The waterways that separate Canada and southeastern Michigan saw 75% of the alcohol that was consumed in the United States during Prohibition. The numerous islands that dot the stretch from Lake Erie to Lake Huron provided the necessary hiding spots to evade officials. The rivers are narrow and could quickly and easily be crossed by boat. Many people on both sides of the river had private boathouse and docks.

Rum Runners found several ways to smuggle alcohol. In the wintertime, with the rivers being frozen, Rum Runners took their chances by driving across the river, more often the drivers would take cars with smaller engines therefore the car would be lighter. These lighter vehicles were called "whiskey sixes" by the smugglers because of the vehicle's six-cylinder engine.

Most alcohol was smuggled across the border by everyday people. They continuously designed new devices to hide the alcohol as they rode the ferry from one side to the other. People used such gimmicks as rubber belts, false breasts, chest protectors, suitcases and even loaves of bread to transport it. Many took children and travelled in families to avoid detection. Children were taught to cry and shout to create confusion and avoid long searches by officials. ■

Harsens Island / St. Clair Flats Historical Society

— SECOND ANNUAL —

RUM RUNNERS

— PARTY —

...
JUNE 23 2012
...

MIDDLE CHANNEL GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB
2306 Golf Course Road / Harsens Island, MI 48028

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

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

Musical Entertainment & Dancing
Charleston Dance Competition & Prizes
Silent Auction: **Guns** & Sporting Goods
Raffles & more...!

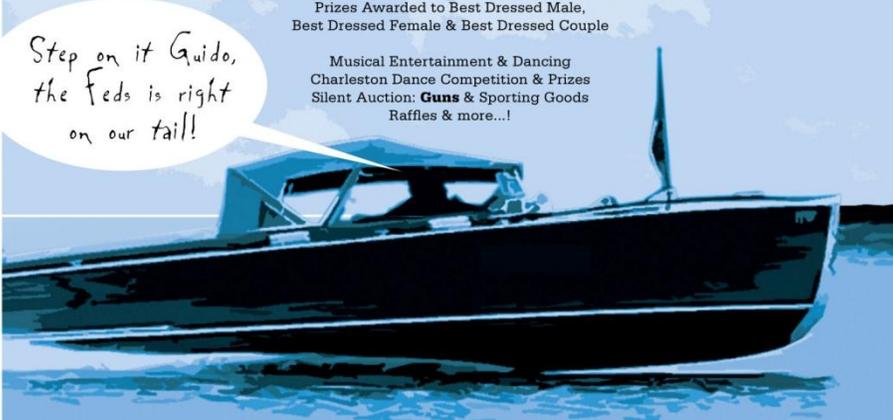
Step on it Guido,
the feds is right
on our tail!

\$40 per person before June 16 - \$50 after June 16
Reservations/Information: Call **Nancy** at **[810] 748-1825**

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

**HARSENS ISLAND
ST. CLAIR FLATS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

**BUILDING for
THE Future
PRESERVING
Our PAST**

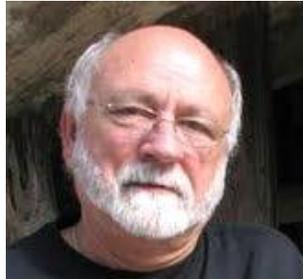


Board Nominees

According to our bylaws, two directors will be up for election this year. Two positions are open and two nominations have been received prior to the May Board meeting deadline; and will be accepted at the June Board Meeting scheduled for June 9. The two nominations are: Joyce Hassen (our current Treasurer) and Bernard Licata (our current President). Meet our nominees:

Bernard Licata's

relationship with Harsens Island started in the mid-1950's at an uncle's cottage on an island in Muskamoot Bay. Bernardo and his wife, Nancy, purchased their residence on South Channel in 2000 and became permanent residents in December 2006. He joined the Historical Society in March 2010.



A summer/week-end resident all her life,

Joyce Hassen is the 4th generation of permanent and summer residents on the Flats. The current cottage, built at the turn of the century, is now enjoyed by her and her husband and their kids... with her Dad living next door! She and Marc have raised 4 children, who are now all in college and working within varied and diverse fields of study. The oldest lives in Phoenix with her husband, the other three are living at home while finishing their bachelor and master's degrees.



Ballots will be mailed to the membership in June and must be returned by July 14. The winners will be announced at the Annual Meeting in August and installed for a three-year term in starting in January.

Upcoming Events

2012 Lecture Series

Robert McGreevy

July 14

Bob is a Great Lakes Historian and Maritime Artist whose family history is steeped in the ship-building industry. Bob will present the history of: **The Steamer Key Stone State (circa-1861)** Bob will also conduct a book signing at the conclusion of his presentation.

Suggested Donation: \$10.00 per person

First Nations Day Festival

AUGUST 11

DOWNTOWN SANS SOUCI

Dancers • Drum • Food • Crafts

THIS IS A FREE EVENT

ANNUAL MEETING

& Spaghetti Dinner

August 18

Lion's Hall - \$20 per person



THE DATE

SQUARE DANCE

Fried Chicken Dinner

September 22

Browne's Field • \$20 per person

SAVE

First Anniversary Celebration – Memorial Day Weekend

by Marc Hassen

We made our own history on this past Saturday, May 26, with a fun and festive first anniversary celebration held at the museum. It was a warm day and storms threatened, but patience and preparation persevered. Many members and visitors came to celebrate and satisfy their curiosity about the historical Old Fire Hall which is serving as the museum's location. The unique and picturesque fire hall in downtown Sans Souci was spruced up and decorated by Society volunteers, who also helped run concessions, answered questions, and made sure everyone enjoyed themselves.

"Our volunteers really came through, they helped us meet the goals of the celebration," said Society President Bernard Licata. "More people could see for themselves some of the Artifacts we have on display, and get a glimpse of what the museum can become through the Society's continued efforts."



A primary goal of the celebration was to raise awareness of the island's history and the museum's artifacts that help islanders and visitors understand our unique heritage. The anniversary also raised additional funds towards making the fire hall a permanent home for the museum.

"Special thanks to Larry Zelensky for the announcement poster", said Bernard. "We're fortunate to have Larry's talent as part of our volunteer force - that poster really looked terrific. The professionalism and art helped sell the event....and by association the museum." (see poster on page 5)

The great volunteers made this event a success. Nancy Boulton, Ruth and Ken Roth, Peggy and Denne Osgood, Jane and Art Armstrong along with Kathy O'Conner did a great job...in spite of the rain.



The celebration raised about \$1,300, which will be used toward the Building Fund. Over 250 hot dogs were enjoyed by visitors, along with popcorn, chips, and cupcakes. A 50/50 raffle was also held as a fund raiser. The winner, Judy Jessup, donated half of her \$174 winnings back to the Building Fund. Emile Crowley drew the lucky ticket.

Another goal of the celebration, as with most society events, is to expand membership. Rick Ryan, Val & Jon Moot, Renata & Gorton Greene, and Clair & Don Eaton, became new Society members on Saturday.

"We're delighted to have these folks join," said first vice-president John Chamberlain. "Building the future for the society takes people, and we're happy to have everyone's involvement. Please help welcome each of them as soon as you have the opportunity."

The next event will be the first of the 2012 Social Hours, held at the Museum on Wednesday, June 13 from 5 to 7.

"Come join us", said John, "the Society is not only a great cause, but a great group of people, too. You can have a good time and be part of this unique chance to help preserve something special right here on the island."



2012 Activities & Events Calendar

Dates and locations subject to change

Museum Hours

June, July, Aug, Sept: Saturday 10 AM – 2 PM and Sunday Noon – 4 PM

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

Contact us at email@hiscfhs.org

**All events and meetings held at the Old Fire Hall Museum unless noted
3058 S. Channel in downtown Sans Souci.**

**Members are welcome to attend any Board meetings on the calendar to keep apprised of
Society activities and to bring issues before the Board.**

June	9	Board Meeting Saturday – 9:00 AM
	13	Social Hour Wednesday – 5 to 7 PM at the museum. Bring a lawn chair, beverage and a hors d'oeuvre to pass
	23	Rum Runners Party Middle Channel Country Club - see page 5
	27	Social Hour Wednesday – 5 to 7 PM
July	4	Museum open special for the holiday – Wednesday
	11	Social Hour Wednesday – 5 to 7 PM
	14	Lecture Series and General Membership Meeting Saturday – 3 to 5 PM
	25	Social Hour Wednesday – 5 to 7 PM