

# The SOCIETY

# PAGES

HARSENS ISLAND / ST. CLAIR FLATS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 2013 LECTURE SERIES

**Tony Gramer**  
*presents*

the story of the 161-foot  
**Steamer**

**Fred McBrier**

built in 1881 and lost - in a  
mere 7 minutes - with a load  
of iron ore on the night of  
October 3, 1890.

**Saturday**  
**April 13, 2013**  
**3:00 – 5:00 PM**  
**Lions Club**  
**Harsens Island**

***see page 3 for  
more details!***



## From the President

Well, we're back from visiting the grandkids in Austin and the mailbox was full of envelopes carrying your annual dues. Many envelopes carried additional donations to the building fund, some of which were very generous; and, we extend a gracious **THANK YOU** to those who made additional contributions. Our Secretary, Nancy, has summarized memberships to date for 2013/14 as follows:

Total Members	2012/13	207
		53-Lifetime
Total Members	2013/14	155 ytd
		55-Lifetime, 11-New members

A factor in our success is continuing growth in membership as well as our financial growth. Membership is a factor that foundations grant committees and lending institutions consider when making their decisions. If you have not sent in your 2013/14 dues or recruited a new member, please consider doing so.

*The Society Pages* newsletter distribution list will be updated on May 1, for distribution to lifetime and dues paying members.

### ***In other news:***

The **Tashmoo Days Event** scheduled for July 20, 2013 is making headway. Live music, food, gambling, games, square dancing, lectures, special exhibits at the museum and other activities are being organized that will welcome visitors to experience Harsens Island as it was 100 years ago when the Tashmoo Park and Steamer were in full swing.

Regarding the **Freighter View Park** Proposal, two activities are underway, they are:

- First: Clay Township, is moving forward to the extent that a committee has been formed, by the Township, to conduct an evaluation of The Society's proposal along with other possible opportunities that are under consideration by the Township. We will keep you updated on their progress.

## The Society Pages

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St. Clair Flats Historical Society

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scan the code to go to the HISC FHS  
website

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### HISC FHS Board of Directors

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Directors

**Nancy Boulton** - 810-748-3802

**Lucy Burby-Mastro** - 810-748-8977

**Kathy O'Connor** - 810-748-3113



Join us on Facebook!

## From the President continued

- Second: The Community Foundation of St. Clair County has invited us to be present at their next grants committee meeting, scheduled for June 5, to answer some additional questions.

We view the actions by these two organizations as a positive. One year ago, Freighter View Park was not on anyone's radar screen. This year we're talking about it as a possible path to improve our community. In the interim, your board continues to evaluate options for acquisition of the Fire Hall to be our permanent museum. We plan to meet with the present owners in the upcoming weeks to initiate discussions; and we are evaluating financing options.

The **2013 Lecture Series** will kick-off on Saturday, April 13, with certified PADI Divemaster, **Tony Gramer**. Please make your reservations now by phoning 810-748-1825, or e-mail: [nlicata@comcast.net](mailto:nlicata@comcast.net).

Thank you again for renewing your memberships and your donations to the building fund. Those of you who have not renewed, we hope you will consider continuing your membership and support the growth of The Society, and the cultural and educational programs it brings to our community.

Attend a meeting, get involved and help make The Society a success. Any questions or comments should be sent directly to me at: [president@hiscfhs.org](mailto:president@hiscfhs.org).

*thank you,  
bernard*



**Stop by and see what's new!**

**MUSEUM OPEN**

**Saturdays from 10 AM to 3 PM**

# 2013 LECTURE SERIES

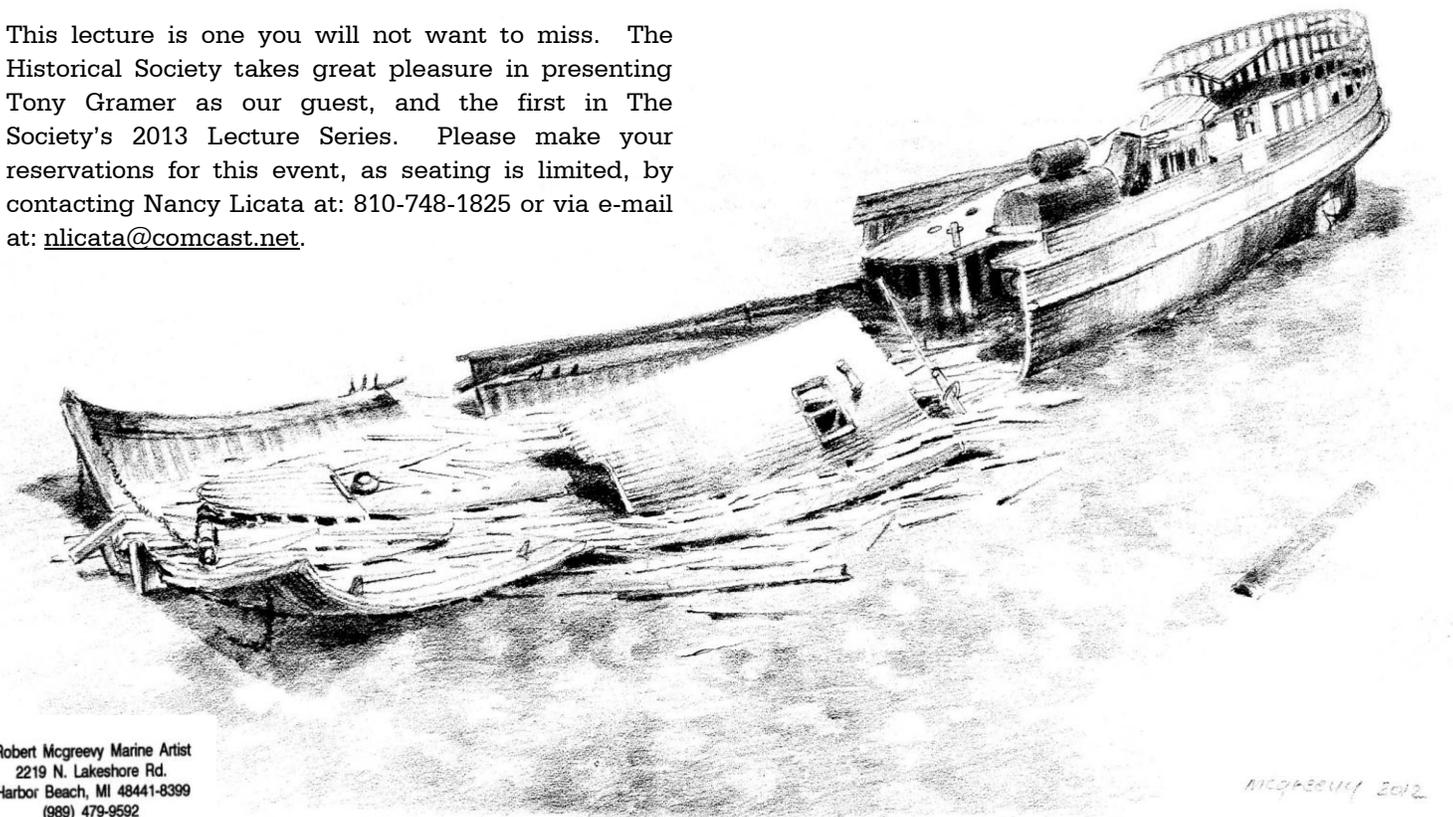
The Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society is pleased to sponsor world renowned diver **Anthony (Tony) Gramer** who will present the story of the 161-foot Steamer **Fred McBrier**, built in 1881 and lost, in a mere 7 minutes, with a load of iron ore on the night of October 3, 1890. Tony will present in words and underwater photo's the fate of the Steamer and her crew on Saturday, April 13, 3:00 to 5:00 PM at the Lions Hall on Harsens Island.

Tony Gramer has been diving since 1977 and is a certified PADI Divemaster. He is the president of Silent World Information Masters, Inc. (SWIM). He is presently on the Maritime board and Divemaster of the Dossin Museum in Detroit, Michigan. His images have taken best in show and first place in photo contest throughout the United States, Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Mexico. His images have been included in Skin Diver magazine, Dive Boat Calendar & Travel magazine, Michigan Living magazine, Great Lakes Diving magazine, Michigan Underwater Preserve pamphlets, advertising catalogs, Nikon Calendar and music CD covers. In 2011 and 2012 he recorded two half hour programs for "Every Thing Great Lakes" and "So Far, Safari" on CMNTV.

This lecture is one you will not want to miss. The Historical Society takes great pleasure in presenting Tony Gramer as our guest, and the first in The Society's 2013 Lecture Series. Please make your reservations for this event, as seating is limited, by contacting Nancy Licata at: 810-748-1825 or via e-mail at: [nlicata@comcast.net](mailto:nlicata@comcast.net).

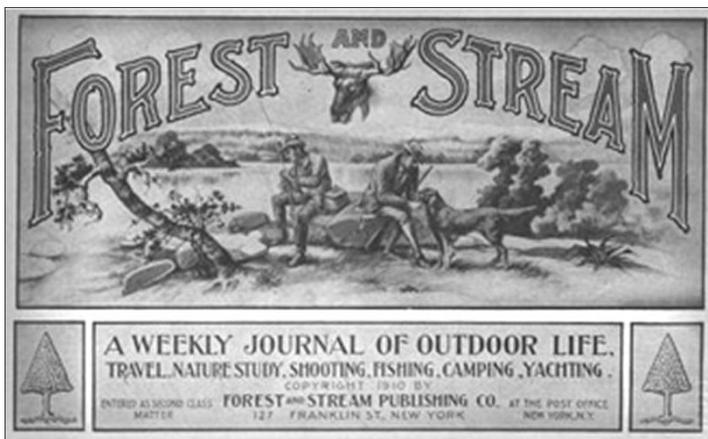


**Tony Gramer**



Robert Mcgreivy Marine Artist  
2219 N. Lakeshore Rd.  
Harbor Beach, MI 48441-8399  
(989) 479-9592

FRED MCBRIER  
90' DEEP



## The Clubs of the St. Clair Flats

by E. Hough

*Editor's Note: This is Part 7 of 7 of a series originally published in Forest and Stream in August and September, 1890.*

### The North Channel Club

THE whole of the St. Clair Flats is by no means comprised in the narrow section lying along the present ship channel, and although the bulk of the club interests center at that point, there are clubs elsewhere on the Flats. Of these exceptions, we need pause to note only one, the North Channel Club. Of the St. Anne Club, on the Sui Carte, not enough was learned to warrant description in detail, and besides there is a space limit in all papers, as well as a last notch in the patience of all readers. But the North Channel Club we must mention, because it is so old and so able an organization.

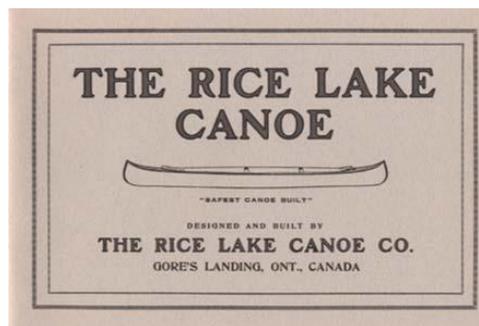
This club house is some miles distant from those of which we have been speaking, and in the old ship course through the Flats known as the North Channel. As in all the other clubs, the building is on "made land." In front of this is a good dock and a walk to it. The club house is a good wooden building, with 38 sleeping rooms and a big club room, a fine ladies' parlor, dining room, gun room, etc. The floors are of hard wood and the main stairway is of cherry. All the furniture is very good, and the walls are well embellished with pictures of game birds and fishes. A noteworthy feature is the great fireplace, big enough to take in a small log. This is something that every club house should have for cold days. About the house is a wide veranda, about 150 ft. long, which is something that every club house should have for warm weather.

The full name of the club is "The North Channel Shooting Club of Detroit." Unless we mistake, this is the oldest of the clubs we have struck, for it runs back 15 years. The articles of association run back to March 5, 1875. The first officers were Marcus Stevens, president; L. P. Knight, vice-president; James P. Donaldson, secretary; E. H. Butter, treasurer; and the signing members were the above gentlemen with R. W. King, Wm. C. Williams and Denaing Jarvis. The capital stock was originally \$10,000, consisting of 400 shares. That made each share \$25. Today a share is held at \$100, but no stock has been sold for five or six years. The annual dues are \$15. There are now 100 members of North Channel Club.

This club is a business-like and regular sporting club, devoted to shooting and fishing. Its shooting ground is right at hand, only two or three miles from the house. It has 12,000 acres, or about six miles stretch of good shooting ground, including plenty of rice. Near by here are the white sand spawning grounds of Goose Bay. So many bass were speared here by the natives that the club tried to buy the water from the Government, but this it could not do. The earliest of the perch and pickerel fishing is over in this direction. The bass fishing there no longer amounts to anything, but the duck shooting remains good. Last spring was an exceptionally good season all over the Flats. Mr. McGaw, of the Queen's Hotel, Toronto, bagged 84 in one day, and bags of 30, 40, 50, etc, have not been uncommon. The birds are mostly redheads and bluebills.

In open water shooting the North Channel men use a very low double-ender, decked and coamed. For their marsh work some of them use the Rice Lake canoe, which is a veneer boat with much the lines of a birch, and generally reputed to be teetery and no good on earth for duck shooting.

*continued next page*



The boat house of North Channel cost \$1,900, and is over 100 ft. long. Over 200 boats are owned in the club, and there are two steam yachts, the *Whistler*, coal, owned by the club, and the *Rustler*, oil, owned by Mr. Brabaw, the steward. The steward is paid a salary and charges a rate per diem for board. The pusher's fee is \$2 a day for fishing and \$3 a day for shooting.

Some time ago mention was made in these columns of a supposed practice of stealing wild duck eggs by the Indians or half-breeds of Manitoba. This practice, if doubtful there, is certain nearer home. In a talk with the president of this club, Mr. R. D. Robinson, a very well posted and affable gentleman, he informed the writer that the French natives steal the wild duck eggs whenever they get a chance. These French seem to have no respect whatever for the game laws, if indeed they know there are any.

Mr. Robinson has been prominent in the efforts to secure proper legislation in the matter of game and fish laws, especially the latter, and has done all he could to secure their enforcement, the latter including the payment of \$55 to a game warden out of his own pocket in one year. He may be supposed to be fairly well posted on what he talks about in the matter of fish supply about North Channel. Mr. Robinson says that the bass fishing is now absolutely worthless there. He does not think there were 10 bass caught all last year. Once they could catch all they wanted. Five years ago he once caught 30 bass in one day, 6 of which weighed 4 lbs. each. This failure of the bass supply he attributes to the seining, netting and spearing which has been so long pursued without let or hindrance. It should be remembered that it was over in this direction that so much of the seining was done that called out the voyage of "No. 11" and the Detroit wardens.

The members of the North Channel Club must go some distance for bass fishing now, but sometimes they go far enough for a little fun. The club holds many baitcasters, and they prefer to a great extent the 8 ft. split bamboo, 8 to 9 oz. in weight, and the Kentucky reel. The minnow is largely used in the deep-water fishing, and the crawfish is much liked for the small-mouths.

The summer life of the Flats is joyous and happy, and no one, whatever be his position in life or his occupation on the spot, is free from the infection of the sweet do nothingness or from the democracy of the local genius. Quite this much may be said of the feminine element resident or transient thereabout. As I paddled quietly up to the cabin yacht, at the close of my day's labor along the channel, I heard a sound of laughter and mingling voices, and soon learned that the boat had been boarded by a flock of maidens from the hotels nearby. These were entertained by Messrs. Parker and Wherry, who in all gravity showed them the resources of the craft, and explained the why and wherefore of everything aboard, even going so far as to remove all scoffing at the culinary ability of the three navigators of No. 11 by making them a cup of coffee and washing the dishes afterward in their presence. The moon was out in splendor that evening. The level wrinkling sea lay far and wide beyond our sturdy little ship, and across it, dim and ghostly in the rising mist, glided the sails of many boats coming and going like dreams in the night. The scene quieted even the merry party on board our boat. On the rail of the deck sat one young girl, whose head might have served as the model for the painting of the "Neapolitan Fisherboy," so dark was the hair, so dreamy the eyes and so innocent all the features. After the fashion of young girls, this maiden gazed thoughtfully up at the moon, dreaming no one knows what. Kindly the moon spread her spell upon the land and water, mellowing the outlines of the shore, making noble palaces out of the structures nearby and softening the distant ones into merely vague suggestiveness. The breeze just barely whispered on the silvered sails. If there were shadows they lay beyond and one could not see them. Quiet, peaceful, beautiful, almost melancholy in the exquisite tenderness of its absolute repose, this scene was one to charm the heart, yet tantalize the mind that would attempt to fix or measure it. We cannot measure dreams. And here, certainly, was simply a dream of the elements, delicate, intangible, a figment of the relaxed and resting mind of the Universe. ■



PO Box 44  
Harsens Island MI 48028

## **Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society 2013 Calendar of Events**

*subject to change*

Members are welcome to attend any Board / Membership Meeting to keep apprised of Society activities and to bring issues before the Board.

### **Museum Hours**

**April, May** - Saturday - 10 AM - 3 PM

**June, July, Aug, Sept** - Saturday 10 AM - 3 PM and Sunday Noon - 4 PM

**Oct, Nov, Dec** - closed - open by appointment and for Christmas Sale (Dec)

### **April**

**13th** - Saturday - 3 to 5 PM - Lecture Series I (Lions Hall) with **Tony Gramer**

### **May**

**11th** - Saturday - 11:30 AM - Board / Membership Meeting (Lions Hall)

**11th** - Saturday - 3 to 5 PM - Lecture Series II (Lions Hall)

**25th - 27th** - Saturday, Sunday, Monday – 11am – 4pm Memorial Day Open House (Museum)

### **June**

**8<sup>th</sup>** – Saturday – 10:00 AM - Board / Membership Meeting (Museum)

**12<sup>th</sup>** – Wednesday – Social Hour – 5 to 7 PM (Museum)