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Publication of the Harsens Island St.

Clair Flats Historical Society

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**President's Message for September 2017**

**Hi All,**

If you missed the annual membership meeting I would like to summarize for you what we talked about.

The election of the new Board members is completed and Sue Wrobel was re-elected and Mary Woodford was newly elected, each to three-year terms on the Board of Directors. Thank you both for being willing to serve and to Donna Krispen who is concluding her term on the Board.

Some of our Society's accomplishments during the last 12 months include the following.

We have a very successful 2017 Special Exhibit called "Fins and Feathers" about sport fishing and hunting on Harsens Island and the St. Clair Flats.

We hosted seven school and senior citizen groups visiting the museum and the special exhibit.

We recently purchased, with the help of one of our very supportive donors, our first laptop computer.

We have installed Wifi at the museum for use in creating and maintaining our collection and for access to records of other museums. Financed by member Clayton Evans, we conducted a successful matching grant fundraiser to raise over \$4,000 for the museum.

We are in the process of completing the installation of a security system for the building which includes motion detectors, entry sensors, a glass break sound detector, smoke detector, and carbon monoxide detector.

We created and marketed a Visitor's Map of Harsens Island.

We received a full wall of storage cabinets for the rear storage room which were donated to the society and moved and installed by members.

An outdoor message center has been built by one of our members and is due to be installed in front of the museum in the next few weeks.

We received a steam whistle originally from the freighter J.B. Ford which is to be installed in operating condition at the museum. It was donated by member John Cameron, Jr. We now have ahead of us the job of building a room on the museum to house the equipment which will power the whistle. We hope to have it operational for the museum opening in the spring of 2018.

At a Board meeting following the annual membership meeting the following officers were elected by the new Board to serve during 2018. President – Bob Williams; First Vice President – Sue Wrobel; Second Vice President – Corinne Trexler; Secretary – Nancy Bonacquisti; and Treasurer – Joyce Hassen.

**Thank you,  
Bob Williams, President**

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## Let's Put Harsens Island on the Great Lakes Map!

**As most of you know by now, the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society is the lucky recipient of the steam whistle from the retired freighter J.B. Ford. We plan to install the whistle on the front of the museum in operating condition, to use to salute passing freighters. If we can do this, we may be the only historical museum on the Great Lakes with such an installation.**



Photo by Wm. J. Luke, July, 1978

**In order to install the whistle and other items needed for its operation, we need to build a small addition on the building to house a compressor and air storage tank large enough to operate the whistle. We have researched what we need for the room, have prepared plans, applied to the Township for permits, and obtained bids from contractors. The complete installation project will cost approximately \$11,000.**

**The Board of Directors is initiating a fund raising campaign to pay for the project. The campaign will run from September through December of this year. This year's October Pie Sale and December Cookie Sale are dedicated to this special fundraiser, and all building fund donations, lecture series donations, and donations received in the bowls at the museum through December will also be applied to the Whistle project. If you would like additional information on this project, feel free to contact me.**

**Bob Williams, [xharpspah@aol.com](mailto:xharpspah@aol.com) - 248-388-0465**

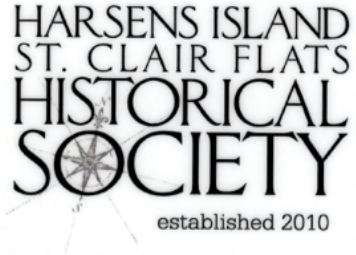
**Special Note from Bob Williams:**

**Thank You Museum Hosts!**

Here are some of our members who gave their time to be at the Museum on weekends this year to assure that the public could enjoy our collection. Thank you all.

Jane Armstrong  
Nancy Bonaquisti  
Nancy Boulton  
John Chamberlain  
John Eidt  
Marie Eidt  
Joyce Hassen  
Dick Hile  
Kay Vandegaffe Hile  
Mike Hilla  
Judy Jessup  
Donna Krispin  
Chuck Miller  
Kathy O'Connor  
Betsy Phinney  
Linda Schoonover  
Bill Smith  
Karen Smith  
Nancy Streit  
Corinne Trexler  
Jean Weber  
Terry Wiggins  
Bob Williams  
Sue Wrobel

**THANK YOU!**



**HARSENS ISLAND  
ST. CLAIR FLATS  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**  
established 2010

**Our Mission**

The Harsens Island/St. Clair Flats Historical Society's mission is to collect, protect, preserve and share with the public the unique historical artifacts and information that represents the diverse cultural composition of the people that occupied the area of the St. Clair River Delta that is Harsens Island and the St. Clair Flats.

Our energies will be directed to acquisition, restoration and preservation with special emphasis directed to education of all who wish to share the rich cultural history of the people who lived here.

**Knowledge of the Past  
Provides  
Vision for the Future**

**News from Our Neighbors..**

# Maritime Museum Event

The Algonac/Clay Maritime Museum is proud to present an entertaining and interesting lecture by Terry Ernest about Gar Wood Boat Factory on Thursday evening, September 21, 2017 at 7:30 pm at the Algonac/Clay Maritime Museum located at 1117 St Clair River Dr. The admission is \$5.00. RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED

## **Building Boats in Marysville**

*The History of the Gar Wood Boat Factory*

Lecture at the Algonac/Clay Maritime Museum



One of many billboards erected in Marysville in the early 1930's.

*Did you know that they made boats in Marysville?*

The Algonac/Clay Maritime Museum is proud to present an entertaining and interesting lecture by Terry Ernest about the Gar Wood Boat Factory on Thursday evening, Sept. 21st, 2017 at 7:30 PM at the Algonac/Clay Maritime Museum located at 1117 St. Clair River Dr., Algonac, MI. 48001

The Gar Wood Boat factory was built in Marysville on the River Road in 1930. For the next 17 years, they produced some of the finest wood runabouts in the world! We will discuss the story behind these remarkable boats that bear the name of the world's greatest speedboat champion. The story of Gar Wood is one of the most compelling tales of achievement of any American sports champion. He individually challenged the nations of the world to build a faster

## MUSEUM CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sept. – 8th – Friday – Social hour – 6 to 8 PM at the Museum

**16– Saturday – 3:00 PM - Lecture series – Tony Gramer: “Lost in 17 Minutes-The Tug O Wilcox “ Reservations required- Call Chuck- 748-7209. Members. \$10, Non -Members \$15**

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Oct.- 7– Saturday – 10 – 3 PM - Pie Sale at Museum

Dec.-2nd – Saturday – 10 AM– 3 PM - Cookie Walk at the Museum

9th– Saturday – 10:30 AM – Board/Membership Meeting at Museum

### 2017 Summer Hours

Thursday, Friday - 12-3 PM; Saturday – 10 AM–3 PM,

Sunday – Noon–4 PM Special Happy Hour- 2nd Friday 6-8 PM.

**Special note from Museum Director Nancy Boulton:** We have had an increasing number of groups from senior citizen homes visit the island during the week. Generally, they have lunch, then make their rounds visiting the library, the gift shop, the Lighthouse Hardware then a trip to the museum. We are pleased to welcome new friends to the island! If you know any senior group or other groups looking for a fun day out, please contact Nancy 748-3802 for a special appointment.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW MESSAGE BOARD! KEEP TRACK OF EVENTS AT THE MUSEUM AND AROUND THE LOCAL AREA.



## Lost in Seven Minutes

*'The Tug O Wilcox'*

*The 123 foot tug Ozias Wilcox was built in 1869 in Detroit MI. She was best in class on the lakes, with an A2 rating; she was valued at \$10,000. In her last days, she was under charter to bring a raft of logs from Georgian Bay-to-Bay City. She met her fate in a large gale on August 29,1893, she went down in seven minutes in twenty-five fathoms of water approximately fifteen miles from Tawas.*

*Join Tony Gramer and crew on Saturday, September 16th at 3 PM at the Schoolhouse Grille as they explore this beautiful shipwreck with a 22 minute HD Blu- Ray video program synchronized to music and employs live narration.*



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 Board and Divemaster of Dossins Museum in Detroit, Michigan. His images have taken best in show and first place in photo contests 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. His main interest is photography, researching and diving shipwreck schooners and brigs. In 2012,2012 and 2015 he recorded four half hour programs for “Every Thing Great Lakes” and “So Far, Safari” on CMNTV.





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