



volume 13 / number 9

November / December 2022

Message from the President . . .

Happy Winter Holidays!

I hope that your holiday season has begun with good food, fun, family, and friends. My decorating is done, but I can't say the same for shopping or baking or the other thousand things that seem to continue to pop up! But I'm not complaining, this time of year is one of my favorites and even though I still have a lot to do, I am looking forward to the celebrations and family traditions still ahead this season.

The annual cookie walk was held the first weekend in December and was a deliciously smashing success! Thank you to the bakers who donated cookies, the volunteers who were at the museum working, and of course those who purchased the wonderful cookies.



Once again with December here, I am reminded how quickly the year has gone, but I am also reminded of how much we have accomplished as an organization in 2022. We continue to flourish, and our museum continues to grow, change, and provide a place the community can go for information and entertainment. Our 2023 planning has begun, and we will continue to host events and activities for everyone to enjoy.

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continued from page 1 . . . President's Letter

A huge thank you to all our volunteers who worked tirelessly during 2022, including those who worked very early in the year to finish the museum renovation and set up new exhibits, and of course the Board who works hard every day and supports me as President, those that keep the museum well maintained, the host volunteers that keep the museum doors open, and our members and donators who keep us financially stable.

However, you celebrate the upcoming holidays, I hope that you will find good health, happiness, and peace over the holiday season and in the new year.

As always, thank you for your continued support!

Joyce

Joyce

Joyce Hassen, President

Edmund Fitzgerald Remembrance

On Sunday, November 6th, we had an event at the museum to remember those who lost their lives during the sinking of the Great Lakes freighter, the Edmund Fitzgerald. Gerhard and Jill Rauch (*On the Border*) led the ceremony with a presentation about the timeline and what most likely contributed to the sinking of the Fitzgerald. Ken Cameron spoke about meeting and corresponding with one of the former captains of the Edmund Fitzgerald, Peter Pulcer. Captain Pulcer gave Ken a flag from the Edmund Fitzgerald, which was displayed for the event. Dan Orlando, one of the museum's hosts, brought in his scale Lego model of the Edmund Fitzgerald.

Following the presentation, On the Border performed the Gordon Lightfoot song, *The Sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald* and then read the list of names of those who lost their lives on November 10, 1975. Food and refreshments were provided after the ceremony. It was a very moving event with over 100 people in attendance.

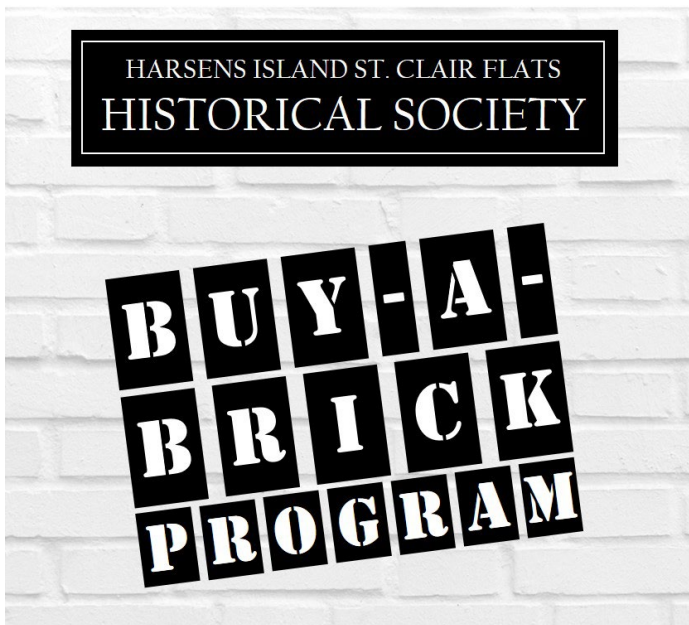


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Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society Building Renovation BUY-A-BRICK Program

The past three years we celebrated the completion of several renovation projects; in 2020 the Clayton Evans Room Addition, in 2021 the Karen and Drew Peslar Library and in 2022 the large exhibit space at the entrance to the museum named the Nancy Boulton / Gary Grout Room.

To help maintain the museum's infrastructure and a healthy financial position for our Historical Society, we are reactivating our BUY-A-BRICK Program.



Members and friends can support the Historical Society and assure the continuance of the museum by donating \$350 to our BUY-A-BRICK program. Donors will be recognized or may designate a memorial on one of the bricks inside the museum. Of course, they may remain anonymous if they wish. Donations of any amount to support the renovation efforts are welcome and appreciated. To sign up, or if you have questions, contact Bob Williams at 248-388-0465 or xharpspah@aol.com.

BUY-A-BRICK Order Form is included at the end of this newsletter.

continued from page 2 . . . Edmund Fitzgerald



Scale model of the Edmund Fitzgerald, created by Dan Orlando



Ken Cameron sharing his story



Reading the names of the 29 men who lost their lives on November 10, 1975



University of Michigan Students Visit Harsens Island and the Historical Museum . . . Again

On Sunday, October 16, our museum hosted a visit from the University of Michigan students and their instructor. Their visit was part of a class researching the history of the St. Clair River and its people. This is the second U of M visit this year, and it was a bigger group than last time.

Once on the Island, the students enjoyed brunch at the Schoolhouse Grille. After brunch, the group stopped by the museum where Sue Wrobel gave a tour and lecture on the history of the islands and the indigenous people. After their museum visit, they boarded their bus and headed to the turnaround with Joyce Hassen as their guide.



Memoriam Robert B. Coulter 1930 – 2022

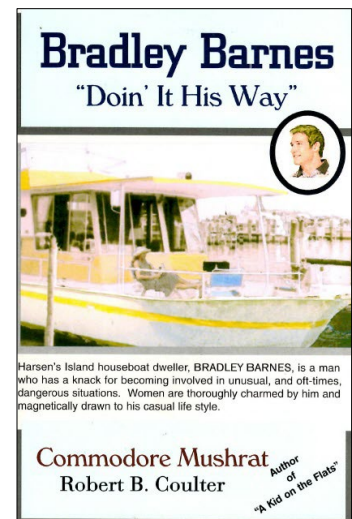
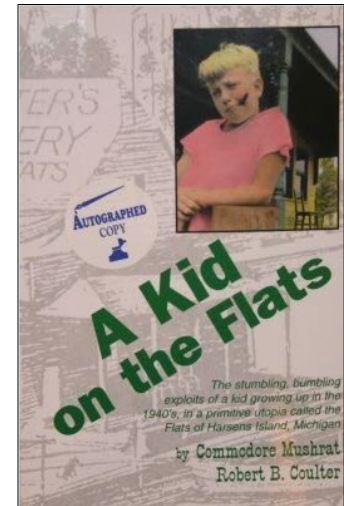
Robert B. Coulter, age 92, passed away on September 18, 2022. He was known, by many islanders, as the author of “A Kid on the Flats.”



Robert Coulter 1930 - 2022



Robert Coulter as a boy



Robert was raised on Harsens Island, on the St. Clair Flats. He was a graduate of Algonac High School, class of 1948. Following high school, he proudly served his country in the United States Army during the Korean War.

In 1968, he received his bachelor’s degree from University of Detroit. Robert worked in advertising for his whole life, working for various companies. Around 2004, Robert moved down to Florida which became his new home. He was an avid boater. Early in life, he thoroughly enjoyed sail boating, and would sail in the Mackinac Races. He loved his sports cars; Robert owned several sports cars throughout his life and enjoyed driving them around. Robert, aka, (Commadore Mushrat), was an avid reader and wrote 2 books. Both books are in the museum’s library.

After the publishing the book, “A Kid on the Flats,” a bronze statue was made, representing a young Robert Coulter. The original sculpture was made by Nancy Diebold, who used her grandnephew, Alex Harcourt as the model. The first step was to make an armature (metal frame) of the statue. Then the clay statue was worked on. Nancy added details to the sculpture; a NuGrape bottle in the boy’s hand (Robert Coulter’s favorite drink) and scars which Robert had on his ankles from polio surgery. The clay sculpture was then used to create a mold into which the bronze (heated to 2,500 degrees) would be poured into. The mold was taken to the Fine Arts Sculpture Center in Clarkston, Michigan, where the bronze was poured. The final steps were to paint the bronze statue with a patina finish and wax coating to seal the statue.

The estate of Robert Coulter donated to the Harsens Island Museum; “Bradley Barnes Doin’ It His Way,” a scrapbook showing the process of making the bronze statue, and the bronze statue of the Kid on the Flats.

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continued from page 6 . . . Robert Coulter



The model:
Nancy Diebold's grandnephew,
Alex Harcourt, 10 years old.



The finished clay sculpture.



John cleans up the sculpture with
a drummel.



Mike heats the sculpture as
he applies the patina.



Memoriam John G. Cameron 1924 – 2022

John Gray Cameron (Sr), a third generation Islander, was born on August 14, 1924 - the day a favorite Island freighter (the *Henry Ford II*) was launched. He lasted much longer than the freighter and, like many of his generation, entered military service during World War II. In those days, a young man could choose between being drafted into that branch of the service where there was an immediate need or volunteering to undertake a specific role. Like his close friend Dick Chute, John Cameron was interested in aviation.

Hence, following his graduation from Detroit's Cass Tech High School in 1943, John elected to join the Navy and focus on aviation. Following basic training at Chicago's Great Lakes Naval Training Center, John received further training at the nearby Glen Ellen Naval Air Station and also (he said) somewhere near New York. He was then assigned to duty at the Naval base in Alameda, California, where he became a flight engineer. His responsibilities included verification of the flight worthiness of the PBY 3 aircraft and performance of various in-flight duties.



Photo source : <https://pbycatalina.com/pby-3/>

He left the service in 1946 as a petty officer first class. Among other distinctions, John saved several aircraft from destruction (as well as the lives of their crew members) by paying careful attention to detail and identifying various defects in their readiness when they were in his charge. At the end of his service, he managed to "borrow" a wooden propeller from one of his aircraft. That propeller found its way to the rafters of his Island cottage, where it sat for a generation. Its present whereabouts is, sadly, unknown. But the rest of the story is well known, John Cameron spent the better part of most of his remaining years on the Island he loved. We are grateful for the service John and so any others gave in World War II and happy that this memorial can serve as a remainder of the sacrifices they made.



John Cameron's Naval uniform, donated by the Cameron Family, will be displayed in the Harsen Island Museum

We were sad to hear one of our summer hosts, Father James Wysocki, passed away on November 29, 2022. He was a new host and loved to see the variety of people who come to visit the museum from both on and off the Island.



Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2023

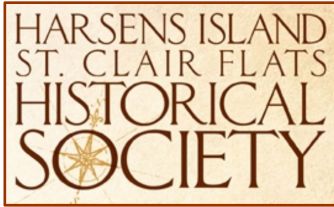
PLEASE NOTE: All events and locations in the following schedule are **tentative**

Date	Day	Time	Event
January 7	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom
March 11	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom
April 8	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom
May 13	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at Museum
May 27, 28 and 29	Saturday	10:00 AM – 4:00 PM	Museum Opens and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
	Sunday	12:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Museum Open
	Monday	11:00 AM – 2:00 PM	Museum Open
June 10	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at Museum
June TBD	TBD	TBD	Special Event – Speaker TBD
July 8	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at Museum
July TBD	TBD	TBD	Special Event – Speaker TBD
August 12	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at Museum
August 12	Saturday	10:00 AM	Annual Membership Meeting at the Museum
August TBD	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at Museum
September 2	Saturday	11:00 AM	Labor Day Parade
September 9	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
October 7	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Annual Pie Sale
October 14	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting at the Museum
November TBD	Sunday	2:00 PM	Remembrance Edmund Fitzgerald
November 11	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Planning Meeting via Zoom
December 2	Saturday	10:00 AM – 1:00 PM	Cookie Walk
December 9	Saturday	9:30 AM	Board Meeting via Zoom



Museum Hours

Summer Schedule (June, July, August, September)
Saturdays 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Sundays 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Winter Schedule (October through April)
Closed but Open by appointment



A publication of the Harsens Island St.
Clair Flats Historical Society

Mailing Address:

PO Box 44
Harsens Island MI 48028

Museum Address:

3058 S. Channel Dr.

www.harsensislandhistory.org

HISCFHS Board of Directors 2023

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Tom Pendolino



The historical society is looking to add to its collection. We accept donations of artifacts, photos, documents, and stories related to the Island and surrounding area. If you would like to add your family history to the museum archives, we can help you capture your memories for future generations.

Please contact our curator; Chris Knight at
chris.knight@comcast.net

Is your house more than 100 years old?

The Michigan Heritage Home™ program recognizes houses that were constructed at least 100 years ago and are in substantially original condition. That designation comes with a handsome cast-aluminum plaque that lets everyone know that your home has its own rich heritage and historical significance. This distinguished plaque, authorized by the Historical Society of Michigan, will remind both new and longtime community members of your home's contribution to your shared heritage.



For more information click here to go to the

[Michigan Heritage Program](http://www.hsmichigan.org/awards/michigan-heritage-home)

<https://www.hsmichigan.org/awards/michigan-heritage-home>

**Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society
Building Renovation BUY-A-BRICK Order Form**

I / We would like to 'BUY-A-BRICK' to support the Museum.

Indicate on the three lines below the inscription you would like on the brick using up to 25 letters, spaces, or special characters per line.

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Print Your Name _____

Your Phone Number _____ - _____ - _____

Your email address _____ @ _____

_____ **Enclosed is my check for \$350 made payable to HISCFHS.**

_____ **I will not be purchasing a brick at this time but have enclosed a donation for the renovation.**

Payments should be made payable to "HISCFHS" with "BRICK" on the memo line and mailed to the HISCFHS at P.O. Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028.



PO Box 44
 Harsens Island
 MI 48028
 www.harsensislandhistory.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2023

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Primary Mailing Address: _____ Member No. _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Spouse Cell: _____

E-Mail Address: _____ Spouse E-Mail: _____

Additional Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Additional Phone: _____ Membership Type: _____

Annual Renewal Dues:		Lifetime Dues:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (1 Member Only)	\$20.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Individual	\$300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (1-2 Adults + Children < 18)	\$30.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Family	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Business	\$50.00		

Building Donation: \$ _____ Other Donation: \$ _____

If desired, please specify use: _____

Newsletters are emailed to members. If you require newsletters via postal mail, please write a note on your returned application.

Please complete and send with a check made payable to: **Harsens Island Historical Society.**

Mail to: Harsens Island St. Clair Historical Society, P.O. Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date received: _____

Check # _____ Amount \$ _____