



volume 14 / number 7

September 2023

*Message from the President . . .*

Happy September!

What a fabulous Labor Day Weekend!! My cottage was filled with family all weekend and the perfect summer weather allowed us to experience everything Harsens Island has to offer – ‘warm’ water for swimming, sun for boating, fishing, runs/walks, games, parades (with candy!!), good food and BBQs, and Sunday evening’s sunset was one for the books!

The museum also had a Saturday, as it was filled with visitors, as Sans Souci was full of smiling faces enjoying the boat parade, street parade, Bloody Mary’s, and community. The museum has a special display of a ferry model made from Legos that brought much interest from kids and adults alike. The museum will maintain regular hours through September, there is still time to visit.

The Historical Society will be joining the St. Clair County Quilt Trail. We have ordered our quilt square, and it is being created and painted as we speak. The quilt block will be displayed on the side of the museum by the end of September. There will be a QR code displayed next to the quilt block which will provide a link explaining the design and color choices. I believe the colors and pattern will be stunning and a wonderful addition to museum and Sans Souci.

As always, thank you for your support!

*Joyce*

*Joyce Hassen, President*

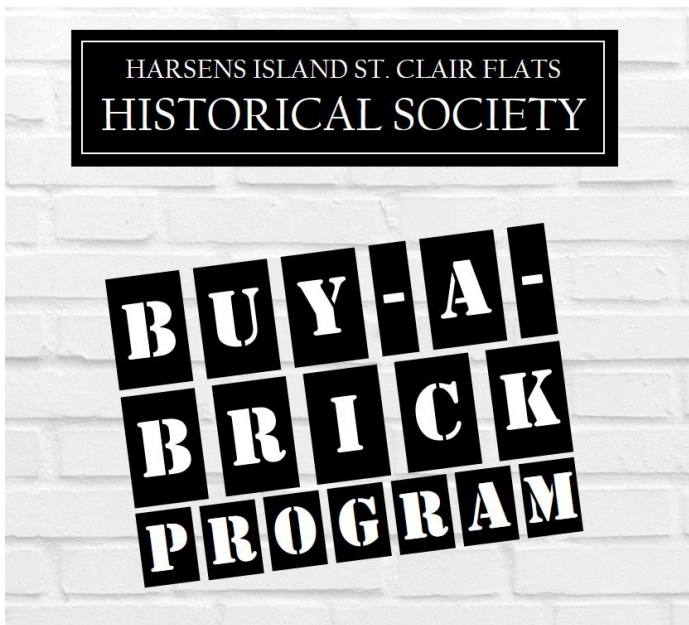


*Lego model of Harsens Island Ferry created by Dan Orlando.*

## 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](mailto:xharpspah@aol.com).

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

## Municipal water on its way to Harsens Island

*Sourced from Times Herald February 2, 2002*

Electricity in 1923 and township water in 2002. Electricity, water, sewage, gas, phone, tv cable, and trash pickup did not happen all at once and some services are still a work in progress. It was just 21 years ago that the pipeline was installed to provide township water to Harsens Island. This is an article that was published in the Times Herald in 2002.

**Households starting to tap lines from the township** - Don Thomas 70, of South Channel Drive soon will quit driving about three miles to a township water station for clean drinking water. Workers recently finished installing 12-inch water main underneath his front yard as part of a 20-mile, \$4.8 million pipeline project.

Despite occasional opposition from some islanders, officials' plans to pump township water from the mainland directly to about 800 residents have continued unabated since work began in September. "We'll be quite happy to get it." Mr. Thomas said. The first 60 home tap-ins to the system were completed earlier this week, township Clerk Michael Pellerito said.

The pipeline project, expected to be completed by mid-summer, will be expanded to include more homes, than originally planned, but details and costs still are being finalized, officials said. The water station on North Channel Drive, which since the 1970s has received township water through an underwater pipeline in the St. Clair River, was until the installation of the mains, the primary source of drinking water on the island, Mr. Pellerito said. Many residents pumped their bathroom and laundry water from the river or nearby canals, leading to health concerns, he said.

Large sections of the new water system were laid using an underground horizontal-drilling method in several residential areas, said supervising engineer Philip Porte of BMJ Engineers and Surveyors Inc. of Port Huron.

"That allowed us to minimize the mess and the kind of (landscaping) restoration that had to take place," he said. Island residents whose property contains the new water lines will pay a 20-year annual assessment fee, township Treasurer Connie Turner said.

Each property owner's bill is \$4,050 for the first 75 feet of their land's width, plus \$6.75 for each additional foot of pipeline needed to connect with nearby property, she said. Although the first year's bill was interest free, future bill will contain 3.69% in interest charges, Mrs. Turner said.

The pipeline project also will result in the island fire department changing its procedures and using 214 new fire hydrants. Previously, firefighters drew water they needed from the river and canals. Fire Chief Bruce Schweikart said his department will need to buy a new pumper truck to properly use the hydrants.



By TONY PITTS, Times Herald  
**LINES GOING IN:** Denny Howe of Mecosta, left, and J.R. Lucas of Garden seal a plastic water main pipe Friday as part of a project to supply city water to Harsens Island.

*Continued on page 4 . . .*

### Guest Speaker, LeRoy A Rubinas Shares His Knowledge About the J.B. Ford

On Sunday, August 20, LeRoy A Rubinas was at the historical museum to talk about his passion of ships, in particular, the J.B. Ford. From his teenage years and throughout his life he developed a passion for anything to do with the water. He was visiting the USS South Work Steel Plant when he found the 1901 built J.B. Ford. After finding the J.B. Ford he arranged for several tours, and from 1991 to 1993 he took many photographs of the J.B. Ford. LeRoy compiled his photos along with detailed description and published "Museum Ship J.B. Ford - The Chicago Maritime Society Tour - March 1991,"



LeRoy A. Rubinas' presentation on J.B. Ford

The historical museum was honored to have another author join us on Sunday, Wes Oleszewski. Wes has authored 17 books on maritime history and lighthouses. His most recent research and publications are the history of spaceflight, notably his six-book series called "Growing up with Spaceflight."



Thank you, LeRoy, and Wes,  
for two informative and  
entertaining presentations!

Left: John Cameron Jr. and wife Ann (John Jr. donated the J.B Ford whistle to the museum) Center: LeRoy A. Rubinas. Right: Wes Oleszewski

## Our Historical Society to Present to the Historical Society of Michigan

On Tuesday, September 26 at 12:00 PM our Historical Society will be presenting a PowerPoint presentation to the members of The Historical Society of Michigan (HSM). HSM sponsors regular webinars of a variety of topics related to Michigan history. We have been invited to tell the story of our island.

### To attend the webinar

Our historical society is a member of HSM, and all our members are entitled to attend these webinars at no cost. If you would like to attend our webinar on September 26 you can register by going to . . .

<https://www.hsmichigan.org/>

Click on the SEARCH button in the upper right corner.

In the "Keywords" box type in "Harsens Island" then click on the "Apply" button.

One of results will be "*Harsens Island: It's all about the Water!*" Click on that.

Click on the "Register" button under the webinar description.

On the registration page click on "*A member of an HSM member organization.*"

A box will pop up for you to enter your member organization name. Type in "Harsens Island" and our full name will pop into the box. Now, fill in your name and email address. Select our event from the list. (Sept 26) Then select how you heard about History Hounds and click on "submit."

Within a minute you should receive a confirmation email with your registration information. A few days before the webinar you should receive a reminder email with a link to the zoom meeting. If you don't see it, you should be able to attend by clicking on the name of the Webinar in the confirmation email you received.

Keep in mind that this presentation is designed to tell people about Harsens Island who may know little or nothing at all about the island.

Here is a full list of topics we hope to be able to cover in our approximately 45-minute time slot. It should be a fully packed and fast-moving presentation.

- Where is Harsens Island?
- The Historical Society
- The Creation of Harsens Island
- Wildlife on Harsens Island
- Plants of Harsens Island
- The Political History of H.I.
- Our Shipping Channel
- The Tashmoo Steamer
- Our History of Island Resorts
- Tashmoo Park
- Then and Now
- Current Events
- Island Homes
- Our Town – Sans Souci
- Museum Exhibits
- Island Services
- One-of-a-Kinds on the island
- Getting to and from the island
- Conclusion

HSM offers webinars on a variety of topics. As a member of our society, you are eligible to attend many of the HSM offerings. To check out other topics go to <https://www.hsmichigan.org/> and scroll down on the page to the "History Hounds" logo. Click on the button below it which says, "History Hounds Lecture Series." On that new page scroll down to see the upcoming lectures and for more topics click on the page numbers at the bottom.

# Harsens Island Historical Society Calendar 2023

Date	Day	Time	Event
September 16	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 12	Sunday	3:00 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

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



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

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 44  
Harsens Island MI 48028

**Museum Address:**

3058 S. Channel Dr.

[www.harsensislandhistory.org](http://www.harsensislandhistory.org)

**HISCFHS Board of Directors 2023**

Chairman of the Board

**Bob Williams**

President

**Joyce Hassen**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

**Chris Knight**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President

**Ellen Probst**

Treasurer

**Corinne Trexler**

Secretary

**Nancy Bonacquisti**

Directors

**Terry Wiggins**

**Sue Wrobel**

**Rebecca Verschave**



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](mailto: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](https://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.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**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.