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

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## President's Message

Hi All,

### ***Steam Whistle Project Update***

Since our last report the Harsens Island Garden Club helped us pick out some appropriate plants. The planting beds around the compressor room were prepared for landscaping and Hydrangeas were installed. A special thanks to all involved in the project, especially Harsens Island Garden Club members Sue Williams, Terry Wiggins, Doreen Miller, Nancy Boulton, Ruth Roth and Kathy Snary. Bobby Bryson is working on the piping installation needed to supply the air from the compressor to the whistle. With the help of Museum Curator Chuck Miller, an additional air storage tank was acquired. Bobby and Chuck got the whistle attached to the tank for a test of the whistle and it was quite a blast. It should all be completed soon.

### ***Building Addition Committee Update***

In August we had a hearing before the Clay Township Board of Appeals and received their approval for a waiver we needed on our south property line setback. In October we will go before the Clay Township Planning Commission for our Special Use and Site Plan Approvals. We hope to proceed with full architectural and engineering plans for the addition soon; then on to obtain contractor bids and a building permit. We are keeping our fingers crossed for a ground breaking in the spring.

### ***Museum will be opened by special arrangements over the winter***

The museum is now closed for the season, but, if you have a group who would like to visit we can make special arrangements to have it opened. Please call Chuck Miller at 810-643-1150.

### ***Special Exhibit on the People of Harsens Island***

Our 2018 Special Exhibit on "The People of Harsens Island" was a great success. There was much interest shown in the Harsens family tree and other Island family trees. As summer progressed, more and more people dropped in to add their family photos to our board; to provide copies of their family trees; and to tell of their connections to other families on the island. With the popularity of this exhibit we will now be making it a part of our Permanent Exhibit.



### ***Nancy Boulton***

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our dear founding member Nancy

Boulton. Nancy had the vision that Harsens Island was deserving of its own Historical Society and Museum. She spent months promoting the idea and rounded up plenty of folks who agreed with her. In 2010 the original Board of Directors was formed during a meeting at the Reader's Cove and Nancy's vision began to take shape. After arranging to rent the old fire house, the Society had its home and Nancy had her museum. Nancy served as Museum Director from its inception to the day of her passing. Most of Nancy's life in the last few years was dedicated to Museum. Nancy spent countless hours at the museum. She spent most of her weekends either at the museum or trying to find volunteers to keep it open to the public.

She led fundraisers such as the Cookie Walk and the Pie Sale every year. She even had a few Antique Sales with items donated by Islanders for the sale.

Nancy was very enthusiastic about the Museum and the Island itself. She loved to be at the Museum, and talking to its many visitors. When we first opened the museum,

we mostly had pictures, newspaper articles and few donated artifacts. As time went on, Nancy was able to procure most of the items that are now on display at the Museum.

Nancy will always be the heart and soul of the museum. It is now up to us to carry on with the work which she began. Thank you, Nancy, for your leadership and your dedication to the Island and its heritage. You will be greatly missed.

A Memorial for Nancy will be held at the Museum on Saturday October 13 at noon. Everyone is welcome.

### **2018 Raffle a Success**



The Society raised over \$1,000 through the 2018 Raffle. A big *Thank You* to everyone who purchased raffle tickets this year. With the help of a couple of Islanders, we picked the winners on Saturday September 1 at 2:00 here in the Museum.

Here are the winners:

- 1<sup>st</sup> prize – Shirley Toussaint winner of the Jim Clary print
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> prize – Jen Atwood winner of the 2-night stay at Harsens Island Bed & Breakfast
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> prize – Pamela S. Wilson winner of a book of ferry tickets
- Congratulations!



## Notes from the Curator

Our 2018 Museum season draws to a close on a sad note with the passing of Nancy Boulton. She was the driving force behind the creation of our organization and she will be missed.

Yet we have many positive achievements to reflect on. Over the past three years, an average of over 400 visitors have signed our guest log — a very credible showing. Thanks to all of you. We will continue to expand our Family Tree efforts and invite the Island families to contribute to the effort by providing what information they have (including pictures). These exhibits are living interactive projects that will change as we receive input from you.

We were fortunate to have connected with the French Canadian Voyageur Re-enactors from the Castle Museum in Saginaw, who spent three nights in encampment at our museum, complete with a 30' replica of the Voyageurs canoe, period dress and stories of the woods. The Trois Buffons French Canadian signing group also provided a particular highlight with their song and dance around the camp fire.

Thanks to the help of Kathy O'Connor, we were able to acquire a model of the Tashmoo Steamer for our "Tashmoo Room". Complete with internal lighting, the model presents a stunning addition to our exhibit. Special thanks also go out to Art and Mary Woodford for the donation of their first-rate collection of First Nation's leather and carved souvenirs that were sold from booths at Tashmoo Park. Member Mike Sauer contributed the Indian artifacts for our First Nations exhibit, and hard-working volunteers, among them Nancy Boulton, Marie and John Eidt, Corrine

Trexler, Donna Krispin, Terry Wiggins and Chris Knight were instrumental in bringing our exhibits to life.

Next year will be an exciting year and surprises are in store!



**Voyageurs pass St. Mark's Church on Harsens Island.**

## Social Hour

The September Historical Society's Social Hour was another great event ending the season on Harsens Island. There were some new wonderful stories of past Island adventures, some that can't be repeated and not up for publication. Too bad for those who missed them! As always, there was an abundance of good food and there did not appear to be any lack of libations. Since the Social Hours are such a great success, they will continue next year. Plan to share some stories. Find some old pictures You have all winter to get ready for the 2019 Historical Society's Social Hour which will start at 6:00 pm on May 10, 2019 – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in May.

God Bless and have a wonderful winter.

John Chamberlain



### **The Memoirs of Aura P. Stewart**

In recent issues we printed a portion of Aura Stewart's memoirs as originally published in "The History of St. Clair County by A.T. Andreas & Co. 1883." Below are more of his reminiscences from the early 1800's.

*"About ten years after the blowing-up of the house, causing the death of two of the members of the Harsen family, Mr. James Harsen went over to Big Bear Creek on the Canadian side to trade with the Indians. At this time, John Riley was there on a spree, and as Mr. Harsen was stooping to enter his cabin, he (Riley) fired off his rifle, the ball entered Mr. H.'s eye and passing out behind his ear. From this wound Mr. Harsen lingered in great misery for about six months, and died at his home on Harsen's Island.*

*The names of the steamboats commanded by my brother John were Michigan 1, and Michigan 2, owned by O. Newberry, of Detroit, and the Northern, owned in Cleveland. He also commanded a steamboat on the Chicago and St. Joseph route, the name of which I have forgotten. In 1855, he purchased an interest in the steam tug Pilot, but as his health was fast failing his physicians advised him to abandon the waters and remain quiet at home. He did as advised, remaining at home until the day of his death, which was on the 28th of May, 1855, in the fiftieth year of his age. He entered on his profession in the year 1820, and continued it for thirty-five years. He was the first seaman from St. Clair County appointed to the command of a vessel at Detroit. In two cases he risked his life to save the lives of drowning sailors and passengers. He was generous to a fault, and could shed a tear for suffering humanity. His death was sudden, as his physicians had previously told him it would be. He was at my place in the morning on business and died before reaching home, in an apoplectic fit, it being the third attack of*

*the kind. He left a good record, which his surviving children should imitate and be proud of.*

*After writing the above memoirs, I visited my brother, G. G. Stewart, of Harsen's Island, and while there I asked to examine my father's papers, among which I found the appointment of Harvey Stewart as County Commissioner, in and for the County of St. Clair. The commission had the seal of the Territory, signed by Lewis Cass, Governor, and William Woodbridge, Secretary of State, and was dated the 22d day of May, 1822. Following the above appointment is the commission of Gov. Cass appointing my father Master in Chancery in and for the Territory of Michigan, and dated April 20, 1827."*



**You don't want to miss this!  
What's happening this Fall with your  
Historical Society:**

**October 6<sup>th</sup> – Saturday – 10:00 am – noon Pie Sale at the Museum.** If you are donating pies for the sale, please bring them to the Museum between 9:00 – 9:30 AM. For more information contact Chris Knight 586-242-4560.

**October 13<sup>th</sup> – Saturday – 10:30 AM Board/Membership Meeting at the Museum.**

**October 13<sup>th</sup> – Saturday – noon Nancy Boulton Memorial at the Museum.** For more information contact Chris Knight 586-242-4560.

**December 1<sup>st</sup> – Saturday – 10:00 AM – noon Cookie Walk at the Museum.**

**December 8<sup>th</sup> – Saturday – 10:30 AM Board Meeting at the Museum.**

If you aren't currently a member, please consider joining the Harsens Island St. Clair Flats Historical Society

### Membership Application 2018

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse (2): \_\_\_\_\_

Only required for family Membership

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell (1): \_\_\_\_\_ Spouses Cell (2): \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please write e-mail address clearly.

Additional Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues:		Life-time Dues	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (1 Member Only)	\$20.00	_____ Life Individual	\$300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family (1-2 Adults plus children under 18 years)	\$30.00	_____ Life Family	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Business	\$50.00	Business Name: _____	

<b>BUILDING FUND DONATION: \$</b> _____	<b>OTHER DONATION: \$</b> _____
<b>STEAM WHISTLE PROJECT DONATION: \$</b> _____	If desired, please specify use: _____

Please complete this form and send with a check made payable to: "The Society" to P.O. Box 44, Harsens Island, MI 48028, or deposit in the letter slot at the museum at 3058 South Channel Drive, Harsens Island, MI 48028

New Member  
 Renewal

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**  
Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Board of Directors

#### President

Bob Williams 248-388-0465  
president@hiscfhs.org

#### 1st. Vice President

Susan Wrobel 810-748-3601

#### 2nd Vice President

Corinne Trexlar 810-512-4675

#### Treasurer

Joyce Hassen 313-336-4675

#### Secretary

Nancy Bonacquisti – 248-840-3042

#### Directors:

Terry Wiggins 810-923-7538  
Mary Woodford 810-748-3571

#### Museum Curator

Chuck Miller 810-748-7209

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