

Pointe aux Barques Lighthouse Society

We had a great 2023 season!

- Our second year hiring a summer intern – along with help from our “assistant keepers” – took weight off the shoulders of our volunteers and allowed us to be open 5 days a week
- We had record numbers of visitors: over 6,000 people visited the lighthouse; more than 4,000 toured the museum; 1,600 climbed the tower. About 400 people toured the life-saving station (LSS) on weekends it was open
- We gave the top of the tower a “face lift” with a bright, distinctive red paint job. (See photo at top right)



The 3rd year of our “Assistant Keeper” program was a huge success

- Assistant keepers were on staff all 16 weeks of the season
- They came from Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, North Carolina, and Texas, as well as various points in Michigan
- Their work included being museum docents, weeding the gardens, edging the sidewalks, and helping with tower climbs and field trips
- The 2024 schedule is already almost full!



Our 19th annual Heritage Festival was one of our best



- In our second year of counting visitors, we saw an increase from 600 last year to over 1,000 people in attendance this year
- The R&B Detroit Social Club was a big hit, and Kenny Lang charmed the crowd with his folk songs
- 12 vendors and 2 food trucks had a wonderful array of items for sale
- About 250 people toured the life-saving station and learned about its history

In August, we sponsored a program by artist/historian Robert McGreevy



- Bob delivered his talk, “The U.S. Life-Saving Service in the Thumb of Michigan”, to over 220 people at the Harbor Beach Theater
- The program covered the history of Life-Saving Service operations and featured the engrossing tale of the April 1880 tragedy at the PAB LSS when all six surfmen died of hypothermia while trying to rescue a stranded ship
- Bob also captivated the crowd with his account of the October 1888 heroic efforts of the Harbor Beach LSS crew to save a barge captain and his crew during a raging storm

In September, we hosted field trips for most of the County's sixth-graders

- 240 students from seven of the eight county school districts and rural schools visited (the eighth school will attend in spring 2024)
- The students had a great time visiting the museum, climbing the tower, and touring the life-saving station
- We love to share the history of the lighthouse and life-saving station with our youth – a majority of whom have never been to Lighthouse Park



Work on restoration of the PAB life-saving station continues

- We've reviewed over 4,200 pages of station logbook entries spanning 1879 to 1896 from the National Archives that contain fascinating details about station life and building construction
- Work on our Historic Structure Report (HSR) is nearing completion. It documents the history of the LSS buildings and details our plan for restoration. The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the HSR, and we've made revisions to address its comments
- We're now looking forward to developing bid drawings and specifications, securing funding, and beginning restoration in 2024
- To raise awareness about the life-saving station, we added a 6-video display of life-saving history in the museum

Plans are underway to update museum exhibits

- Over the winter, all life-saving station photos and artifacts will be centralized in one room with the video display
- Work is also proceeding on a new, interactive iPad-based display that will enhance visitors' experience as to the Thumb Bottomland Preserve's many shipwrecks. The electronic display will provide information about the ships, including underwater dive photos of the wrecks
- Plans also include enhancement of the display of artifacts and information about the tragic 1966 sinking of the *Daniel J. Morrell* and the 1913 Great Storm stranding and salvage of the *SS Matoa*

Our Many Thanks To You!

As we close out 2023 and look forward to 2024, we thank you all for your continuing support. As you know, our need to fund our ongoing operations continues. PABLS still depends largely on donations and grants for its funding as well as volunteers for its operations and fundraising. We welcome individuals with experience in business, marketing, finance, art and related fields. If you are interested, please contact Mimi Herrington at mimiherrington@comcast.net And of course, you can help with a donation. Please find a return envelope for your convenience. Donations can also be made at our website: www.pointeauxbarqueslighthouse.org.

Our Board thanks all of our visitors, donors and volunteers for their continued support
and wishes you all the happiest of holidays!

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