



CHARLEVOIX
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Bridging our past with our future

103 State Street / P.O. Box 525 / Charlevoix, MI 49720 / 231.547.0373 / info@chxhistory.com / www.chxhistory.com

September 2019

Issue #4

Editor: David L. Miles

Platinum (\$2000 or more)

Adrienne Osborne Ives
Robert J. and ZeZe Jess
Ole Lyngklip III
Craig & Deborah Mann

Gold (\$1000 — \$1999)

Mike & Rheda Dow
Chip & Vicki Emery
Paul & Sally Hoeldtke
Glenn & Valerie Mueller
Paul & Linda Weston

Silver (\$500 — \$999)

Ace Hardware
Belvedere Club
Virginia Cash
Charlevoix Commercial Center/
Self-Service Storage
Charlevoix State Bank
John & Phyllis Elzinga
Gary & Denise Fale
Grey Gables Restaurant & Catering
Haggard's Plumbing & Heating
Ralph & Mary Lynn Held
Don & Kay Heise
Dale & Diane Herder
Katherine Liggett
Nu-Core, Inc.
Richard & Diane Platt
David & Judith Wilson
John Wilson

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Tom & Maryalice Armstrong
Curtis & Shelley Boehmer
Charlevoix Convention
& Visitors Bureau
Chris & Brenda Cosco
Harry Golsk
Perry Irish Hodgson
& Richard Hodgson III
Elizabeth Hoffmann
Meghan Johnson & Jason Dishow
Tom & Sue Kirkpatrick
Ed O'Neill & Susan Kroll
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Barry & Kaitlin Markwart
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Michael & Leslie Mount
Philip & Lynn Stella
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*Please support the businesses
that support us.*

Lake Michigan Fishing History Program

LAKE MICHIGAN: ITS FISH AND THE HISTORY OF ITS COMMERCIAL FISHERY

The Great Lakes once produced a quarter of all the fish caught by American commercial fishers. By 1908 Charlevoix became the Lakes' most productive fish exporting port. A seemingly limitless supply of millions of tons of "finny gold" became Charlevoix's first industry in the mid 1800s when itinerant seasonal fishermen and their families arrived once the lake ice melted in spring. They either built new shelters on our shorelines or fixed up the weather-damaged ones they had constructed in previous years. After working non-stop for months, the fishing community left just before the lakes froze over.

Once our first permanent settlers arrived beginning in 1854, fishing became the immediate bedrock of our early economy until lumbering appeared in the 1860s to work in tandem with fishing. The sawdust created by the lumber production was put to work insulating the blocks of ice harvested in winter from our lakes. This kept the fish fresh long enough for it to be shipped out by boat, and eventually rail after 1892, to be distributed all over the United States.

Join us as we explore this fascinating, essential part of our history in a fully illustrated program narrated by retired Michigan State University professor of anthropology Chuck Cleland, Historical Society Board member. His talk will explore the waters of the Great

Lakes, the commercial fish and the history of the Great Lakes fishery, and will be illustrated by photos from the Historical Society's superb photo collection.

**When: Monday, October 7
@ 7:00 p.m.**

**Where: The Depot, Depot Beach
305 Chicago Avenue**

FALL MUSEUM HOURS

The Museum at Harsha House will be open Tuesday through Saturday, 12-4 p.m., until December 31, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day excluded. Please call ahead if you need to stop by to conduct business, do research, or make a store purchase before the museum opens.

SUMMER MUSEUM VISITORS

This has been a banner year for the Museum at Harsha House. From Memorial Day weekend on, visitors arrived from Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Tennessee, Washington, and Wyoming.

From other countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Japan, Mexico, and the Philippines (twice).

NEW HISTORIC SIGNAGE REALLY GETTING ATTENTION

We are very pleased to report that the installation of the new historic signage that appears in seven locations—four downtown, two on the channel, and one at the Depot—is getting the desired results. Random discreet observations at each locale find people stopping to read, take notes, photograph the signs, talking amongst themselves about the images, and pointing beyond the signs at the nearby areas they're reading about. There have even been seen, on occasion, large gatherings assembled around a sign, children in strollers included, for a big group portrait.

A BIG THANKS TO OUR VOLUNTEER GROUNDSKEEPERS

At the end of another almost too short season, the Society would like to acknowledge its volunteer groundskeepers at the Harsha House and the Depot. Ralph Heid continues his yeoman's work keeping the museum lawn trim and neat, while his wife Mary Lynn Heid, Chris Unbehau, and their colleagues from the Charlevoix Area Garden Club tend the circumference of the Harsha House and the alley-side strip with their beautiful flowers and plants. At the Depot, the Garden Club continues to keep the Heritage Garden as one of the showplaces of Charlevoix, an oasis of quiet and calm in a very busy world. A big thanks to each and every one involved.

DEPOT USAGE CONTINUES STRONG

Ever since the Board of Directors decided, a few years ago, to open our Depot for paid usage as a venue for private and public events, the results have been extremely encouraging not only for the exposure of the historic and beautiful structure to so many people, but for the revenue it has generated. This year alone, the Depot, painted in late 2018 to its surprisingly vivid original colors, has seen twenty-one events take place. Just over half, eleven, have been non-Society functions. These included weddings (all-inclusive, all-day ceremonies or only breakfast/reception/pre-wedding functions), non-profit organization meetings, anniversary parties, photography club juried exhibit, a memorial service, and a commodore's ball. Previous years have seen birthday parties, high school graduation parties, lectures to private entities, and other functions. Almost all who attend these events have raved about the unmatched setting looking down Lake Charlevoix, in 2012 voted by an online poll of USA Today's readership to be the second best lake in the United States (Lake Tahoe in California came in at #1). Several bookings have been made as a result of someone attending a previous event and seeing what we have to offer. Call Museum Manager Trevor Dotson at 231-547-0373 for information about booking the Charlevoix Depot.

IMPORTANT ADDITIONS TO THE COLLECTIONS

Some excellent additions have been made to our collections. From the estates of the late father and son James and Bill Bellinger have come both document and photo records of the Foster Boat Works on Ferry Avenue, now the big condominium building, and the Booth Fisheries/Bellinger Marine Services building once on the south shore of Round Lake. The Foster Boat group includes excellent photos of the plywood "storm boats" built in Charlevoix that were instrumental in the winning of World War II in the European Theater. The lightweight craft were commissioned by the War Department in 1944 for the specific purpose of ferrying tens of thousands of Allied troops across the rivers of central Europe, mainly the Moselle and Rhine, in the final push to Berlin in 1945. We also have been loaned, for scanning and copying, original letters handwritten by pioneer John Dixon, one in 1854 before he arrived in Charlevoix, the second in 1858 after he settled here.

**Save the Date! Annual Christmas Dinner at the Grey Gables will be on Tuesday, December 3.
Details in November.**

2019 MARGARET DUERR AWARD PRESENTATION AND PROGRAM AT LIBRARY

This year, the Friends of the Charlevoix Public Library organization will be presenting its Margaret Duerr award to the library's Michigan Room Committee, the originators themselves of this honor. The committee members are also all longtime members of the Historical Society: Mary Ann Chew, Kay Heise, Marilyn Novak, and Cynthia Postmus. The Margaret Duerr award is always one of the most anticipated events of the year.

This award was named after a devoted former librarian who did so much to build Charlevoix's library system when it was located at 109 Clinton Street, now the Charlevoix Circle of Arts. Its intent is to honor those local or area individuals or groups that have notably contributed to the arts, education, history, or environment of Northern Michigan. The four ladies were part of the intensely committed and determined sparkplug group that saved the emptied 1927/28 Grant Street brick school from development, successfully lobbying all over town for the building's glorious transformation into a new library that, since 2006, has been recognized as one of the finest in Michigan. The committee is responsible for managing the contents of the library's main floor Michigan Room, appraising the library's rare book collection, archivally preserving hard copies of the town's historic newspapers, providing obituary records online (an historical treasure house), mounting exhibitions in the Michigan Room's display cases, plus much more.

After the award presentation, a unique program will be presented by Lois Spregnether Keel. Ms. Keel combines her training in theater, work as a librarian, and love of history to create an unusual form of storytelling. Her program, "High Times in the Dry Times," visually and in story and song tells of the "Noble Experiment," the era of Prohibition (1920-1933), in Michigan. She builds her program through the eyes of a woman reporter, and this performance will include some Charlevoix history alongside the town's connection with Detroit's notorious Purple Gang in the years of flappers, jazz clubs, and bathtub gin. Charlevoix during the 1920s summers was one roaring place.

The program with reception following will take place in the library's Community Room, 220 Clinton Street, on Thursday, October 3 at 6:30 p.m.

A TRIBUTE TO BETSY REYNOLDS

The Historical Society suffered a serious loss in August with the passing of Betsy Reynolds, director of the Museum at Harsha House from 1993 to 2003, after which she continued on as an amazingly productive volunteer and advisor. Betsy took over the museum position not long after the resignation of her son Geoff, and her subsequent devotion to the Society was total. She honed her research skills over the years until it seemed she could find the answer to any Charlevoix-related historical question almost instantly. In her later years, Betsy spent countless hours at her home computer slowly sifting through the Charlevoix newspapers now online, courtesy of the Charlevoix Public Library, with the intent of building histories of various local topics and people one by one as reported in the vintage press. She also served as one of four on the committee that put together five of the Charlevoix Historical Society Press publications, using her research skills to enable their assemblage as quickly and correctly as possible, plus pitching in on layout and text writing and editing.

Betsy was also responsible for convincing the Board of Directors to modernize with the acquisition of the museum-specific PastPerfect computer record keeping program that handles all membership data plus photo collection description and search capability. Because of that, we now have almost 10,000 of the Bob Miles Photo Collection images ready at hand on their own discreet laptop for public inspection. Hundreds of these photos have subsequently produced revenue from sales for display in private homes, stores, restaurants, public buildings, and as gifts.

(Editor's note—During her first directorship years, Betsy was a teacher, able to devote time to the museum only on Thursday evenings and Saturdays during the academic year. As a consequence, as the collections started to build, a serious backlog and crowding of the Harsha House resulted. I was asked to come in part time in 1997 to help reduce the workload. Under Betsy's guidance, I really learned about the history of Charlevoix for the first time. Her influence is still moving us forward.)

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I want to welcome our newest Board member, John Duerr. A Charlevoix native, he has a keen and deep interest in local history and is a wonderful addition for us! Tom Darrnton is stepping up to the Vice President position after serving as a director to two years, and Lindsey Dotson is beginning a new 3-year term as Director. Thank you all for serving on the board!

We were so sad to learn of the passing of former museum director Betsy Reynolds - she will be sorely missed. She was a terrific and reliable go-to resource for me - with a steel-trap memory. She answered many a question for me, and willingly did so much for the Society over many years.

With our season of programs winding down, the Society is focusing on the next phase of interior renovation projects for the Harsha House as well as other social and fundraising activities coming up this winter. Watch for more information coming your way on all of these.

Denise

The Society welcomes new members: Gary & Kathy Moore, Louis & Meryl Hankey, Ruth Hurvitz,

Frank King, Katherine Craig, Katherine Liggett (Patron)

Donation in memory of William (Bill) Clark Heugh received from: *Tina Heugh*

Donations in memory of D'Ann Rothenberger received from: C. Marilyn Gibbons,

William and Carol Venema

Donation in memory of Roberta Mayne Albright received from: *William and Carol Venema*

Donations in memory of Betsy Reynolds received from: Barry & Karen Pierce, C. Marilyn Gibbons,

Christopher & Jean Carson, David L. Miles, Gary & Denise Fate, Donald & Ethel Reynolds,

Kay Reynolds, Lee Anne Widlak

Donations (unrestricted) received from: *Rachael Goodstein, Haggard's Plumbing & Heating,*

Jerilee McHard, Jeff Hayes

The Society deeply regrets the recent passing of longtime member: D'Ann Rothenberger



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