

CURIOSITIES

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2021 EVENTS IN REVIEW

After a year of not being able to attend social functions, the members, trustees and staff of Mackinac Associates knew the 2021 events would have to be top notch, and they did not disappoint.

The kick-off to the season, as always, was the G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration in June. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was understood right away that the format would have to change. To stick with tradition of hosting the event at a summer cottage, the gathering was held at The Inn at Stonecliffe, which was built as a private summer residence in 1904. There the crowd enjoyed a strolling dinner, listened to the Mike Davis Trio, and heard remarks from board president Harriet McGraw, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director Steve Brisson, and Mackinac State Historic Parks Director Emeritus Phil Porter. Porter shared the history

of the Stonecliffe property.

“It was wonderful to see so many familiar and friendly faces again this summer,” Brisson said. “The support of Mackinac Associates isn’t just financial. So many support our mission, of what we do as an organization, that being able to see them again was so gratifying.”

On July 4 the annual Red, White & Blue event was held at the Huron Road Pavilion under brilliant blue skies. This patriotic event continues to bring members from across the island together for a short but fun afternoon of hors d’oeuvres, cocktails and friendship. Island House Hotel catered the event.

Mackinac Associates was a key financial contributor to the archaeology program at Colonial Michilimackinac for the 2021 season. As such, members were treated to a behind-the-scenes evening at Colonial Michilimackinac led

by Curator of Archaeology Dr. Lynn Evans and her staff in mid-July. Those present were able to get up close to the dig site and see the screening process in action, see the most recent artifacts unearthed up-close-and-personal, an overview of the current archaeological dig, and learn about the archaeological process.

The finale for the season was the Annual Meeting, held at the Huron Road Pavilion on Mackinac Island. While enjoying a lunch catered from Island House, attendees met the candidates for the board and heard a presentation from Eric Hemenway from the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. See the related story in this issue.

Dates for 2022 events appear elsewhere in this issue of Curiosities, and are also online at mackinacassociates.com.



Shannon and Lucas Westblade at the G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration



Showcasing the screening process at the members-only archaeology program in July

WHAT CAN WE DO WITH OUR DATABASE?

Mackinac Associates has been hard at work making modifications and improvements with what information we can store in our member database. Some of the things we can now more easily do include storing a seasonal address so your Mackinac Associates mail can go directly to you without having to be forwarded (and some items such as Curiosities aren’t always forwarded by the postal service).

We are now able to manage automatic membership renewals, which was an item of interest on the member survey in 2020, though it just took us a little while to get to where we could more easily manage this process. If you are interested, you will begin to see more information regarding this with membership renewals beginning this winter but if you want more information before then please feel free to contact us at 231-436-4100 or membership@mackinacassociates.com.



Isaac McNutt at Red, White and Blue

ANNUAL MEETING ROUND-UP

Joan Slater, of St. Ignace, and Brian Bailey, of Mackinac Island, were unanimously voted to the Mackinac Associates Board of Trustees at its annual meeting August 14.

Slater grew up in Minneapolis and first visited Mackinac Island with family in 1965. After graduating from Utah State University with a degree in history and geography, Slater came to Mackinac for a summer job which turned into living and working on the Island for forty years. Slater now lives in St Ignace with her wife, Mary Wojcik.

“It is an honor to be on the board of Mackinac Associates and I approach my term with a willingness to listen, learn and assist in any way possible,” Slater said.

Bailey has been the general manager of the Chippewa Hotel for more than 25 years, first from 1986-1992 and since 2003. Also since 2003 he has served as general manager of the Lilac Tree Suites & Spa. He originally hails from Ann Arbor and attended Albion College. Bailey has been married to his wife Jeri-Lynn (whom he met at the Chippewa Hotel) since 1991 and has three children – Kyle, a project manager for Emcor Corp., Mary, a student at Hope College, and Nora, a junior at Gaylord High School.

“I am honored to be a member of this prestigious board whose purpose is to support the Mackinac State Park and the history of the Straits area,” Bailey said.

Slater and Bailey replace Jack Barnwell and Wes Maurer, who were term-limited off the board.

“We’re thrilled to see Joan Slater and Brian Bailey added to the Mackinac Associates Board of Trustees,” said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director. “Joan has always been an engaged and committed member of the Mackinac Island and St. Ignace communities, and Brian offers a quarter-century’s worth of experience as a business and community leader on Mackinac Island.

“We thank Wes Maurer and Jack Barnwell for their dedication to the Mackinac Associates board,” Brisson continued. “We look forward to their continued involvement with Mackinac Associates in the future.”

Additionally, members heard from Eric Hemenway, Director of Repatriation, Archives and Records for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. During his talk he highlighted the importance of the partnership that the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians has with Mackinac State Historic Parks that has resulted in MSHP sharing a more accurate story of the Anishnaabek of northern Michigan, which includes the 2021 opening of the Mackinac Island Native American Museum at the Biddle House. President Harriet McGraw highlighted the summer events and the generous support of members over the past year, including funding the 2021 archaeology field season at Colonial Michilimackinac and funding accessibility



Harriet McGraw and Wes Maurer



Eric Hemenway

improvements including mobility scooters available for visitors at Colonial Michilimackinac and Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park.

At the regular board meeting August 27, the board reelected the following officers: Harriet McGraw, president; Jeb Burns, vice president; Tom Lockwood, treasurer; and Nancy Porter, secretary.

A COLONIAL CHRISTMAS

A new event will welcome Mackinac Associates members this December: A Colonial Christmas, taking place at Colonial Michilimackinac on Saturday, December 11, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

A Colonial Christmas at Colonial Michilimackinac will immerse guests into the holiday traditions of Michilimackinac in the 17th and 18th centuries. Visitors will be able to tour the site at their own pace, heading into buildings that will feature interpreters describing various Christmas traditions and try era-appropriate snacks and drinks throughout their visit.

Upon entering the site, lanterns will light a path to the South Southwest Rowhouse, where guests can purchase tickets and receive their first goodies. Dedicated photo spots will also dot the entry into the fort, allowing for that perfect winter photo opportunity.

Once inside the fort, guests can head to the Southwest Rowhouse, where they’ll learn about French-Canadian traditions; the Guardhouse, where British civilian and military traditions will be discussed; the Barracks, where German military traditions will be presented; the Northwest Rowhouse, where crafts will be available, allowing guests to take home a piece of their visit; Northwest Rowhouse Unit A, where they’ll learn about French New Year’s celebrations, including a chance to cut into the King’s cake to find a prize; the Priest’s House, where wassail will be distributed; and Ste. Anne’s Church, where the church will be set up for holiday mass. Finally, out on the parade ground, a fire will be set up and stories of the first Christmas at Mackinac (1675) will be told, and games like Trap Ball will be available for guests to play.



Interpreters will be stationed throughout the site presenting various Christmas traditions.

This event is free for Mackinac Associates, excluding the Heritage-level season pass. Please watch mackinacparks.com or mackinacassociates.com for potential Covid-19 updates to this event.

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

Mackinac Associates feels very strongly about addressing members and donors in their preferred manner. We also appreciate that many of you have been members for a long time and things change over time. If your name is not how you would prefer it, please let us know and we would be happy to update our records. You can do this on your renewal form or contact the office at any time. Also, as a result of database improvements, we are now capable of easily storing different versions of your name for

donor recognition and for nametags at events. We know some members prefer a more formal name for donor recognition but would like a more casual version or nickname on their nametags at events. But please remember that our guest service representatives at the ticket locations are seasonal and not usually long-time residents of the area and may sometimes ask for ID, so we want to make sure that the name on your membership card is some version of the name on your ID.

2022 EVENT DATES

June 18th
G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration

July 4th
Red, White and Blue

August 20th
Mackinac Associates Annual Meeting



DIRECTOR'S OUTLOOK

As we wind down another season at Mackinac State Historic Parks, we pause to look back at an amazing summer. Amazing because it was near normal in many ways. Of course, the lack of Boy and Girl Scouts, reduced programs, and some cancelled events remained as examples that we were not out of the woods yet. But overall, it has been a bright season. Daily attendance numbers were back to above 2019 levels and it was gratifying to see our sites filled with happy guests. Our museum stores, a key source of support, did very well. And the generosity of Mackinac Associates continued to remain strong. You provided us with the resources that enabled us to keep our public programs running.

The opening of the Biddle House with its new Mackinac Island Native American Museum was a highlight of the year. In addition to the new museum, the site was opened for the first time for the full May to October season, including the Benjamin Blacksmith Shop. The newly installed Kids' Quarters exhibit refreshed and broadened one of Fort Mackinac's most popular gallery spaces. Regular programs, including the addition of some new tours, were presented across our sites; the zipline resumed operation at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park; and we wrapped up the 63rd consecutive archaeological excavation of Fort Michilimackinac.

New projects were completed throughout the parks including the first phase of a merchandise warehouse in Mackinaw City, enhancements to Marquette Park, the restoration of windows at Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, and the design of the Milliken Nature Center at Arch Rock. All this work was done amidst the routine daily tasks of keeping the parks and sites ready for our visitors. This work, new and routine,

fulfills our mission and our commitment to the public. It was gratifying to see guests enjoying the beauty of our sites and enriching programs. They undoubtedly left Mackinac with lifetime memories.

People are key to much of that memory making. Our greatest hurdle this season has been, like everywhere, lack of personnel. Our seasonal staff was initially reduced to a skeleton crew across all units. There was no slack in the inevitable vacancies that occur every summer, and no pool of candidates to fill those vacant posts. Our interpreters, guest service representatives, and maintenance staff did double time serving our guests. By mid-season there were senior staff on lawn mowers, in ticket booths, and in historical costume. Through their dedication we kept the sites open and running. It was our goal to ensure that our visitors were unaware of the contortions, and for the most part we achieved it.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to our dedicated crew who played a key role in ensuring our visitors were able to create those wonderful Mackinac memories.



“IT WAS GRATIFYING TO SEE GUESTS ENJOYING THE BEAUTY OF OUR SITES AND ENRICHING PROGRAMS.” – STEVE BRISSON, DIRECTOR

PHOTO ALBUM: MACKINAC ISLAND MAIN STREET, 1900

As summer comes to a close, the activity on Main Street begins to lessen with the coming of fall. In this image from around 1900, visitors continue walking the streets looking into stores, buying souvenirs, and taking carriage rides. Signs indicate island businesses are selling photographs, moccasins, books, ice cream and, of course, candy. Visible are several well-known businesses including the Murray Hotel, Bogan's Drug Store and Fenton's Bazaar. The New Mackinac Hotel, with flower baskets hanging from the second floor, was prominent until the 1930s when it was torn down. In the background sits Fort Mackinac watching over the town and harbor.



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For membership information,
call 231-436-4100

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MackinacAssociates.com



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