Hello everyone! Can you believe we are well into the month of May? The museum will be opening in just a couple of weeks. We plan to maintain the same schedule: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 12 noon to 6 PM and all legal holidays. Our opening day will be Saturday, May 25th.

The gift shop has a fresh coat of paint, some new shelving, and new window shades. In addition to our books, ornaments, and usual items we have some surprises in store. Be sure to visit the gift shop. The downstairs bathroom has been re-painted and has new plumbing.

Meetings are scheduled to welcome back our volunteers and hopefully bring in some new faces. On May 10, Dan Maxson held a session for volunteers who would like to become docents. Saturday May 11, a group of volunteers from The Kirtland Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints came to help us with our spring cleaning of the museum and tower. Afterward, we shared a lunch. The windows of the museum will be cleaned inside and out. The flower beds have been mulched and planting of annuals will be done at the end of May. Several projects are pending. We are scheduled to have the garage and museum roofed, hopefully before opening day. The USS Michigan mast has been repaired and will soon be returned to its rightful place on the museum grounds. The ground lighting is scheduled for repair. Our new exterior signage is in place and looks amazing.

Inside, the digitization project is up and running with a new computer and scanner in place. The interactive displays should be in place by July 1; all the needed text and photos have been sent to RGI so they can build the displays. There will also be some changes in the museum displays to make our visitors experience more interesting and meaningful.

If you are out after dark, be sure to look up at the tower; we have a computer program in place that allows us to vary our colors to honor holidays and special events.

Lake Erie Living Magazine contacted us for a phone interview. We will be featured in the June edition of the magazine. The Golf Cart Pub Crawl gave us a generous check on May 4 during their event.

As we prepare for another busy season, we want to thank all our loyal volunteers, the Village of Fairport Harbor, the local merchants, LCVB, and our members all over the country for their ongoing support and interest.

We receive frequent phone calls and emails asking for operating hours, tours, and general information about the museum and lighthouse. We respond to them all. As of now, we have 14 docent led tours scheduled.

So please come and visit when our season begins. Remember we are a Blue Star Museum and active and retired military pay no admission. Up to five family members of active military are admitted at no charge. Remember to check our Facebook page and website for special events. Hope to see you soon!
Eclipse Day Events at the Lighthouse a Hugh Success.

Our village was in the path of totality for the April 8, 2024 eclipse. It was an incredible experience for all who witnessed it. The Fairport Harbor Marine Museum was open and welcoming visitors April 5 through April 8. We received a generous grant from Lake County Visitors Bureau that helped to cover our expenses.

Prior to the 5th of April we were somewhat anxious, not really knowing what to expect or how many people would be descending on our small community. We worried about crowd control, parking, how to get the volunteers to the museum -you name it and we worried about it. The village work crew helped us rope off our grounds, and made sure we had extra trash bags and containers. The police and fire chiefs assured us there would be ample police and emergency people on duty. Friends of Faith Church let us use their parking lot for volunteers and raffle winners (see below). Harbor carts gave us the use of a golf cart to transport volunteers. There were crowds, but no incidents. Lots of people but much good will, enjoyment, and excitement to be here on a gorgeous day to witness an unforgettable event. We welcomed over 400 visitors, many of whom had never been to Fairport Harbor before. There were visitors from 30 of the 50 states. We also had guests from the United Kingdom, Israel, and Ukraine.

In March, the museum sponsored a raffle for spots on the tower to observe the eclipse; five winners were chosen and each could bring one guest. So a total of 10 lucky people viewed the event from atop our “towering view”. Each one was given a “swag bag” which included a special edition T shirt, a box lunch, and gift certificates from many of the Fairport shops. Two of the winners were from Fairport, one was from Madison. Another winner was from west of Toledo, and one was from Illinois. One of the winners gave her spots on the tower to her daughter and grandson so they had a memorable day together. All the winners were pleased and excited with the afternoon and all praised our volunteers and all the Fairport Harbor merchants and towns people they came in contact with. The museum also hosted three astronomers from Duluth, Minn. who gave a presentation on the lighthouse grounds prior to the eclipse. One of these gentlemen was a cousin of a member.

The museum had one of its busiest and most profitable four days in recent times. We are indebted to our volunteers, the Village of Fairport Harbor, the local shops, and the LCVB for our success. Many of our visitors said they will visit Fairport Harbor again and were happy they discovered it. Well done everyone!

Greg Major and Carla Riboczi awarded Citizens of the Year

Congratulations to three of our members who were recognized at the 2024 Founders Day Celebration presented 4/13/24 by the Fairport Harbor Civic Club. Greg Major and Carla Riboczi were awarded Citizens of the Year. Marty O’Gara received the Golden Beacon Award. The event was held at St. Anthony’s Church. We are proud to have our members honored for their community support and involvement. Our previous president, Mary Alyce Gladding, was awarded the Golden Beacon several years ago. Thanks to Karen Bidlak and the Civic Club for presenting this event.

Social Media Guidelines

The museum’s Facebook page has been very active in the past year. We have learned it is a good way to communicate with our members and the community. Like any other good and useful process, some guidelines need to be in place. The illustration is our Social Media Flowchart for posting items on Facebook. The guidelines help prevent unauthorized or “provocative” items from being posted. Currently, Cindy Shega and Vance Todd are posting on the museum’s Facebook page. The president, Marty O’Gara approves the material to be posted. Vance is our webmaster for the museum website. If you have questions, please contact Marty.
“Fairport Harbor – Then and Now”  by Lee Silvi

For this quarterly edition of Through the Porthole we will take a break from the transportation series that I started a few issues back. Instead, I wish to introduce you to the “Fairport Harbor – Then and Now” digital photo project.

In the fall of 2023 I started work on this project, expecting to assemble 75 or so then photos, and 75 corresponding now photos. The project has taken on a life of its own, and grown to include hundreds of photos, organized into online photo albums organized by topic. A sample of these photos is included with this brief article.

As of May 2024 the six album topics uploaded thus far include: Two albums of Fairport Harbor Businesses, and one album each on the topics of Schools & Libraries, Lights, Markers, & Lighthouses, Churches & Social Organizations, and Public Transportation History.

To view the hundreds of images in the “Then and Now” collection thus far go to https://bit.ly/4a2QRxD. Once there click on any of the photo albums. Then click on the first photo in each album, and use your right arrow to advance through all of the photos in that album. Enjoy!

While I have taken a break until late fall 2024, the same link will be used in the future for any new digital photo albums. I expect there will be at least three, if not more, albums to come much later in 2024 or early 2025. The future albums will include additional business, industry, and railroad photos dating as far back as the late 1800s, along with possible additions to the original six digital photo albums.

Sample pictures from the online collection. Scan the QR code with your phone or browse to https://bit.ly/4a2QRxD to view all of the pictures.
A View Through The Porthole is the official newsletter of the Fairport Harbor Historical Society. The newsletter is produced quarterly for members of the Society: February, May, August and November.

If your address changes, please notify us. To be informed about upcoming events, tours, and Fairport Harbor Lighthouse news send us your e-mail address and we’ll add you to our E-News list soon.

Volunteers Needed.

It is that time of year when we need to start staffing the Museum Store, Museum Host and Tower Attendee. We are assigned stations for volunteers when they are scheduled to volunteer. We had a great amount of visitors last year and needed to make assignments and tasks clearer. Your help is greatly needed and appreciated.

If interested, please call Cindy Shega at (440) 669-3293 or Marty O’Gara at (330) 853-1827. Our hope is to not have to call every week to get volunteers on the schedule. We have a wonderful volunteer team and we truly do thank all of you for your hard work, dedication and even the tons of fun we had throughout the year. Hope you would like to join our team.

Current Membership Totals:

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>25 x 2 = 50 People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1 x 4 = 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total as of April 2024: 189

IN MEMORIAM

Patricia (Mora) Gavelda Mackey, age 92, passed April 19, 2024, at her residence in Fairport Harbor. She was born September 13, 1931, in Fairport to Walter and Emily Mora. Patricia was a 1949 graduate of Fairport Harding High School. She received her nursing degree from Huron Road School of Nursing in 1952 and her bachelor’s degree from Lake Erie College in 1990. She worked as a surgical nurse, private duty nurse, and finally as school nurse for the Fairport Harbor School System for many years, retiring in 1991. She was an active member of St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, where she was in the choir at the 4 PM Mass every Saturday. She was a Eucharistic Minister, a member of the Altar and Rosary Society, and the St. Ann Guild. Patricia was also active in her community as a member of the Fairport Mardi Gras Committee. Burial will be at Riverside Cemetery in Painesville. The family suggests contributions to St. Anthony’s Church in Fairport Harbor or Hospice of the Western Reserve.

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Museum “Wish List”

There are a few things on our museum “wish list”. We are a 501(c) (3) and we rely on memberships, donations, and the funds we generate during our open season to maintain and improve the museum and grounds. There are a few items that would be greatly appreciated. We are hoping to find someone with grant writing experience who would be interested in helping us identify and apply for grants. This is a volunteer position but we would support and assist the individual as much as possible. Postage is getting more expensive, as you know. There are still some things that we “snail mail” like newsletters, ballots, and membership forms. A gift of stamps is always welcome. We are also looking to acquire a rechargeable shop vac.

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Kirtland Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Help With Our Annual Spring Cleaning.

On May 11, 2024 a group of 14 volunteers from Kirtland Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints spent the morning with us at the museum. They were here to help us complete our annual spring cleaning prior to opening for the season. There were also 7 of our own members. Many hands definitely made the work go quickly and well. Glass was cleaned, brass was polished, the tower steps were vacuumed, and floors were cleaned. After the work was done, all enjoyed a lunch of pizza from Rego’s Brickhouse Pizza.

Fairport Harbor played an important role in the history of the Latter Day Saints in the 1800’s it was an entry point for their arrival from the east, and a departure point for further missions. There is a plaque placed on a boulder near the lighthouse in 2003 commemorating the more than 3000 members of the Church who passed through our harbor. We always welcome their visits.

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