

A VIEW THROUGH THE PORTHOLE



Fairport Harbor Historical Society

November 2025

From the President's Desk

Marty O'Gara

PRESIDENTS LOG

Greetings to all our members, local and far away. I am looking out my window at what remains of the fall foliage, and realizing it is only a week until Thanksgiving, and we all know what comes next! The museum officially closed for the season on September 28, but we have still been active. Since closing we have had 8 private tours conducted by Dan Maxson, John Ollila, and Bob Manross. The tour groups included a book club from the Ashtabula Library, travelers from Utah who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ/Latter Day Saints, and an assisted living group.

On September 29 John Ollila was interviewed by Jeremy D'Entremont, from the United States Lighthouse Society. Jeremy does a regular podcast, and his interview with John will be featured at a later date. Also in September Buckeye Restoration sent a drone operator to take photos of the tower. The footage was analyzed back at the firm's offices. They did submit a report and proposal.

On October 1, Tyler Finkle from ICC/Commonwealth Restoration did a site visit to assess the tower. Tyler spent several hours talking with Marty, John, Tony, and Bill, touring the museum, and looking at architectural drawings.

He examined the tower, taking photographs and masonry samples. We will get his report and recommendations sometime in November. After the second report is received, the trustees will meet to discuss the findings and plan for any needed repairs.

October 4, the Village held it's first Witch's Night Out. The museum and the volunteers were dressed for the occasion. There was face painting, tarot cards and charms, and a pop up shop by Beth Lynne Studios. Outside Braden, our favorite young drummer, played dressed as a very scary skeleton. We also had a kettle corn and lemonade vendor. There were lots of visitors many of them in costume. Sentinel was seen on little cat feet all over town.

On October 27, A paranormal investigation group made up of members from Dayton and Columbus visited. They spent 8 hours investigating. Paranormal activity was indicated in the lens room and the boat room on the various devices they used. We are awaiting their final report. That was followed by Halloween night when the strong winds prevented us from opening the tower. But we had over 100 visitors and passed out candy. Thanks to Greg Major and Carla Ribozi for making us spooky!

A remembrance ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald was held on November 10, 2025 at VFW Post 7754. Despite concerns about the weather, there were over 230 people in the audience. Harbor Holidays on the first Saturday of December signals the actual closing of the Lighthouse calendar. Fairport Harbor and the museum will be quiet for the winter. It will also be the conclusion of our 200th anniversary year and possibly the end of the Mardi Gras era.

We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Many thanks to all who visited, donated, volunteered, or just enjoyed seeing the lighthouse as it stood proud and tall through the seasons.



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Harbor Holidays is Saturday, December 6, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Before the event this year is the Whoville Holiday Dash. A two mile fun run through town. On that day we invite you to visit our gift shop to do your Christmas shopping and tour the museum. The gift shop has many unique items including local Christmas cards and Ornaments featuring our Lighthouse. Santa will also be here for pictures. All children 10 years old and under will receive a free gift. At 5:45 PM the Grinch will read "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" from the top of the tower. This will be followed by the Village Tree Lighting at 6:00 PM, caroling, and photo ops with Santa at the Village Memorial Park Gazebo. The families will then stroll down to Veteran's Park for hot chocolate and Santa.

On November 23 Mayor Manross, Chief Lloyd, and a group of police and firefighters arrived at the lighthouse to decorate for the holidays. After fueling up with coffee and donuts the group made multiple trips carrying up the wreaths and swags to the top of the tower. Others checked the ground lighting for burned out bulbs. Chief Lloyd made a run to purchase replacement lights. By 1PM, all was done and the timers were set to come on at dusk. Thanks to all who helped. Mayor Manross said he enjoys doing this every year because, "How many people get to decorate a lighthouse for Christmas!"



Firefighters, Police and the Mayor volunteer to help decorate the museum and lighthouse.

Mardi Gras Archives Donated

The final Fairport Harbor Mardi Gras was held in 2025 after over 80 years of being a yearly tradition in the Village. With the disbanding of the Mardi Gras committee the archives have now become part of our collection. This collection includes documents, correspondence and dozens of photo albums that the Historical Society will preserve and in the future might be able to make available to the public.

Harbor Holidays Fundraiser

This year the museum will be holding a raffle fundraiser during the Harbor Holidays / Grinch events. The prize this year is a Sunset Dinner and Private Tour for 6 People.

The winner can schedule a date in the summer next year. Tickets are \$5 each and are available online. Scan the code with your phone to purchase tickets or follow the link on our facebook page or website.



Skeleton Drummer Braden McCrone

Halloween & Witches Night Out at the Lighthouse

Greg Major, one of our faithful and energetic volunteers decorated the museum and the tower for Halloween. Greg used pieces from his extensive collection. Jan Merrick also loaned us a ghostly phone, a magic wand, and a cackling, self propelled broom.

The museum was open for Witches Night Out on October 4. All the volunteers were in costume; we had our tarot card reader, Madame Lynette and face painting by Lea Ann. Sentinel, our ghost cat, prowled around the village. Braden McCrone provided the music with his drums.

The Haunted Tower was also open. Children could enter the tower if accompanied by an adult and possibly have an encounter with Sentinel the ghost cat.

Paranormal Investigators from Dayton have an Interesting Night at the Museum

On October 27, a paranormal group made up of members from Dayton and Columbus visited the museum. They spent 8 hours investigating. Before they made the trip to Fairport Harbor the group did quite a bit of historical research about the people who lived and worked (and died) in the our building. Paranormal activity was indicated in the lens room and the boat room on the various devices they used. At one point in the lens room the faint sound of a cat's meow was heard and recorded by the team. We are awaiting their final report.



Looking for activity in the museum basement

50th Anniversary Program for The Edmund Fitzgerald

The Historical Society's remembrance ceremony was held November 10th at the VFW Post 7754 in Fairport Harbor. Highlights of the evening were, Bill Simko Fairport resident, who sailed on the Fitz in earlier years. Bill shared his photos and memories of his years onboard the Fitz. Fran Gabor and Debbie Kunsman, nieces of Eddie Bindon, gave a touching eulogy/remembrance of their Uncle Eddie. Dan Maxson and John Ollila were masters of Ceremony. Tina Green gave the opening prayer and Benediction. The event closed with Bruce Gregg playing Amazing Grace on his bagpipes. It was a community driven event and those present enjoyed the evening. *Below is a copy of Fran Gabor's remembrance of her uncle Edward Bindon.*

Edward Bindon Eulogy/Remembrance

Good evening, I'm Fran Gabor. Eddie was my uncle. My father was Joe Majoros from Fairport and it was my father's sister, Helen who married Eddie. I'm here this evening with my sister Debbie Kunsman, to honor our uncle and to share with you some of our childhood memories.

After we were contacted by the Historical Society, Debbie and I got in touch with our brother Chris, who lives in Arizona and memories started to flow. Having worked on the freighters for 25 years we have a vivid recollection of Uncle Eddie coming home only to have to leave again. But the time we spent with him are times that made us smile and laugh even today. Because when Uncle Eddie came home it was party time. There was food galore! Everything was top shelf like steaks, lobster, filets, crab legs, and prime rib. Back in those days my brother and sister would walk home for lunch from St. Anthony's school to Helen and Eddie's house on Courtland street to find perhaps prime rib for lunch but more often it was open face steak or turkey sandwiches piled high with meat and smothered in gravy. It was a wonder that they were able to stay awake in school in the afternoon. When we started reminiscing, this was the very first thing the both of them brought up. We remembered that Eddie enjoyed his liquor and a good Camel cigarette. He loved high balls and he even taught my sister how to mix one as a kid. A very important life's lesson.

Uncle Eddie would be home every Christmas and what a hoot Christmas was with him. Money seemed like no object when it came to gift giving to us kids. He was our Santa Claus. Christmas Eve was a time of celebration for our family and it meant going from one relatives house to another in Fairport where there was plenty of food and an unending amount of drinks and a lot of laughs. So after a long evening of gift giving, eating, drinking and merry making, the family would pack up and head to midnight mass at St. Anthony's back when midnight mass was at midnight. We would settle in at church where it was warm and quiet with Christmas carols softly playing. It was not uncommon to hear snoring coming from our pew or looking over only to see Aunt Helen giving Uncle Eddie a good nudge in his ribs. We remembered that one thing that Uncle Eddie could do would be to talk exactly like Donald Duck at the most inappropriate times. I recall that as a young woman I was trying to have a conversation with him about my getting married and all the while he was talking to me like Donald Duck or when he and Aunt Helen would come over our home to play pinochle with my parents and if Helen played the wrong card he'd go off on a Donald Duck tantrum. My sister Debbie summed it up this way: Eddie was a Donald Duck talking party animal who fell asleep at midnight mass, made the greatest lunches when he was home from the boat, drank high balls and chain smoked Camels until he had an angina attack. He'd come out of the bathroom saying "the bird of paradise was just in there" or long before caller id he would answer the phone saying, "Church of Christ, Christ speaking." He was colorful, fun loving and you just wanted to be with him. But time moves on and we grow up.

On his last visit home, I remember a conversation I had with him. This time there was no Donald Duck but a seriousness I was not used to seeing. He told me he was ready to retire having developed a sense of fear and uneasiness with being on the lakes. It was about that time that he had purchased a 2 carat diamond ring for Helen for their anniversary. He made arrangements with a friend whose name I do not recall to keep the ring for him until he returned because he didn't want to take it on the Fitz. Perhaps it was an omen. After the ship went down his friend got a hold of my Uncle Julius, my father's brother and made arrangements to meet to give Julius the ring. The family was gathered in Helen's kitchen when Uncle Julius came in with the ring and presented it to her. There wasn't one dry eye and I can tell you personally it was one of the saddest moments of my life. Uncle Eddie was a man who just wanted to finish out his time on the Fitzgerald and come home to retire. But on Nov. 10th, 1975 the gales of November had its way with the Edmund Fitzgerald and the 29 souls aboard all made their final journey home.



Eddie Bindon with his niece Fran on the Fitz.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

It is time to renew your membership. The renewal membership is valid from January 1 - December 31, 2026. included is the renewal form. This year you can also join or renew online with credit card. Thank you for your membership renewal. This helps with all the expenses of keeping the Lighthouse and Museum open.

\$10 Student: (Free admission for One named Student for the year)

\$25 Individual: (Free Admission for One named individual for the year)

\$45 Individual Plus ONE: (Free Admission for Two named individuals for the year)

\$75 Family: (Free Admission for Four named individuals plus 1 guest all year)

\$300 Lifetime: (Free Admission for One named individual for Life)

Annual Fund

Thank you to all that donated to our Annual Fund. We appreciate that you understand the importance of keeping the Lighthouse and Museum open. If you are still interested in contributing to the Annual Fund, we have attached/included information.

Current Membership Totals:

Individual+1:	27 x 2 = 54 People
Individual:	43
Lifetime:	92
Family:	3 x 4 = 12
Total as of November 2025: 206	



Scan the qr code with your phone to join or renew online.

Volunteer / Members Holiday Bowling Party

Please come and enjoy a nice, fun day as a way for us to thank you for all your hard work and dedication.



Rich Lanes
637 High Street
Fairport Harbor, OH 44077
December 13, 2025 from 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Bowling, Pizza, and Wings
(Alcoholic Beverages Not included but can be purchased)



Wish List

A gift of Postage Stamps would help us to continue to mail several items throughout the year. The cost of postage is rising significantly. We are still looking for volunteer with grant writing experience.

IN MEMORIAM

Condolences to Carol and Tony Bertone on the recent passing of Carol's father, Joseph A Topoly.
Please keep the Bertone's and their family in your thoughts and prayers.
You can view Mr Topoly's full obituary on the News Herald website

A VIEW THROUGH THE PORTHOLE

"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.



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