

Changing Times

Dombroski Leaves Legacy

In 1993, Mackinac Associates was a strong little organization, founded 10 years prior with the simple mission of friends preserving and sharing Mackinac's heritage. The group had about 500 members with membership revenue hovering around \$35,000, a fund balance of \$53,000, and annual project support totaling about \$8,000.

On July 19 of that year, Diane Dombroski started as the membership and grants coordinator. In the 25 years since, Mackinac Associates now boasts a membership of more than 3,000, membership revenues exceeding \$230,000 and a fund balance of \$975,000. Mackinac Associates' annual project support went to \$185,000 a year and is a major component of Mackinac State Historic Parks' budget.

To say it's been an impressive 25 years is an understatement.

Diane officially retired on July 31 from her role as membership



Incoming Membership and Grants Coordinator Michelle Walk with Diane Dombroski at the Annual meeting.

and grants coordinator, knowing it was the right time to step away to do some of the things she wants to do, as well as for a fresh vision for the organization.

Reflecting back on her 25 years with Mackinac State Historic Parks and Mackinac Associates, there's one aspect of her job that stands out more than others.

"It's the people," she said. "The Mackinac Associates members – many have become friends. I've gotten to know a lot of them personally and become a part of

their lives."

And they didn't even have to be present for those relationships to happen.

"The surprising thing to me was the relationships I had with people whom I've never even met face-to-face," she explained. "I know them so well, yet I've never seen their face."

With the rapid growth of the organization, Mackinac Associates has become an integral part of the day-to-day life of Mackinac

See Dombroski, Page 2

Michelle Walk Hired

Michelle Walk began work as membership and grants coordinator on August 27.

Michelle has worked in community development for over 20 years. Most recently she has spent 14 years with MSU Extension as an extension educator focusing primarily in the areas of tourism and community food systems across the Upper Peninsula. Her work included providing education and technical assistance to local units of government, businesses, and community members, as well as seeking out relevant funding to support local projects and events.

After serving for 10 years, Michelle recently completed her term of service on the board for the United Way of the Eastern Upper Peninsula and has served with the following organizations as part of her responsibilities with MSU Extension: Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning

See Walk, Page 2

Annual Meeting Draws More Than 100

Mackinac Associates held its annual meeting on Saturday, August 18 at the Mackinac Island State Park Tennis Courts adjacent to Fort Mackinac, with more than 100 associates in attendance.

Preceding the business meeting, Jeff Dykehouse, curator of natural history for Mackinac State Historic Parks, and Jack Barnwell, owner of Barnwell Landscaping and Mackinac Associates board member, presented a program on native plants and provided a preview tour of the Mackinac Island Botanical Trail.

Recent bylaw changes allowed for the addition of more board members, and Nancy Porter and Michael (Skip) Young were presented for nomination, and

the motion carried. Additionally, Jack Barnwell, Kathy Lieder and Wes Maurer were nominated for re-election, and that motion also passed.

During the meeting, secretary/treasurer Tom Lockwood reported that the Mackinac Associates fund balance ended 2017 at \$974,530.12, an increase of \$63,688.04 over the previous year. This is attributed to investment income, very successful spring and fall appeals, and membership income exceeding budget expectations.

Mackinac Associates board president Pete Pellerito thanked guests for attending 2018 events, and went into detail on several projects associates funded in 2018.



Jack Barnwell leading a preview tour of the Mackinac Island Botanical Trail at the annual meeting, a project funded through Mackinac Associates.

Make Plans for Fort Fright, October 5-6

Be wary of were-wolves and look out for lutins as you walk the lantern-lit path along the shore of Lake Michigan to Colonial Michilimackinac for Fort Fright the evenings of October 5 and 6. From 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (last admission at 8:30 p.m.), eighteenth-century French-Canadian folklore comes to life.

Visitors must tread lightly on the path along the shoreline, because as the sun sets on the horizon, all manner of monsters take over the fort and eagerly await your arrival inside. There are campfires glowing in the night where a voyageur tells eerie tales and warns you of the terror that might await you, before you approach the guarded gates of Colonial Michilimackinac. You are now on your own to enter the wooden palisade, a frightening world of fun and phantoms wrapped into one.

As you venture inside the gate, British Redcoats of a different order patrol the wooden fort. Look closer to see they're not ordinary soldiers, but skeletons with bony fingers outstretched beckoning you to enter. More campfires crackle inside the fort, but there are friendly faces around these. French raconteurs are telling more tales, and visiting with guests. The fires offer a respite from the

mythical creatures that prefer other places, like the upper stories of the wooden buildings where they throw open shutters and cackle, howl or prowl around the palisade.

Other frightening features include the Demon Walk boasting vicious monsters waiting to trick you out of fortune and pull you into the underworld and the Werewolf Walk, where the most terrifying of the creatures in the fort prowl and hunt for you in the dark.

"The majority of the activities at Fort Fright will be suitable for the entire family," said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks deputy director. "But we'll also have a number of interesting and scary activities designed to appeal to older children and adults."

A tour of the haunted rowhouse, a custom-designed exhibit for this occasion, will not be easily forgotten.

In other wooden buildings within the fort and fur trading village, colonial ladies serve warm autumn treats like homemade molasses cookies and toffee. Guests can learn about death and burial in the 1700s, and the various traditions and ceremonies for the dead from over 250 years ago in the church. In addition



A werewolf prowls the blockhouse at Colonial Michilimackinac during Fort Fright. This event is complimentary to associates (excluding Heritage-level members).

to creatures, colonial men and women with friendly faces roam the village, following the lantern-lit paths that wind throughout the fort, a unique nighttime atmosphere available only on these two nights.

Admission to Fort Fright is \$10 per adult, \$6 for children ages 5-12, and free for children 4 and under and Mackinac Associates members (excluding Heritage Level). Tickets are available now

online at www.mackinacparks.com/fort-fright, or can be purchased beginning October 1 in the Colonial Michilimackinac Visitor's Center. Visitors who purchase in advance will be able to enter through a shorter line, indicated by the "Mackinac Associates and Pre-Paid Tickets Here" sign. Last admission on both nights is at 8:30 p.m. Call 231-436-4100 for more information.

Mackinac Associates Events Successful Again

From the season kick-off at the G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration at the Captain's and Major's Quarters next to Fort Mackinac to the annual meeting held near the Botanical Trail in August, 2018 was another banner year for member events.

The kick-off to the season, as always, was the G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration in June. It was held at the historic Captain's and Major's Quarters, near Fort Mackinac, on a truly spectacular evening. A huge crowd gathered at the cottages, which were open for tours, and enjoyed food and beverages provided by Island House Hotel. Mackinac Associates Board president Pete Pellerito spoke to the attendees, reiterating the importance of the organization, and also bid

farewell to membership and grants coordinator Diane Dombroski.

"The G. Mennen Williams celebration continues to be a highlight for many members," said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks deputy director. "The Captain's and Major's Quarters provided a fitting backdrop for Diane's farewell."

Dombroski was presented with a lifetime Steward-level membership for her service to Mackinac Associates and Mackinac State Historic Parks.

On July 4 the annual Red, White & Blue event brought associates together behind Fort Mackinac for a short but fun afternoon of hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and friendship. The holiday falls on a Thursday in 2019, so be sure to mark it on your calendars now.

The finale for the season was the Annual Meeting, held at the tennis courts near Fort Mackinac and adjacent to the Botanical Trail, a Mackinac Associates funded project. See the related article for details of the annual meeting.

Dates for the 2019 events will

be in the December issue of *Curiosities*. The dates will also appear on the Mackinac Associates website, mackinacassociates.com, when they are finalized.

See page 4 for a gallery of images from the various Mackinac Associates events.

Dombroski Retires

Continued from Page 1

State Historic Parks. From smaller projects or needs – a camera or chicken feed, for example – to major projects like Diane's favorite, Fort Holmes, she and Mackinac Associates were in the middle of getting it done.

"The Fort Holmes project was incredible," she said. "How people just came forward, and how the state matched those funds, showed how important it was. And the fact that it got done so quickly was just amazing."

It's that ability to impact the everyday budget of the parks that Diane mentions as the biggest change since she started. The major growth in project support (\$8,000 in 1993 to more than \$185,000 in 2018) has allowed Mackinac State Historic Parks to take on ambitious projects, such as Fort Holmes, that otherwise could have been delayed. Although she's retired from Mackinac State Historic Parks and Mackinac Associates, Diane won't be still.

"I'm going to catch up on some home projects, travel, see my son out west," she said. "I want to take some camping trips, and really just catch up on some of the mundane things at home."

Diane's replacement, Michelle Walk, started August 27. Diane has been incredibly helpful in the transition, including being at the Annual Meeting and participating in the most recent board meeting.

Diane's advice to Michelle?

"Continue the mission. Don't get too wrapped up in the day-to-day, but focus on the overall purpose," she said. "If you do that you find your reason for being here. Get out to the sites and realize why we do this."

Diane was presented with a lifetime Steward-level membership at the 2018 G. Mennen Williams event, and will still be around.

Mackinac State Historic Parks and Mackinac Associates thanks Diane for her 25 wonderful years of service, and wishes her the best in retirement.

Walk Excited to Join MSHP

Continued from Page 1

and Development Commission, Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) Professional Development Committee, and as an advisor on the Michigan Agritourism Association Board of Directors.

Michelle moved to the Upper Peninsula in 2000 and currently resides in Cedarville. She loves the outdoors and has a passion for tourism and local food. She has a B.S. in Economics from Oakland University and an M.A.

in Economics from Michigan State University.

"Michelle brings a combination of experience and skills to this job that will make for a seamless and positive transition for Mackinac Associates," said Phil Porter, director for Mackinac State Historic Parks.

"I'm excited to be able to work for an organization that I've been passionate about for a long time," Walk said. "I look forward to continue growing Mackinac Associates."

DIRECTOR'S OUTLOOK

As I come to the end of my 46th consecutive summer working at Fort Mackinac, I have been thinking about how blessed I am to have this job. While it is easy to take it for granted or dwell on the more challenging aspects of my work, a little reflection reminds me of my good fortune. There are many things that bring joy to my daily routine, especially the people who are part of my work life. With that thought in mind, I'd like to share a list of those for whom I am grateful.

- Mackinac Island State Park Commissioners who provide outstanding leadership in guiding the work of Mackinac State Historic Parks.
- Our dedicated and extremely hard-working employees and volunteers who care deeply about successfully fulfilling

our mission of protecting, preserving and presenting Mackinac's rich resources.

- The Mackinac Associates board of directors and members who provide funding for a wide variety of projects that support our parks and museums.
- The boy and girl scouts and their leaders who serve our visitors with pride and dedication.
- Elected federal, state, and local leaders who understand the unique challenge of managing our resources and provide much-needed support.
- The many professional, community, and business leaders with whom we have forged successful and mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Donors who provide historic objects that allow us to continue to preserve Mackinac's rich history.

- The nearly 350,000 visitors to our historic sites this summer who support the continued preservation and interpretation of our sites through their admission fees. Particularly satisfying are the positive comments that we receive from delighted visitors. Typical is the TripAdvisor comment from a Chicago guest who visited Colonial Michilimackinac on July 15:

We arrived at 9:00 a.m. and didn't leave until after 3:00 pm without one moment of lack of something to do. Staff was excellent, very knowledgeable, warm and welcoming and willing to answer any questions you might have. Very interesting presentations every half hour with well done museum presentations of artifacts. Overall wonderful experience!!



Phil Porter
Director

It is really pretty easy to enjoy and appreciate your job when you are surrounded by skilled leaders, dedicated employees, supportive partners, generous donors, committed volunteers, and appreciative guests. For all of you, I am most thankful.

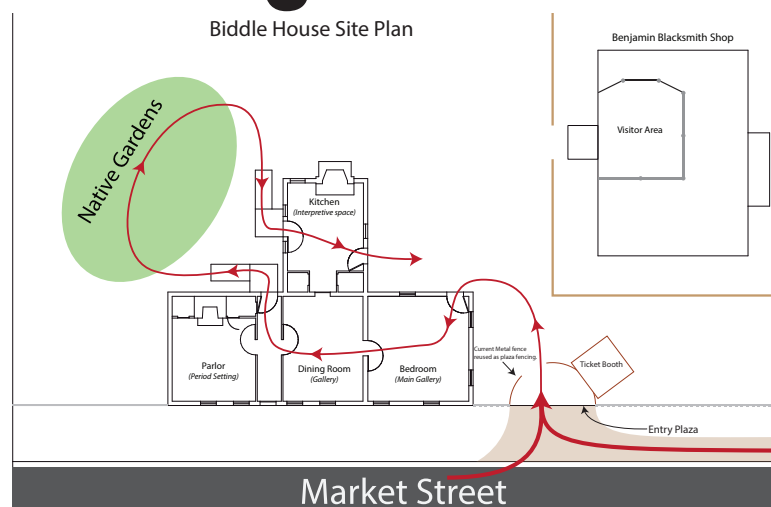
Biddle House Plan Moving Forward

Two years ago Mackinac State Historic Parks announced its plan to remodel the Biddle House to include the Mackinac Island Native American Museum. Combined with the successful installation of the Mackinac Island Native American Cultural History Trail on Lakeshore Boulevard, the creation of the new museum will complete MSHP's current effort to more comprehensively interpret Native American history. Initial project plans, developed by MSHP staff in conjunction with representatives from the Anishinaabek community, are now complete and are ready to move forward with a projected opening date in the spring of 2020.

The exhibition "Agatha's Mackinac" will tell the Anishinaabek story of Mackinac Island from pre-contact to today through the experiences and relationships of Agatha Biddle

(1797-1873), an Odawa woman whose life provides a lens through which to understand and appreciate this rich story.

Of French and Odawa ancestry, Agatha de la Vigne Biddle embraced traditional Anishinaabek values in the way she lived her life. Her hospitality and gift-giving were recognized by all, especially tribal people visiting the island. She was an invaluable partner to her husband as she served as a cultural intermediary providing him with access to a trade network with her Odawa kin. Her leadership skills were confirmed when she was appointed as a chief of the Mackinac band of Ojibway and Odawa in the 1830s. Through her home on Market Street, Agatha helped her people navigate through the complex and difficult transitions created by the 1836 Treaty of Washington in which Native peoples ceded over fourteen



Site plan for the remodeled Biddle House.

million acres of land to the United States. This treaty paved the way for the creation of the State of Michigan.

The storyline of the exhibit will focus on how and why Mackinac Island has been a significant place for Anishinaabek people for

centuries. Exhibits will focus on the themes of Mackinac Island as a place to live, a place for worship, a place to encounter other nations, a place to gather for battle, a place for treaties, and a place for blended cultures. There will be a variety of interpretive elements including artifact-based displays, interactive exhibits, period settings, and live interpretation. Additionally, new landscape features will be added including a Native Gardens area, new state historical marker, entrance plaza, and ticket booth.

The cost of the project is \$100,000. Mackinac State Historic Parks has already received a leadership gift of \$25,000, and an additional gift of \$2,500 from the Mackinac Island Bike and Buggy League to fund the new Native American garden. We hope to complete the funding through the Mackinac Associates' Fall Appeal.

"I encourage all Mackinac Associates members to carefully consider and support this effort which will help us better tell the full Mackinac story and provide another cultural resource for our island visitors," said Phil Porter, Mackinac State Historic Parks director.



Photo Album: Fort Mackinac Tea Room, ca. 1925

The Fort Mackinac Tea Room celebrated its 100th anniversary this year. Originally a fund raiser to support World War I relief efforts, the concession operated sporadically over the next 40 years, but was active for a significant portion of each decade, even during the depression. It has been open continuously since 1958. Grand Hotel has been the concessionaire of the Tea Room since 1988.

**Mackinac Associates
Board of Trustees**

Peter Pellerito
Harriet McGraw
Tom Lockwood
Phil Porter
Michelle Walk
Dominick Miller

President
Vice President
Secretary/Treasurer
Administrative Agent
Membership Coordinator
Editor

Jack Barnwell
Jeb Burns
Ann Parrish
Mark Mercer
Nancy Porter

Mary Jane Barnwell
Kathy Lieder
Wesley Maurer
Todd Peterson
Michael Young

For membership information,
call 231-436-4100

Published by Mackinac Associates. Subscription is a membership benefit. Membership levels include Friend, \$70; Mackinac Heritage, \$85; Voyageur, \$95; Sentinel, \$200; Explorer, \$400; Commandant's Circle, \$650; Steward, \$1,000; Guardian, \$2,500; Patron, \$5,000; Benefactor, \$10,000. Other membership benefits include unlimited free admission to Colonial Michilimackinac, Fort Mackinac, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse and The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum; 15 percent merchandise and publications discount at the six Mackinac State Historic Parks' museum stores; invitation to Mackinac Associates special events; and discounted admission for member's guests (excluding Heritage level).

mackinacassociates.com



Mackinac Associates
P.O. Box 567
Mackinaw City, MI 49701

NON-Profit
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Lansing, MI
Permit No. 1176

Mackinac Associates Memories 2018



Friends Preserving and Sharing Mackinac's Heritage