

ANNUAL REPORT



The Mackinac Island State Park Commission was created by the Michigan legislature on May 31, 1895. The commission's purpose was to administer Michigan's first state park, which had previously been Mackinac National Park, the United States' second national park, from 1875 to 1895. The commission's jurisdiction was extended in 1909 to Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City, Michigan's second state park. Over 80 percent of Mackinac Island is now included within the boundaries of Mackinac Island State Park, which also contains Fort Mackinac historic site. Colonial Michilimackinac and Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse are located within Michilimackinac State Park. In 1983 the commission also opened Historic Mill Creek State Park, east of Mackinaw City. The historic sites and parks are together known as Mackinac State Historic Parks. Annual visitation to all these parks and museums is nearly 1,000,000. Mackinac State Historic Parks has been accredited by the American Alliance of Museums since 1972.

Mackinac Island State Park Commission



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BIRMINGHAM



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VICE CHAIRMAN
TAYLOR



WILLIAM K. MARVIN
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MACKINAW CITY



RACHEL BENDIT
ANN ARBOR



MARLEE BROWN
MACKINAC ISLAND



PHILLIP PIERCE
GROSSE PTE. SHORES



RICHARD E. POSTHUMUS
ALTO

Mackinac State Historic Parks Staff

Phil Porter, Director

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Nancy A. Stempky, Chief of Finance
Myron Johnson, Mackinac Island Park Manager
Robert L. Strittmatter, Mackinaw City Park Manager
Kathryn M. Cryderman, Executive Administrative Assistant

Accounting:

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Jody L. Scheele, Accounting Technician
Lori A. Thornton, Accounting Assistant

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Michelle H. Walk, Membership and Grants Coordinator

Marketing:

Cassandra M. Boothroyd, Group Travel & Special Events Coordinator
Dominick M. Miller, Marketing Manager
Suzette M. Schmalzried, Sales Manager

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James V. Evans, Lead Interpreter
Dr. Lynn L. M. Evans, Curator of Archaeology
LeeAnn Ewer, Interpretive Assistant
David E. Harkleroad, Interpretation Coordinator

Brian S. Jaeschke, Registrar

Keeney A. Swearer, Exhibit Designer
Craig P. Wilson, Curator of History

Park Operations:

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Jacob Brown, Park & Rec. Ranger
Mark L. Bunker, Painter
James H. Cardinal, Maintenance Mechanic
Gary A. Horn, Laborer
Robert J. Horn, Groundskeeper
Patricia A. Kitchen, Janitor
Craig R. LaCross, Laborer
John R. McClure, Carpenter
Robert B. McGreevy, Equipment Operator
William E. Nieman, Park & Rec. Ranger
Mike Paeth, Park & Rec. Ranger
William Pechta, Carpenter
Lawrence D. Rickley, Equipment Operator
Paul D. Robbins, Park & Rec. Ranger
Vincent W. Sova, Park & Rec. Ranger
Terry J. Stempky, Park & Rec. Ranger
Scott A. Thompson, Carpenter
Justin A. Wright, Park & Rec. Ranger



Daniel J. Loepp, Chairman
Mackinac Island State Park Commission

Phil Porter, Director
Mackinac State Historic Parks

Dear Friends,

Mackinac State Historic Parks is pleased to share the story of another successful year!

Notable accomplishments in 2019 include launching the Mackinac Island Artist-in-Residence program, constructing the Mackinac Island Botanical Trail, and installing new exhibits in the Fort Mackinac North Blockhouse and Post Headquarters, and Colonial Michilimackinac Soldiers' Barracks. We replaced the Arch Rock viewing platform fence, constructed the Mackinac Island restroom/shelter, and completed the brick restoration at Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. We published *Mémoires of Michilimackinac*, the fourth in our series of French translation publications, and drafted the Mackinac State Historic Parks Strategic Plan, 2020-2022.

We initiated work on the Mackinac Island Native American Museum at the Biddle House and restoration and interpretation of the second floor of Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse. We completed our 61st consecutive year of historical archaeology at Colonial Michilimackinac and our 31st consecutive year of education outreach programs.

We accomplished all of this while successfully hosting nearly 1,000,000 park and historic sites guests and managing our accounting and personnel systems. We continue to administer dozens of leases, use permits, franchises and concessions. We oversee our collections, mitigate invasive species, operate seven museum stores, and manage three state parks, the Mackinac Island Airport, a multitude of historic buildings and sites, and dozens of support facilities.

As always, we appreciate the great support of the Mackinac Associates board of directors and membership. Their support in 2019 funded a multitude of important projects that allowed us to successfully fulfill our mission of protecting, preserving and presenting Mackinac's rich historic and natural resources.

On behalf of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission and the Mackinac State Historic Parks staff –

Thank you!



**WE PROTECT, PRESERVE AND PRESENT MACKINAC'S RICH HISTORIC
AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO PROVIDE OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL
AND RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR THE PUBLIC.**

Interpretation, Education and Publications

Mackinac State Historic Parks presents the rich history of the Straits of Mackinac through a wide variety of resources including exhibits and live interpretation, education activities, and a comprehensive publication program.

Initiatives for 2019 included the installation of the Mackinac Island Botanical Trail, the debut of the Mackinac Island Artist-in-Residence and Station 256 Conference Room, new exhibits at Fort Mackinac in the North Blockhouse and Office, an update to the Soldier's Barracks at Colonial Michilimackinac, installation of the annual art exhibit at The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, successful completion of the 31st year of education outreach programs, special themed weekends at Colonial Michilimackinac and Fort Mackinac, hosting nearly 3,000 guests at Fort Fright at Colonial Michilimackinac, publication of *Mémoires of Michilimackinac and the Pays d'en Haut*, and updates to *Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park* and the *Historic Mackinac Island Visitor's Guide*.



Above: Grand opening of the Mackinac Island Botanical Trail. Left to right: Jane Manoogian, Jack Barnwell, Victor Callewaert and Phil Porter. **Below left:** Lead Interpreter Jim Evans in the new Soldier's Barracks exhibit at Colonial Michilimackinac. **Below right:** The new Office exhibit at Fort Mackinac.





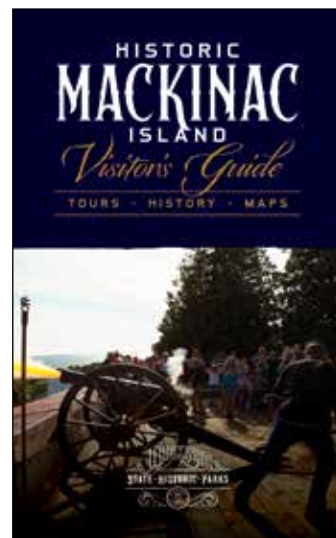
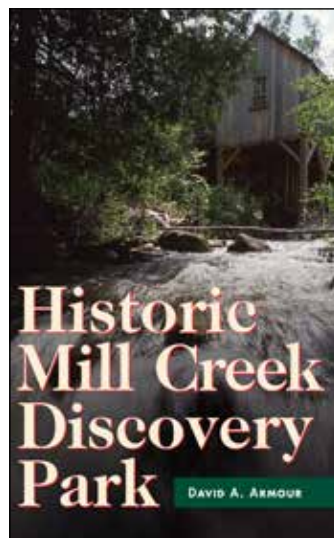
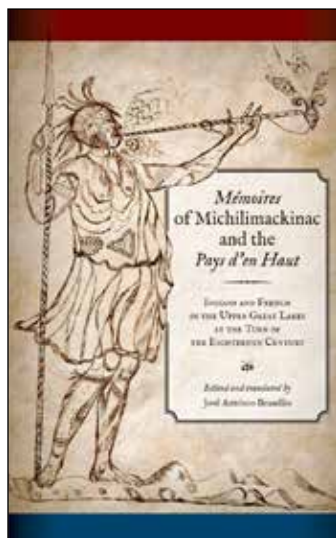
Top: The new exhibit in the North Blockhouse at Fort Mackinac, which tells the story of the surrender of Fort Mackinac in one of the first engagements of the War of 1812. **Above:** Winners from the juried exhibition Visions of Mackinac, from left: Peter Pellerito, Mackinac Associates; Kris Falk, Mackinac Arts Council; Jennifer Wohletz, accepting the first place prize for her daughter, Natalia; Philip Rice, honorable mention; Beth Bynum, honorable mention; John Demers, 3rd place; Mary Bea McWatters, second place; Phil Porter, Mackinac State Historic Parks. **Left:** Interpretive Assistant LeeAnn Ewer during 'Gardens and Good Things to Eat' Weekend at Colonial Michilimackinac.

PRESENTING HISTORY

2019 Annual Report



Starting top left, moving clockwise: Sculptor Andy Sacksteder during his stay as an Artist-in-Residence; Station 256 Conference Room; **Historic Mackinac Island Visitor's Guide;** Cannon firing at Colonial Michilimackinac; **Mémoires of Michilimackinac and the Pays d'en Haut;** Interpreter Steven Hamann leading an "Historic Mackinac on Tour" education outreach program; **Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park.**





Top left: Interpreter Trevor Retell leading daily drill at Fort Mackinac.

Bottom left: Interpreter Caleb Cavitt starting a demonstration at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park.

Top right: Interpreter Kira Rosol at Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse.

Middle right: Stoking the fire at the Biddle House, part of Historic Downtown Mackinac.

Bottom right: A young guest creating a paper lilac at the Kids' Art Studio in The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum.

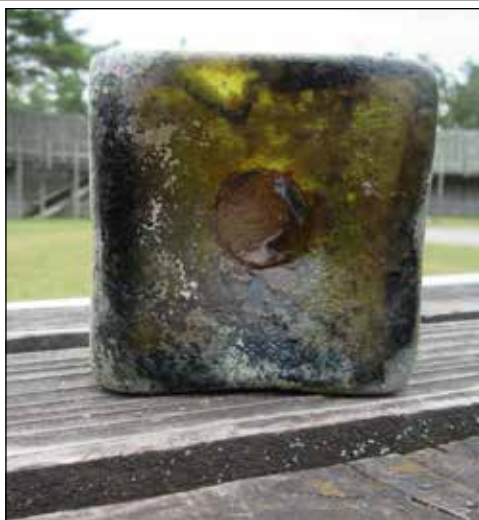
Treasures from the Sand:

On August 24 the archaeology field crew completed this summer's excavation at House E of the Southeast Rowhouse at Colonial Michilimackinac. This was the 61st consecutive summer of excavations at Michilimackinac, making it one of the longest-running archaeology programs in North America. House E was first occupied by Charles Henri Desjardins de Rupallay de Gonneville, and later by an as-yet-unidentified English trader.

The root cellar in the southeast corner of the house continued to yield interesting artifacts. These included the final piece of the creamware plate found in 2018, a large piece of a Chinese export porcelain saucer that matches others found in 2018, a trade silver brooch, a brass serpentine sideplate from a British trade gun, and a leg bone and hoof from a pig or sheep. Additional sections of the cellar wall planks were exposed as well.

Another deep feature in the south-central area of the house was noted at the end of the 2018 season. In 2019 it became better defined, taking on a rectangular shape. A few previously excavated houses at Michilimackinac have had two root cellars, and this could be another one. The area contained numerous interesting artifacts, including a large structural hinge, the base of a British case (square) bottle, a two-tined fork, a circular trade silver brooch (wider than the one above), and a small iron "dart" point.

The northwest area of the excavation was the most intriguing. Two rows of charred vertical planks, which intersect at a right angle, were uncovered. This area was not as artifact rich as the others, but did contain a large cache of burned corn. It is earlier than, and cut into by, the second possible cellar.



Archaeology at Michilimackinac



Opposite page, clockwise: Brass serpentine sideplate for a British trade gun; two-tined fork; Chinese export porcelain saucer; British case bottle; trade silver brooch.

Top left: Archaeological Field Supervisor Alex Conell with the final piece of the creamware plate.

Top right: A small iron "dart" point.

Middle left: The creamware plate put together with the pieces unearthed during the 2018 field season.

Middle right: A new feature in the northwest area of the dig, featuring two rows of charred vertical planks.

Bottom left: Large structural hinge found in the possible root cellar.

Collections Acquisitions

Well over 300 artifacts were added to the permanent collection this year, notably several significant works of art. Many acquisitions were made through purchase and include numerous objects, archival material and photographs. Most significant of all were items from the collection of the late Ronald J. Rolando. A businessman, collector and dealer from Leonard, Michigan, many remember Ron from his prominence at the Grand Hotel antique show, which he managed during its final years. After it ended, he continued to sell items during the hotel's annual history weekend. When he died in 2018 he left both a large inventory of items as well as a large personal collection of Mackinac material. We always had a close professional relationship with Ron, and he had promised to offer us these Mackinac pieces. Keeping his promise, his wife Dora and daughter Dawn invited us to select items from this unequaled collection of Mackinac art and mementos. From this we chose dozens of early souvenir items and works of art. The former includes first-class German porcelain pieces and twentieth-century Staffordshire ware. Among the paintings are nearly a dozen works by Stanley Bielecky, both watercolors and oils. Ron had generously loaned some of these for the Bielecky show at the Mackinac Art Museum in 2016. Also of note is an 1874 Mackinac oil of the east shore by artist Henry Chapman Ford of Chicago. This is one of only two known Mackinac works that were produced by Ford, in fact one of the few non-California Ford paintings in existence. It will join the Fairy Arch painting by Ford (on long-term loan from Commission Vice-chairman Richard and Jane Manoogian) at the Mackinac Art Museum in the spring. Another wonderful item from Ron's collection was the Mackinac County flag that he had always displayed in his sales booth. It was one of 83 such flags commissioned by the J. L. Hudson Department Store in Detroit in 1940, one for each Michigan county, and flown over the store in September of that year. One of the few known to have survived, the design features the Fort Mackinac blockhouse. The purchase of the Rolando collection was made through the Martin and Patricia Jahn Collections Development Fund.

Highlights of collection donations (see sidebar) include ninety-four pieces of fine etched glass and crystal by Frank Kriesche, given by descendent Harold Kriesche. We have numerous examples of ruby-stained pressed glass by the legendary island glass engraver, but his set of various pieces of stemware and decanters adds significantly to the fine Kriesche glassware in our collection. Another notable donated piece is the engine plate from the *SS Fred McBrier* by Tom Farnquist. It remains gratifying that we continue to receive these significant shipwreck artifacts, which was the hope of Chuck and Jeri Feltner when they donated their own collection to help establish our Straits of Mackinac Shipwreck Museum at Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse.



Left: Detail from a Stanley Bielecky oil painting.

Opposite, top: Ron and Dora Rolando in front of the Mackinac County Flag in 2001. *Photo courtesy of the Mackinac Island Town Crier.*

Opposite, center: German made souvenir porcelain china.

Opposite, center left: Engine plate from the *SS Fred McBrier*.

Opposite, center right: Engraved glass pitcher by Frank Kriesche.

Opposite, bottom: Detail of 1874 Mackinac shore by Henry Chapman Ford.



Collection Donors

TOM WILLE

Black and white print of Round Island Lighthouse by Clarice Haynes

CRAIG WILSON

Color postcards of Mackinaw City, Mackinac Island and Mackinac Bridge

Color postcard panoramic of Mackinac Bridge

STEVEN BRISSON

Oversize color postcard showing aerial view of Mackinac Island harbor

DR. KEITH WIDDER

Wood plaque with image of sloop Welcome by Pat Reisland

STEVE HAROLD

Black and white photograph of railroad ferry Chief Wawatam in ice

Color postcards of Mackinac Island, Mackinaw City and Mackinac Bridge

DR. LYNN EVANS

Vernors soda can with image of Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse

JOHN DONNELLY JR.

Black and white photograph showing Henry Donnelly with group of people

Color images of Cloghaun Cottage interior by Clarice Haynes

DONNA SINKS

Black and white photographs on board SS Alabama and on Mackinac Island

DAVID DOSS

Black and white photographs of Mackinac Island and Mackinac Bridge

Color and black & white postcards of Mackinac Island and Mackinaw City

JENNIFER MAPLES

Photograph album of Moral Re-Armament people and places

HAROLD KRIESCHE

Ninety-four pieces of etched clear glass by Frank Kriesche of Mackinac Island

BRIAN JAESCHKE

Two motel keys from the Kings Inn in Mackinaw City

TOM FARNQUIST

Engine plate from the SS Fred McBrier which sank in the Straits of Mackinac

CLARK BLOSWICK

Hotel room keys from the Terrace Cottage on Mackinac Island

STANLEY D. YOUNG

Forty-six stamps commemorating Pontiac's Uprising at Fort Michilimackinac

RICHARD AND VICTORIA RIEL

Grand Hotel booklet and dinner menu

KAY HOPPENRATH

Two wicker rocking chairs made for children from Young Cottage

DEBORAH O'DONNELL

Photographic prints by William Gardiner and H. Marshall Gardiner

PAM MISCH-SILLIMAN

Black and white snapshots of Mackinac Island and Upper Peninsula guidebooks

DEBORAH ORR

Two sets of billiard cue racks and mirror from Mackinac Island

GEORGE BURROWS

Steamer trunk with several pieces of clothing belonging to Ralph Burrows

SCOTT RAUSCH

Color postcard of Marquette Park with Fort Mackinac in background

LINDA MASTIN

Mackinac Island souvenir photograph book

LORRAINE HARTLEY

Black and white postcard of Father Marquette Statue on Mackinac Island

GILL CHAMBERLAIN

Scrapbook pages from a trip on SS South American

By the Numbers

Mackinac State Historic Parks hosted nearly 1,000,000 guests at its parks and historic sites in 2019. Of those million, over 380,000 entered a ticketed location. Exciting public programs and exhibits, an effective media campaign, and productive partnerships with several area businesses and organizations drew visitors to our sites from across the globe.



198,452



68,823



28,155



26,669



13,421



44,621

Attendance Revenue

Attendance revenue was up 0.74% over 2018, thanks in part to a minor increase in ticket prices, our Partners Program, sales of the Adventure Tour at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park, exciting special events, and robust internet sales.

Attendance Revenue:

2019: \$3,222,008.16

2018: \$3,189,228.75

Partners/Internet:

2019: \$394,819.75

2018: \$301,646.74

Adventure Tour:

2019: \$115,253.00

2018: \$100,320.40

Fort Fright:

2019: \$24,382.00

2018: \$23,663.94

An American Picnic:

2019: \$14,083.50

2018: \$11,261.00

Thanks to our ticketing and strategic partners:

Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry
Diamond Tours
Lakeshore Excursions
HK Events
Murray Hotel
Mackinac Revealed
Baymont Inn & Suites
Bob Rogers Travel
Lake View Hotel
mParks
Central Michigan University
Corporate Travel Service
Chippewa Hotel
Premier World Discovery
Bicycle Street Inn
Midwest Tours
Bob Neff Tours
US Tours
Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry

Mackinac Island Carriage Tours
Mackinaw City Chamber of Tourism
Island House Hotel
Grand Hotel
Great Adventure Tours
Mission Point Resort
Inn on Mackinac
Tauck World Discovery
Student Adventures
Brightspark Travel
Harbour View Inn
Educational Tours
Lilac Tree Hotel
American Semester Program
Gate 1 Travel
Tour Trends
Michigan Department of Transportation
Greenlight Group Tours
Terrapin Tours

Museum Store Sales

Museum store sales continue to rise year over year under the leadership of Sales Manager Suzette Schmalzried, whose first full season was 2014. 2019 marked the first year sales broke \$1,000,000.

Museum store sales since 2014:

2019: \$1,000,844.41

2018: \$941,712.91

2017: \$928,033.13

2016: \$894,506.00

2015: \$840,770.00

2014: \$783,486.00

**"So. Much.
Fun."**

"We enjoyed our trip here so much. My son (age 5) had a blast. He got to help pull the cannon to the water and loved seeing everyone in costume. So much history to learn about too."

TripAdvisor, June 21, 2019



COLONIAL

MICHILMACKINAC

EST. 1715

Mackinac - Our Famous Island

2019 saw the premiere of *Mackinac - Our Famous Island*, a joint production between Detroit Public TV and Mackinac State Historic Parks. The exciting documentary took viewers along the many shores and trails of Mackinac Island to experience its natural beauty, visited landmarks that reveal its earliest history and introduced the people who still work to preserve this special place. It also aimed to show that there is far more to the island than horses and fudge.

The premiere was on February 28th, with an event at the Detroit Public TV studios in Wixom. The program drew a 2.4 Nielsen, more than 2,000 unique views of the live stream, and viewers from 47 states, Washington D.C. and nine countries. During the broadcast viewers pledged more than \$18,000 to the station.



At the premiere of Mackinac - Our Famous Island at the Detroit Public TV studios in Wixom.

Outstanding Visitor Experiences

Seven of Mackinac State Historic Parks' sites were awarded the TripAdvisor **Certificate of Excellence** in 2019.



Arch Rock
Colonial Michilimackinac
Fort Holmes
Fort Mackinac
Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park
Mackinac Island State Park
Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse



**"A must do on Mackinac Island!
So much history!"**



"Amazing views and lots of history!
A must do if you visit the island. We
have 6, 8 and 12 year old kids and we
all loved it!"

TripAdvisor, July 7, 2019



Improving our Parks

Mackinac State Historic Parks continues its uncompromising effort to care for and improve its park resources for travelers from around the world. Park enhancement projects for 2019 included the repairing and painting of multiple structures, adding interpretive signs, installation of the Mackinac Island Botanical Trail, the addition of two chimneys to the Soldier's Barracks at Colonial Michilimackinac, combating invasive species, construction of the Huron Road Restrooms and Pavillion, and the much needed repaving of sections of Arch Rock Road.



Top: Before and after of Arch Rock Road, one of the most traveled roads on Mackinac Island.

Middle left: National Restoration was contracted to construct the chimneys for the new Soldier's Barracks exhibit at Colonial Michilimackinac.

Middle right: Carpenter John McClure installing an interpretive sign on the Mackinac Island Botanical Trail.

Bottom: Removing invasive species within Mackinac Island State Park.



OLD MACKINAC POINT
LIGHTHOUSE
ESTD 1889

"Interesting history of the Straits"

"Loved this little find - shipwreck museum, lighthouse with nice views and great history of the busy shipping area of the Great Lakes. Recommend this!"

TripAdvisor, July 28, 2019

"History and fun"

"Really great tour guide will take you back in time. Powered by water and very powerful equipment. Great hiking and simply wonderful people at the Park - a hidden gem."

TripAdvisor, September 3, 2019



HISTORIC
MILL CREEK
Discovery Park

Volunteers

In 2019 volunteers donated 30,454 hours of service time to Mackinac State Historic Parks. Volunteers supported a wide variety of activities including historical archaeology, collections management, interpretation, park maintenance, and visitor services. As usual, the largest number of volunteer hours was recorded by the more than 800 boy and girl scouts who participated in the Mackinac Island Scout Service Program.



Starting top right, moving counter-clockwise: Fort Fright drew nearly 3,000 guests in 2019, and is only possible thanks to the dozens of volunteers both nights; the second annual Fort2Fort Five Mile Challenge drew nearly 400 runners and had more than 15 volunteers to help run it; A Boy Scout taking flags down at Fort Mackinac as part of the Mackinac Island Scout Service Camp; A reenactment group at Fort Mackinac during a special War of 1812 weekend.



There's Nothing Like Good Friends!



Mackinac Associates, the nonprofit friends group supporting Mackinac State Historic Parks, continued to provide support in a variety of ways during the 2019 season. Special projects funded totaled \$173,950. Some of the larger projects included the Office exhibit and new bunting at Fort Mackinac, the Barracks exhibit and new entry signs at Colonial Michilimackinac, replacement of interpretive signs across park sites, and a reprint of *Were-Wolves and Will-O-The-Wisps: French Tales of Mackinac Retold*. And last, but not least, our continuing support of education outreach programs is something Mackinac Associates continues to be proud of. Each year Mackinac Associates provides funding to send staff and interpreters into classrooms across the state and provide scholarships to schools to help support their visit to a Mackinac State Historic Parks site.

During this past year Mackinac Associates, through the tremendous support of our members, raised the funds necessary to convert the Biddle House into the new Mackinac Island Native American Museum that will open in 2020.

2019 events saw record attendance. The Annual G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration was hosted at the cottage of Michael and Wendy Young on the West Bluff and enjoyed a visit from Governor Whitmer during the cocktail reception. The annual meeting in August was held at Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park. We bid a fond farewell to Mary Jane Barnwell and Mark Mercer for years of dedicated service to the Mackinac Associates Board of Trustees as they had served the maximum

number of terms and welcomed Stephen Murray and Sheldon Smith as their replacements.

This past year also saw the establishment of our Legacy Society giving us a formal way to recognize and encourage planned giving opportunities. An electronic newsletter is now being sent between issues of *Curiosities* and a Facebook page was launched.

We continue to appreciate our members and their support through membership dues and contributions. It is through their generosity that we are able to fulfill our mission of preserving and sharing Mackinac's heritage.



The annual G. Mennen Williams Mackinac Celebration was hosted by Michael and Wendy and Skip and Rachael Young, and featured an appearance from Governor Whitmer.



New board members Stephen Murray and Sheldon Smith at the Annual Meeting.

Board of Trustees

Peter Pellerito, *President*
Jack Barnwell
Wesly Maurer
Todd Petersen

Harriet McGraw, *Vice President*
Jeb Burns
Stephen Murray
Nancy Porter
Skip Young

Tom Lockwood, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Kathy Lieder
Ann Parrish
Sheldon Smith



MACKINAC
STATE • HISTORIC • PARKS

