

MLA E-Newsletter March 2008

Hello Everyone,

Welcome to another MLA E-Newsletter and hopefully everyone is ready for Spring to arrive so we can start getting the lighthouses ready to open for the summer season. The upcoming Great lakes Regional Lighthouse Conference will be a lot of the focus in this newsletter. We have lots to update you on and we are looking for your registrations right now as the special room rates will be ending soon. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep everyone informed of what is going on in the lighthouse community, including organization updates, state and federal issues and anything else related to the network of Michigan's lighthouses. The E-Newsletter is a publication just to keep the lines of communication open between all of us. Previous newsletters will now be available online from the MLA web site, so if you missed a past communication, please see the web site for more information. If you have any news to share or updates to give, this is the venue to keep everyone informed. Please let us know how things are going and if you have any information to share. We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference.

NOTE: *Please find attached a requested contact update sheet that we would like you to fill out and return. Return it to MLA & SHPO. Alternatively, you can fill in the PDF file and e-mail it in by clicking on BOTH buttons at the top of the page. To print it out and mail it in, simply click the print button.*

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1. Great Lighthouse Conference, June 11-13, 2008:

Registrations are coming in for this exciting conference and the \$85 Early Registration date of March 31 is fast approaching. April 1- May 31 the conference price goes up to \$100 and late registration (June 1 and after) goes up to \$115.

This conference takes place in beautiful Traverse City, Michigan at the Park Place Hotel. This town is bustling in the summer and rooms are reserved for the conference at a special price at three local hotels. The hotels are: Park Place-cost \$129 (through April 18), Holiday Inn West Bay-cost \$119 (through May 1) Bayshore Resort-cost \$123, these blocks of rooms are on a first come basis. Be sure to tell them you are with the **Lighthouse Conference** when you register. Contact information is on the MLA website listed below.

The conference goal is to give you the tools and knowledge you need to “Preserve Today’s Lighthouses for Tomorrow’s Generations.” Come and network with lighthouse experts and enthusiasts and get answers to

questions regarding all sorts of topics including: Leases & Transfers; Structural aspects regarding moisture, paint, timber testing; lightning protection, Aids to Navigation-the Fresnel lens; Researching your Lighthouse, Historic Structures Reports and much more. Visit the newly opened Old Mission Point Lighthouse or take a trip aboard the schooner Inland Seas. Hear the Keynote speaker Peter Annin, author of The Great Lakes Water Wars, an authoritative book on the battles between those wanting to use or protect the waters of the Great Lakes and Executive Director of Gull Rock Lightkeepers. Meet with architects or paint and brick experts regarding your building issues. Hear about the importance of education programming for our youth/schools and adults. There is something for everyone involved in lighthouses. Don't miss out on this opportunity to share and learn.

The latest conference information, including a conference Flyer with registration and hotel information can be found on our website: www.michiganlighthousealliance.org as well as the flyer is an attachment to this e-mail. You can also call or email Sally Frye at lighthsesally@charter.net or (231)590-4004 if you have questions or wish more information.

2. Sponsorship Opportunities for the Lighthouse Conference:

The registration costs, to you the participant, are the same as those for the 2004 conference as MLA wanted to make sure during these challenging financial times that it provided this educational opportunity to as many people as possible at the lowest possible cost. To do this, however, we need your help if you are able. Please help make this conference a success by looking at the sponsorship opportunities below to see if an opportunity exists to support the conference. If so, please contact Sally Frye at lighthsesally@charter.net or call (231)590-4004 and join in this effort. You can also go to the MLA website at www.michiganlighthousealliance.org for a downloadable sponsorship form.

Conference Sponsorships:

Platinum Event- June 12 Dinner Park Place Hotel \$3,500

Gold Events- June 12, 13 Luncheon Events \$2,000

Silver Events- June 12, 13 Breakfast Events \$2,500

Brass Events- June 11 and 13 Cocktail Receptions \$1,000

Workshop Sessions- 16 Total, 8 per day \$250

Coffee Sponsorships- Each day/all day \$250

BOOTHS AVAILABLE FOR YOU "TO GET THE WORD" OUT ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE DOING!

Tables are available for groups to put up displays, pass out literature, sell lighthouse/maritime items and talk with participants of the conference. The cost is \$150 per 10X10 space (special pricing for non-profit groups may be available). Contact Sally Frye at lighthsesally@charter.net or (231)590-4004.

3. Lighthouse Insurance Survey Announced:

Insurance is just one challenge lighthouses face and has been a topic for some time in the lighthouse community. At the lighthouse stakeholder meeting last spring, the Michigan Lighthouse Fund agreed to look into the feasibility of a master insurance policy for Michigan's lighthouse stewardship organizations and has

taken on the challenging task of researching potential insurance programs. This survey is the initial step we must all take to progress forward towards more affordable insurance premiums and programs. I think we have an opportunity to significantly reduce insurance premiums and provide coverage for owners of off-shore properties that we expect will be transferred in the near future. The MLA encourages you to fill out the attached survey form and return it to them with as much information as possible in this first step. Since this is to be a pool, it can be important to have as many participants as possible. The more we are able to spread the risk, the lower the premiums can be. Any unusual circumstances might be addressed through riders to the principle policy.

The attached letter may have already arrived in your mailbox and was sent to owners and lessees of Michigan lighthouse properties. If you did not get one, please fill out and return the attached letter. You will notice that some information is requested by the underwriters (A more user friendly form has been provided with each letter).

Thank you for participating in this process. Keep in mind that any savings that might be realized through this master policy should directly support your efforts to protect, preserve and maintain Michigan's historic lighthouses.

4. Lighthouse Grant Opportunity Announced, Deadline March 26th:

The Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) Waterfront Redevelopment Grants provide funding to local units of government to revitalize waterfront properties by funding property acquisition, demolition, response activities, public infrastructure, and public facility improvements. It has also been used in restoration activities at 12 lighthouses. Nonprofits can work in partnership with their local municipalities to obtain one of these grants. Requests can be made for \$100,000 or less.

The website for all MDEQ grants is:

http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3311_4110_29262---,00.html

For the waterfront development grant:

http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3311_4110_29262-151092--,00.html

The information was received from the State Historic Preservation Officer, Brian Conway. If you need assistance you can contact Nancy Steffan in his office at Steffenj@michigan.gov or call 517-373-9540.

5. Annual Electronic Filing Requirement for Small Exempt Organizations — Form 990-N (e-Postcard):

This is an important announcement for all Michigan lighthouse organizations, please read and click the link at the end of the announcement to go directly to the IRS web site for more information.

Small tax-exempt organizations whose gross receipts are normally \$25,000 or less may be required to electronically submit Form 990-N, also known as the e-Postcard. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 added this filing requirement to ensure that the IRS and potential donors have current information about your organization.

Due Date of the e-Postcard

The first e-Postcards are due in 2008 for tax years ending on or after December 31, 2007. The e-Postcard is due every year by the 15th day of the 5th month after the close of your tax year. For example, if your tax year ended on December 31, 2007, the e-Postcard is due May 15, 2008. You cannot file the e-Postcard until after your tax year ends.

Who Must File

Most small tax-exempt organizations with gross receipts that are normally \$25,000 or less must file the e-Postcard. Exceptions to this requirement include:

- Organizations that are included in a group return, and
- Churches, their integrated auxiliaries, and conventions or associations of churches.

Late Filing or Failure To File the e-Postcard

If you do not file your e-Postcard on time, the IRS will send you a reminder notice but you will not be assessed a penalty for late filing the e-Postcard. However, an organization that fails to file required e-Postcards (or information returns – Forms 990 or 990-EZ) for three consecutive years will automatically lose its tax-exempt status. The revocation of the organization's tax-exempt status will not take place until the filing due date of the third year.

<http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=169250,00.html>

6. How to work on acquiring original Lighthouse Service antiques:

Recent requests from a number of organizations seeking original Lighthouse Service antiques have spurred a few conversations we thought we should share. The antiques used in lighthouses are typically very hard to find and even harder to acquire, with the high cost being the most deterring factor. Many private collectors and other museums compete for these antiques, making the cost of a plain white dinner plate that would normally sell for \$5 cost with a Lighthouse Service logo on it \$600 to \$900! This type of large cash outflow out of your normal general operating fund can adversely affect your organizations primary preservation goals because this money could have been used to paint several rooms, repair a porch, or used for a matching grant, etc. If your organization runs across someone who will not donate the antique and will only sell it, how do you acquire it?

The White River Light Station and several others have been very successful in acquiring numerous antiques for their light station over the past several years with a FRIENDS group. Some people call these smaller groups of community people “Angles” or “Friends” of an organization and they are called upon throughout the year to help organize, educate and fundraise among other things. For example, they pool money together to make purchases of antiques or help create educational displays for the lighthouse. White River has been successful at this and their March 2008 newsletter proves it, they acquired a china plate and demitasse cup and saucer with the blue Lighthouse Service logo. They acquired a four bulb automatic bulb changer for a small minor aid to

navigation as well as a low pressure steam gauge from a lighthouse tender. A replica traveling library box was also purchased.

To help give you some background on creating your own Friends or Angles group, please contact the Friends of White River Light Station or for an online article from the National Park Service that is helpful, please click on the following link http://www.nps.gov/partnerships/friends_groups.htm. Some organizations have this group be totally separate from the main fundraising activities of the organization so they can concentrate on the tasks of acquiring artifacts while the core organization concentrates on the structural repairs. It can be worked a number of ways and we wanted to make sure you were aware of how to go about acquiring artifacts a little differently than you might think of.

To keep you hands on the antique someone may want to sell, you need to convince them you are the best home for the object. If you don't have the money right away, the main thing you want to do is try and convince the seller of the antique to hold onto it a little longer and give you first right of refusal in trying to buy it, establish a price goal to meet and start to inquire about funds. If you can, put a deposit or rather down payment on the antique to hold it for you. We suggest doing this in writing and that if the deal should fall through, your money will be returned fully. The value of these antiques are not depreciating, so it will never cost the seller any money to hold onto the antique just so you know.

For more information on the value or to purchase artifacts, please see this website www.lighthouseantiques.net and for lighthouse keeper tools explanations, [please click on this link](#) and browse around the Michigan Lighthouse Conservancies web site for some of the artifacts mentioned here.

All of your comments are important to the success of the MLA. If you are looking to help out the MLA, please let us know. Your participation in the upcoming conference will help ensure the future success of Michigan's lighthouses. You may contact [John Gronberg](#) or [Jeff Shook](#) for any questions or comments. Thanks for all your help and continued support.

John Gronberg,
President, MLA
PO Box 43
Northport, MI 49670
GOLDEN EGG@aol.com
www.michiganlighthousealliance.org