

Charity Island Newsletter

News From Charity Island MARCH 2012



A LIGHT UPDATE

Lighthouses are important remnants of our maritime history and their ability to draw tourists make them important economic assets for those communities fortunate enough to have them, especially, in these tough economic times.

During the seven years our Dinner Cruises have been in operation the lighthouse on Charity Island has drawn over 14,000 visitors. Many have come from other states and even other countries.

Built in 1857 and abandoned in 1939, the Charity Island light tower passed from federal ownership into private hands in 1967. It was in an advanced state of decay when it was acquired by the Nature Conservancy, its current owner, in 2001.

An effort in 2003 by the Arenac County Historical Society to acquire and restore the tower stalled when the State of Michigan deemed the tower was not eligible for grant money because the newly built light-keepers home on the adjoining property was historically incorrect.

Year after year the elements continue to take their toll.

This summer it was discovered that the cast iron stanchions supporting the metal roof/ are so cracked and broken that heavy winds could bring it crashing down.

We knew something needed to be done and soon.

Labor day Weekend, 2011 – To the rescue, comes [Jimmy Moore of Bay Marine Salvage & Services](#), and his crew from Caseville. They volunteered their time, expertise and money building a wooden scaffold structure under the dome that will hold the parts together while we seek a path forward that will ensure the tower's survival.

To get the ball rolling we offered to swap some of our property on Charity Island for the Light tower. The Nature Conservancy has expressed interest in our proposal, but discussion has been put on hold pending resolution of a lawsuit that was brought against the Nature Conservancy by a Charity Island lot owner over an unrelated issue.

We are hopeful the lawsuit will be dismissed this month allowing us to continue our efforts to restore the tower.

If we reach an agreement to obtain the tower, we've been advised to set up a non- profit corporation in which to vest ownership of the tower.

If we get to that point we will seek the help of qualified people to serve on a board of directors to help raise the funds needed to restore and manage the tower property

New revenue opportunities for tower restoration are now a reality through anticipated future wine & beer sales.

As mentioned in our fall newsletter, the dining area at the Charity Island Light keepers' property is now licensed to sell alcohol and we have some exciting new menu changes as well. Funny, how one thing leads to another.

As of last summer, Au Gres now has its very own Winery, [Modern Craft Winery](#) located on Saginaw Bay just a few miles from town.

The owners of Modern Craft Winery recently invited Karen and I to come and sample their wines. Scroll down to cont'd

Local Foods ★ Local Flavors

Wines cont'd: I prefer the traditional dry grape wines so I was not expecting to be impressed with anything produced locally from local fruits. Boy, was I surprised, what delicious wines !

These guys really know what they are doing!

I was so impressed I asked, and they agreed, to develop a white wine exclusively for Charity Island for our Great Lakes Perch Dinner and a Red wine to compliment our Fire Seared Tenderloin Steak Tips dinner from local fruits.

From that came the idea to make wine tasting of local wines part of every Charity Island Dinner Cruise in 2012.

This led to the idea of serving more local foods. We now have a new supplier for our *steak tips* that guarantees our beef is always Michigan Beef.

Our Perch has always been Great Lakes Perch. But we are currently lining up local licensed fishermen to see if we can obtain exclusively Lake Huron or even Saginaw Bay Perch.

For years Karen and I have purchased smoked Swiss and Extra Sharp Cheddar from [Williams Cheese in Linwood](#), Michigan for our personal enjoyment. I met with them recently and learned their Swiss cheese won second runner up at an international cheese competition second only to a Danish cheese maker.

So, the appetizers we serve on the way to the Island will now feature Williams's award winning smoked Swiss and Williams Original Horseradish Cheddar Cheeses.

Our desert will be Apple Crisp made with all local ingredients. Judy's Pies in Linwood uses only Michigan Apples and has her flour milled in Frankenmuth. Apple Crisp served with Williams Extra Sharp Cheddar.

Even our famous Charity Island Dipping Sauce is local thanks To [Bay View Foods of Pinconning Michigan](#).



We have your table Ready !



Finally, we look forward to serving a Charity Island Beer.

WEEK DAY DEPARTURES Employer Appreciation Cruises

Beginning in May we will be offering Employee/ Employer Appreciation cruises with Group Rates for companies interested in doing a company outing with their employees.

Whether it's the office or management staff or the whole company, call us for a quote we will be happy to custom plan a trip to fit any company budget.

We currently have two options posted on our website.

Option 1.

Charity Island Picnic Cruise

Bring the staff on a afternoon Picnic Cruise. You bring the picnic baskets and enjoy a meal up at the light keepers house and we will have the cash bar opened on the boat and at the lighthouse.

Option 2.

Bring the employee or management staff and let us do the cooking. We will provide our *Signature Island Lighthouse Dining Experience* that now includes **wine tasting**

on the cruise to Charity Island and you and the staff just relax and enjoy the Day.



Employee Appreciation Cruises Continued:

We can schedule the departure and return times to accommodate your preferences. We can arrange for groups up to 130 people at one time.



Call Karen at 989 254 7710 for more details on our Employee appreciation cruises or [click here](#)



**Jimmy Moore & Crew
Thank You Guys! Great Job!**

