

# MLA 2024 Conference

**Be the Beacon:  
Connecting With and Guiding Your  
Community**



**SUNDAY, April 21, 2024** Carnegie Center Rotunda 1115 Sixth Street, Port Huron



**5:00 pm**

**Registration and Welcome Social**

During registration enjoy “Lighthouses on the Great Lakes” slide presentation by Terry Pepper. Participants can tour the maritime exhibit, enjoy hors d’oeuvres, and socialize as they register and gather

**6:30 pm**

**Welcome** to the MLA & conference by Buzz Hoerr, MLA President, followed by a welcome to Port Huron, the Maritime Capital of the Great Lakes, by Andrew Kercher, conference host.

**7:00 pm**

**Evening Entertainment by Anna Marck -  
Women of the Watch: Keepers of the Light**

Written and performed by Anna Marck and directed by D.B. Schroeder, *Women of the Watch: Keepers of the Light* is an uplifting 45-minute of music, laughter, and simple, honest storytelling. The play follows Anna as she relives family trips to lighthouses in Michigan, which ignites a passion to share the spectacular stories of various female lighthouse keepers of the Great Lakes. She details the lives of four particular keepers by donning voice and movement. As she steps into these brave women’s shoes, she discovers the tragedy of the hardships they faced and the beauty of their spirits. Q&A will complete the presentation. The show was commissioned by The Lorenzo Cultural Center in Macomb, MI.

**MONDAY, April 22, 2024** Blue Water Conference Center,  
800 Harker Street, Port Huron

**7:30 am**

**Registration and Light Breakfast**

**8:30 am**

**Welcome**

by **Buzz Hoerr**, to include video welcomes from U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Senator Gary Peters

**Looking Back and Linking through Tomorrow: Conference Theme Overview**  
by **Gail Vander Stoep**

Where we’ve been and where we’re going, both as an organization and as part of the lighthouse preservation movement

## **8:45 am How an Industrial Smokestack Company Became Well Known for Lighthouse Preservation**

by Tyler Finkle and Mark Cansdale, ICC Commonwealth

A presentation of the history of International Chimney Corporation (now ICC Commonwealth), the company that moved Cape Hatteras Light Station. Preservation Division Manager Tyler Finkle will present the evolution of the Historic Preservation Division of ICC, from designing and building smokestacks to preserving lighthouses and relocating Historic Register Landmark Properties. Such structural preservation work provides the foundation for future preservation and sharing of the associated stories and culture. Followed by Q&A.

## **9:45 am**

### **Becoming Grant Ready to Build Your Capacity**

by **Shiloh Holley**, Aderworks Consulting, LLC

Are you overwhelmed by how much work it is to pull off a grant application that may only award a small amount of money? Shiloh Holley of Aderworks Consulting LLC will share a grant-ready checklist and provide tips on streamlining your grant application process so you can be more competitive for funding and win more awards. She will also share strategies on how to leverage programming and initiatives to pitch capacity-building projects to funders that can award more unrestricted dollars to your organization.

## **11:00 am**

### **Panel: Funding and Nurturing Donors for the Long Term** (followed by Q&A)

Panelist 1: **Stef Staley**, Grand Traverse Lighthouse

Fundraising can be a challenge even in the best of times. So, what can you do when COVID hits and you have to raise money to keep your organization afloat? Stef will share some of the innovative and creative fundraising techniques and programs that she is still using today. Learn how the Lighthouse Museum raised the needed funds to completely restore the USCG cabin motor launch and how the Northport Museum updated all their exhibits and did renovations of the museum without being open and they had no income.

Panelist 2: **Bruce Lynn**, Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society/Whitefish Point

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society (GLSHS) has successfully attracted and maintained a wide variety of supporters/donors since 1978. As a private non-profit. Because it is not funded by the State of Michigan or the Federal Government, it is critically important to raise additional "unearned income" to help underwrite museum/marine operations and historic preservation projects. GLSHS Executive Director Bruce Lynn will share a variety of ways in which his organization cultivates donors and raises funding to support the organization's operations.

## **12:00 noon**

### **Lunch Buffet and**

### **Panel - Lighthouse Preservation Pioneer Reflections and Looking Forward**

The Michigan Lighthouse Alliance was founded to assist those taking on lighthouse ownership and rehabilitation in the 1980s. The early lighthouse groups came together to share information, from navigating the logistics of purchasing the structures to securing public access and everything in between. Join this panel to look back at the uncertainty of early lighthouse restoration by local groups and how the

lessons learned have helped later lighthouse groups save, protect, and share their lighthouses' stories. Followed by audience comments and input.

Pioneer 1: **Buzz Hoerr**, Harbor Beach Lighthouse Preservation Society

Pioneer 2: **Lou Schillinger**, Port Austin Reef Lighthouse Association, Inc.

Pioneer 3: **Jeri Feltner**, DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society

Pioneer 4: **John Gronberg**, Holland Harbor Lighthouse Historical Commission (Big Red)

New Steward Respondent: **Dave McWilliam**, North Manitou Light Keepers

**1:15 pm**

**Panel: Becoming Effective Community Partners as Tailored to Different Types of “Communities”**

Panelist 1: **Bruce Lynn**, Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society/Whitefish Point

**Building Community with Partnerships**

The Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society works closely with a variety of partners to operate and preserve the Whitefish Point Light-Station. In doing so, GLSHS shares a highly sensitive geographical location, both in the context of natural and human history. To chart the evolution/ preservation of this unique and ruggedly beautiful location, the Shipwreck Society partners with the USFWS, Michigan Audubon Society, and the local community via the Whitefish Point Joint Committee. Bruce Lynn will speak to these, among other community partnerships in this program.

Panelist 2: **Jody Glancy**, Port Austin Reef Light Association, Inc.

**Welcome to Mayberry: How a Small Michigan Town Supported a Big Lighthouse Restoration**

In June of 2023, the Port Austin Reef Light embarked on a \$1.5 million restoration. Located 2.5 miles from Port Austin, the Board recognized there would be challenges to address. Yet little did we know how many and varied they would be. Learn how ICC Commonwealth, our General Contractor, and the Board of Directors of the lighthouse sourced local vendors, trades and craftsmen, and rallied the support of the county to successfully execute this project.

Panelist 3: **Dr. Chelsea Deneault**, Michigan Digital Preservation Network, Coordinator

**Digital Community Connections and Resources**

This session will address how creating digital collections in collaboration with other community organizations, especially public libraries, can be a great opportunity to build new, valuable partnerships. She'll also share information about the many statewide resources that exist to support your organization's work in digital collections.

**2:15 pm**

**Panel: Stability is a Three-Legged Stool: Partnerships with Fort Gratiot Light Station**

The Fort Gratiot Light Station is Michigan's oldest, and it takes three different partner groups to not only keep it open, but actively preserve the grounds and offer programming to the public. Join us for this panel that will discuss how two different non-profits and a county government complement each other and work together toward a shared goal of lighthouse preservation.

Panelist 1: **Lauren Nelson**, Port Huron Museums

Panelist 2: **Dennis Delor**, St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission

Panelist 3: **Denise Brooks**, Friends of the Fort Gratiot Light Station

**3:15 pm**

**Story Song Creations**—a community-centered process using creative, collaborative and inclusive artistic expression

by **Dan Hall**

During the Story Song Creations workshop, Dan will discuss interactive, community-based approaches to accessing the artist within each of us. Common stories about important events, people, local landmarks, etc. become topics for artistic expression.

**4:30 pm**

**Tour of Fort Gratiot Lighthouse**

**6:15 pm**

**Dinner Buffet**

**7:00 pm**

**Evening Entertainment: Dan Hall in Concert**

Dan Hall will perform original maritime songs focused on the triumphs and tragedies of life on the inland seas as well as songs written with K-6 graders throughout the Great Lakes region.



**TUESDAY, April 23, 2024** Blue Water Conference Center,  
800 Harker Street, Port Huron

**8:00 am**

**Registration and Light Breakfast**

**8:30am**

**SHPO: Programs, Partners, and People: Working with Lighthouse Organizations**

by **Bryan Lijewski**, with special introduction of **Ryan Schumaker**

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will present an introduction and overview of its mission and programs. Details on programs applicable to Michigan's historic lighthouses such as grants, historic preservation easements, and Section 106 will be provided. Case studies will be included to illustrate how SHPO partners with advocates and stewards to preserve and promote our lighthouses, and how these partnerships connect with people in the community including staff, consultants, volunteers, and tourists.

**9:30 am Panel - Retaining Volunteers & Staff, & Recruiting Future Lighthouse Stewards**

**Service Learning at The University of Olivet: Foundation for Lighthouse Preservation Work**

by **Mike Fales**, University of Olivet

The University of Olivet has an active Service Learning Program, established in 1999, that engages students in a variety of projects. Some projects include a unique focus on historic preservation combined with local community involvement, such as recent students' work on the Port Austin Lighthouse project. This provides an example for other institutions to develop student engagement programs integrated with larger and ongoing community projects. Other examples of student work have included active engagement in disaster relief work, through which eight Katrina Relief work groups were sent to New Orleans. Other disaster relief services have been provided in Puerto Rico and fourteen states. Students

will be traveling to Maui in May to serve fire victims there. Typically they do eight weekend and three week-long trips each year.

### **10:15 am**

#### **Panel: Retaining Volunteers and Staff, and Recruiting Future Lighthouse Stewards**

- **University of Olivet Student Experiences & Perspectives:**

Past and current students discuss their engagement with lighthouse preservation work in Port Austin, and talk about the things that motivate and facilitate their participation.

Panelist 1: **Casey Eldridge**, recent graduate of University of Olivet

Panelist 2: **Ulrick Meighan**, international University of Olivet student from Belize

Facilitator: **Mike Fales**, University of Olivet

- **Eastern Michigan University Experiences & Perspectives:**

Applying historic preservation theory to practice, the students of the Eastern Michigan University's Preservation Studies program have worked on the Beaver Head Lighthouse on the south end of Beaver Island. They will present a short overview of the station's history, both as an active lighthouse and as an alternative school. The students will also talk about the physical and intellectual work they have accomplished at the lighthouse during field school, a necessary in-the-field education that is a graduation requirement. Join us and learn how we have worked to save historic maritime structures while gaining valuable field experience.

Panelist 3: **Andrew Schneider**, Master's graduate of Eastern Michigan University

Panelist 4: **Andrew De Windt**, Eastern Michigan University graduate student

Panelist 5: **Anna Bennett**, Eastern Michigan University undergraduate student

### **11:30 am**

#### **Lighthouse Café: Small Group Sharing of Successes and Looking Forward as Future Lighthouse Stewards**

Participants will rotate through small groups to discuss a selection of topics related to Michigan lighthouse preservation successes, current challenges and needs, and the changing roles of MLA and lighthouse organizations into the future.

### **12:15 pm**

#### **Lunch**

### **12:45 pm Business meeting**

### **1:30 pm**

Behind-the-Scenes Tour of the **Lightship Huron**

### **3:00 pm Closing** (from the Lightship Huron)

Final comments from MLA President, Buzz Hoerr and Conference Host, Andrew Kercher

