

# Alcona Historical Society

P.O. Box 174, Harrisville MI 48740

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**Sturgeon Point Lighthouse**



**Bailey School House**



**Lincoln Train Depot**

Dear Members,

We are pretty excited about the progress we made this year and would like to share a summary of this year's activities. There have been some changes in the last couple of years and we feel like we are getting back on track.

This year the lighthouse and gift shop were open 33 days over the summer from Memorial Day to Labor Day, open Saturdays and Sundays, and the three holidays - Memorial Day, 4th of July, and Labor Day. Bailey School was open 22 days. The approximate visitor count at the lighthouse was 3,700 from over 28 states and 4 countries. The tower was open 10 days with a total of 884 climbers.

There were four weddings, one school group from Oscoda, the Corvette car group, and two tour bus groups from Pennsylvania. We hope to increase group visitors next year.

The lighthouse and school were staffed by our wonderful volunteers. We are building our volunteer base and had about 40 different volunteers. Volunteers served as docents at the lighthouse/tower and school. For Heritage Day, they cleaned up and closed up. We had a docent training in the spring and docent manuals were created to help aid the docents with historical information. We ended the summer with a volunteer appreciation luncheon. It was a good time to visit and get valuable feedback on ways we can improve next summer. Building our volunteer base continues to be a priority.

The History On The Spot self guided tour brochures are popular. They are a great way for visitors to learn brief historical information about the lighthouse grounds when the museum is closed.

We have also increased our membership this year over last and look forward to continuing the upward trend.

We were challenged in July with the loss of electricity at the lighthouse and gift shop. The gift shop was run on a generator for the summer. We are working with the State of Michigan to have the facility rewired.

We thank you for supporting Alcona Historical Society.

Sincerely,

Alcona Historical Society Board

# Coming in 2020

The Alcona Historical Society will be debuting a new website in 2020. Some of the features on the website will be historical photos, downloadable driving tours, Baseball Hall of Famer Kiki Cuyler, programs, publications and membership. Please check it out at [alconahistoricalsociety.com](http://alconahistoricalsociety.com) in early 2020.

Mark your calendar for the Cabin Fever Lecture Series. On the third Tuesday of each month, January through April, the Society will host a history program. Topics range from the golden years of radio to haunted lighthouses, shipwrecks and Russell Alger.

Beat the winter blahs and join your friends and neighbors for an evening of history and fellowship. There will be no charge for the lectures and refreshments will be served. *See page 4 for details.*

The Lincoln Depot will receive a face lift in 2020 with the new eavestroughs installed, siding being repaired and a new paint job will follow. The engine and caboose out front received a fresh coat of paint this year and are looking sharp.

Our annual dinner will be Tuesday, May 19, 2020 at Rosa's Restaurant the featured speaker is Robert Kreipke and his talk will be on Ford's Maritime History.

## *Just a reminder*

The Lincoln Depot's Quilt Raffle is coming to an end, there is still time to get your tickets. Contact Nick Williams for tickets at 989-727-4080. The drawing is Friday, Dec. 6 at the Depot, after Santa arrives. Proceeds support the Lincoln Depot.

## The Alcona Reader

**Stories and history of Alcona County written by those who lived it!**

*The Alcona Reader* is the perfect holiday gift for friends and family with ties to Alcona County, or for anyone who loves history. Pick up a copy at the Alcona Historical Society table at Christmas in the Village in Harrisville on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Stop by our booth for the Christmas in the Village Special Price of \$15 per book, and all proceeds benefit the Alcona Historical Society.

If you can't make it to the Craft Fair, the Reader is available NOW at the Alcona County Review and Alcona County Library (Harrisville branch), and online at Amazon.com (ISBN 978-1726301725).

Stories by local authors R.E. Prescott, Doris Gauthier, Hazel Phetteplace, Annette Ludwig, Marie Schelley, Elrita Sterling, Charles Reynolds, Bill Kahn, Annie Anderson and many, many more.

### **Comments and Reviews:**

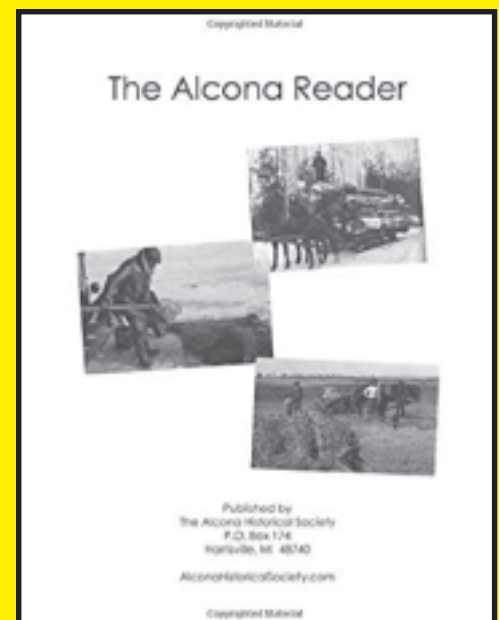
"I read it cover to cover in one sitting. Couldn't put it down."

"Every county would be lucky to have a book like this"

"Lots of laughter, and a few tears....."

"Alcona history comes alive with these stories."

"A snapshot of the hardships and joys of the early settlers."



Dear Friends of Alcona Historical Society,

We are asking you once again to support Alcona Historical Society with your annual membership. Your past support and membership indicate that you share the Society's goals and objectives in preserving and protecting the historical resources in Alcona County. We truly appreciate your involvement, whether it is your membership or donations, your willingness to volunteer at one of the Society's historical sites, attending one of our events, or providing historical items or information. All of these activities allow the Alcona Historical Society to continue to grow.

We also encourage you to consider receiving your newsletter via email. This saves the Society quite a bit in printing and postage costs. If this is an option you would like to try, please give us your email address on the form below.

Please complete the membership form below and send it with your check to Alcona Historical Society, P. O. Box 174, Harrisville, MI 48740. If you have any questions regarding membership, please do not hesitate to contact me at (989) 471-2088 or by email – k\_benghauser@yahoo.com.

Thank you so much for being a part of Alcona Historical Society and supporting the work we do.

Sincerely,

Kristin Benghauser, Membership

## 2020 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

I do not have an email address. Please mail my newsletter. \_\_\_\_\_

### TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:

Individual - \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ Family - \$35 \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor - \$55 \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to pay more than one year - 2019 \_\_\_\_\_ 2020 \_\_\_\_\_

Please contact me so that I may learn more about volunteer opportunities \_\_\_\_\_

***Kristen Benghauser, AHS Membership Chair, P.O. Box 174, Harrisville MI 48740***



## **Cabin Fever Lecture Series**

**Third Tuesday of the Month, January – April 2020.**

*Come in out of the cold and visit with friends and neighbors at a series of interesting Michigan-based history programs. Each event, presented by a renowned Michigan historian, is guaranteed to keep “Cabin Fever” away. Program format includes presentation, Q&A period, and refreshments.*

*January 21, 7:00 p.m. ~ **Early Days of Radio in Michigan by Al & Dave Eicher.** This multi-media lecture will surround us with many wonderful memories of the early days of radio. At the Harrisville branch of the Alcona County Library, 312 W. Main Street, Harrisville.*

*February 18, 7:00 p.m. ~ **A Superior Design...Whaleback Shipwrecks by Ric Mixer.** Whalebacks were unique ships built in Superior, Wisconsin. Lecture and visual presentation profiles their inventor and includes underwater visits to the shipwrecks Sagamore, Colgate and Cort. At the Alcona Township Hall, 5576 N. US-23, Black River.*

*March 17, 6:30 p.m. ~ **Michigan Ghostly Beacons by Dianna Stampfler.** More than 30 lighthouses in Michigan are rumored to be haunted. From the smell of cigar smoke at Seul Choix Point Light to the mysterious housekeeping at White River Light Station and the antics at Waugoshance Shoal, these stories will entertain all ages. At the Caledonia Township Hall, Gillard Road, just south of Spruce Road in Spruce.*

*April 21, 7:00 p.m. ~ **Russell Alger; Lumberman, Entrepreneur and Public Servant by Keith Myers.** Russell Alger and his lumbering company shaped Alcona County, but did you know that he also had served with General Custer during the Civil War; was elected Governor of Michigan; was appointed Secretary of War by President McKinley; and became a U.S. Senator from the State of Michigan? At the Lincoln Depot, Lake Street, Lincoln.*

*Cabin Fever Lecture series is presented by the Alcona Historical Society, and supported by the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan and the Alcona County Library.*

*For more information, visit our new website:  
[www.alconahistoricalsociety.com](http://www.alconahistoricalsociety.com) or call 989-724-7902.*

# U-M music professor's project pays tribute to Michigan's lighthouses

*By Shaun Manning*

Inspired by the beauty and lore of lighthouses throughout the state—as well as their sheer number—University of Michigan assistant professor of music William Lucas launched the Michigan Lighthouse Landmark Legacy project, an artistic collaboration aimed at raising awareness and supporting preservation of the state's beloved, historic buildings.

Since 2014, Lucas, who plays trumpet, has worked with many U-M faculty, student and alumni composers to create more than 40 original fanfares for the lighthouses. So far, 20 of them have been recorded by the “Lighthouse Brass Quintet” at U-M's Duderstadt audio studios. As part of the project, he's also worked with musicians, poets and media production artists associated with U-M to create videos promoting several prominent lighthouses. We recently talked to Lucas about his project.

**What led you to pursue the Michigan Lighthouse Landmark Legacy project?**

**Lucas:** One of the things I have done in my 30-year career as a musician with the Detroit Symphony was to get commissioned to write fanfares, which are short musical tributes. Fanfares are to music as accolades, or even eulogies, are to words—they attempt to in some way honor the subject at hand in the most creative and descriptive way possible. And it's really fun. But I started thinking, what else can I write fanfares for? The next day I got a calendar in my mailbox with all these lighthouses in the state of Michigan. I started investigating, and I did not know we had more lighthouses in the state than any other—129. So I did a tour. And I was absolutely blown away.

**Can you tell me more about your process for creating each composition?**

I have visited all of the lights in the lower peninsula. Our project composers have also visited those lights they have written for. As a composer, I try to describe a lighthouse using music as though I were describing it using words. What music comes to my mind when I look at a lighthouse? That is what I want to attempt to capture. Sometimes the music is majestic, sometimes sorrowful, sometimes terrifying and yet others—like the fanfare written for Point Betsie—are playful and jazzy. Betsie is big, beauti-

ful, and I'll bet she really loves a cocktail party.

**What kind of relationships do you have with local Lighthouse preservation organizations?**

**Lucas:** I've had a lot of contact with the Sable Point Lighthouse Keepers Association. I took a trip in early spring 2016 and told them what we were going to do, and they were excited about it. Their responsibilities are enormous—maintaining these buildings that are hundreds of years old. They often get approached by historical societies that say, “Oh, well, you actually cannot use that modern roofing on this building.” They have to be sure the buildings are preserved according to guidelines.

**Are there other particular challenges of preserving these landmarks?**

**Lucas:** Well, for example, they sit on the water. They're blasted all winter long and most of them have some concrete or brick. Even the outer facing of brick if it is exposed enough to hard-driving winds will absorb some of that water. When it gets cold it freezes and the brick cracks and then they have to redo it. Big Sable light, for example, is 112 feet tall. It's basically a metal cylinder encased in six feet of concrete all around it at the base, reducing to about two feet at the top. All that concrete needs to be stripped off and repaired and replaced, which is a huge job.

**What's next for the Michigan Lighthouse Landmark Legacy project?**

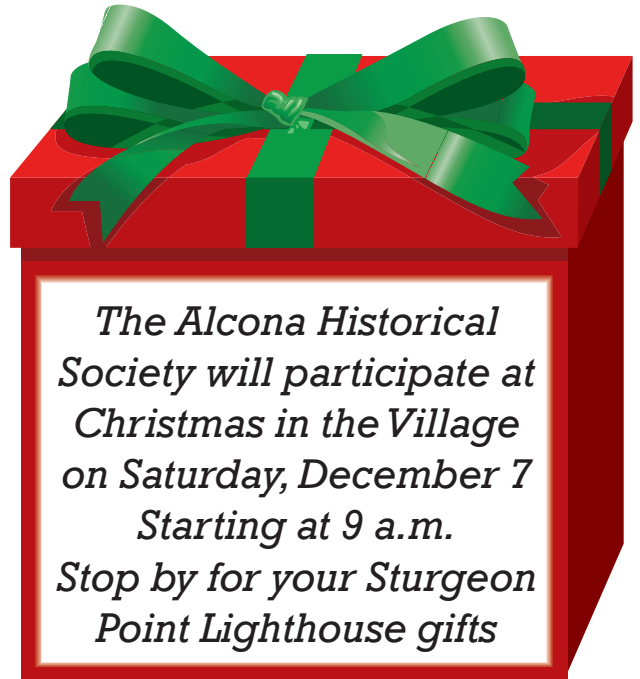
**Lucas:** We currently have about a CD's worth of music, and we're not stopping. I would hope that the project would continue to be able to obtain donations and grants to commission and record fanfares for all 129 lighthouses in the state. In addition, while we already have fanfares for a few Michigan landmarks including Sleeping Bear Dunes, Tahquamenon Falls and the Porcupine Mountains, I'd love to explore that route as well. I'd like to put together a tour of the music at some point or an art exhibition involving the many photos I've taken as part of the project. Bringing awareness to the unique features our great state of Michigan has to offer in the form of video set to music might help us preserve these fascinating lighthouse/landmarks for future generations to enjoy and embrace.

*Article courtesy of UofM Communications Arts and Culture*

## **A Big Thank you to our Volunteers:**

Thank you to all of the people who volunteered their time and energy this summer. Your efforts helped Alcona Historical Society in many ways. We truly appreciate you and could not have done it without you. There were more than 40 volunteers that helped with clean ups, docents at the lighthouse and school, tower climbs, special events (like Heritage Day), depot plant and bake sale, etc. We look forward to continuing to built our volunteer base to help us accomplish our future goals.

Thank you.



**Address Service Requested**

**Harrisville, MI 47840**

**P.O. Box 174**

**Alcona Historical Society**

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