

Letter from the President of LEIHS

Dear Members, Islanders, and Friends,

First, I want to welcome our new board members Amy Huston, Dona Mitchell, Betsy McCann, and June Stoiber. Each of them has already taken on different duties and we're excited to move to monthly meetings for better organization and workflow.

Maggie Beckford, our longest sitting board member for 25 years, called a special meeting on September 22 to elect officers through 2027. I am proud that Maggie nominated me to be President for the next two years. I was elected treasurer in 2024, and my financial and historical mentor Susie Cooper, was elected Treasurer in September. Barb Hunter was elected for a full term as secretary, and Kendra Koehler, who successfully managed the museum in 2024 with volunteers and an intern, is your Vice President.

As a 5th generation islander, my love and passion for history is deeply rooted in island soil. My story began on South Bass in 1888. I've been a board member for close to a decade, and now it is my honor to lead the Historical Society into its next chapter. I'm keeping in mind it is our duty, first and foremost, to practice fiduciary responsibility, and to protect and preserve our museum collection.

Dan Savage has retired. LEIHS is pursuing a reorganization of the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society's operation. Funds that were allocated for payroll, travel expenses and employee benefits will now be spent on building and grounds maintenance, updating equipment to improve the visitor experience, and providing programming and events for our members and visitors.

We will continue to work hard to attract new members as well as give our current members motivation to help us continue our mission to educate the community and our visitors on the history of the Lake Erie Islands and its people.

That motivation includes

- A quarterly newsletter called the Historical Journal to provide transparency and keep members current on events and programming, interesting items in the archive, and how members can help their museum. Timely website updates, social media posts and a new monthly Gazette column.
- Tapping into our great core of volunteers who will help us eliminate over \$40,000 in payroll costs. We have had a wonderful response from our community in volunteering for recent events and staffing the Heritage Resale Shop and Museum. We welcome you to join our growing list of volunteers for the 2026 season. Contact Kendra Koehler, Volunteer Museum Manager, for more information and to sign up.
- Developing new programs and events with priority reservations for our members.
- Setting a Museum Calendar by the end of each year for the following season.
- Providing island youth with programs during the winter months at the museum.
- Making Public Participation time for members at board meetings.
- Updating the society's bylaws following a guideline provided by the Ohio Attorney General's office. Betsy McCann is already gathering information so we can start this winter.
- Restructuring the current museum membership levels, and passing a resolution outlining the membership voting structure, including Family Memberships receiving two votes.
- Posting the board's meeting minutes online after they are official (approved). The minutes from the Annual Membership Meeting were posted September 28.

The Lake Erie Islands Historical Society Museum belongs to all of us. We will continue to encourage current members to get involved to help strengthen the museum for future generations to enjoy. I look forward to your feedback, questions, concerns, and ideas.

In closing, September 27, 2026, marks 40 years since the Lake Erie Islands Historical Society held its first membership election to form its first full Board of Trustees under the non-profit's bylaws back in 1986. The museum will celebrate this milestone on its anniversary date with a Birthday Party for the membership, volunteers and guests.

Sincerely,

Dustin Heineman
President
Lake Erie Islands Historical Society

BOARD OFFICERS

President
DUSTIN HEINEMAN

Vice President
KENDRA KOEHLER

Secretary
BARB HUNTER

Treasurer
SUSIE COOPER

BOARD MEMBERS

MARCIA ASHLEY
MAGGIE BECKFORD

AMY HUSTON
BETSY McCANN

DONA MITCHELL
BILL SLOUGH

GEORGE STOIBER
JUNE STOIBER

BETSY VOLCHKO

Monthly Meetings

*The Museum Board
will now meet monthly.
We'll stay informed
throughout the winter
on Zoom.*



LEIHS 2026 Calendar of Programs & Events

Not all programs, events and fundraisers fit in the LEIHS Newsletter. Visit leihs.org for our most complete Calendar of Events. Several events are awaiting confirmation before listing. Times and schedule may change.

Friday, May 1	LEIHS Museum & Resale Shop Open for Season. We're open daily, 11 am to 5 pm.
Tuesday, May 12	LEIHS's Capt. Andrew Hunker will attend the PIBCC Blessing of the Fleet.
Saturday, May 16	The Heritage Resale Shop is "Bargain City" during the PIBCC Island Wide Garage Sale. We're happy to accept donation of your leftover items.
Monday, May 25	Memorial Day – LEIHS Pioneers will lay a wreath at the base of the DeRivera Park Doughboy.
Sunday, June 7	"Day in the Life of a Lighthousekeeper" performed by storyteller Brian Ellis at the South Bass Island Lighthouse at 2 pm.
Saturday, June 13	LEIHS's Museum Booth at DeRivera Park during Founder's Day.
Sunday, June 14	Pioneer Cemetery Walk 4:00 focus is on Jose DeRivera.
Saturday, June 20	LEIHS will host its popular Silent Auction at Ohio's Island Wine Fest, hosted by Heineman Winery. The auction will be located adjacent to the Wine Tent. We'll also have our portable Museum Booth on site.
Sat., June 27	LEIHS Museum Booth in Pyrate Village on Saturday, June 27 at PIBCC Pyrate Fest.
Sunday, June 28	LEIHS Membership "Welcome Back Potluck & Membership Drive". Gather at LEIHS Museum for our Welcome Back Potluck. Please bring a favorite dish to share.
Sat., July 11	LEIHS Museum Booth heads to Middle Bass for the Lake Erie Islands Conservancy's Middle Bass Music Festival.
Saturday, Aug. 1	Ottawa County-America 250: Timeline Exhibit at LEIHS. Ottawa County's series of Historic Timeline Banners will be on display throughout the museum from August 1 through September 8.
Sunday, Aug 2	Island Pioneers will greet guests arriving to sign the Declaration of Independence as part of Ottawa County-America 250.



Celebrating the History of LEIHS

Continued from Page 4

Powered by Volunteers

LEIHS Museum began life as a volunteer driven non-profit. That idea was revived in 2024 when it was operated by volunteers and an intern we shared with another island non-profit. We returned to that operation model in October with an enthusiastic board of trustees eager to fill support positions in the operation. We have enjoyed an outpouring of volunteers for Fall events and for cleaning and extending our season into fall.

Heritage Resale Shop: Supporting Our Mission

A cornerstone of our fundraising efforts is the Heritage Resale Shop, located behind the museum. Islanders generously donate high-quality items, from antiques to household goods, which are then sold to benefit museum operations.

Volunteers are currently cleaning out and moving displays to prepare for a major renovation before we open on May 1. If you'd like to help, please contact Kendra.

Looking Ahead

As the Society approaches our 40th anniversary in 2026, LEIHS remains dedicated to its mission of preserving and educating the public about the history of the Lake Erie Islands. We invite everyone to join us on September 27, 2026, for our birthday celebration, and to participate in the many programs, events, and services that make our museum a vibrant part of the Put-in-Bay community.

Read More Details on LEIHS History @leihs.org

Using the meeting minutes from 1986, we're including more details about LEIHS's beginnings online. Visit us at leihs.org later this winter.