TWO SPECIAL WEEKEND PROGRAMS JANUARY 10-11 AT THE DOSSIN GREAT LAKES MUSEUM ON BELLE ISLE

DETROIT - The Detroit Historical Society is offering two great programs on the weekend of January 10 and 11 at the Dossin Great Lakes Museum on Belle Isle, featuring a preview of the upcoming Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival in Ann Arbor in March on Saturday and the latest installment of its monthly Film Series on Sunday.

On Saturday at 2 p.m., local historian and divemaster Tony Gramer presents “Tragedy Strikes in Seven Minutes: The Loss of the Steamer Fred McBrier” followed by diver Russ Haeberle presenting “Isle Royal: Lake Superior Wreck Divers Paradise.”

The 161 foot steamer Fred McBrier was built in 1881 in West Bay City, MI. On the night of October 3, 1890 the down bound Fred McBrier with a load of iron ore and towing the barges A. Stewart and J.B. Lozen was squarely hit amidships by the upper bound larger steamer Progress. Both steamers misunderstood signals as they passed that night; the McBrier went down in just seven minutes, approximately 10 miles west from old Mackinaw point in Lake Michigan. Gramer’s presentation will explore the remains of this beautiful shipwreck. This 30-minute HD video program is synchronized to music and employs live narration.

Gramer has been diving since 1977 and is a certified PADI divemaster. He is the president of Silent World Information Masters, Inc. (SWIM). He is presently on the Dossin Maritime Group board and divemaster of the Dossin Great Lakes Museum. His images have taken best in show and first place in photo contests throughout the United States, Grand Cayman and Mexico.

Isle Royal became a national park in 1940 and is actually a group of 450 islands in Northern Lake Superior. The main group of islands is 45 miles long and nine miles wide and was formed over several million years with a series of volcanic eruptions. The
volcanic dome rose and collapsed numerous times, forming the layers of rock that can be seen in some areas of the islands. Many of the islands are long narrow slivers of jagged rock rising up out of the dark depths of Lake Superior, some lurking just a few feet under the surface, forming dangerous reefs -- the reason so many ships sank around the island. Haeberle’s presentation documents dives of the following shipwrecks: the America, the Chester A. Congdon, the Kamloops and the Emperor.

Russ Haeberle started diving in 1971 and joined the Ford Seahorses in 1990. An avid shipwreck diver, Haeberle had been a past chairman of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival and president of the Ford Seahorses.

For more information on the Great Lakes Shipwreck Festival on Saturday, March 7 at Washtenaw Community College, visit shipwreckfestival.us.

On Sunday, the Film Series screens “Detroit: Remember When” at 2 p.m., and admission is free.

From Briggs Stadium to Bob-lo, Black Bottom to the Boulevard, “Detroit: Remember When” captures the true spirit of Detroit. This documentary, produced by Detroit Public Television, reveals Detroit’s history, explores its musical legacy, and examines its architecture, politics, sports legends and landmarks. The film also looks back at summer days at Belle Isle, Vernor’s soda fountain, Jefferson Beach and Edgewater Park. Runtime is 44 minutes.

The Society’s Film Series at the Dossin continues its monthly film series in 2015, with screenings of, “Detroit: Remember When II” on February 8, taking a trip back to Detroit’s past and how it influenced the city’s future. “More Bob-lo Memories” on March 8 takes a trip to the famous Bob-Lo Island Amusement Park, showcasing the summer days in Detroit.

The Dossin Great Lakes Museum, located at 100 Strand Drive on Belle Isle, is open Saturdays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free for all, all the time. Permanent exhibits include Built by the River in the John A. and Marlene L. Boll Foundation Gallery, the Miss Pepsi vintage 1950s championship hydroplane, the Gothic Room from the City of Detroit III, a bow anchor from the S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald, the pilothouse from the Great Lakes freighter S.S. William Clay Ford in the Wayne and Joan Webber Foundation Gallery, and one of the largest known collections of scale model ships in the world.

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