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Mackinac State Historic Parks Hosting Special Events to Help Celebrate Mackinac Island Lilac Festival

MACKINAC ISLAND, MICH. — Mackinac State Historic Parks will host a number of activities at its sites on Mackinac Island in conjunction with the 75th annual Mackinac Island Lilac Festival, June 9-18.

To kick off the festivities for the week, the reigning Lilac Festival Queen, Clara Chambers, will fire the ceremonial opening cannon at Fort Mackinac on Friday morning, June 9.

“We are happy to join our partners on the island in kicking off our main season,” said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director. “We hope these special events and tours help highlight the great experiences found at Mackinac all summer.”

Starting Saturday, June 10 and running through June 18, admission to The Richard & Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, located in beautiful Marquette Park in front of Fort Mackinac, will be complimentary to all guests on Mackinac Island. Visitors are encouraged to explore *A Mackinac Day*, the juried exhibition located in the changing gallery on the second floor, and the new portraits of Arent and Rebecca DePeyster located on the main level of the museum.

Also throughout the festival, inside Fort Mackinac, the interpretive staff will feature an exclusive tour. At 1:00 p.m. join the staff as they bring guests out onto the porch of the Wood Quarters for a

discussion of the soldier's garden, what is now Marquette Park, home to the most famous of Mackinac's lilacs. General fort admission is required for this tour.

Additionally, Mackinac State Historic Parks is teaming up with the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau to give a visitor to fire the closing cannon of the day on Saturday, June 10, Friday, June 16, and Saturday, June 17. Visitors must be on the island to enter, and simply need to fill out a card at the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau booth on Main Street.

Other special events include:

- Saturday, June 10: a showing of *The Wizard of Oz* at dusk inside Fort Mackinac. This is a free event, open to all.
- Monday, June 12: Creating the Village of Mackinac Island tour, which will guide guests through downtown Mackinac Island, laying out how the Village of Mackinac came to be. This is a free event with donations welcome; tour starts at 5:30 p.m. at Winderemere Point. Tour led by MSHP Interpretation Coordinator Jack Swartzinski.
- Tuesday, June 13: Mackinac in the 1830s tour, where guests will experience a walking tour of downtown Mackinac Island discussing the community in the 1830s and highlighting the role various agencies had at the time; tour starts at 5:30 p.m. at The Richard & Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum. This is a free event, with donations welcome, led by MSHP Chief Curator Craig Wilson.
- Wednesday, June 14: Governor's Summer Residence tour, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.; Artist-in-Residence Workshop, Station 256 Conference Room, 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, June 17: Lilacs and Warblers Birding Adventure! This unique guided adventure will allow visitors to search for spring songbirds while walking among the thousands of fragrant lilac blossoms and up the hill into the park; tour starts at 9:00

a.m. at the Father Marquette Statue in Marquette Park. This is a free event, led by MSHP Park Naturalist Kyle Bagnall.

- Saturday, June 17: Guests will have a guided opportunity to explore Mackinac Island State Park's newest interpretive pathway, the Hardwood Nature Trail. Starting behind Fort Mackinac, guests will walk about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to a woodland loop, all the while looking for wildflowers, songbirds, and other wildlife. This is a free event, with donations welcome, led by MSHP Park Naturalist Kyle Bagnall. Begins at the Fort Mackinac Avenue of Flags at 1:00 p.m.

The world famous Lilac Festival Grand Parade concludes the celebration, on June 18.

Fort Mackinac interpreters will march in the parade, and a special cannon firing will kick it off at 4:00 p.m.

More information on the Lilac Festival can be found at mackinacisland.org.

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan's Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Historic Downtown Mackinac, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks' rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or online at www.mackinacparks.com.

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