

MIHPF

Annual Report 2023



Mare Island
Historic Park
Foundation

ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Supporters and Friends of the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation

As we embark on 2024, we want to take a moment and look back on progress, as well as the challenges, of 2023 in this annual report. While the immediate post-COVID years had a theme of “surviving”, we feel that in 2023 we have turned a corner in the direction of “thriving”.

The Foundation's Mission

To operate a museum to collect, preserve, and interpret the history of the Mare Island Naval Shipyard and related entities and to present exhibits and programs that explore, educate, and celebrate the diverse military and cultural aspects of the base.

Below are some highlights of our outreach and progress, many of which are detailed in the subsequent paragraphs of this report:

- **Mare Island History Night at the Ferry Taproom,**
- **Flyway Festival:** Open Chapel Hours & Booth
- **American Legion Presentation,** Mount Diablo Post 246
- **Speakers Series: Incredible Journey,** Dr. Rob Hoffman, Nuclear physicist, Lawrence Livermore National Labs
- **Wardroom USS Frank Cable MINS History Presentation**
- **Easter Chorale Concert:** First Annual
- **Cemetery Tour: ROTC Junior Fairfield**
- **Speakers Series: MINS Hospital Presentation,** Dr. Tom Snyder
- **Benecia Museum Speakers Series:** MINS History Presentation,
- **Mare Island Brewing: War Bond Beer Event,** MIHPF Presence
- **Memorial Day:** Navy League
- **Community Organization Presentations:** Vallejo Rotary Club, Visit Vallejo Installation Dinner, Leadership Vallejo Cohort, Solano Realtors Association
- **Speakers Series:** Shackleton's Voyage, Captain Scott Shackleton
- **Naval Order of San Francisco:** MINS History Presentation
- **Speakers Series:** Cryptology, Ralph Simpson, author of *Crypto Wars*
- **SOMIRA Charity Row Whaleboat Race to Napa:** Participated
- **Founders Day Weekend:** Speakers Series, *Standing Together* Panel, *Behind the Fences* Bus Tour, Library Dedication, and Founders Day Festival, September 14-16
- **Pedalfest:** Bike Tours of MINS
- **Mare Island Halloween Event:** Participated with a Beer Garden at the Admiral's Mansion
- **Vallejo Waterfront Weekend:** Bus Tours of MINS
- **Holiday Concerts:** Holiday Choral Extravaganza, Voena Children's Choir & Candlelight Christmas Concert





Financials

While in 2023 we again operated slightly in the red on an operational basis, we have narrowed the deficit compared to past years. On an ordinary/operating basis, we had \$89K total income from private events, Foundation events, merchandise and unrestricted donations on the year. We had offsetting operational expenditures of \$117K. This resulted in a \$28K deficit (loss) in 2023. On the balance-sheet, at the end of 2023, we held \$98K in our operational account.

At the same time, we have received a robust series of grants and awards towards specific projects which bolstered our bank accounts with restricted funds that will allow for some major projects over the next couple years. Chief among these is the Federal Grant of \$1.2MM towards the restoration of the Chapel and the Admirals Mansion, a \$7,500 grant from Preserving America Program for new audio equipment at the Chapel, and \$5,000 from the Native Sons of the Golden West towards finishing a kiosk for the sail of the USS Vallejo. Some of these funds have been received and spent, others have been received but not spent. And the largest Federal Grant will be received on a reimbursement basis as we work through that enormous project.

Grant Funded Renovation

Securing a \$1.2MM grant is no easy task, but who knew jumping through all the hoops to spend it could be equally challenging? As it is a Federal grant towards City-owned buildings that are historic landmarks, we have spent considerable time and energy navigating the layers of approvals for the planning of the renovation projects on the Admiral's Mansion and the Chapel. As of the writing of this report, we have worked through the City to finally award the design contract to Garvaglia Architects of San Francisco. 2024 will focus on project design, costing, planning, scoping, and permitting: there is a chance we could begin swinging hammers by winter. At current, we envision spending the money on new ADA bathrooms and refinished siding at the Chapel, and ADA bathroom and landscaping improvements at the Admiral's Mansion. \$1MM doesn't go as far as one thinks in this day and age, particularly in a government process.

Private Event Space Rental Program

A cornerstone of our financial success—and putting these incredible buildings to use—is our growing private event space rental program of St. Peter's Chapel and the Admiral's Mansion. We do so in conjunction with a commission-based professional event coordinator, Jen Mojica. This program not only provides unique venues for special occasions but also significantly contributes to our operational sustainability. We more than doubled our revenue from these events in 2023 vs 2022.

Robust Tour Program

Our commitment to education and engagement blossomed through the expansion of our public tour program. Our passionate docents walked our visitors through Mare Island Naval Shipyard's rich history. Tours more than doubled, with 103 in 2023 vs. 35 in 2022. We also hosted 24 larger group tours (>10pp) vs. 11 in 2022, which included 150 people for the USS Indianapolis Reunion tour of Mare Island and several high school groups.



Bus and Open Island Tours

In addition to our ongoing standard tour program, in 2023 we conducted three “bus” tours: one in conjunction with Founders Day and two as part of Waterfront Weekend. All three of these were sold out. We also held a free “Open Mare Island” Tour wherein the visitors received public could come to the Island to receive a map and walk from stop to stop where docents were present to elaborate on the history of specific sites. This was very well attended with more than 100 people touring the Island on that one day.

Speaker Series and Engagements

The Speaker Series program and various engagements became platforms for not just sharing history but sparking meaningful conversations with different community sectors. These initiatives transcend traditional museum experiences, creating a dynamic connection between the past and the present. We held four such presentations at the Chapel in 2023.

Concerts

St. Peter’s Chapel witnessed the resonance of music and holiday cheer through three different holiday concerts and two new summer concerts, providing our community with an extraordinary experience among the Chapel’s famous stained-glass windows. All three of the holiday concerts were sold out events.

PedalFest

A celebration of all things bicycle in late September on the Mare Island waterfront, we executed our fourth edition of the “Lap of the Shipyard”, drawing over 120 cyclists to follow a docent around the Island for a family-friendly history-filled tour of key historic sites.

Library Relocation

Moving our library to a new location and opening it to the public marked a significant step forward in restoring accessible historical resources for our community. This not only secured many of our key reference assets, but gave a gathering and research place to view them.

The “Museum”

Our physical museum at Building 46 remains closed after we were required to vacate in 2022 due to life safety and modernization improvements. Due to the costs to bring the building up to code being estimated at over \$20MM, and we are in search of another building elsewhere to house our collection. That said, we made great strides in 2023 in support of our argument that “the entire Island is a museum” with the tour program and outreach.

The Collection

Our artifact collection remains in Building 46 while we look for a new home. The Foundation-owned portion of the collection is all crated and cataloged. The Navy-owned artifacts remain out for review by the Navy when they visit in 2024. We are in active negotiations with the Navy about the future of those artifacts and hope to hold onto them for future display.



World War 2 Heritage City Application

Our collaborative effort with the City in applying for World War 2 Heritage City designation is a testament to our commitment to preserving and promoting the historical significance of Mare Island. Unfortunately, we have learned that Vallejo was not awarded the designation (it went to Richmond, CA), but the work done on the project was not for naught. We are looking to collaborate on a featured exhibit at the downtown Vallejo museum showcasing the City's application and all the history it celebrates.

Newspaper Digitization

Director Brendan Riley's efforts, in partnership with various history-minded organizations in the City, are bearing fruit. The digitization and searchability of Vallejo newspapers dating back to the mid-1960s will soon be a reality.

Partnerships and Collaborations

Of note, we continued our collaboration with Mare Island Co., the developer of the Island, with them providing critical landscaping services and have sponsoring key events, contributing to the showcasing of the Island's rich history. We worked with MICo on the very successful "Halloween Block Party" at the end of October. Also of note, we have been meeting with top City officials bi-weekly as we work through our Grant application and other issues.

Outreach

We conducted a number of presentations about the history of Mare Island and the mission of the Foundation to many community groups including: Naval Order of San Francisco, the Real Estate Association of Vallejo, Visit Vallejo, Leadership Vallejo, the Benicia Historical Museum, Yountville Veterans Home, Savage & Cooke Distillery Sales Team, and many more.

Marketing

Board member Dennis Kelly's dedication to posting intriguing stories of Mare Island history on social media has not only promoted our mission but has also engaged a broader audience in our historical narrative. Also, our commitment to outreach (and transparency) is reflected in the launch of our new website. We invite you to explore and share in the happenings and vision of the Mare Island Historic Park Foundation www.mihpf.org.

Membership

We continue to grow our membership program and benefits and are always grateful for members' support. This year we exceeded our 2023 goal to reach 100 members as we continue to bounce back from the impact of the loss of our museum and COVID.

Volunteers

Our Volunteer corp expanded in 2023, with growth mainly in our team of docents and event volunteers. All of our dedicated, volunteers allow MIHPF to offer our wide array of educational programs and help to maintain our facilities. They donate hundreds of hours to perform tasks including: guiding tours, managing events, staffing the library, maintaining the gardens, repairing and cleaning our facilities, and so much more.



Challenges

A year is never without its challenges. The lack of physical museum is disheartening. Related, the ongoing emergency repairs to our historic (old) facilities continue to be a serious drain of time and financial resources. We are still negotiating our future leases on the Chapel and Admiral's Mansion with the City of Vallejo; mostly we await the City's more comprehensive negotiation with Mare Island Co., the Island's developer, about the disposition of all the future-City-owned buildings on the Island. Finally, as noted earlier in this report, we operated operationally in the red again this year. While the loss is small enough that we have many years before we get into true financial trouble, it is never a good feeling to not be able to pay all your bills without dipping into the rainy-day fund.

Thank You for Your Support

Thank you for reading our annual report. This is submitted respectfully on behalf of the board of Directors, a dedicated group of leaders with various areas of expertise, who volunteer their time and knowledge to help assure the Foundation's ongoing operations and fulfillment of the Foundation's mission.

Board Members

Officers

- Kent Fortner – President
- Dennis Kelly – Vice President and External Affairs Committee Chair
- Bruce Christensen – Secretary and Governance Committee Chair
- Jaclyn Rosales – Treasurer

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- Lynn Anderson (Internal Affairs Committee Chair)
- Douglas Davis (Membership)
- Dennis Deisinger
- Lewis Fone
- Daniel Glaze
- Jim Reikowsky
- Brendan Riley
- Kenneth Wright

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P.O. Box 4540 | Vallejo, CA 94590
admin@MIHPF.org
707-557-4646
MIHPF.org