



# Museum building celebrated for century of service

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EAST LIVERPOOL - The sound of gentle harp music and the soft clink of a lid as it was lifted from a tray of food greeted visitors to the Museum of Ceramics on Sunday.

After hanging up their coats, the visitors gathered to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the dedication of the building, which was originally the East Liverpool Post Office.

The building was opened to the public on June 15, 1909, and served as the city post office until 1969, when it was purchased by the state of Ohio in the hope of developing a museum. In 1980, the building was reopened as the Museum of Ceramics.

From museum board members such as Dr. Marc Hoffrichter to city Mayor Jim Swoger, the building gradually filled with museum members and history aficionados, all of whom looked carefully at the latest exhibit, "Hidden Beauties," which showcases more than 100 never-before-displayed items as a part of the building's 100th anniversary.

Another guest to the museum for the celebration included Bill Purton of Struthers, the first maintenance supervisor of the building after it opened as the Museum of Ceramics.

Museum Director Sarah Vodrey welcomed the crowd and read a long list of groups and individuals who deserve praise for their help in organizing the celebration and keeping the museum alive.

Some of those mentioned were: The East Liverpool Motor Lodge, Free Methodist Church and The Carriage House, who provided some of the refreshments, chairs, and flowers for the celebration, respectively.

Vodrey also shared a commendation from the Ohio Senate, signed by Senate President Bill Harris and Assistant Minority Whip, Sen. Jason Wilson.

"We are certain that in the years to come, the East Liverpool Post Office Building and the Museum of Ceramics will continue to make positive contributions to the surrounding area while standing as an example of the rich heritage of bygone days," the senators stated in the commendation.

The celebration was comprised of several features, including a special video presentation in the theater, a video from the 1930s displaying the production of pottery at the Homer Laughlin China Co., and a display table of preserved documents relating to the building.

In addition to its other gift shop offerings, Vodrey said, the museum is now offering backstamp (the logo stamped on the bottoms of pottery and ceramic dishes) patches for embroidery on coats, bags, and other materials. There are currently 12 backstamps available, including Hall China. Vodrey stated that if a particular backstamp patch is not yet available, guests are welcome to request that it be made.

Vodrey also commented on her hopes for the future of the museum, stating that she would like the museum to reach 129 years of service to the city.

"Wouldn't it be great to have our descendants here in 100 years, celebrating 129 years of the Museum of Ceramics?" Vodrey asked the crowd. "It's so heartening to know that all of you care about the museum."

Vodrey added that the museum relies heavily on the loyal membership of its patrons to continue the tradition of excellence begun in 1980.

"That's what our city is, is tradition," Swoger commented later. "If we're anything, we're tradition, and that makes me very proud."

David H. Ellison of Cleveland, regional president of the Institute of Classical Architecture and Classical America, spoke to museum visitors about the lost art of classicism.

"We can do something about the history in our vicinities; we can do something to preserve it instead of having it taken away from us," he said.

Ellison gave a brief history of American architecture, from the style inspired by the Parisian L'Ecole de Beaux-Arts to the brutalism that dominated architecture following World War II.

"This building is actually a textbook example of the L'Ecole de Beaux-Arts," Ellison said, citing the intricately patterned marble flooring in the entryway. "This building happens to be one of the 'special' (built based on inspiration from the city) buildings, and we're really lucky to have it here in East Liverpool."

Ellison concluded his speech with a list of top events from the early 1900s, such as the expeditions to the North and South poles, the start of construction on the Panama Canal, and founding of the Navy base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

Ellison received his formal architectural training at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art and the Institute of Classical Architecture in New York City. In 1998, he formed the D.H. Ellison Company, which specializes in traditional architecture based on historical precedents.

Playing the harp was Allison Miller of Lisbon, who most recently performed at the Celtic Roots Festival in Ontario, Canada, and at the Welsh Society of America in Pittsburgh.

The Museum of Ceramics is open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday-Thursday.

For more information on the museum, including how to become a member, contact 330-386-6001 or visit [www.themuseumofceramics.org](http://www.themuseumofceramics.org)

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