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McClure Tour a Big Hit in Fairport More than a thousand flock to see Canal Schooner Replica Four Hour Fairport Event Out-Draws Two-Day Rochester Event

The Lois McClure, an 80 foot-long 1800's canal schooner replica, docked in Fairport on August 9th for tours from 3-7pm. Free and open to the public, 756 people boarded the vessel for the tour, surpassing the attendance numbers for the ship's two day Rochester stop. Many more reviewed the eleven historic display panels outlining the history of the canal and canal commerce. Tourists also enjoyed a free wine tasting held by Fairport's own Casa Larga Vineyards and free samples of various types of cheese provided by Cabot Creameries and McCadam Cheese.

The McClure, owned and operated by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, was in Fairport as part of its 2007 100-day Grand Canal Journey. "The enthusiasm of Fairport and its rich tradition of canal lore and history made it one of the best stops so far. We've heard more stories, from more people; I particularly enjoyed my Fairport Museum tour with Mattson Ewell," said Art Cohn, Executive Director of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. "The entire crew was buoyed by the visit."

A particularly poignant moment actually came several hours after the tour closed. A class of adult students, studying English as a second language, arrived at dockside late in the evening. While viewing the historic interpretive signage along side the vessel they struck up a conversation with the crew which culminated in a 30 minute impromptu lesson on maritime archeology, lead by Director Cohn, during which he used some of the ship's artifacts to communicate the universal nature and importance of submerged cultural resources. "It really was a very special moment," according to Cohn.

Visitors also perused gifts and memorabilia available for purchase at the ship's store, as well as free information and materials provided by the New York State Canal Corporation and Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor Commission.

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