

Looking Back

Compiled by Ryan Schlehuber

115 Years Ago Saturday, December 27, 1890

Today's snow storm gives us good sleighing and it looks as if it has come to stay.

Married - In this city (St. Ignace), on the 20 inst. [of the present month] at the residence of F. Gunther, by Justice Rutherford, Frederick Mahl, to Miss Annie Schlehuber, both of St. Ignace.

There is a law that goes in effect January 1st which requires all freight cars in this state to be provided with some sort of safety couplers, and Commissioner Rich has notified the companies about it.

Report of the city schools for the month closing December 19, 1890:

- Number enrolled: LaSalle, 272; Third Ward, 142; First Ward, 56.

- Average number of pupils in each room: LaSalle, 45; Third Ward, 41; First Ward, 25.5.

- Number of times teachers have been tardy: LaSalle, 0; Third Ward, 5; First Ward, 2.

Third Ward School Student Roster: 8th Grade - Fred Chapman, Edward Reavie, Fred Shaver; 7th Grade - Bert Wood; 6th Grade - Carrie Bacon, Ella McKay, Phillip Duval, Nettie Wood; 5th Grade - Nettie Burgess, Laura Faut, Albert Kruger, Fred Kruger; John McHugh; 4th Grade - Joe Archombeau, Henry Derusha, Lavina Derusha, May Faut, Peach McHugh, Leda Renaud, Maggie Reavie, Eve Tremblay, Selma Fallquest; 3rd Grade - Isaac Bouch, Walter

Fillus, Ralph Gleason, George Hammell, Arthur Hammell, Willie Kruger, Herbert Murray; 2nd Grade - Clara Hecke, Fred Pond, Elmer Hoy, Rose St. Onge; 1st Grade - Frank Amyott, Stella Derusha, Isaac Lajoie, Fred LaDuke, Louis Latoundresse, Earnest Murray, Henry Pond, Antoine Renaud, Mike Reagon, George Smith, Minia Renaud, Kate Smith, Harry Wood.

"Why is it," asked a citizen of a reporter on a city paper, "that newspapers make so many mis-statements?"

"Well," said the reporter of 20 years experience, "the papers have to tell, as most of the news, the stories that men like you tell them. It is a moral impossibility for nine out of 10 men to tell a thing as it really was. Some may tell it as it seemed to them, but what one man will swear to as the truth, the next will characterize it as a lie."

90 Years Ago Thursday, December 30, 1915

John Morrison of St. Ignace died Wednesday night. He was a veteran of the Civil War, having been a member of Company 3, 26th Massachusetts Infantry.

Thirteen-year-old Loretto Gallagher was attacked by vicious dogs Tuesday afternoon, bitten about the legs and had her clothes torn nearly off her. Her cries were overheard by people in the vicinity, who rescued her from the brutes. The little girl was coming down town when near Murray Brothers store on Goudreau alley, she was attacked by two dogs, who pulled her down when two

other canines joined in the fray.

After her rescue she was taken home and received medical treatment. Marshal McLean succeeded in rounding up three of the brutes, which he shot, and the fourth will meet a like fate if the officer can locate it.

The work of raising the hotel of Capt. W.P. Robertson at Mackinaw City was completed last week by Contractor Hudson of Cheboygan. The entire building was raised 10.5 feet, so as to permit another floor being built, which will make it a three-story hotel.

The captain will have it ready for the summer season of 1916 and will cater only to the first class trade. He is aiming to care for the auto trade that will go through Mackinaw City as the result of the auto road around the boundary of the lower peninsula.

In a fire that destroyed the residence of Gus Bazineau at Harrisonville, Mackinac Island, at an early hour Wednesday morning, Mr. Bazineau lost his life. Mrs. Bazineau succeeded in escaping from the building in her night clothes by jumping from the second story window.

Harrisonville has been the scene of a number of fires during the past two or three years, four residences having burned there.

Learning that a rink is established in St. Ignace, Alvin Hossack of Cedarville has issued a challenge to play a Snows team against any hockey septet this city can get together.

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Portage Twp. Approves Fire Truck Purchase

By Paul Gingras

The Portage Township board discussed maintenance of its emergency response, road matters, and how to maintain the cemetery without a sexton at its monthly meeting Tuesday, December 13.

New fire fighting equipment turned out to be significantly more expensive than anticipated, but the township board is going ahead and approving \$399,020 for two new fire trucks. These trucks are needed upgrades for the rural fire department.

They cost approximately \$43,520 more than expected, said Marcia McDonald, township clerk, but will not stress the township's budget.

Great Lakes Fire Equipment of Wisconsin sells the fire trucks. Board members signed a purchase agreement to buy one new fire truck, made by Danko Emergency Equipment Company, for \$170,994, and another, produced by Smeal Fire Apparatus Company, for \$219,026.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which will loan the township much of the money needed for the equipment, must still review the purchasing agreement, but Ms. McDonald said she anticipates that the USDA will approve transaction.

State legislation to ban "water skipping" at Portage Creek in Curtis may be in effect by the end of January, Ms. McDonald said. For years, snowmobilers have had fun crossing a portion of shallow, open water at Portage Creek, an inlet to South Manistique Lake. Snowmobilers cross the creek at

high speed during the winter, she said. It's a daredevil maneuver and some make it across, some don't.

Since some snowmobiles wind up in the water, the activity creates a pollution issue, giving the Department of Natural Resources authority in the matter.

Since 2004, there has been a lot of activity at night, often by a group which leaves litter and makes excessive noise, Ms. McDonald said.

In response to complaints, the township sent a letter to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) last March, asking that water skipping be prohibited at night. The DNR suggested the activity be banned at all times, but the township will resubmit its request for only a nighttime ban and believes the DNR will submit the matter to the legislature this winter.

Two Mackinac County Road Commission contracts were signed by the township. One is for continued work on East Sandtown Road. Every year, one mile of the road is improved by adding gravel using a combination of federal, state, county, and local funding. The improvement of Sandtown road is a federally approved program, in which Portage Township will contribute \$10,900.

Another major road improvement concerns the corner where Crisler Shores Road makes a nearly 90-degree turn onto County Road H-42, known locally as dead man's curve.

For years, Ms. McDonald said, this was a dangerous turn where serious potholes marred the road-

side. The corner was eventually improved, but the main road is still in need of an upgrade.

The work will be funded with matching money provided by the township, the County Board of Commissioners, and the Road Commission. Each entity will contribute \$10,000.

Crisler Shores is a dead end road. The township plans to build a turn-around at the end to make it easy for snowplows to maneuver.

At the meeting, board members passed a resolution to adopt the Mackinac County Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The plan lays out procedures for dealing with natural and man-made disasters. Every government entity in the county has to adopt it, Ms. McDonald said. It allows resources to be shared by townships, the county, and other organizations to make dealing with disasters quicker and easier.

Natural disaster mitigation procedures have been on the minds of the public lately, due to hurricanes Rita and Katrina in the southern United States, but in Garfield Township, a recent near-miss could have caused a man-made disaster, leading to speculation and concern among area residents.

A semi tractor trailer carrying a low level radioactive product through the Upper Peninsula from Canada went off the roadway into the ditch on M-117 in Mackinac County's Garfield Township (which borders Portage Township) Thursday, November 24. The tanker did not rupture, luckily, said Ms. McDonald.

"Had it leaked into the world as we know it here," she said, "we would have been dealing with a major cleanup."

Although no major cleanup was necessary, taking care of the accident took several days. M-117 had to be closed and reopened several times.

Ms. McDonald said the new hazard mitigation plan will aid responders in dealing with such accidents. It also has alerted officials to the potential for man-made disasters in the U.P.

"Until something like this happens, you don't realize how things like this are passing through your area," she said. The accident prompted her to trace the truck's path from Canada to its destination out west.

During the meeting, the township board eliminated the position of township Sexton and reassigned cemetery maintenance duties, including grave opening and closing, to the township maintenance department. Harold Reeves, former Portage Township sexton, resigned after a year and a half. Mr. Reeves was in the process of transferring cemetery data to a computer program, which kept track of who is buried where, as well as other record keeping.

Now, the clerk's office will be in charge of those duties, as well as selling lots and issuing deeds.

The new process of maintaining cemetery records is being modernized, said Ms. McDonald. For decades, cemetery information was placed on large window shades which were rolled up when not in use, like large scrolls. When needed, they were simply unrolled and read.

Now the information is being transferred onto a computer by Ms. McDonald.

"It's a big job," she said.

Mr. Reeves' computer, and the data on it, will now be more accessible to the public. The public can come to the township building, and Ms. McDonald will be able to help people look up information concerning their relatives quickly and easily.

Doing so was challenging before, she added. Locating burial certificates, discovering exactly who was buried where, and rooting out other information wasn't easy under the old categorization method.

It has been a personal project for Ms. McDonald to go through the old records and find out where individuals are buried, a project she described as difficult and sensitive.

"But cemeteries are for the living," she added. "People should be able to access this information." Tom Brown, who has been doing maintenance for the township for about two years, will be helping Ms. McDonald create the upgraded cemetery map.

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