

# Looking Back

\*Continued from page 29

through with it, were it not for the prompt action of the men in cutting the harness and letting the horse go. Of course, the horse was drowned. The three men, wet from head to foot, left the cutter and robes on the ice and walked to the city, arriving here nearer dead than alive from fatigue and the cold. Their clothing was frozen stiff. Mr. McKinney had his hands badly frost bitten. The accident was caused by their getting off the right road.

The contract for the Soo Canal lock has been awarded by Secretary of War Proctor to Hughes Bros. & Bangs of Rochester and Buffalo for \$1,258,500, which includes furnishing all the material and doing all the work in the construction of the new lock.

## 90 Years Ago

Thursday, February 17, 1916

The Dodge car that's running all the time - no waiting for repairs, no stops on the road - acknowledged today the best buy on the market for \$785. A carload of cars with a factory demonstrator will be at the Highstone Garage very soon.

The steamer *St. Marie*, on one of her trips across the straits last Thursday, carried a cargo of 14 cars of copper from the copper country mines, valued at \$160,000. This was the first copper shipped from the copper country for a week previous, all freight having been held up by the snow blockade. Copper is now quoted at 26.5 cents a pound, a record price.

There are no indications that the submission of a prohibition amendment at the November elections will eliminate the "wet" and "dry" elements in the state senatorial campaigns, says a dispatch from the state capitol. From both "wet" and "dry" districts come reports that the old battle lines will be applied to the senate as emphatically as if no state-wide amendment were to be considered.

*The Rambler column* - It is said that when the locomotive first put in an appearance at St. Ignace they created a genuine sensation all around; a great many people had never gazed on one before.

The above paragraph is taken from the *Cheboygan Democrat's* 35-years ago column. I met Capt. Frank D. Root, manager of the Great Lakes Towing Company's Soo office, on the train the other day and in the course of our conversation, he recalled the fact that it was while in command of the sailing vessel *Unadilla* he delivered at St. Ignace the first engines, Nos. 1 and 2, for the D.M. & M. Ry., now the South Shore, in St. Ignace. He said that the landing was made at an old dock (probably the Hombach dock) and that the vessel brought rails along for the purpose of unloading the engines. On the up trip the vessel encountered rough weather and was towed into this port by the *Saugatuck*. The *Unadilla*, while being sailed by Capt. Root, also brought all of the iron used in the construction of the Martel Furnace as well as other material for the plant.

## 50 Years Ago

Thursday, February 16, 1956

More than 30 fish shanties were endangered, three of them floated away, and crossing on the Island ice bridge was halted last week on account of shifting ice. While more than 100 shanties are still safe on the ice in the bay here, more than 30 broke loose on flows between the Merchandise and Chief's dock last week when the wheel of the *Chief Wawatam*, railway ferry, churned at the dock, loosening the ice. The three shanties that floated away were recovered along the beach in the first ward. The others were roped in or hauled to safety.

Ice shifted in the Straits last week and the icebreaker *Vacationland* was forced to cut several new channels as the flows

closed up the old ones.

The same mild spell caused breaks in the Island ice bridge and one airled was reported having gone through the ice near Mackinac Island. As a result, traffic on the ice came to almost a complete halt last week. However, autos are still being driven to the fish shanties on the bay here where the ice remains solid and upwards of 12 inches thick.

The pilot and two passengers walked away from the wreck when their plane crashed about a half mile west of the Mackinac County airport at 2 p.m. Friday afternoon. Pilot John Sturgeon had just left the airport bound for Mackinac Island when his plane lost altitude. He pancaked it in the trees west of the airport.

With him in the plane were Alan F. Sawyer, Mackinac Island resident park commissioner, and Mrs. Isabell Pero. The three made their way through the snowbound forest to the port. All were somewhat shaken up. Mrs. Pero was hospitalized for treatment of a minor arm injury.

## 35 Years Ago

Thursday, February 18, 1971

In the first running of the 50-mile stock race at the Allenville Fairgrounds, Stan Ellis of Trout Lake in an Arctic Cat 399 finished 100 laps on the half mile track to cop the first place trophy and a check for \$300. Other finishers were Larry Simmons of Cedarville, in second place, Mark Beaudoin of Trout Lake took third, and Halsey Weiss of Moran finished fourth.

The following are candidates for the Tri Centennial Queen contest: Barbara Ahlich, Ruth Brown, Rosemary Collins, Jean Cronin, Nina Everson, Darlene Giacherio, Denise Gierlaszynski, Pam Huskey, Kathy Kalbfleisch, Margaret LaChapelle, Sandy Lant, Pam Litzner, Kristeen McDonald, Diana Peters, Collette Phillips, Janice



The steamship *Vacationland* was built in 1952, purchased by the state for \$4,745,000, and became the "queen of the fleet" of the Michigan State Ferries. It was 360 feet in length and had 10,000 horsepower. After the Mackinac Bridge was completed in 1957, the *Vacationland* was sold and renamed many times. In December 1987, while being towed in a vicious storm to a scrapping company in China, she sank 100 miles off the coast of Astoria, Oregon. (Photograph courtesy of Ollie Boynton)

Steiner, Ruth Utter, Brenda Paquin.

## 15 Years Ago

Thursday, February 14, 1991

Thirty to 50 more fishers have been released between Trout Lake and Eckerman this winter as part of a continuing effort to restore the animals in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. The fisher is a dark-furred, medium-size member of the weasel family.

An outbreak of influenza that sidelined almost 60 of 190 Cedarville High School students by Thursday, February 7, forced the cancellation of school the next day.

Athletes of the week included Mackinaw City senior Zach Baker, who is averaging 13.4 points a game; Mackinac Island senior Chad Ruddle, one of the leading rebounders for the Lakers; Rudyard senior David Van Sloten, who scored a career-high 23 points against Central Algoma; and LaSalle freshman Brad Ledy, who

had a 28- and 24-point performance in his last two games.

Sophomore Tom Horn captured the 125-pound class title February 8 and 9 in Marquette to become the first St. Ignace wrestler to win an Upper Peninsula individual championship since Steve Frazier won consecutive titles in 1986 and 1987.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The St. Ignace News is seeking original prints or reprints of old photographs depicting areas in the Eastern Upper Peninsula to be scanned into its archives and for the Looking Back column. Photographs to be loaned or donated to the Michilimackinac Historical Society can also be dropped off at The St. Ignace News.

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## Looking Back: Johnny Brown's Letter From Vietnam

The following is an article published in *The St. Ignace News* February 11, 1971, about *Johnny Brown* of St. Ignace being wounded in Vietnam while serving in the Marine Corps. Mr. Brown, a 1969 graduate and star football player for LaSalle High School, still resides in St. Ignace.

On February 10, Mrs. Claude Brown opened a letter from her son, Johnny, anxious to hear how he was, and she read...

"Hi, Mom - It happened to me and I am in 1st Med."

Mrs. Brown had had no official word, and still hasn't. Because of his concern for his mother, and knowing what she went through just a couple years ago when his older brother, Ken, was hit in Vietnam, Johnny wrote the scrawly letter while still dazed and half-sedated in a field hospital.

"Last night we got hit pretty hard with B40 rockets and a lot of AK 47. I was on watch and I saw two V.C.'s and I opened up on them. They threw a bomb. After we were hit, we started running and we made it to a school house. Leaving the school, we had to run in an open area. I had the radio on my back and the guy ahead of me dropped some flares. I stopped to pick them up and I got shot in the leg. The Doc said it wasn't too bad and that I will be coming home in awhile, I hope.

"That's all for now, so don't worry, Mom, it's not that bad."



Johnny Brown

He signed his barely legible letter with love, and in the lower corner, he scribbled, "Say prayer for m---"

Mrs. Brown waited, counting the hours, until Saturday night, February 13, and she still hadn't received any notice of her son's condition. She contacted the Red Cross and found out that he had been evacuated to a hospital in Okinawa. She

placed a call with the overseas operator and after checking about six locations, the operator found Johnny at a U.S. Army medical ward in San Francisco.

They offered to bring a phone to his bedside and within about 20 minutes from the time she placed the call, she heard his voice. It was 10:30 p.m. Saturday here and 12:30 p.m. Sunday over there. Johnny said he barely remembered writing the letter. He said he'd been hit in the hip, shattering the bone and the corpsman stayed with him for three hours before they were able to move him. He found out that he'd been hit with a SKS shell. He is in traction now and expects to be in the San Francisco medical ward for two or three weeks before being transferred to a hospital in the States for surgery, which will probably entail a steel plate in his hip. The doctors said he might be left with a stiff hip the rest of his life.

Mrs. Brown said he sounded good - like himself - and she is so grateful to the overseas operator, who was such a help, and the per-



Vote

## Susan Tamlyn-Massaway For Mayor

### Experience:

- \* Working with our city government.
- \* Member of the Michigan Municipal League Elected Official's Academy.
- \* Involvement with community organizations.
- \* Owned a business in St. Ignace for 10 years.

### Understanding:

- \* Citizen of St. Ignace for over 45 years.
- \* Masters Degree in Public Administration.
- \* I will listen and be available to the citizens of St. Ignace.
- \* I have the time and the energy needed to be your Mayor.



I Would appreciate your vote  
February 28

Paid for by the committee to elect Susan Tamlyn-Massaway for Mayor

sonnel in the hospital who made it possible for her to talk to Johnny. She feels better now, but of course, she still worries about possible nerve damage, and so many other things she doesn't know about yet.

St. Ignace is a small town and Johnny Brown is well known. Let's bombard that hospital in Okinawa with cards and well-wishes for Johnny so that he'll know we care.

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