

Cutter Mackinaw Will Rest at Mackinaw City

By Paul Gingras

The decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter *Mackinaw* will be berthed at the old railroad dock in Mackinaw City and opened to the

Last-Minute Deal for Shepler Dock May Save Ship From Scrap Yard

public as a floating maritime museum under a letter of understanding signed Tuesday, June 6.

The 61-year-old ship will be turned over as government surplus to the Icebreaker Mackinac Mar-

itime Museum (IMMM), which will lease the dock from owner Bill Shepler.

The last-minute deal to use the old rail dock may have saved it from being turned into scrap, because unless the vessel found a local home before it set sail Wednesday, June 21, the Coast Guard may have acted on a proposal to send it to the Coast Guard yards in Baltimore, Maryland, said Ensign Beth Newton, public affairs officer aboard the vessel.

The old *Mackinaw* will be decommissioned Saturday, June

10, in Cheboygan and replaced by a newer ship, to be commissioned with the same name later that day.

The IMMM was organized as a nonprofit to secure the old ice-breaker as a museum in the Cheboygan River, but fell short of raising the needed money to keep it there.

"We would need \$3 million for a land purchase, electric lines, and other utilities," said IMMM President Michelle Hill.

IMMM then turned its attention to the old state ferry dock in Mackinaw City, but DNR Press Secre-

tary Mary Detloff said the state-owned harbor there is still undergoing major renovations and could only allow moorage for a maximum of three to five years.

Further complicating the *Mackinac* moorage, she said, "Several cruise ship companies have approached the State Waterways Commission and said they would like to dock boats there." The site where the IMMM wanted to dock the *Mackinaw* is in the same place where the state is trying to develop space for cruise ships.

State harbor planner Bill Bolk

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Mackinac Island Lilac Festival Begins Fri.



Lilac Queen Blisse Beardsley and Phil Porter, director of Mackinac State Historic Parks, open Fort Mackinac for the season Friday, May 5. Miss Beardsley will officially be crowned Lilac Queen this Friday, June 9, at the 57th annual Lilac Festival.

Mackinac Island's 57th annual Lilac Festival gets underway Friday, June 9, just as lilacs are bursting into full bloom. The 10-day schedule of festivities culminates on Father's Day, Sunday, June 18, with the Lilac Parade.

The celebration blends the Island's many varieties of lilacs

and distinctive equestrian culture with historic tours, samplings of food and accommodations, and family games.

"The festival celebrates its most recognized botanical symbol, the lilac, while emphasizing its international, cultural and historic appeal," said Mary McGuire

Slevin, executive director of the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau, which hosts the celebration. "We have added elements to this year's festival to keep repeat visitors intrigued while targeting botanical, equine, canine, culinary, and wine

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Planners: U.P. Needs Tourism 'Super Magnet'

By Karen Gould

"Why do we continue to persist in getting jobs related to the auto industry when we could get jobs in the tourism industry?" asked Dr. Don Holecek, the director of

Michigan State University's Tourism Center. His question was posed to 40 area chamber of commerce and tourism directors, business owners, and local planners who gathered at Kewadin Casino

Hotel in Sault Ste. Marie Thursday, June 1, for a Michigan Tourism Strategic Planning Project session. Thursday's session was the one of seven to be held around the state and the only one taking place in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. A session was held a week earlier in Iron Mountain.

Dr. Holecek is leading a team of state planners who are developing a tourism action plan to guide Michigan's tourism, now a \$17 billion industry. The plan will be to increase tourism, capture more tourism dollars, and establish Michigan as a tourism destination.

"We're creating the environment for the discussion and to identify their common goals," said Dr. Holecek of the tourism participants. "We're bringing the industry together to hammer out differences."

The plan is expected to be completed in one year at a cost of approximately \$400,000. Michigan State University (MSU) and Travel Michigan are jointly contributing \$200,000 in staff time and additional funds to the project. The rest of the tab is being picked up by businesses and tourism organizations and agencies.

"One of the things the U.P. probably needs is an identifiable attraction that people feel they must see, must do, and go back to," Dr. Holecek said after the meeting. That will involve the creation of "a super magnet that sucks people across the [Mackinac] Bridge."

Carol Eavou, vice president of

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Traffic Signs Cause Confusion at Busy Pedestrian Crosswalks

By Paul Gingras

Painted crosswalks across State Street in St. Ignace have long caused confusion among visitors, some of whom think they mean pedestrians have the right of way when crossing the street. They don't.

State Street is also I-75 Business Loop, a state trunkline down the city's main street. As such, motor vehicles have the right of way and pedestrians must wait for traffic to clear before crossing the road. But tourists from communities where crosswalks give pedestrians the right of way don't know this. They walk in front of traffic, sometimes with children in tow, or stop their cars suddenly when they see people at the curb.

Now, two bright yellow pedestrian crosswalk signs have been erected on State Street by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), one at the First National Bank across from the Arnold Dock and one at the corner of Fitch Street at the Y, where South State Street and US-2 split.

What do they mean? "They are standard signs advising motorists to be alert," said traffic and safety engineer Karrie

Abbitt of MDOT. "Traffic does not have to stop along the trunkline, but the signs should advise motorists that there could be people crossing in the area."

St. Ignace Police Chief Tim Matelski said the presence of the pedestrian crossing signs is not a signal for traffic to stop. Drivers must yield to pedestrians they encounter who are already in or near their lanes, he said, but the crosswalk does not mean that pedestrians on the side of the road can suddenly enter the street and expect traffic to stop.

There are no signs at the curb advising pedestrians to yield to motorists, however.

Mr. Matelski said people have expressed confusion about the crosswalks and acknowledged that the new pedestrian crossing signs may make matters more clouded.

"I hope this doesn't create confusion," he said, "but the State of Michigan puts those up along the I-75 trunkline. They are not a city project."

If there is any further confusion, Ms. Abbitt said, the crosswalk signs will be reviewed and

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Parents See Students Off on China Trip

Cedarville Band To Play in Beijing

By Amy Polk

Toting luggage and backpacks, the group of 40 smiling Cedarville High School band members boarded a bus bound for Detroit Metropolitan Airport Monday morning, June 5, on a trip that will eventually land them in China.

Cedarville musicians will be performing for other young musicians, and meeting with them in workshops in a program viewed by the Chinese government as an opportunity to raise the quality of some band programs in Shanghai and Beijing.

The trip cost more than \$100,000, which was raised with some help from the Chinese, an \$80,000 anonymous donation, and fundraisers held by the Les Cheneaux Music Boosters, which also contributed new uniforms. Adult chaperones and parents are paying for their own trip.

The new uniforms arrived a week before the school's May 30 band concert, said Music Director Alan Jacobus, and were purchased because the students and Boosters thought the band's formal black dresses and tuxedo pants and long sleeved shirts would be too warm. The new uniforms are khaki pants and short-sleeved, green, collared shirts embroidered with Cedarville High School Band, China Trip 2006

The group is expected to arrive in Beijing Wednesday, June 7. It will leave Shanghai Thursday, June 15 and arrive back in Detroit at 5:21 a.m. Friday morning, June 16.

Daily trip updates and photo-



Cedarville High band member Molly Thompson (left) embraces her mother, Pam, before boarding the charter bus to an airport in Detroit, and eventually to China.

graphs will be posted on the school's Web site (Google: Les Cheneaux Community Schools).

Over the course of the trip, the band will play 13 songs and musical pieces they have been rehearsing throughout the year. Mr. Jacobus said the students will play some sets that will last 40 to 45 minute, so the larger repertoire will give them more room and

variety so they don't have to play the same songs wherever they go.

The band will play mostly American music, because the Chinese requested it, but it will sprinkle some Chinese pieces into the performances.

The Cedarville students are also scheduled to present workshops and work with the Chinese

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Jerry Smith of Cedarville recites a blessing for the Cedarville High School band members and families before climbing the bus to leave Cedarville for China.