

With Clock Ticking, Board Settles on Mackinaw City as Port for Icebreaker Museum

*Continued from page 1

said the *Mackinaw* would also have been in the way of the area where the state intends to work on pilings set into wooden cribs which need to be placed deeper into the harbor. This work is scheduled to take place this summer.

Docking cruise ships would have an even bigger economic impact on Mackinaw City than the presence of the *Mackinaw*, said Ms. Detloff, so the new deal with Mr. Shepler, "allows us to continue to move forward to create space for cruise ships."

She wouldn't say which cruise lines the state is talking with.

As the clock ticked, and the *Mackinaw* crew prepared for new assignments, the IMMM board scrambled to find the vessel a home. If it didn't do so before the ship sailed June 21, it would lose the benefit of sailing the ship under its current crew, paid for by the Coast Guard, and probably face the high cost of having the *Mackinaw* towed, said Ens. Newton.

When Mr. Shepler agreed to let the group use the old rail dock, Tom Chastain, an IMMM trustee and a

third generation member of his family to join the Coast Guard and work on the ship (his uncle sailed the brand new ship to port in 1944), approached the Mackinaw City Village Council to get its blessing during its Thursday, June 1 meeting. Council welcomed the idea.

Tuesday, at 10 a.m., the letter of understanding between IMMM and Mr. Shepler was signed, together with the signature of local advocates Sandra Planisek, author of "Icebreaker Mackinaw: WAGB 83 1944-2006," and Dick Moehl, president of the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association.

Just days before, Commander Joe McGuinness, captain of the *Mackinaw*, informed his crew that they would be sailing to Mackinaw City, said Ens. Newton, not Baltimore. In response, the crew began to prepare for new assignments and clear the ship of electronic equipment, fuels, oils, and other materials the museum will not require.

The 2.5-hour cruise from Cheboygan to Mackinaw City on June 21 will be with great fanfare.

"It will be a celebration," Mr.



Several members of the U.S. Coast Guard look over the old Coast Guard Cutter *Mackinaw* as it makes a winter run near the Mackinaw Bridge. The vessel will be docked in Mackinaw City, following its final voyage from Cheboygan Wednesday, June 21. (Photograph courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard)

Shepler said. The ship's crew will make its final voyage on the vessel, riding with dignitaries, members of the public, and the press.

For a not-yet specified donation, interested parties can take part in the historic event by contacting Shepler's Mackinaw Island Ferry or Marilyn McFarland of the Mackinaw Area Visitors Bureau. The revenue will be used to benefit the museum. The cruise, Mr. Shepler said, will be complete with food, drink, live music, and return

transportation, Mr. Shepler said.

Ownership of the *Mackinaw* will be transferred to IMMM, Friday, June 30. The IMMM will lease Mr. Shepler's dock, and the group is preparing to use its \$200,000 budget for renovations, liability insurance, and other general expenses, Mr. Moehl said.

"We are very excited now," said Ms. Hill, the IMMM president, noting that Mr. Shepler's dock will need much less preparation than the Cheboygan site. Further, the Village of Mackinaw City is willing to

address zoning issues that will result from the proposed museum.

The museum ship's presence at the Shepler dock will pose no serious problems for the village, said Village Manager Jeff Lawson. The Village Council will need to grapple with making the ship a local business, a new prospect for the village that presents unique challenges. For example, parking will be required for the proposed museum, but the size of the required parking lot, under current zoning, is based on the amount of usable space in a "building." The ship will also have a great deal of space that cannot be used for the proposed museum.

In addition, Mr. Shepler will have to find space for boats currently utilizing the dock.

"None of these problems are insurmountable," said Village President Robert Heilman.

The IMMM's original request to use the state harbor in Mackinaw City is still scheduled for a vote of the Michigan Waterways Commission Friday, June 9, when it meets in St. Ignace at Little Bear East Conference Center. The meeting starts at 9 a.m.

Most parties interested in the *Mackinaw*, however, already have declared Mr. Shepler's agreement "a done deal."

"I expect the proposal to be withdrawn from the agenda," Ms. Detloff said Monday, June 5.

The city of St. Ignace also expressed interest in docking the *Mackinaw*, temporarily or permanently, said City Manager Eric Dodson, when it heard there was trouble finding a spot in Cheboygan. St. Ignace offered the use of Dock III in St. Ignace, or the Chief Dock, which would require significant upgrades. But at the news that the ship likely would land at Mackinaw City, Mr. Dodson said he is relieved that the ship will remain in the area.

"I'm glad to hear that it will find a home," he said.

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20085 E Paradise Pt Rd, DeTour, Awesome view on 550 ft of waterfrontage, beautiful private pointe, has septic system, drilled well. **MLS# 05-1081 \$375,000** Call Bob Smith! Must See!

000 S Lakeside Cedarville, Older cottage needs work--2 small bedrooms, 1 bath, formerly a resort. Sellers are building a new home and removing additional cottages. Great waterfront lot with a good view. Protected waterfront. **MLS# 05-602 \$175,000** Call Bob Smith! Must See!

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446 E Grove St., Option #1, Cedarville, 200 ft waterfrontage on Lake Huron. Close to downtown Cedarville. 3 cottages, 2 bedrooms and 1 bath each. Super cute. Knotty pine inside. Right on the shore. Wonderful view of boat traffic and sunsets. Extensive garage with workshop and storage building. **MLS# 06-243 \$395,000** Call Bob Smith! Must See!

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446 E Grove St., Option #2, Cedarville, 150 waterfrontage. Darling 3 bedroom cobblestone home on Cedarville Bay, extensive crib dock and 2 bedroom, really cute guest cottage. Attractive interiors and fantastic view of boats and sunsets. Bright sunroom. **MLS# 06-246 \$395,000** Call Bob Smith! Must See!

000 E Lakeside Rd Cedarville, Vacant Wooded Lot--479 x 191 ft. Located on black top county road. **MLS# 06-310 \$32,000** Call Bob Smith! Must See!

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