

Heavier Fish Hauled in at This Year's Les Cheneaux Salmon Derby

Koben Takes Top Prize With Biggest Fish in Four Years

By Amy Polk

Gary Koben Sr. of St. Martin's Point, Hessel, caught the largest fish in four years of the Islander Bar's Slammin' Salmon Derby, hauling in a 21.06-pound Chinook to win the contest Saturday, August 19. He said he caught the fish around 8:15 a.m. west of Goose Island near Hessel, using a fly and fish attractor bait. They lost at least two fish before catching one, Mr. Koben said, and his fishing partner, Stan Kownacki, also of St. Martin's, said, "It was a group effort, but it was Gary's fish."

Mr. Koben won the \$1,000 first place prize and will have his fish mounted by Matt Winberg, an employee of the Islander who has a taxidermy shop in Pickford and donated his services to support the tournament.

Mr. Kownacki won the raffle



Third and first place winners in the Fifth Annual Slammin' Salmon Derby in Hessel Saturday, August 19 include (from left) Ryan Wilson of Cedarville with his third place, 19.68-pound salmon, and Stan Kownacki and Gary Koben, with the first place, 21.06-pound fish.

drawing for a pendant that bears the tournament's Slammin' Salmon logo.

Bucking a trend of lighter, leaner salmon caught over the past

three years, all of the top seven fish weighed more than 16 pounds. By comparison, last year's first place fish, caught by Joe Lavender, weighed 16.28 pounds.

The second place winner of \$550 was a 20.74-pound salmon caught by Dick Lindstrom of Chippewa Lake and Dave Newth of Cadillac. Ryan Wilson of

Cedarville, on the Aaron Burrows boat, won \$450 for catching the third place salmon, weighing in at 19.68 pounds. The fourth place salmon, weighing 19.38 pounds, won \$350 for David Altmaier of Cedarville. Kris Arnold of Wayland received \$250 for the fifth place fish, which weighed 18.44 pounds. Norm Perkins of



Dick Lindstrom of Chippewa Lake (left) and Dave Newth of Cadillac hold the second place fish in the Islander's Slammin' Salmon Derby, a 20.74-pound Chinook.

Cedarville won the \$100 sixth place prize for a 17.76-pound salmon. The seventh place award of \$100 went to Jeff Ederly of Carp Lake for a 16.62-pound fish.

Phil Lavender of Topinabee won \$500 for the largest total weight of all the fish caught by participants on his boat. The combined total of six fish weighed in at 66.94 pounds.

Organizer Donna Olmstead said the 70 fish caught in the tournament this year weighed 666.38 pounds, an average of about 9.5 pounds each, whereas last year, 89 salmon entered in the tournament weighed 578.10 pounds, about 6.5 pounds each.

Thirty six boats were entered in this year's event.

Next year's Slammin' Salmon tournament will be Saturday, August 18.

Total weights of fish caught and weighed from other boats include: Norm Perkins - 51.66 pounds; Kris Arnold - 51.58 pounds; Gary Koben - 50.98 pounds; Pete Redmond - 45.94 pounds; Jimbo Brown - 43.50; Doug Blaskowski - 40.76; Harold Glauch - 38.86; Dick Lindstrom - 35.76; Trent Miller - 29.66; Brian Hilgendorf - 28.86; Bill Mudloff - 27.74; Hallums - 27.00; Gene Ratcliffe - 24.02; David Altmaier - 23.68; Mark Merchberger - 21.62; Bill Knaffle - 21.32; Aaron Burrows - 19.68, and Jeff Ederly - 16.62. One to six salmon were caught per boat.

Les Cheneaux Residents Hear Update

Better Fishing May Be Result of Cormorant Control Project

By Amy Polk

Cormorant control in the Les Cheneaux Islands seems to be working, according to Mike Hamburg of the Les Cheneaux Islands Association, before introducing his guest speaker at the Les Cheneaux Islands Association meeting Thursday, August 10.

"Last year I told you I thought the yellow perch numbers were improving. Well, all species of fish are being caught throughout the Les Cheneaux Islands. I even saw a gull this summer with an eight-inch sunfish," Mr. Hamburg said. "Thanks to the efforts of the USDA Wildlife Services, fishing has improved everywhere."

Pete Butchko of the United States Department of Agriculture estimates that control efforts have

helped reduce the number of nesting pairs of cormorants in the islands by 64 percent. He described the history of the cormorant control project and gave this year's progress report to Islands Association members.

"We're not near finished, yet," he said. "We've got a ways to go. We don't take all the credit for the nest numbers dropping, and we thank the DNR for how instrumental they've been in this project. Working together works, and we have a great partnership with the DNR."

He reminded Association members of the ephemeral status of the permit to kill cormorants, and cautioned the public against taking control into their own hands. The

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Moran Township Challenges St. Ignace City Hydrant Bill

By Paul Gingras

Prompted by complaints by the general public and trustee Mark Spencer, the Moran Township Board of Trustees voted not to pay an annual bill of \$9,800 to the St. Ignace Water Department for fire hydrant rental until the city fully explains what the township is getting for its money. The action was taken at the regular township meeting Wednesday, August 2.

Other bills from the Water Department, amounting to \$30,877.19, were paid in full.

For decades, the township has paid a monthly maintenance fee of \$200 for each fire hydrant, said Supervisor Jim Durm.

"It would be good for them to let us know how they arrive at the number," he suggested.

Citizens and Mr. Spencer questioned the validity of the bill because the township and the water department have a maintenance agreement, but annual bills for the hydrants do not fall under this agreement. They are part of a separate fire service contract that also includes city fire department operating expenses, building expenses and fire truck maintenance.

Prior to replacing portions of the US-2 water line in 2004, there were 15 hydrants in the township. Now, the township has 49 hydrants and the bill has become large enough to spark citizen complaints.

Mr. Durm said revenue from

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Churches Open St. Ignace Resale Store Monday

Lisa Penner (right) makes a purchase from manager Marcy Kammers at the St. Ignace Area Hope resale store during its opening day Monday, August 21. The store is part of a collaborative charity formed by local churches. The goal is to provide low cost, used clothing and household goods. The St. Ignace Area Hope building at 250 Ferry Lane will also house the St. Ignace Food Pantry and serve as a place for people with financial needs to seek assistance.

Gros Cap School Ratifies Teacher Contracts

By Paul Gingras

At its regular meeting, Monday, August 21, the Moran Township school board ratified two-year contracts for teachers and support staff, which included annual 2.3 percent raises for teachers and 1.5 percent raises for support staff. The board also redesigned the pay scale and limited the maximum pay that teachers with exceptional education and experience can make in the district.

To ensure that the district can afford to run Gros Cap's kindergarten-through-8th grade school in the future, said superintendent Bill Peltier, the board eliminated a portion of its old contract which detailed the pay scale for teachers with master's degrees plus 20 additional college credits. Had the board not done so, teachers with the highest level of experience (30 years or more) and master's degrees would have been entitled to more than \$60,000 a year, Mr. Peltier said, an amount the district could not afford.

There are three pay designations left. The first is for certified teachers with bachelor's degrees and no additional college credits. At Gros Cap, these teachers begin at \$34,250 and can work their way up to \$55,250 after 30 years. The second is for teachers with bachelor's degrees and 18 additional college credits, who begin at \$35,750 and can work their way up to \$56,750. The third is for teachers with master's degrees who begin at \$57,250 and can

work their way up to \$58,250. With the elimination of the master's-plus-20 credits designation, this becomes the new maximum teachers can make at Gros Cap.

Teacher's insurance coverage was also changed. For years, many teachers and support staff in Michigan had MESSA Super Care I. Now, teachers at Gros Cap will have MESSA Choices II.

The change means teachers and support staff will now pay higher co-pays for prescriptions, but the new insurance package is cheaper by \$2,000 per family, Mr. Peltier said. Super Care I, though widely considered excellent insurance, included a premium which cost \$18,000 a year for each family covered. Choices II costs \$16,000 a year. Formerly, each family paid \$1,200 of the \$2,000 difference, and the district paid \$800.

Staff members will also have to utilize doctors in a specific network. This should not present a problem, however, Mr. Peltier

said. Almost all doctors in Michigan, particularly in the Upper Peninsula, are part of the network, and important out-of-state services such as the Mayo Clinic also accept MESSA Choices II.

In other business, Gros Cap received two federal grants, a United States Department of Education Indian Education grant for \$8,542 and a Rural Education grant for \$15,364. The Indian Education grant will be used to buy teaching supplies to support the mathematics, social studies, and English curriculums, Mr. Peltier said. The Rural Education grant will be used to provide supplemental instruction for students.

Gros Cap's half-time special education teacher, Jonas Halonen, will provide the additional services. He will work an extra hour a day to provide one-on-one and group tutoring to students who need extra help the most, Mr. Peltier said.

St. Ignace Salmon Derby To Begin Sat.

A first prize of \$3,000 will be awarded for the heaviest salmon caught during the St. Ignace Salmon Derby Saturday, August 26, and Sunday, August 27.

This year, the top 30 heaviest individual fish also will earn anglers cash prizes and payouts will be awarded to the heaviest fish per boat.

Registration is \$175 per boat, made through the St. Ignace Chamber of Commerce at (800)

338-6660. Anglers can also register by calling 643-9219.

All anglers must be registered before the captains' meeting at the boat launch area on Hazelton Street at 7:30 p.m. Friday, August 25.

For marina reservations, call (800) 447-2757.

Fishing will be in lakes Michigan and Huron, though inclement weather may require a change in venue on derby days.

Beam Guides Boaters From Railroad Dock

Wawatam Lighthouse at the entrance to the St. Ignace Marina now is operational and is serving as an aid to navigation to boaters. The light was turned on Sunday, August 20, and will remain lit year-around, said Eugene Elmer, St. Ignace marina director.

The beacon projects 13.2 miles over Lake Huron with a white flashing light at a 152-degree arch.

The light also can be seen on land, which was not anticipated, though Mr. Elmer refers to the unexpected development as a positive effect. The land-visible light now allows residents and visitors to see that the lighthouse is operational, he said.

Though blocked with an internal baffle to prevent land projection, the surprise flashback is a rebound from the glass windows that surround the light, said Mr. Elmer. He attributes the rebounding light similar to taking a flash picture through a window.

After the light was activated and the flashback effect was noticed, Mr. Elmer contacted nearby neighbors whose houses were in the line of light. He reported that residents were not bothered by the beam, also noting the rebounding light was not that bright.

The lighthouse, which stands at the end of the old Railroad Dock, is scheduled to be included in part of the city's boardwalk system and will appear on navigational charts next year.

Later this year, the city hopes to complete the Huron Boardwalk that now runs along the north side of the city along the water's edge to just south of the marina. The 1,000 foot addition to the boardwalk will lead out to the structure and include railings and lighting on the span. A fishing pier is planned on the south side of the walkway.

The lighthouse was named earlier this month after the former 338-foot railcar ferry Chief Wawatam, which loaded railroad cars at the dock to transport them between the Upper and Lower Peninsulas.

Bayside Live...Jelly Roll Blues Band To Play at St. Ignace Marina Thurs.



The Jelly Roll Blues Band will perform Thursday, August 24, at 7 p.m. at a Bayside Live! concert at the St. Ignace Marina. The concert is free of charge.

This northern Michigan favorite plays the blues, funk, rock, bluegrass, rhythm and blues, and smooth jazz and has been entertaining crowds for more than 20 years. Band members are pianist Craig Stadtmiller, drummer Bill Riesenbeck, lead guitarist and vocalist Johnny Storm, and bassist Bob Crossover. The band has released five albums and performs regularly in venues at Mackinac Island, Petoskey, Boyne City, and for the past 16 years has performed every summer Sunday evening at Legs Inn at Cross Village, where music fans travel great distances to catch the show.

The Locals on the Bay concert previously scheduled for Wednesday, August 23, featuring Sendhelp, has been cancelled. Locals on the Bay will resume Wednesday, August 30, at 7 p.m. with a performance by Simplified, with Chris Sheridan.