

# Snowbuddies, Clue Hunt, Race To Be Part of Cedarville Snowsfest Next Weekend

Snowbuddies are still available to anyone who wants to decorate and enter their contribution to a new Snowsfest community art project. Snowsfest is sponsored by the Les Cheneaux Chamber of Commerce, and will take place in Cedarville Friday, February 16, through Sunday, February 18.

Snowbuddies are wooden snowmen that can be painted or decorated and placed like a sign at homes and businesses. The Snowsfest committee is offering the opportunity to decorate them as an alternative to the traditional snow sculptures, since snow accumulation has not been reliable this year. Residents and business own-

ers can still build snow sculptures and decorate windows, and are encouraged to enter at least one of the three available contests.

Snowbuddies can be purchased for \$10 at the Les Cheneaux Welcome Center in Cedarville. Profits from the sale of Snowbuddies will help pay for Snowsfest activities. Snow statues, window decorations, and Snowbuddy entries must be registered at the Welcome Center if they are to be considered by judges in the contests.

Snowsfest entry buttons are also available now, at local businesses, and can be purchased for \$4 each. Proceeds from the buttons help cover the cost of activities and prizes over the weekend.

Snowsfest schedules are available at local businesses, and at the Welcome Center. More than 20 activities are being planned for the weekend, and *The St. Ignace News* will also run a complete schedule of events the week before

Snowsfest.

Volunteers are always needed, and can find out where they can help by calling the Welcome Center at (906) 484-3935.

For some of the weekend contests, participants are asked to register early to ensure space in the events and to get an early count, but people are always welcome to register at the events. Poker run registration will be at the Snowsfest tent at Cedarville Waterfront Park on Hodeck Street in Cedarville.

There are still a few spaces left for the craft show, which will be at Les Cheneaux Community Schools commons and cafeteria area Saturday, February 17. Artisans, craft makers, and organizations can register for a space by calling Cathy Hollowell at (906) 484-6821, or by sending e-mail to hollycat@cedarville.net. The craft show will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and exhibitors will set up their tables that morning.

Concessions will be served by the Trojan Booster Club at the school.

The second annual Snowshoe Hare Race will be Saturday, February 17. People of all ages and skill levels are invited to participate at their own pace. A course has not yet been determined, but the race is expected to start in Cedarville, and early registration is encouraged. Register by calling (906) 484-4157, or at the Snowsfest tent. Participants can walk, run, or jog, and should bring a pair of snowshoes. Use of a free pair of snowshoes on a first-come, first-serve basis by calling the number above.

The Les Cheneaux Sportsman's Club will again offer its clay pigeon shoot both Saturday and Sunday. Participants need only come to the Sportsman's Club House east of Cedarville to shoot.

Other activities planned for the weekend include a snowmobile ride and hot dog roast, blessing of the snowmobiles by Father

Sebastian Chacko of Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church in Hessel, barbecued food, children's games, a cross-country ski tour, and cardboard sled races.

The cardboard sled races will be Sunday, February 18, and participants should register by calling the Welcome Center or (906) 484-5001. Sleds can be made of plastic or cardboard, and should be covered with cardboard to form vehicles, animals, or anything representing Snowsfest's theme, "Winter Time Fun." Participants

are welcome to decorate and bring a cardboard box as their entry for a prize in the "best all-cardboard" contest. Registration is \$2 per entry, or \$1 each for two or more participants from the same family. The Snowsfest committee needs help Friday, February 16, to help set up the tent area and for judging snow statues, Snowbuddies, and window decorations. People interested in helping Friday or with set-up or in judging should contact the Welcome Center.

## Garfield Twp. Eyes Future Marina Needs

### Lake Sediment Returns at Naubinway Facility

By Paul Gingras

The Garfield Township Board of Trustees is concerned about the return of drifting sediment into the Naubinway Marina, which was dredged in 2004 to re-open access to the facility. Prior to the dredging, boaters had been blocked from entering the area by sediment, called littoral or shore drift. The board is also keeping its eye on changes in fee structures for state-backed marinas. At its regular meeting Monday, January 14, members discussed state-mandated increases for slip rates in 2007, and a change in how the DNR will determine fees in 2008, which may allow the township to lower slip rates.

In 2006, United Design Associates (UDA) of Cheboygan conducted a study of littoral drift in Naubinway for the township board, as a follow-up to the dredging of the marina in 2004. The company determined that sediment is returning to the area and will again present a problem for boater access.

The board has not yet received word from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding what state engineers think about the report, or what the state will do to help the public facility, said Trustee Duncan MacArthur.

Owing to the geographical layout of the area, the marina is subject to waves that can reach five to six feet, under extreme conditions. This creates "an ongoing need for more site protection to reduce the site's exposure," reports UDA. Further, weather and geography "has considerable impact on the littoral drift at this site."

If improvements take place, there will be "a lot more interest in the marina," said Township Clerk Linda Bennett. "We'd love to get a grant," to make them, she added, but it is too far off to know if this is likely.

Paul Petersen, harbor program manager for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), said he is waiting for an analysis of the report by state engineers. When engineers make their recommendations, the department will decide what action the state will take, such as potentially funding the construction of wave deflectors.

UDA recommends three construction projects in the basin, notably a low rubble mound at the northwest side, which would "greatly reduce conditions being experienced from littoral drift," the report says. The recommended projects would also protect the site's mooring area by limiting the affects of waves and ice, making the area safer.

"This could also allow for increased craft mooring potential for this facility," UDA suggests.

Improvements to the facilities on land are also needed, such as upgrades to the sanitary drain field.

There is a sizable list of potential projects for boater access in Michigan, Mr. Petersen said, but the state cannot fund them all. Ultimately, by applying for grants, the township itself will be the force that drives future improvements, he said.

Improvements totaling more than \$2.5 million will be needed at the marina, Mrs. Bennett said. If the township does not receive grants, it will have to pay for re-dredging with local funding, an expensive endeavor for the municipality, she

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## Muskie Bay 'Shanty Town' Forming



The late arrival of winter and some cold nights have helped ice conditions in Muskie Bay in Cedarville, where an ice shanty village is forming over the frozen water. Brisk angling activity and traffic heading to the ice access at the end of Park Avenue were spotted Sunday, January 28, in the late afternoon.

## DNR: Clear Ice With Bluish Tint Is the Strongest

### Agency Shares Ice Safety Guidelines

Ice fishing and snowmobile enthusiasts should presume that ice on lakes and rivers is unsafe, and use extreme caution when traveling across lakes, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reported January 23 while issuing ice safety guidelines.

"Just because a lake or stream is frozen, doesn't mean the ice is safe," said Lieutenant Creig Grey, a marine safety and education supervisor for the DNR Law Enforcement Division.

The strength of ice cannot be determined by its appearance, its thickness, the temperature, or whether or not it is covered with snow, Mr. Grey said. New ice is generally much stronger than old ice, and a couple of inches of clear ice may be strong enough to support a person's weight, while a foot of old, air-bubbled ice will not.

"Clear ice that has a bluish tint is the strongest," Mr. Grey said. "Ice formed by melted and refrozen snow appears milky, and is very porous and very weak."

Ice covered by snow should always be presumed unsafe because snow acts like an insulating blanket and slows the freezing process. Ice under snow will be

thinner and weaker. A snowfall can warm up and melt existing ice.

If there is slush on the ice, stay off, Mr. Grey advises. Slush ice is only about half as strong as clear ice and indicates the ice is no longer freezing from the bottom.

Anglers should be especially cautious in areas where air temperatures have fluctuated in recent days, Mr. Grey said. Any newly formed ice that is created after a cold front moves through should be regarded with caution. A cold snap with very cold temperatures quickly weakens ice and can cause large cracks within half a day. A warm spell may take several days to weaken the ice.

When temperatures vary widely, causing the ice to thaw during the day and refreeze at night, the result is weak, "spongy," or honey-combed ice that is unsafe, he said.

The DNR does not recommend the standard "inch thickness" guide used by many anglers and snowmobilers to determine ice safety, because ice seldom forms at a uniform rate.

Three or four inches of ice on a shallow farm pond with no inlets or outlets, for example, cannot be compared to the same amount of ice formed over a river with strong current, or to ice covering the bays of the Great Lakes, where ice cover will always be more fragile,

Mr. Grey said.

Deep inland lakes take longer to freeze than shallow lakes. Ice cover on lakes with strong currents or chain-of-lakes systems is also more unpredictable.

"Always presume that no ice is safe," Mr. Grey said. "Do not venture out onto the ice unless you test the thickness and quality with a spud, needle bar, or an auger. Ice that is six or seven inches thick in one spot can be only two inches thick close by."

On the big lakes, conditions can change within just a few feet because of currents under the ice. Be especially careful around pressure cracks, Mr. Grey advised.

Ice near shore tends to be much weaker because of shifting, expansion, and heat from sunlight reflecting off the bottom. If there's ice on the lake, but water around the shoreline, proceed with caution.

Avoid areas with protruding logs, brush, plants, or docks. These structures can absorb heat from the sun, weakening the surrounding ice.

"I personally would never recommend that you take a car or truck onto the ice," Mr. Grey said. "But those are personal decisions. I would urge that anyone wear a life jacket when walking onto a frozen lake or river."

## Public To Judge Chili Entries at Mackinac Island

Hot and cold are the two main elements for fun in the 14th annual Mackinac Island Chili Cook-off and Postcard Poker Ski and Walk Rally Saturday, February 17.

A poker rally, in which participants can either cross-country ski or walk at their own pace to each designated stop, will begin at 9 a.m., with the starting point at Village Inn Restaurant on Hoban Street. The rally will take participants to many landmarks throughout the Island, including Arch Rock, Fort Holmes, Fort Mackinac, and Sugarloaf.

Registration for the poker rally will be at the Village Inn between 9 a.m. and noon. Prizes will be announced at 5 p.m.

The chili cook-off contest will be from noon until 4 p.m. Last year's winner, Ray Card, of Mackinac Island, said he is set to win it again as he boasts an improved chili recipe this year. Mr. Card beat out second-place finisher John Cadotte by only one vote, the closest contest since the cook-off began in 1993, according to the Village Inn. There were 11 entries last year.

The entries will be judged by the public.

People can enter their chili in the contest until 10 a.m. Saturday. Participants should make two to four gallons of chili for the contest.

To taste and judge at the all-

you-can-eat chili buffet, the fee is \$6 per person, with no charge for children ages 12 and younger. Hot cocoa and lemonade will be offered, as well.

Winners of the contest will be announced at 5 p.m.

Prizes include a two-night stay on the Island, dinner for two at the Village Inn, a trophy, and \$200 cash.

After the chili contest, a winter stone skipping contest may be held at the shore near the Village Inn. Competition will start out with participants digging through the snow to find a stone to throw.

To enter the chili cook-off contest, contact Peter Dewey at (906) 847-3542 or 643-9511.

## Softball Planned on Moran Bay

By Ryan Schlehuder

Twelve teams will take to the ice on Moran Bay Saturday, February 17, and Sunday, February 18, to compete in the third annual St. Ignace Snowball Softball Tournament.

Depending on the strength of the ice, games will be played on the bay or in the parking lot next to the Mackinac Grille Restaurant in St. Ignace. Either way, said event coordinator Mark Sposito, games will be played no matter what the weather is like.

"Last year we played in a white-out for most of the day, and it was really kind of fun," Mr. Sposito said.

Last year's winner, out of six teams, was Team Dixie from Mackinaw City, which will compete this year as well. Other non-local teams are coming from Levering and Alpena.

"It's the most fun of all the winter events we have here, I think," said Mr. Sposito, who admits he cannot wait to play to avenge his team's loss to the St. Ignace Fire Department.

"It was their first win in the tournament in the last two years!" he laughed. "I guarantee they will never win against us again. You can quote me on that."

The games are played by regu-

lar softball rules, with a few differences. For example, each team batting is allowed only three balls and two strikes instead of the usual four balls and three strikes. There is unlimited substitution and there is no guy-to-girl ratio rule.

Also, if games are played on the ice, unlimited home runs are allowed. If games are played in the parking lot, as they were last year, a team is allowed only three home runs per game, owing to the shortened field. Any home runs after three will only be awarded a single.

A trophy will be awarded to the winning team. Games will start at 10 a.m. each day.

Mr. Sposito said there is one more spot available for a team. Each team pays \$150 for entry into the tournament. The fee includes lunch for players for both days. To enter, call Mark Sposito at the Mackinac Grille at 643-7482.

A heated tent will be pitched on the ice for players and spectators.

Members of the St. Ignace Saints varsity baseball team, which will have a team in the tournament, will volunteer their time to call the games.

Some tournament proceeds will be donated to the St. Ignace Saints baseball team.

## Vintage Sleds To Be Focus of 15th Annual Naubinway Show

The 15th Annual Antique and Vintage Snowmobile Show in Naubinway begins Friday, February 16, and continues through Saturday evening, February 17.

Events start Friday at 9 a.m., when vintage sled owners take part in the Breakfast Ride, which begins in Naubinway and proceeds to the Garfield Township Hall in Engadine. Riders can enjoy a free breakfast, sponsored by the West Mackinac American Legion.

At 1 p.m., owners of antique, vintage, and newer sleds will participate in the Bonfire Ride, which begins in Naubinway and ends at

Pipeline Bridge. At the bridge, drivers will enjoy a bonfire and test their skills in the Hus-ski Hustle obstacle course.

Free registration for sled display takes place in Naubinway Saturday, at 9 a.m. From 10 a.m. through 3 p.m., the sleds will be displayed. From 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., there will be a banquet and drawings for prizes, hosted by the Naubinway/Engadine Merchants Association.

For more information, call Charlie or Marilyn Vallier at (906) 477-6192 or e-mail them at vallierc@pngusa.net.

## Fish Coop To Highlight Curtis Winter Carnival Feb. 16 - 18

The 13th Annual Curtis Winter Carnival is Friday, February 16, through Sunday, February 18.

Friday, from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m., the Curtis Volunteer Parents group will host a spaghetti dinner at the Portage Township Community Building.

Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.,

there will be a carnival on the ice. There will be an Ice Fishing Coop, a chili cook off, games, and food.

Sunday, from 8:30 a.m. until noon, the Manistique Lakes Lions Club will host an all-you-can-eat breakfast at the Community Building. The cost is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children.