

Fort de Buade To Be Focus of Public Hearing Monday

City, Historical Society Plan Details

By Ryan Schlehuder

While the purchase agreement for Fort de Buade Museum is still being drafted, Michilimackinac Historical Society and St. Ignace city officials are preparing a lease agreement for the museum opera-

tion.

A committee of city and historical society representatives met Monday, April 23, to hash out details of an agreement that will allow the nonprofit organization to operate the museum and its retail

store, called the Unique Shop.

Representing the city were the city attorney, Prentiss "Moie" Brown Jr., City Manager Eric Dodson, Mayor Paul Grondin, and Councilman Paul Fullerton. Two other committee members, Councilmen Willie LaLonde and Don Gustafson were absent. Represent-

ing the Historical Society were Judi Engle, the organization's president, and Tom Pfeiffelmann. Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians board member, Keith Massaway, was also present.

Besides the purchasing agreement, other issues that need to be completed are finalizing the transfer of property from the museum owners, the Benson family, and creating a business and marketing plan for the museum.

The tribe has offered to donate \$708,000 to the city over six years, to be used to purchase from the

Benson family the museum property and its contents and provide money to get the museum up and running.

Mr. Dodson told *The St. Ignace News* that the city will purchase the building and its contents, including museum artifacts, for \$500,000.

Council will decide whether to accept the purchase agreement after a public hearing scheduled for Monday, May 7, at 7 p.m. at City Hall.

"Basically, the city will own the real estate and artifacts and I

assume the historical society will market it," said Mr. Brown. "The city would be the boss."

Mr. Massaway and Ms. Engle asked that the city allow the historical society to operate the museum and the store independently.

"A mutual type of thing would work, no problem, but the city dictating how to run it, I don't think that kind of process will work," said Mr. Massaway.

"I don't want to be in a situation where the city can just step in and

*Please turn to page 12

Submerged Car Pulled From Lake Huron

Police Seek Owner of Red '70s Wagon

By Ryan Schlehuder

A late-1970s red Pontiac Catalina wagon was pulled from the bottom of Lake Huron near the U.S. Coast Guard station in St. Ignace Wednesday, April 25. It was empty, however, police are still investigating how the car got there and who the owner may be. The license plate was from 1982.

Michigan State Police divers discovered the car in 40 feet of water at the head of the Coast Guard pier during a routine training exercise March 27. They waited until ice had cleared before pulling the car out last Wednesday.

An attempt to identify the owner of the license plate yielded no answers, as the state's records are kept only 10 years. St. Ignace City Police Chief Tim Matelski said he will attempt to trace the car by its vehicle identification number.

Police believe the car may have been driven or pushed off the pier, or it may have broken through the

ice during winter.

There is one missing person, a

*Please turn to page 13



From 550 feet above the Straits of Mackinac, ironworkers built a catwalk that swooped down to approximately 200 feet above the water. With Mackinac Island in the background, ironworkers focus on building the catwalk, which was used in the construction of the two main support cables for the Mackinac Bridge. Since the cables weighed 12,500 tons and could not be lifted into place, they were assembled on-site. Each cable consisted of 12,580 wires and each wire was approximately the diameter of a pencil. (Photograph courtesy of Mackinac Bridge Authority)

Artist Wants To Capture Spirit of Bridge Ironworkers With Memorial Sculpture

Will Be Dedicated July 28 at St. Ignace

By Karen Gould

Janice Trimpe says she's been called the "common man's artist" because she sculpts everyday people. This winter, however, she is creating a sculpture of a Mackinac Bridge ironworker, a subject far from common.

These were men who labored for three years, working at heights up to 552 feet above the Straits of Mackinac, in good weather and bad, and almost always in windy conditions. Five workers died while building the structure in the 1950s.

Mrs. Trimpe's sculpture will become a memorial to the ironworkers who built the Mackinac Bridge, to be dedicated Saturday, July 28, at Bridge View Park in St. Ignace during the 50th anniversary celebration of the opening of the bridge.

The sculpture is a composite of a typical ironworker, said the Grosse Pointe Park artist, typical of the men who began building the Mackinac Bridge May 7, 1954, nearly 53 years ago.

"Everything is authentic," said Mrs. Trimpe, who has consulted with ironworkers on the clothing, work boots, tools, and the posture of the men. She made the clothing look like layered shirts, which were worn to keep warm. She replicated the gloves worn by the workers, using an original pair as a model.

The sculpture is a composite representing those who drove the rivets and tightened the bolts, and those who worked reinforcing the concrete. The workers were strong, agile, and had a great sense of balance, which she has tried to portray in the sculpture. The men often wore two tool belts, said Mrs. Trimpe, and they carried with them wrenches, hammers, picks, bags of bolts, and rope.

"It was very cold when they were up on the bridge," she said. "They wore overalls pulled way

up so they wouldn't trip."

Mrs. Trimpe has designed the ironworker with his feet pointed slightly inward, as they would be for walking on one of the bridge's steel beams. Creating historic accuracy in these details would be easily overlooked by most people, she said, other than an ironworker.

She works in her 2,000-square-foot studio, about two blocks from her house. To accommodate her work, the building has 17-foot tall ceilings.

When completed, the bronze

sculpture will stand on a beam, which will be set on a marble base. A plaque will be attached to the base to honor ironworkers and the five men who died. They included three ironworkers, Albert Abbott of St. Ignace, Jack Baker of Pagosa Springs, Colorado, and Robert Koppen of Plymouth, laborer James LeSarge, and diver Frank Pepper.

The sculpted ironworker will stand more than six feet tall, but when she begins the sculpting

*Please turn to page 12



Artist Janice Trimpe puts the finishing touches on her sculpture. When finished, the bronze work will stand atop a beam on a marble base to memorialize the men who helped construct the Mackinac Bridge. The statue will be dedicated Saturday, July 28, in Bridge View Park at St. Ignace. (Photograph by Rogers Foster)



Police and local residents inspect the car after it was towed to shore. Nothing was found inside that could identify its owner. Pictured are (from left) City Chief Police Tim Matelski, Officer Mark Wilk, Mayor Paul Grondin, city worker Dennis Sorenson, and Lance DeKeyser of George's Body Shop. Behind Mr. DeKeyser is City Councilman Paul Fullerton.



A late 1970s model Pontiac Catalina wagon, covered in zebra mussels, emerges from the water. Michigan State Police divers spent hours lifting the car from 40 feet of water near the St. Ignace Coast Guard station pier and towing it to the nearby public access boat ramp Wednesday, April 25. Police believe the car may have been underwater since 1982, as its license plate sticker from that year is still attached. Police are still searching for answers about who it belongs to and how it got there. Police were assisted by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Candidates, Millage Requests on Ballot Tues.

Voters will determine school board candidates, City of Mackinac Island officials, school propositions, and one township proposition as polls in the county will be open Tuesday, May 8, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Voters will also be asked to consider an increase of 0.75 mills for three years to fund special education services through the Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School District.

Election issues and candidate interviews were reported in *The St. Ignace News* Thursday, April 26.

School districts seeking operational millage renewals are Gros Cap School in Moran Township, Les Cheneaux Community Schools, DeTour Area Schools, and Pickford Public Schools. Engadine Consolidated Schools will seek one mill for two years to develop a site improvement fund.

Hendricks Township will seek 2.5 mills for five years to purchase a firetruck and rescue equipment.

Voters on Mackinac Island will choose candidates to fill the posi-

tions of mayor, clerk, treasurer, City Council, assessor, and supervisor.

School board candidates will be

on the ballot in several districts. At St. Ignace Area Schools, Kathy

*Please turn to page 13

Commissioners at Odds Over Road Work as Funds Dwindle

By Karen Gould

Clearing and restoration work ordered by Road Commission Chairman Frank Luepnitz on a 20-acre parcel of land on Brevort Lake Road is inappropriate, says a fellow commissioner, and has raised concerns that the project could hasten the depletion of funds used for summer maintenance work in the county.

The work is taking place at a Road Commission staging site, at the intersection of Crystal Road and Brevort Lake Road, which is used to store materials and equipment during road projects. Site restoration, ditch reshaping, tree and brush clearing, and road safety

work was ordered last week by the chairman without a board vote, and carried out by the commission manager.

The project is being discussed by residents in and out of the area. Mr. Luepnitz told *The St. Ignace News* he ordered the work, in part, because the Road Commission had promised Moran Township it would clean up the area a few years ago when a Brevort Lake Road project ended, which it never did, and, in part, to offer training to road crews.

In addition to land restoration, the project also includes tree and brush removal to improve vision

*Please turn to page 12