

The St. Ignace News

Clydesdales Are Big Hit During Week-long Tour in Straits of Mackinac

By Amy Polk

The presence of the world-famous Budweiser Clydesdales team drew surprisingly large crowds in St. Ignace and Cedarville last week, from the arrival of the horses in St. Ignace Monday, July 23, through their final day in the area Sunday, July 29.

The public response to Anheuser-Busch's trademark horse and beer wagon show was better than organizers hoped when they first conceived the idea of bringing the team to the gala Mackinac Bridge 50th anniversary celebration and parade. Parade coordinator Anne Ottaway of Cedarville made the initial contact with Anheuser-Busch, and Griffin Beverage of St. Ignace scheduled site visits and parades in St. Ignace, Mackinac Island, and Cedarville.

"The response has been nothing but positive," said Mike Kamyszek, facility manager of Griffin Beverage, the local Anheuser-Busch distributor. "There has been a steady flow of people each day they've been at Little Bear. They're just such large, majestic animals, and there aren't many opportunities for people here to see them."

It was the first time the Clydesdales came to Cedarville, and the second time since 1984 they visited St. Ignace. Griffin Beverage coordinated a visit to Mackinac Island in 2003 in addition to last Tuesday's parade through the island's downtown area.

People started lining up Monday outside Little Bear East Arena and Community Center, where the horses were stabled inside and available for limited public viewing. The chance to see the impeccably maintained horses in their regalia, pulling an antique beer wagon, came at parades scheduled around the area the week they were here. Wednesday, July 25, spectators flocked to State Street in downtown St. Ignace to watch the horses deliver ceremonial cases of beer to Driftwood Sports Bar, B.C. Pizza, Galley Restaurant, Marina Pub, McGregor Oil, State Street Village



Clydesdales Supervisor Pete Petersen (left) pats Otis, the Dalmation dog seated between himself and Nick Margeson, while stopped at Ang-Gio's during the team's visit to Cedarville Thursday, July 26.

Inn, and Mackinac Grille. Friday night, the team paraded from Kewadin Shores Casino in St. Ignace to Mid-Jim and Little Bob's New Frontier restaurant, then back again to the Mackinac Bridge reception and banquet at the casino.

In Cedarville Thursday, July 26, hundreds of people lined the streets along the team's parade route. People could be overheard reminiscing about the last time they saw the Clydesdales, or the years they spent watching commercials featuring the horse team parading across the television screen. Spectators cheered and clapped for the team as they left each business where a ceremonial case of beer was delivered. People posed in front of the team to have their photographs taken with the team and handlers.

Cindy Gough, one of the owners of Cindy's Riding Stable and Jack's Livery on Mackinac Island, brought a stuffed Clydesdale to the Cedarville event and had it signed by the drivers. The event was significant to the longtime horse lover

who has worked with horses her entire life, and Mrs. Gough bought the only stuffed Clydesdale she could find in Cedarville at Arfstrom Pharmacy.

It was all part of the carnival-like atmosphere that swept the town, drawing out local residents and summer people of all ages, as well as residents from neighboring towns. People lined up along the downtown area streets in Cedarville, including M-134, where the horses walked their longest route, about a mile west of the corner of M-129 and M-134. Approximately 100 people waited at that corner in front of Cedarville Foods and in the store's parking lot for the return of the hitch. The three semi-trucks that carried the team and its handlers from St. Ignace parked at the grocery store's lot before they were hitched to deliver cases to Bumpa's Bar, Cattail's Cove, Pammi's Restaurant, Ang-Gio's Restaurant, Cedar Pantry, and Cedarville Foods.

"That was quite the crowd," said Clydesdale supervisor Pete



Michelle Sheckler of Cedarville (left) served "scoop duty" with Todd St. Andrew of Griffin Beverage of St. Ignace (not pictured) during the Budweiser Clydesdale team's visit to Cedarville Thursday, July 26. The two were in charge of cleaning up behind the team as they paraded down the streets of Cedarville. Standing beside her is Cindy Gough, also of Cedarville, who had the hitch drivers sign a toy Clydesdale she bought in town to commemorate the event.

Petersen of the Cedarville parade. "For a small town and just us, that was a pretty large turn-out."

Both Mr. Kamyszek and Ms. Ottaway were pleasantly surprised by the number of people who turned out in Cedarville, and heard many calling the visit a "historic event."

"Bringing those horses there – that was something I really wanted

to do for the community of Cedarville," Mr. Kamyszek said.

Although area residents are familiar with the draft horses that participate in horse pulls, and work and live in the rural areas of Pickford, Stalwart, DeTour, Kinross, and Sault Ste. Marie, Clydesdales are not a common sight in the Eastern Upper Peninsula.

The Clydesdale breed was brought to the United States in the mid-1800s by Canadians of Scottish descent. The breed originated in Scotland, and was appreciated for its ability to pull loads of more than one ton at the relatively quick walking speed of five miles per hour.

The Anheuser-Busch Clydes-

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Bridge Birthday Cake Tastes Good as It Looks



James Aslanian, along with Kevin Pavlina (not pictured) of Pavlina Cakes of Fenton, donated this 50th birthday cake replicating the Mackinac Bridge. The renowned chefs spent 55 hours designing and making the pastry, which was served Friday, July 27, at a banquet held in celebration of the bridge at Kewadin Shores Casino and Hotel in St. Ignace.

By Karen Gould

Renowned custom cake chefs Kevin Pavlina and James Aslanian of Pavlina Cakes of Fenton spent 55 hours making a 6 foot 10 inch long and 2.5 foot wide cake that replicated the Mackinac Bridge. It had towers, main cables, and aviation lights, although the aviation lights didn't make it to St. Ignace.

"I'm sure they're sitting on the table," said Mr. Aslanian, Friday, July 27, as guests were arriving for the sold-out banquet held in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the bridge.

When he realized the lights were left behind earlier that afternoon, Mr. Aslanian headed across the banquet room to the gift shop at the Kewadin Shores Casino and Hotel in St. Ignace. He didn't know what he was looking for, he said, but he was confident he would find it.

A few minutes later, he was back to work on the cake, adding four red Tic-Tac candies to the top of the towers replacing the aviation lights left behind at the company's kitchen.

That evening, the creativity of the two men, the likeness to the bridge, and the exacting details filled conversations from one banquet table to the next. Well aware of the challenge they faced, they knew the cake had to be spectacular.

"It had to be that grand and it had to have the candles," said Mr. Pavlina.

"The power of cake" is what he often mentions when talking about the important role a cake plays in

any event. "It's not just cake," he said. "It is such a vocal point. The right cake can inspire people and make people happy."

All the senses are used by guests when a cake is right, said Mr. Pavlina. "People want to touch, see, feel, and taste it," he

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EMS Runs Increase in Portage; New Twp. Budget Adopted

By Paul Gingras

Ambulance runs doubled in Portage Township for the month of June, compared to June 2006, reported Brad Kohvakka, captain of the local emergency medical service (EMS), at the Tuesday, July 10, board of trustees meeting. Having completed 19 runs in one month, the department has been busy, he said.

Mr. Kohvakka added that emergency medical technician Bobbie Willett, who has been taking residents' blood pressure readings twice per month at State Savings Bank, saw more clients in June than in recent months.

Mr. Kohvakka has completed a class certifying him to train ambu-

lance drivers. To teach classes, he has drawn \$500 from the ambulance fund for traffic cones and \$2,800 for a laptop computer and projector. The projector can be used for other township purposes, he noted.

EMS hopes Mr. Kohvakka's certification will attract new recruits. Prior to his certification, potential drivers had to travel long distances to attend training sessions, and Portage has had difficulty convincing certified trainers to come to the area.

Ambulance drivers must be re-certified every two years. Mr. Kohvakka's training allows him to do so, and he can certify new driv-

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Log Books Viewed at Bagley Book Signing



Twenty years ago, Jim Litzner (second from right) a Michigan Department of Transportation employee, discovered some of the original State Ferry log books while cleaning the attic of the MDOT garage on State Street in St. Ignace. "I just realized they had historical value," he said Wednesday, July 25. Despite attempts to convince anyone of their potential value, he was told to throw them away. He did not, and Wednesday he brought the historic record books to the St. Ignace Public Library to show them to author Les Bagley, who was at the library to sign copies of his new pictorial history book, "Images of America: Michigan State Ferries." Following Mr. Bagley's book signing, Kim Nowack, chief engineer for the Mackinac Bridge, gave a presentation and answered questions about the bridge's construction and present day operations. Checking out the log book from the ferry Straits of Mackinac, with a last log record of October 28, 1957, are (from left) Mr. Bagley, Mary Parviainen of St. Ignace, Mr. Litzner, and Ms. Nowack.