

# Mackinaw City Council Re-votes, Removes Two From Planning Commission

By Paul Gingras

The Mackinaw City Village Council reversed its November 15 decision to appoint Nancy Dean and Florence Tracy to the village planning commission, following debate on the subject at the Thursday, December 6, village council meeting. Council members said they re-voted to correct hasty decisions made in November, which they felt had not received sufficient forethought. Although membership on the planning commission has fallen to five of the usual nine, there are enough members to form a simple majority to vote, and expected zoning revisions, including changes to limit building sizes on South Huron Avenue, are expected to proceed, Village Manager Jeff Lawson told *The St. Ignace News*.

Citing dissatisfaction with Village President Ronald Wallin's method of nominating commission members, all council members

except Mr. Wallin voted to deny Ms. Dean and Mrs. Tracy seats on the commission. Mr. Wallin reiterated his desire to enable new, qualified people to serve on the commission.

The council also accepted the resignation of planning commission member Bill Pepler, re-appointed commissioners Robert Most and Jeff Hingston, and granted a seat to Paul Allers. The council denied a seat to Joan Leal. There are now four empty seats on the planning commission, which includes Robert Most, Jeff Hingston, Earl Taylor, Mary Clark,

and Paul Allers.

As president, Mr. Wallin makes planning commission nominations when terms expire or when members resign. The nominations are then accepted or rejected by the council.

A rift has developed between Mr. Wallin and council members on the subject. Trustees noted that they felt long-time commissioners should have been re-nominated, adding that former president Robert Heilman consulted with them regarding potential nominees, at least at one meeting before the names of potential members

were officially presented for a vote.

No council member made a motion to table the vote on the new members in November, which would have given the council as much time as necessary to decide whether to appoint his nominees, Mr. Wallin said.

Concerned that the decisions of the council and Mr. Wallin have created "an environment that encourages resignations," Trustee James Alford said, "It worries me that we are losing so many people with so much expertise in areas that the planning commission

needs."

Citing talks with commissioners who recently resigned, Planning Commission Chairman Mr. Most said former commissioners had expressed a variety of personal reasons for leaving.

"I do not think you should feel that you people are creating an atmosphere that is pushing people out," he said. "This does happen once in awhile."

The planning commission is responsible for guiding village developments by applying the local zoning ordinance and upholding building standards.

In the midst of shifting membership, the commission will continue to work on finalizing the village master plan, which broadly outlines the way the village would like to be developed in coming decades, Mr. Lawson told *The St. Ignace News*.

Changing membership means educating new commissioners on planning commission processes,

details of the master plan, and zoning issues, Mr. Lawson said. He assumes a full commission will be in place and trained prior to finishing the latest master plan draft, probably in two months, at which time the village will hold public meetings to ratify the document.

The master plan is used to help make zoning revisions, such as those required to address the controversial B2 Zoning District along South Huron Avenue. To protect the view of Lake Huron, Mr. Lawson reported that the planning commission is considering zoning changes to limit building sizes in the district. The commission also seeks to address building setbacks, parking lot sizes, the community's desire to require areas of grass, shrubs, and other "green space" on commercial property, and to ensure that there are access areas for emergency vehicles on the corridor.

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## 'Smoke' Rises on Bay as Temperatures Fall



**Bogey, the golden retriever of Billy Shepler of St. Ignace, stands next to the Shepler freight dock in St. Ignace Monday morning, December 10. In the background, evaporation fog, called "smoke" by locals, hangs over Moran Bay in the chilly air. It is caused by the cold air moving over the relatively warm water.**

## Tribal Election To Be in June Chairman, 7 Director Seats To Be Decided

Campaigns for seven seats on the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors, including the chairman position, will begin January 1 and continue through election day June 22.

The board of directors is the governing body of the tribe and includes 12 directors and one chairperson.

The tribe's seven county Eastern Upper Peninsula service area is divided into five units. Tribal members who are registered as voters in each unit elect representatives to the board. The number of representatives chosen from each unit reflects the unit's population. All officers serve for four years and staggered terms put half of the board up for election every two years.

Positions on the ballot in June will be those held by the following people:

- Chairman Aaron Payment of Sault Ste. Marie
- Fred Paquin of St. Ignace, Unit III
- Lana Causley of Hessel, Unit II
- Joe Eitrem of Sault Ste. Marie, Unit I
- Cathy Abramson of Sault Ste. Marie, Unit I
- Todd Gravelle of Sault Ste. Marie, Unit I
- Tom Miller of Cooks, Unit IV

Under tribal law, incumbents seeking reelection and those interested in running for a position cannot register or campaign until after January 1, 2008.

Unit I, in the Sault Ste. Marie area, has five representatives; Units II, in the Les Cheneaux, Drummond Island, Newberry, and Naubinway area, III, the St. Ignace area, and IV, the Escanaba and Manistique area, each have two representatives; Unit V, in the Marquette and Munising area, has one representative.

Mr. Payment defeated 17-year incumbent Bernard Bouschor, 4,190 to 4,028, to win the chairmanship of the 31,000-member Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in the tribe's 2004 general election.

Ballots will be mailed to tribal members.

## VFW Will Host Children's Party

The annual Law-White Veterans of Foreign Wars and Ladies Auxiliary children's Christmas party will be Saturday, December 15, at the Community Center in Cedarville. The party starts at 1 p.m. and includes a holiday movie, candy, visits with Santa Claus, and a toy. All children are welcome.

The winners of the VFW's annual Christmas raffle include Margaret Garvey of Cedarville and Sebastian, Florida, who won \$200, Wayne Guynn of Hessel and Victoria, Texas, who won \$100, and Terry Nordquist of Cedarville, who won \$75. Proceeds from the raffle provide funding for the children's party.

## Portage Township

### Upgrades to Barn Will Protect Emergency Vehicles

By Paul Gingras

Following recent electrical system upgrades at the heavily used Curtis Community Building, the Portage Township Board of Trustees is studying upgrades needed at the adjoining fire and ambulance barn, which lacks an appropriate electrical system to serve its new fire trucks and ambulances.

New emergency vehicles owned by the township must remain plugged in when not in use, Township Supervisor Don Ferris said. Even when the vehicles are stationary, there is a load on the batteries.

To install a new electrical system and ensure that the vehicles are ready for an emergency, restructuring the ceiling is in order. At this point in the year, such a project can only be done on a day of mild weather, owing to the need to place the emergency vehicles outside while the ceiling is torn out, a prospect that concerns Fire

Chief P.J. Costa.

The board tabled the matter at its Tuesday, November 13, meeting to gather more information regarding the length and difficulty of the project.

The vehicles are kept supplied with power via extension cords, a temporary fix that can be maintained throughout the winter, if necessary, Chief Costa said. He pushed the board to pursue the project.

"We just want to see movement on the matter," he said.

The work cannot be done without tearing out the old ceiling, which includes inefficient cellulose insulation, said trustee Pat Abram, who recommended installing foam insulation, enabling the electrical system to remain exposed for future work. The cost of the upgrade would be amortized in a few years by the reduction in heating costs, he added.

Mr. Abram reported that he had

contacted a contractor who agreed to install the insulation for \$6,000, if the fire department would take out the old ceiling. The insulation work could be done in one day.

The firemen could do so quickly, Chief Costa said, however, the vehicles cannot be left out for two or three days.

The fire department has received a free brush truck from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that is designed to fight grassland fires and can access areas the department's larger trucks cannot enter. The brush truck cannot fight a structure fire, Mr. Costa said. It should be ready for use by spring.

The brush truck is a surplus vehicle that remains under DNR ownership, although the fire department can use it indefinitely. The DNR may reclaim it for a major event, such as a forest fire, after which Portage Township would get it, Mr. Costa explained.

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## Soup Luncheon Raises Funds for Church Kitchen



**Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Ignace hosted a soup luncheon and Christmas cookie sale in the basement of the church Tuesday, December 4, to help raise funds for upgrades to the church's kitchen, needed to allow cooking at the site. Presently, cooked food must be brought to the kitchen. Pictured are (from left, in front) Lori Bowlby, Helen Johnson, Linda Wilkins, Sue Fenlon; (back) Eunice Therrian, Denise Ledy, Barb Wilkins, Marlene Olsen, Mike Wilkins, and Jack Nygard of Mackinaw City, who attended with his wife, Marilana, not pictured. Nine kinds of homemade soups were provided, as well as homemade bread and Christmas cookies.**

## One Square at a Time, Knitters Turn Out Blankets for Needy

By Amy Polk

Local knitters are contributing to a nationwide project to keep people warm, and their handiwork is more welcome at this time of the year than any other.

Sue Rye of Hessel has organized volunteers to knit and crochet afghan squares, which are then shipped to the Warm Up America! headquarters in Gastonia, North Carolina, and assembled into 43-inch by 69-inch afghan blankets. Warm Up America! distributes the finished blankets through community service organizations, such as women's and housing shelters, nursing homes, children's hospitals, hospitals and hospices, day-care centers, veterans' homes, churches, AIDS patient facilities, homeless shelters, and American Red Cross chapters.

The program has produced more than 250,000 afghans since it was founded by Evie Rosen, a former yarn seller and knitting teacher in Wausau, Wisconsin. She wanted to help the homeless, so she started the program by asking customers, friends, and members of her community to knit or crochet blanket sections.

Mrs. Rye read about the program in a novel and started the local chapter about a year ago. Volunteers can make as many or few squares as they want, or can contribute a whole afghan. Squares need not be color coordinated.

"Some people have made as many as three to four squares, while others have made dozens," Mrs. Rye said. "It's just a good way to use up your scrap yarn, and it doesn't take up too much time. The beauty of it is, you don't have to put it [the afghan] together yourself."

Volunteers can work individually or as a group and usually hand Mrs. Rye a few squares at a time. She collects them until she has a pile large enough to mail. Knitters can also leave squares in her mailbox in the lobby of First Union



**Nancy Glupker of DeTour Village knits part of an afghan square headed for North Carolina. She is part of a casual group of knitters based in Cedarville, many of whom make squares for the Warm-Up America charity.**

Church in Cedarville.

Warm Up America's headquarters maintain a request list of charitable agencies that are ranked by priority. As afghans are received and assembled, they are shipped to whichever agency is at the top of the list.

Each afghan is unique, made of different colored and textured yarns. Since each is made of 49 squares, an afghan could contain pieces from as many as 49 knitters.

"Every little bit helps," Mrs. Rye added. "You don't have to knit a whole afghan. You can just do one square and it will help."

To volunteer or drop off squares, call Mrs. Rye at 484-3193.

## State's First Case of Flu Reported

The first case of flu in the state this year has been reported in a nine-year-old child in Marquette, reported the Michigan Department of Community Health December 5.

The child's illness was confirmed as influenza B, a type of flu, however, the child was not hospitalized.

Dr. James Terrian, director of the Luce Mackinac Alger Schoolcraft Health Department, said the case affirms that parents need to have their children immunized now that the flu season is underway.

"It's not appropriate to panic at this point, but it is appropriate to take the necessary precautions," he said.

It is important for physicians to take swab samples from patients with flu-like symptoms, he said, so area health officials can see what kinds of possible influenza strains are evident. Flu symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, dry cough, sore throat, congestion, and body aches. Many times people mistake viral gastroenteritis, or an upset stomach, as the flu.

The flu season in the United States is from November through April. Vaccinations are helpful anytime during the season, according to the national Centers for Disease Control.

National studies show that influenza has been attributed to between 20,000 and 30,000 deaths last year, said Dr. Terrian. In many of those cases, the patients were afflicted with a chronic disease or previously declining health.

"That is why it's important for elderly people to be vaccinated, as well as children," he said.

Flu vaccination is strongly recommended for people age 50 and older, those with chronic medical problems, children age six months to five years, pregnant women, and health care workers, according to the health department.

There is no shortage of vaccine this year for either adults or children, said Dr. Terrian.

Immunization appointments through the health department office in St. Ignace can be made by calling 643-1100. Shots cost \$20.