

# 1948 Commemorative Coin Brings Memories of State Ferry Operations at St. Ignace

Clayton Bennett of St. Ignace has a 25¢ coin that reminds him of his youth. It is a 1948 silver anniversary coin commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Michigan State Ferries.



At left: A 1948 silver anniversary token that commemorated the 25th year of operation for the Michigan State Ferries. The tokens were handed out to people, and local businesses honored them as quarters. Many of the coins were kept as souvenirs.

Frank L. Glashaw, Lions Club president, explained the coins in the *Republican-News* several weeks before the jubilee.

"One of our more important publicity stunts will be the distribution of coins commemorating the jubilee," he said. "These should be placed with merchants before the end of this week. They are invaluable mementos of the occasion that will appeal not only to local persons, but to our many transients."

"Good for 25 cents in trade, these coins are redeemable in trade, but it is expected that a large proportion of the distribu-

tion will be pulled off the market as souvenirs. That is what we desire. As time passes, these coins will be come more rare and more valuable to collectors and hobbyists."

It was not recorded how many of the coins were distributed.

Mr. Bennett's coin came to light years ago when his father-in-law, George Ogle of St. Ignace, was moving his safe from his grocery store, Ogle Brothers Groceries, where Straits Building Center is today, to his other business, the Thunderbird Gift Shop, across from the Favorite dock. As he was cleaning out the safe, Mr. Ogle came upon the coin, eventually giving it to Mr. Bennett as a gift.

"I don't know if there are a lot more out there nowadays, but I thought it was pretty neat," said Mr. Bennett of the coin.

Fred Hiser, Mr. Bennett's grandfather, was a state ferry employee working as an oiler on many of the boats. Mr. Bennett remembers accompanying his grandfather on many of the ferries as a young boy.

"It was really fun to just go on rides," he said. "I was on there so much that they gave me things to do, like shovel coal."

## Remote Racing To Be Saturday at St. Ignace

Radio-controlled car racing will take place at the St. Ignace Elementary School gymnasium Saturday, March 22, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Races will also take place Saturday, April 19. Racers of all ages are welcome.

The entrance fee for each racer is \$10. Rental cars will be available and newcomers will be given a half-off rate for rentals. Replacement parts for radio-controlled cars will also be available.

Doors will open at 9:30 a.m. and races will begin about 12:30 p.m., said race coordinator Casey Brake.

Mr. Brake is planning a racing event at Kewadin Shores Casino in St. Ignace Saturday, May 3. Racers can either pre-register at the March 22 and April 19 races or register at the casino Friday evening, May 2. Registration fees will be based on how many vehicles a racer will use. First vehicle registration fees are \$15. Each additional vehicle registered will be \$10.

## Ice Is Removed From St. Ignace Arena March 17

City workers removed the ice from the rink at Little Bear East Community Center and Arena Monday morning, March 17. The process took about two hours.

The ice was placed the first week in October 2007 for the season for St. Ignace Hockey Association's five youth teams.

The underlying concrete floor will be ready for a Home and Garden Show Friday, April 18, and Saturday, April 19.

Other upcoming events there will be an inaugural Yooper Motorcycle display May 24 and 25, a youth wrestling clinic and tournament June 21, a portion of the annual Antique Auto Show June 27 and 28, and the LaSalle High School All-Class Reunion July 25.

## Environmental Farming Program Planned April 3

A workshop entitled "Small and Medium Size Farms and the Environment" will be presented Thursday, April 3, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Mackinaw Area Public Library in Mackinaw City. The cost is \$15 per person. Register by calling (231) 627-8815.

Participants will learn about determining a farm's environmental impact, making sense of environmental regulations, finding practical management solutions, and the Right to Farm act.

The workshop will be hosted by Michigan State University Extension.

vied for the title of Straits of Mackinac Queen, who, with Miss St. Ignace Mary Gallagher, would tour the state to promote the festivities.

The celebration was the largest the city had held, and an estimated 25,000 people turned out.

The St. Ignace Lions Club distributed the souvenir coins, worth 25¢ at St. Ignace stores.

On one side is depicted a ferry between the upper and lower peninsulas, the map extending west to the Garden Peninsula and Beaver Island. The coin also depicts a suspension bridge just west of St. Ignace, commemorating the Highway Department's

dedication that weekend of the new Cut River Bridge, promoted as the highest bridge in the state. It had an uncanny resemblance to the Mackinac Bridge, which

wouldn't be designed for another five years.

The other side of the coin reads, "Gateway to the Upper Peninsula. Good for 25¢ in trade, St. Ignace, Mich. Redeem before Aug. 15, 1948," which was the last day of the celebration. Many

### Mackinaw City

## Magers Earns Honors for Decades of Helping

By Paul Gingras

In the 1960s, Jane Magers was working a concession stand aboard the Straits Transit ferry, *The Straits of Mackinac*. From early morning until mid-afternoon, she rode the route from Mackinaw City to Mackinac Island, absorbing the beauty of the Straits, the conversations of tourists, the sound of water lapping against the steel hull, and when she clocked out at 1 p.m., she kept right on riding.

"It was my favorite job," she recalls. "The people were fun, and the older guys on the boats would adopt you."

She, in turn, adopted the people of Mackinaw City, and over the next four decades, she would immerse herself in the commerce, promotion, and improvement of her community.

To her surprise Sunday, February 10, on her 65th birthday, she entered St. Anthony's Parish Hall in Mackinaw City and discovered not only a party to receive her, but a proclamation from the village council recognizing her strong work ethic and spirit of volunteerism.

A winter storm raged outside, but it had not dissuaded a crowd from arriving to celebrate.

"It seemed like the worst storm in 25 years, and we still had 50 people there," said Bob Fisher, Miss Magers' friend, employer, and owner of the Pancake Chef restaurant in Mackinaw City.

"Jane is very good-hearted," Mr. Fisher said.

Jane Magers grew up in Indiana and studied journalism at Ball State University. She was still in college when she came to Mackinaw City looking for summer work, and landed a job at Miller's Gifts, a shop owned by Bud Miller, at one time the owner of the Pancake Chef.

At the time, he employed another person named Jane, so Mr. Miller decided to call his new employee Baby Jane. Shortened to B.J., it became the name by which she is known in Mackinaw City today.

She came up here because, as a kid, she vacationed at Houghton Lake with her parents, Bill and Dorothy Magers, and her brother and sister, and she thought Mackinaw City would be a nice place to work for the summer.

"I liked it so much I stayed," she said.

Today, the Pancake Chef has been expanded into the place once occupied by the gift shop, and the view outside of East Central Avenue has improved.

She has worked hard to make things better, both inside and outside the restaurant.

She founded the Miss Teen Fort Michilimackinac Pageant in the early 1970s. The goal was to select a young girl to reign over the Memorial Day festivities of the village, which included a reenactment of Pontiac's uprising



"I do all the decorating here," said Jane Magers, sitting among her decorations at the Pancake Chef restaurant in Mackinaw City Friday, March 14. Now in her 49th year with the business, she is known in Mackinaw City for her involvement in the commerce, promotion, and improvement of the community.

at Michilimackinac in 1763 and the Memorial Day parade.

"Jane has taken on causes that no one else would touch," Mr. Fisher explained. "Like the Fort Michilimackinac Teen Pageant; she handled that almost single-handedly."

Contestants came from Emmet, Cheboygan, and Mackinac counties, and Miss Magers and her assistants would spend hours helping the girls with costumes, talents, and stage presence, in addition to coordinating the pageant.

"They kept me young," she said of her years coaching the girls.

In 1976, the pageant committee bestowed its highest honor upon Miss Magers, the Raymond B. Desy Award. She has also been recognized as an outstanding citizen by the Greater Mackinaw City Chamber of Commerce.

For six years, Miss Magers served as a member of the Downtown Development Authority, where she and her colleagues assessed everything from the health of the trees to the gratings in the sidewalks and helped decide where the city would direct its money for maintenance and development.

She loves the old-style lamps and Christmas bulbs that illuminate downtown Mackinaw City, which were installed during her service.

"It looks like a little English village at night, especially when it's snowing," she said.

Miss Magers has been a member of the Women of the Moose 1494 in St. Ignace, in which she was honored with the Academy of Friendship, the Star Recorder, and its highest accolade, the College of Regents.

Her give-it-your-all ethic enabled her to master every job the Pancake Chef had to offer.

She became general manager in the mid 1970s, and Mr. Fisher sent her to the Disney Institute

for management training.

"It was fascinating," she said. Geared for working with tourists from diverse backgrounds, the training helped her learn how to provide good service to all kinds of people, she said.

As the general manager of the Pancake Chef, she helps the restaurant's employees both professionally and personally. For years, she and Mr. Fisher have used the resources of the long-standing business to connect their employees with everything from child care to legal advice. Some have stayed with the business for more than 20 years.

"Without Jane, I would be awfully busy," Mr. Fisher said. "She has a lot on her plate."

Miss Magers keeps a watchful eye on everything from the pebbles on the roof of the Pancake Chef to the toothpicks at the cash register.

"She has always had a perfectionist attitude. Given a project, you can be sure she will get it done," Mr. Fisher said.

She attributes her hard work ethic to her first job in Indiana, at a city newsstand owned by her grandfather, Lawrence Loney.

"You're not my granddaughter now," he told her on the first day; "you're my employee. Now get to work."

Miss Magers said she is amazed at the developments in Mackinaw City since her arrival. One was the development of Mackinaw Crossings, a tremendous boost to the town, she said.

"It feels like you're in a different country" in the Crossings, she said. "You feel like a kid, no matter what age you are."

In the small village of about 800 year-around residents, it takes a core group of volunteers like Miss Magers to promote the many activities that take place, Mr. Fisher said.

"Without people like her, things just don't happen," he said.

## Portage Twp. Pushes for Control of Elementary School Building

By Paul Gingras

Township ownership of Curtis Elementary school is expected to be made official soon, reported the Portage Township Board of Trustees Tuesday, March 11. The Tahquamenon Area Schools board, which has operated the school for decades, is agreeable to turning over the building to the municipality, Trustee Pat Abram reported. This came as welcome news to the Three Lakes Education Committee, a local group planning to use the building for a charter school.

The building will be closed as a public school in June.

Mr. Abram and trustee Mark Devereaux met with Tahquamenon Area Schools Superintendent Alice Walker Friday, February 29, and concluded that neither the township nor the school district have been able to locate documents proving that the building was ever transferred to Tahquamenon by the now-defunct Portage Township School Board of Education.

Now, Tahquamenon will decide if it will charge the township for temporary buildings on the property or for recent renovations to the kitchen that cost about \$7,000. Since the renovations and portable buildings were paid with taxes, Mrs. Walker admitted that it may be inappropriate to charge the township, Mr. Abram said.

Tahquamenon plans "to have a proposal for us before our next month's board meeting," he added.

Tom Clock of Three Lakes Education Committee encouraged the board to move quickly to obtain

documentation from Tahquamenon confirming township ownership of Curtis Elementary. Doing so will help the committee get an authorizing agent to start the charter school.

"We are trying to get it reopened by fall. Every week we miss moving forward is going to hurt us in the end," he said. "April to September does not leave us much time, and it is going to be tough to get somebody to take a hard look at us as a charter school if we do not have proof that we own that building."

"The board will do the best we can to have a proposal [from Tahquamenon] in our hands by the next board meeting," Supervisor Donald Ferris said. If a proposal is submitted beforehand, the township will call a special board meeting to consider it, he added.

"There has been a lot of discussion on starting a preschool right away, maybe even this summer. [The goal] is to maintain that building as a school," Mr. Clock said.

Mr. Ferris sent a letter to the Tahquamenon school board, following the meeting between the trustees and Mrs. Walker, noting that all parties are positive about returning control of the building to the township and asking the board to do so with all reasonable haste.

In other matters discussed by the township board, an accident that injured a snowmobile rider on South Manistique Lake in early February has prompted the township discuss amending its fire ordinance so it can charge for fire department rescues.

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## Government To Begin Sending Stimulus Payments This May

Those on Social Security Benefits May Qualify; Must Sign Tax Return

More than 130 million households will receive an economic stimulus check from the federal government this spring. Individuals will receive between \$300 and \$600, and married couples will receive \$600 to \$1,200, according to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Families with children will receive an additional \$300 per child younger than 17.

Those with a Social Security number and showing qualifying income of at least \$3,000 on a federal tax return are eligible for the payments. People who filed a 2007 income tax return, or will file one by October, do not need to do anything else to qualify for the payment. The Internal Revenue

Service will calculate the amount of each payment and mail checks automatically.

Many people, such as those on Social Security, low income workers, and those on veterans' disability benefits, who normally do not file a tax return, are also eligible, and this year must sign and mail in tax form 1040A to receive their payment.

A sample of the tax form is available online that shows what lines must be filled out to receive a payment, and complete instructions are available at www.irs.gov. It is not mandatory to file by April 15, but early filing is encouraged by the IRS. Payments will not be mailed until tax forms are received.

The economic stimulus payments are not taxable and will not reduce 2007 refunds or increase taxes owed in 2008.

## 'Frozen Wave' Photos in Circulation Are Not From the Straits of Mackinac

E-mails containing photographs of "frozen waves," purportedly in Mackinaw City, are hoaxes. The images, according to Internet sites that track such hoaxes, are probably of the edge of a glacier and were probably taken in Antarctica or the Arctic.

A similar hoax last year purported to show a baby moose and

its mother in Naubinway and even credited *The St. Ignace News* for the story.

Readers can check the accuracy of such e-mails at the Urban Legends reference site, www.snopes.com, or at the Hoax-Slayer, www.hoax-slayer.com.

These hoaxes can also carry viruses.

## Fifth Grade Band Canceled at St. Ignace, Gros Cap Schools

Starting next fall, a music appreciation class will replace fifth-grade band at St. Ignace Area Schools, said Superintendent Mike Springsteen.

The choice is a curriculum change that is not based on a financial decision, he said. At the recommendation of music teachers, and after analyzing offerings at other districts, St. Ignace decided to offer

a general music class for fifth grade students. It will be taught by Stephanie Terpening, occasionally assisted by Jason Byma. Mr. Byma is the band director, and is currently teaching fifth-grade band.

Band will be offered for the first time in sixth grade. Few schools offer band at the fifth-grade level, Mr. Springsteen added.

In music appreciation, students

will learn about harmony, scales, notes, and practice on a recorder, a flute-like instrument.

Eliminating fifth-grade band at St. Ignace eliminates it for Gros Cap School students, who are bused to St. Ignace to take band. Gros Cap students will be invited to take part in the music appreciation class next year, Mr. Springsteen said.