

Gros Cap Accepts Teacher Resignation; Begins Negotiations

By Paul Gingras

Special education teacher Jonas Halonen will leave Gros Cap School this June, and the Moran Township Board of Education accepted his resignation at its Monday, March 17, meeting. Upcoming teacher contract negotiations, and a court case affecting Gros Cap and other area schools were other topics discussed.

"He certainly came to us with a lot of experience," Superintendent Bill Peltier said of Mr. Halonen, who had taught for 30 years, mostly with special needs students, prior to taking a position at Gros Cap in 2004. After retiring from Grosse Ile Township Schools in 1997, Mr. Halonen moved to the Upper Peninsula and offered his experience to Moran Township School.

Grosse Ile Schools, located on an island in the Detroit River, is also a small community.

"Working at Gros Cap was like coming home again," Mr. Halonen said.

Educating special needs students part time, and working part time with students who need a boost in reading and mathematics, Mr. Halonen has been a stabilizing influence at Gros Cap, Mr. Peltier said.

In his letter of resignation, Mr. Halonen said he considered working in the district a privilege and cited Mr. Peltier and Lead Teacher Monica Silet as forces that help the staff and students succeed, in what he termed a "high quality" district.

"I think my experiences at Gros



Special education teacher Jonas Halonen will retire from Gros Cap School this June.

Cap School in Moran Township was just wonderful," Mr. Halonen told *The St. Ignace News*. "I am going to miss it."

Gros Cap will look for a half-time special education teacher to fill Mr. Halonen's position by fall.

The district would like to install Smart Boards in all classrooms at the school, if it is approved for funding requested from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The boards, which display teachers' computer screens to students and link students' and teachers' computers, are already used at the school for mathematics, word processing, and spreadsheets.

Forty-five percent of Gros Cap's students are Native American.

Contracts for the school's seven teachers expire in August, and the first stages of negotiations for new contracts have begun. The board discussed a letter from the Michigan Education Association announcing the local union's desire to prepare for negotiations.

Financial problems, including refunds to energy companies and alterations in taxes collectible by the district, create some uncertainty, he said.

Mr. Peltier hopes to receive documents from companies owed

tax money by June, when he will make recommendations to the school board on financial matters.

A long-standing class-action lawsuit against the state by hundreds of school districts has been settled in favor of the school districts, the school board learned via a letter by Thrun Law Firm of Bloomfield Hills.

The suit deals with state requirements for school systems to shoulder record-keeping tasks formerly handled by the state, without providing funding to do so.

In 2000, 459 Michigan school districts, including Gros Cap, sued the State of Michigan for violating the Headlee Amendment, which states that the Michigan constitution prohibits the state from imposing "unfunded or under funded mandates on local units of government," Thrun reported.

This includes school districts, the company explained.

Michigan now requires all records to be filed with the state electronically, so school systems must file reports using the Internet, Mr. Peltier said. This has made record keeping easier in Lansing, but it has been costly for schools, which require Internet access, computers, computer training, and technical support to comply with the mandate.

Prior to the change, the state simply faxed forms to schools to fill out, and schools faxed them back, he said.

Mr. Peltier hopes to receive documents from companies owed

Clark Township Planning Commission Approves Resort Plan

At the March 11 Clark Township Planning Commission meeting, commissioners approved the request of Dennis Fox to convert the Lindberg Cottages property in Hessel to a resort condominium use.

Commissioner Mike Patrick abstained from voting and participating in deliberations because his wife, Diane, is a real estate agent involved in the transaction.

The use will allow lots to be created and sold, but the property

must continue to be operated as a resort, and only the main residence can be designated as a homestead.

Mr. Fox said the property will be divided into 13 site condominiums, but the resort will remain intact and managed as one property with common spaces, like the yard in the center of the resort and Lake Huron beach across the road from the resort.

"We want the owners of the units to leave the units in the rental pool, and hopefully have them con-

tinued as rentals," Mr. Fox said. "We're hoping it will be a transparent change to the public's view."

Jim Wynn of Petoskey, the attorney for the project, said the master deed that governs how the condominiums will be managed stipulates continued renting to vacationers.

"Basically, the use will stay the

same, but the ownership will change," Mr. Wynn said, adding the master deed is patterned after the Les Cheneaux Landing resort condominiums in Cedarville.

In 2006, Les Cheneaux Landing was the first Clark Township resort to be converted to condominium ownership. Lindberg's is the third resort to be converted since then.

Cheboygan Home Show Will Be April 11-12 at Ice Pavilion

Home Show 2008 will take place at the Ice Pavilion in Cheboygan Friday, April 11, and Saturday, April 12. Show hours are 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday. Admission is \$2 per person and children younger than eight are admitted free.

Vendors will display a wide range of home repair and improvement products, and prize drawings will be available.

The show is sponsored by the

Cheboygan Area Chamber of Commerce and Straits Area Builders Association.

Play Group Meets Mondays in Curtis

Every Monday there will be a parent-child play group beginning at noon at the Curtis Public Library, sponsored by the E.U.P. Great Start Collaborative. Parents and their children can get together for stories and activities.

Cantaloupe Is Recalled; Associated With Salmonella Illness Reports

The Chippewa County Health Department has issued a warning regarding recalled cantaloupe that may be associated with a salmonella Litchfield outbreak. The product was distributed nationwide and in Canada, and it has been found locally in Chippewa County. Central American Produce of Pompano Beach, Florida, is voluntarily recalling cantaloupes grown, packed, and shipped by an independent third-party grower, Agropecuaria Montalibano of San Lorenzo Valle, Honduras.

In persons with poor health or weakened immune systems, salmonella can invade the bloodstream and cause life-threatening infections. Symptoms of food-borne salmonella infection include

nausea, vomiting, fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Individuals who have recently eaten cantaloupe and experienced any of these symptoms should contact their health care professional.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises that U.S. grocers, food service operators, and produce processors remove from their stock any cantaloupes grown, packed, and shipped from this company. The FDA is also advising consumers who have recently bought cantaloupe to check with the place of purchase to determine if the fruit came from this specific grower and packer. If so, consumers should throw away the cantaloupes.

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DEAL ME IN

Insert Your Card For Your Fair Share of Freebies



Mark Pilarski

Dear Mark: As a fairly new slots player, I have made certain observations, as well as heard things from other players. Is it true that once you have inserted your "players club" card into a machine, it knows how you gamble and can be the determining factor in whether you win or lose? I have observed in my most recent visits, that my chances of winning are greater, as well as the amount I win, if I do not put in my player's club card. Is that just a fluke?

Gerri L.

There is a darn good reason for you to be inserting your "player's club" card into a machine, that is, if you want to get your slice of over a billion dollars' worth of comps that casinos nationwide give away each year. You get your goodies by using one of their player's club slot cards, whose only purpose is to register the number of coins you cycle through a machine. What the machines are not programmed to do, Gerri, is stiff you of jackpots because you're using one.

Slot machines are only preprogrammed to pay out a certain percentage on a random basis, notwithstanding all kinds of "fluke" streaks—good and bad—appearing. Because its decisions are random, it doesn't give one iota whether your player's club card is inserted or not. All the casino operators' care about is that after millions and millions of such decisions, "X" amount of money will be retained by the casino and lost by the players.

Dear Mark: I've written you in the past and you always answered and were most helpful. I was hoping to pick your brain on a Las Vegas question. In my past five visits to Vegas, I never tipped the parking attendant when I arrived at the casino, but always tipped the valet \$5 when I left. Are you supposed to tip on both ends of the deal? Also I was reading the tipping advice from a Vegas commerce site and their advice was to tip the valet attendant two bucks. So have I been doing it wrong and have I been over tipping. I use about 40 valets over a 5-day period for

one reason or another. Any insight would be appreciated. Still faithfully reading your column and enjoying it. Steve B.

Valet Parking is a free service offered not only in Las Vegas, but also pretty much at every casino nationwide. Along with knowing that valet parking is a complimentary service, it should also be known that casino employees work in a service-based industry and cannot survive on their salary alone. Their livelihood is based almost entirely on tips.

So how much makes you look like a cheapskate and how much makes you seem like a chump? Well, Steve, a friend of mine -- who would like to remain unnamed -- who makes a tidy sum at one of the larger -- he'd like to keep that undisclosed, as well -- casinos on the Strip says that at least \$2 for both dropping your car off and picking it up elevates you above el cheapo, \$3 to \$5 each way puts you in the generous category, and \$20-and-up coming in will get "VIP" marked on your ticket, which gets your car up front and out a whole lot faster. Oh, and he also said, "Wave a buck in your hand on the pick up, and you'll be waiting for your car longer than it takes GM to build it."

If all this tipping seems a bit too philanthropic for your liking, his reply was, "Hey, it's Vegas baby."

Gambling Wisdom of the Week: "I got cigar boxes full of bad checks from Square John Businessman, but not one from a gambler."

~Amarillo Slim Preston

Got a question about gambling? Write to: Deal Me In, P.O. Box 1234, Traverse City, Michigan 49685 -e-mail: pilarski@markpilarski.com • To order Mark Pilarski's "Hooked on Winning" audio cassettes-laminated win cards package (\$12.95 plus \$2 S&H) call 1-800-WINNERS.

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