

St. Ignace Students Throw Surprise Party for Retiring Principal Bonnie Ledy

By Karen Gould

For nearly a month, somehow 380 students at St. Ignace Elementary and Middle School kept a huge secret. Along with teachers and staff, the students planned a surprise retirement celebration for their principal, Bonnie Ledy.

Final preparations for the party began while the unsuspecting educator was at lunch Friday, May 16. Folding chairs were set up in the Middle School cafeteria, a projector was positioned for a slide show, an oversized construction paper image of Ms. Ledy was moved onto the stage, and shortly before 1 p.m., students quickly took their seats, waiting patiently and quietly. They wanted her to be surprised.



Sharing a hug with their favorite principal, Tyler Beebe (center) and Molly Sweeney want Bonnie Ledy to know how important she has been to them at school and how much they will miss her. Ms. Ledy, who retires in June, is the St. Ignace Elementary and Middle School principal. The two seventh grade girls enjoyed a moment with her following a surprise retirement party given by kindergarten through seventh grade classes Friday, May 16.

she has a good sense of humor. Insight into what motivates students, insight into what motivates adults," said Mike Springsteen, school superintendent. "I tried to talk her out of retiring, but it didn't work."

That Friday afternoon, Ms. Ledy was led to the stage and, with a crown placed on her head, she was asked to sit in a rocking chair she once used in her classroom.

"Over the years," said former principal Mike Lehto, "I've devel-



Watching a slide show of photographs with his grandmother, Bonnie Ledy, Ethan McLean points to familiar family members on the screen. His mother and father, Darcy and Jack McLean, sit to his right. The slide show, which was shown to students attending the retirement party for Ms. Ledy in the school cafeteria, was prepared by the seventh grade technology class.

oped a high respect for you, for your compassion, for your understanding, your educational leadership, and your relationship with the community. We owe you so much. You have touched lives, you have touched generations. Long after

you're gone, your work will be felt." Ms. Ledy, he said, is the type of teacher and principal students will remember, and her colleagues will never forget.

"Her teaching and her administration was permeated with the most

fundamental denominator of education and that's the love for the human spirit."

For the next hour students, teachers, former teachers, and principals

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14 Earn Diplomas at Mackinaw City High



Mackinaw City seniors prepare for graduation Saturday, May 31. Pictured, (front, from left) are Nicholas Dullack, Austin Martin, and Zachary Milholin.

By Paul Gingras

In keeping with tradition, two sets of diplomas were given out in a packed auditorium at Mackinaw City Public Schools Saturday, May 31. One went to the 14-member class of 2008, and the second, honorary set, to eight members of the class of 1958 which attended and was once again recognized. Half of this year's graduates wore solid white caps and gowns, half wore blue, and all heard the advice of their highest-achieving classmates, the wisdom of their elders, and respectful words from the staff, as cameras flashed to preserve their last moments of secondary education.

The seniors heard a strong pitch for the fulfillment that comes with lifelong learning from retired science and mathematics teacher Virginia Reed Wood. She was graduated from Mackinaw City High School in 1953, and retired from Comstock High School last summer.

"I was in school every school year from 1941 until I retired in June 2007," she said, noting that she

spent summers learning about chemistry, physics, and oceanography, an interest enhanced when she received Mackinaw City High School's science award as a youth. She also received awards in civics and was influenced by band, encouraging her to take part in civic affairs and church music groups for decades.

"I tell you this because as we graduate from high school, we do not know where life will lead us and how we will respond to the trust and faith that our teachers have in each of us," she said, addressing the graduates. "You never know where or when you will be an influence to others. I am sure I have been influential in the lives of at least 6,000 people. Former students of mine have careers as doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, lawyers, and business people."

"Most," she added, "are just good people."

Planning careers as diverse as veterinary work and marketing, Mackinaw City graduates have been accepted to schools including Grand Valley State University, University

of Michigan, Saginaw Valley State University, North Central Michigan College, Michigan Technological University, and the class favorite, Kirtland Community College.

During the ceremony, administrators and members of organizations handed out \$28,000 in scholarships, an enjoyable process, noted high school principal William Alexander.

Nine graduates qualified for Michigan Promise Scholarships. Seven qualified for Michigan Competitive Scholarships. Eleven seniors have been accepted at universities for fall 2008. Two will enter vocational schools, and one will enter the military.

"All have direction," he said of the students.

Leaving public high school, and in most cases, their homes on the Straits of Mackinac, will be a difficult step, students said.

Salutatorian Miranda Andress-Morse of St. Ignace offered vivid, often humorous memories characterizing each of her classmates. She

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The Mackinaw City High School Class of 2008 posed for a senior picture earlier this school year. The class was graduated Saturday, May 31. Pictured (front, from left) are Barry Paquet, Logan Paquet, Miranda Andress-Morse, Julie Alexander, Zach Milholin, Austin Martin, Daniel Mahlmeister, Cullen Lawson; (back, from left) Tony Fetke (who moved away before graduation), Nick Dullack, Norman Windsor, Oskar Strojny, Bary Fatmond, Kevin Darrow, and Nicklaus Jaggi II. (Photograph courtesy of Mackinaw City Public Schools)

DeTour To Host Salmon Derby Saturday

The DeTour "X" Atlantic Salmon Derby will return to DeTour Village Saturday, June 7. A shotgun start will launch the event at 6 a.m., and it will continue through 4 p.m. Fish in coolers or fishboxes must be dropped off between 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. sharp, with no exceptions. Coolers will be sealed until the public weigh-in ceremony at 5 p.m. at River Bend Resort in DeTour.

The derby benefits from Atlantic salmon plantings in the Lower Saint Marys Falls in Sault Ste. Marie, through Lake Superior State University.

The event is called the DeTour

"X" derby after the distinctive "X" shaped markings on Atlantic salmon scales, and also because Atlantics fight harder and more aggressively than king salmon, said organizer Gary Dudeck of DeTour. Atlantics run four to 12 pounds, and a 10-pound Atlantic fights harder than a 20-pound king salmon, Mr. Dudeck added, so "this is extreme fishing."

Mr. Dudeck anticipates a good turnout, helped by the state's two-day Free Fishing Weekend, which allows people to fish without having to purchase a license. Also, a state-sponsored fishing tackle and boat gear show and swap meet will be at

DeTour State Harbor. All Michigan fishing rules will apply in the contest.

The contest entry fee is \$50 per boat, and the event will have an 85% prize payout. Total prize value is based on the number of registrants, as well as other prize donations. The last two years' DeTour salmon derbies have each awarded approximately \$1,000 in prize money for the three largest salmon and the most weight caught by one boat. All remaining funds will support the DeTour Fish Cleaning Station, and in the past, Mr. Dudeck

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Chief Wawatam Engine Comes Home



Lift operator Rudy Hennekes positions the bottom portion of the engine from the Chief Wawatam onto wood planks Tuesday, June 3, at the Mill Slip, where it will be stored until a permanent location is found. The city would like to house the engine in a transportation museum being considered in town. When rebuilt, the 65-ton engine will stand 16 feet tall. From 1911 through 1984, the Chief Wawatam, a coal-fired icebreaking ferry, transported trains, passengers, and automobiles across the Straits of Mackinac. The engine was donated to the city by Purvis Marine, the Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, company that converted the ferry to a barge in the mid-1980s.

From left, Zach Harrington, Cody Therrian, and Curtis St. Louis watch as parts of the Chief Wawatam engine return home Tuesday, May 28. A truck-load of parts arrived in the morning from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and by early evening this top section of the engine was delivered to the city garage at Dock 3. Unable to unload it there, the engine was moved to the Mill Slip where it was unloaded by the Arnold Transit travel lift, which is used to lift ferry boats from the water.

