

# Young Scientists at St. Ignace, Gros Cap Conduct Experiments for Competition

## Head To Regional Contest Wednesday

By Karen Gould

Budding young scientists from the area faced judges last week, presenting their hypotheses and explaining their experiments during the school district's science fair. More than 140 students from St. Ignace Middle School and Gros Cap School participated, and the top three will again face judges, this time in the Regional Science Fair at Lake Superior State University (LSSU) in Sault Ste. Marie Wednesday, March 18. Students chose a project based on their interests and curiosity. Work is done at school and at home. Experiments were conducted on a simulated roller coaster, magnets, and laundry detergents. Students undertook projects to determine if homemade weather measuring devices are effective, how much vitamin C is in various beverages, and the average human body temperature, for example. Students spent weeks to



Students from Gros Cap School in the second, third, and fourth grades taking top prizes at the Science Fair Friday, March 13, include Trevor Soblaskey (back row, from left), Alicia Garen, Steve Seccia, Jimmy Reynolds, Dalton McLennan, Shyanne Bird; (front) Heather Ryan, Joshua Kaiser, Lucas Sayles, and Eric Sweeney.

months working on their projects. "It's amazing how much they learn," said Gros Cap second grade teacher Jaime Clark. "They put a lot of hard work in." Each student sought answers to questions by developing a controlled experiment. Before beginning, each student was required to form a hypothesis stating the expected outcome. The results of the experiment either supported or negated the

hypothesis. Some students discovered their initial theory was accurate, while others learned it was faulty.

Among educators, the push in science is to teach students how to seek answers to questions and learn the ways to do it, said St. Ignace teacher Heather Brady. The science fair projects help promote the lesson, and the process showcases what the student has learned about scientific



Students from Gros Cap School in the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades taking top prizes at the Science Fair Friday, March 13, include Cole Garen (back row, from left) Hailee Brown, Molly Sposito, Mary Pollard, Tabitha Blair, Rebecca Brown, Caleb McFarland; (front, left) Kristin Lenoir, Dakota McLennan, Jaina Dunikowski, Tristan Calcaterra, Lillian Calcaterra, Clayton Knutson, Cole Thompson, and Dallas McLennan.

inquiry. "We have to challenge our own expectations, our own assumptions," she said, "and that's what scientists are supposed to do."

Mrs. Brady, the sixth grade science teacher, coordinated the school's science fair. She would like to see the science fair expanded at the school to include grades kindergarten through eighth.

Students in sixth and seventh grades participated in St. Ignace, and at Gros Cap, students in grades two through eight entered the Science Fair, while kindergarten and first grade students made dioramas.

Graphs, charts, testing results, a conclusion, and photographs of their work are organized and showcased on a cardboard presentation board prepared by students. The judging includes neatness and

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"I really like electricity," said Joshua Kaiser, who took first place in his second grade class at Gros Cap School during Science Fair competition Friday, March 13. He tested different types of fruit to see if they had enough electrical charge to turn on a lightbulb. Grapefruit registered the most volts, he discovered, although not enough to light the bulb. Electricity will be the focus of his project next year, too, when he is in the third grade, he said.

## Students Share Strategies for Spelling Bee

### 4 From St. Ignace, 1 From DeTour Advance to U.P. Finals

By Ryan Schlehuber

Spelling bees can be a pressure cooker for some students, but, going into the Upper Peninsula Spelling Bee Finals at Iron Mountain and Kingsford high schools Wednesday, March 18, five area youths have developed certain strategies to help them cope with the challenge.

"You have to be relaxed, you can't be too fast," said 11-year-old Ben Freier, a St. Ignace fifth grade student. "You've got to watch for words ending in '-ious' and '-eous' and also short words, like 'torr' and 'junta.' I'd hate to get out on an easy word."

This is Ben's first taste of spelling bee competition, which includes grades fifth through eighth.

The bright and witty fifth-grader finished first in his grade level at the Eastern Upper Peninsula Regionals in Rudyard February 24, as did two other fellow St. Ignace Middle School students, sixth grader Margo Brown and seventh grader Jacob Sjogren.

Molly Paquin took the runner-up spot in the eighth grade level, finishing second at the regionals to Sault Ste. Marie's Elizabeth Blose. DeTour's Nicole Bouwma also finished second, at the seventh grade level, qualifying her for the finals.

Fifty six students from seven regions throughout the Upper Peninsula will participate in the U.P. Spelling Bee Finals this week. Only one of them will earn an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., to compete in the annual Scripps National Spelling Bee May 26 through May 28.

Each of the four St. Ignace students has studied a list of 200 words that will be presented to the 56 competitors at the U.P. finals.

The list includes various words, from seemingly simple ones, such as "coyote," to short ones, like "torr," to multiple syllable words such as "antepenultimate."

If the list is completed before a winner is determined, a "stump" list is used. None of the words on that list is known to any of the competitors.

During competition, students will cycle through the list in order, and those who spell words correctly wait for their next turn, while incorrect spellers drop out, until there is one student left in each grade. At that time, the winner of each of the grade levels competes in a final four match-up. That winner goes on to the nationals.

Pressure can come from anywhere, say the four St. Ignace students and Miss Bouwma from DeTour. From stage fright to

mounting anxiety waiting for your turn, to loss of focus, or just getting stumped on a word, there are many ways to fumble. "You feel it in your gut when you know you got a word wrong," said 11-year-old Margo, remembering last year's loss in the regionals at the fifth grade level.

Armed with a year of experience and more confidence, Margo, along with her school mates, is ready for Wednesday's competition.

"I tell myself to settle down and don't overreact," she said. "I take a deep breath and repeat the word out loud. I just keep telling myself, 'I know this.'"

Nicole, 12, who reached the U.P. Finals last year as a sixth-grader, needs only to tap her foot to calm her nerves.

"Once you start, it gets better," she said. "I tell myself 'You're not the only one up there.'"

Jacob, 12, watches for "tricks" in certain words on the list, such as "entente" and "schotische."

He remembers each word has a string of repeated letters. If he gets nervous, he closes his eyes and pretends he is back at home in his basement, where he has been practicing with his parents.

"Just pretend to be somewhere where you are comfortable if you get nervous," he advises.

Thirteen-year-old Molly, the veteran of the group, closes her eyes when she gets nervous and tries to focus only on the word she has to spell.

"I wait to see the word in my head and then I open my eyes and spell the word really slowly," she said.

For Nicole, picturing the word in her head and then carefully sounding out each syllable is her strategy. During a spelling bee, competitors are presented a word verbally. They then have the option to hear the word again. They can ask for a definition and origin of the word, and even hear it in a sentence

before having to spell it.

Margo says the pronunciation of the word and its definition helps her the most in spelling a word, while Jacob asks for the word's definition if it is similar to another word on the list, such as "paralysis" and "perilous."

Nicole usually just needs to hear the word again, while Molly sometimes takes a more thorough approach, asking for pronunciation, the definition, and to hear the word in sentence form.

Ben likes to know the origin of the word.

"If the word is Greek, then I know a word with 'c-h' in it can sound like a 'k,'" he said.

Each student devotes time during and after school to learn the list. Although all of them practice spelling the words aloud with their parents, they use different techniques in learning the words.

Margo and Jacob like to write out the words, while Nicole goes through the list column by column, spelling out the words verbally, then writing them out.

Molly goes through the list, spelling each word out, and sometimes writes words four times. Ben sifts through a dictionary and looks up each word's definition, making him more familiar with each word. He also goes over the list at school with his teacher, Elaine MacDonald.

Along with being good spellers, all five students enjoy sports. Mathematics is among favorite school subjects for each.

Margo is the daughter of Ben and Claudette Brown. Her favorite word is "monotonous."

Jacob, the son of Martha and Steve Sjogren, says his favorite words on the spelling list are "arachnophagous" and "bunyanesque."

Molly is the daughter of Ed and Ellen Paquin and says her favorite word on the list is "conquistador."

For Ben, the son of Pete and Kerry Freier, "Tsunami" and "typhoon" are his favorite words.

Nicole is the daughter of Rick and Beth Bouwma of Drummond Island. She said she doesn't favor any word; she likes spelling them all.

Students will travel by car with their families to Iron Mountain to compete Wednesday.

The fifth and seventh grade competition will be at noon (central time) in the Kingsford High School auditorium, while the sixth and eighth grade competition will begin at approximately 1:15 p.m. in the auditorium of Iron Mountain High School.

The final four competition is expected to begin at approximately 3 p.m. in the Kingsford High School auditorium.



Jacob Sjogren



Molly Paquin



Margo Brown



Ben Freier



Nicole Bouwma

## City Considers Roller Skating at Ice Arena

By Karen Gould

Offering summer roller hockey leagues and family roller skating would bring new revenue to Little Bear East Arena, says Recreation Director Scott Marshall, and the summer program also will help promote ice hockey at the arena.

Plans for the program were discussed at the Recreation Advisory Committee's February meeting and continued during its Wednesday, March 11, meeting, with Mr. Marshall providing more information. He has been talking with arena managers who offer roller skating, including those in Gaylord, Alpena, and Mackinac City. Concrete at the Cheboygan arena is too thin, he said, so that city no longer offers the program.

A roller skating mat on top of the concrete would cost approximately \$50,000, he said, but Mackinaw

City and other arenas skate right on the cement.

The advisory committee is considering the program, but has no funds for a mat. Mr. Marshall suggested a portion of the revenue earned from skating fees, skate rentals, and concession profits be used to purchase a mat in the future. Prior to the committee's April meeting, he will find sources and costs for traditional four-wheel roller skates and in-line skates.

In other business, Mr. Marshall said the Bridge Brawl Hockey tournament set for Friday, March 14, and Saturday March 15, was a first effort to establish a hockey tournament by the recreation department.

The entry fee was kept low to encourage teams to the first-time event, where trophies and medals were to be awarded. Four squirt teams and eight mite teams were

registered to play, coming from around the state, including Iron Mountain and Ludington.

Mr. Marshall will give the committee a report on the tournament in April.

Plans for the St. Ignace Home Show and Spring Expo are progressing, said City Manager Eric Dodson. The Recreation Department is organizing the event this year, scheduled for Friday, April 17 and Saturday, April 18. The city is encouraging outdoor displays, including boats, four-wheel all-terrain vehicles, and campers.

Last year, 2,100 people attended the show, organized by Housing Opportunities Made Equal of Mackinac County.

The recreation advisory committee next meets Wednesday, April 8, at Little Bear East Conference Center.

## Mackinac Island Will Review Franchise Rules

### Fast Food Style Service To Be Discouraged, But Current Ones Exempt

By Ryan Schlehuber

A Mackinac Island city committee and its attorney dealt with a list of new proposals and suggested amendments to several ordinances, involving business chains and franchises, nudity, and minors in possession, in preparation of the 2009 summer tourist season.

Eight topics were discussed at a committee meeting at Community Hall Thursday, February 26. Regulating chain and franchised businesses dominated discussion at Thursday's meeting. The committee met again Wednesday, March 4, to discuss further revisions to the city's handbill ordinance. In that, the city seeks to tighten enforcement on pamphlets, fliers, and other materials being handed out to passers-by which could create a safety hazard by spooking horses.

In attendance at both meetings were Mayor Margaret Doud, city attorney Tom Evashevski, committee chairman and Councilman Michael Hart, Councilmen Armand "Smi" Horn and Dan Wightman, Police Chief Jim Marks, building inspector Dennis Dombroski, mayor's assistant Kelly Bean, and, as a spectator, store owner Andrew Doud.

#### Formula Businesses/ Formula Food Restaurant Ordinance

The ordinance amendments will require franchises like fast food restaurants and national hotel chains to operate under city zoning restrictions and minimize what Mr. Evashevski once called "cookie-cutter" type operations and to prevent them from diluting the Island's

resort charm. Such businesses would have to conform to the Island's sign ordinance and, under this ordinance, would not be allowed to display wall menus or allow customers to order and pay for the food at a register counter, for example.

The proposed ordinance was created from a memorandum offered by Dennis Cawthorne, attorney for Kelley Cawthorne law firm in Lansing and a businessman on Mackinac Island, who believes the new regulations can withstand legal challenges, as similar ordinances have been upheld in other parts of the country.

Existing businesses that cur-

rently operate this way, such as Mighty Mac Burgers, Starbucks, and even Mayor Doud's hot dog stand, would be exempt from the ordinance.

The Island already has hosted a number of franchises, from well-known burgers, ice cream, pizza, electronics, T-shirt, and even fudge shops, but, said Mr. Evashevski, "where we may have two or three now, this will prevent us from having 15 in the future."

#### Revising Handbill Ordinance

One Island hotel that hands out promotional leaflets on private property to walkers on the sidewalk

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## Free Tax Filing Help Available Saturday

Free tax preparation assistance will be available Saturday, March 21, from noon to 3 p.m. at the St. Ignace Public Library.

The session is part of the nationwide "Super Saturday" program, which provides free tax preparation assistance. The Internal Revenue Service program helps citizens across the country complete their federal tax returns. Those earning \$42,000 or less are eligible for free tax return preparation. Representatives will also be on hand to assist those who, regardless of income, have a tax problem or who may be unable to pay their tax bill.

Individuals looking for help preparing their return are asked to bring the following items:

- Valid driver's license or photo identification (self and spouse, if

applicable)

- Social Security cards for all persons listed on the return
- Dates of birth for all persons listed on the return

- All income statements: Forms W-2, 1099, Social Security, unemployment, or other benefits statements, self-employment records, and any documents showing taxes withheld. For dependent child care information, bring payee's name, address, and Social Security number or taxpayer identification number.

- Proof of account at financial institution for direct debit or deposit (such as a canceled or voided check or bank statement)
- Prior year tax return (if available)

- Any other pertinent documents or papers