

Mackinac Island's Oldest Bicycle Rental Company Closing After 77 Years

Bicycles: From page 1

was fired the first day when his team of horses took off in front of the Lennox after they were spooked by the noon horn," he said, referring to the Lennox Hotel, which houses the offices and employee housing for Mackinac Island Carriage Tours on Market Street. "My dad met him on the boat as he was heading back home to Toledo. He was immediately impressed by him and offered him a job in soliciting his speedboat business."

The young promoter worked out well, when he stayed on the dock, Mr. Pfeiffelmann recalls.

"Trouble was, when Dad took people out on the speedboat, Bob would go up the hill to the bar," said Mr. Pfeiffelmann, "so Dad thought of the idea of renting bicycles at the dock to keep him there. That way, he wouldn't know when the bicycles would come back in, so he'd have to stay put."

Mr. Pfeiffelmann said he met with Mr. Stiff years later in New York, where he was in the business of buying and selling oil tankers all over the world.

Herbert Pfeiffelmann later expanded, buying Jerry Pelton's bicycle business that operated at the head of the coal dock in 1941, moving his operation in the building where Mr. Pelton operated a radio shop. A nut shop operated next door

in the same building, where Freshwater Foods is now.

Herb then established two other rental outlets, one near the old Straits Transit dock and one at the west entrance to Grand Hotel, where he also repaired the wicker bicycle chairs operated by the Edgecomb family into the 1960s.

At that time, Mr. Pfeiffelmann's operation included renting, selling, and repairing bicycles, mainly Schwinn's.

Herb Pfeiffelmann retired in 1972, handing over the business to Tom, who, in 1975, partnered with Gwen Baker, his wife at the time, and they moved the operation across the street from McNally Cottage.

Over the years, the price of renting bicycles has steadily increased, although, said Mr. Pfeiffelmann, prices were more steady in the early days.

"We bought Schwinn's for \$39 per bike, and that price stayed for eight years," he said. "You don't see that nowadays. Prices change all the time now."

In 1945, renting a single-seater cost 25¢ per hour, and that price held until 1956, when Tom was approached by his father about the



Jerry Pelton's bicycle rental and radio shop was at the head of the coal dock at a site now used by Lakeside Bicycles and Freshwater Foods. Herbert Pfeiffelmann, who started Island Bicycle Livery at the head of Union Terminal Piers in 1932, purchased Mr. Pelton's bicycles and building in 1941. Now called Island Bicycle Rental, the Pfeiffelmann business has been the oldest bike rental on Mackinac Island, but current owners Gwen Baker and Tom Pfeiffelmann have sold the bikes and are retiring. (Photograph courtesy of Tom Pfeiffelmann)

idea of raising prices. "Dad asked me if we should raise the price to 50¢," remembers Mr. Pfeiffelmann. "Here I was, just a kid, and he's asking me. I told him we'd never rent another bike. He

said he wouldn't tell anyone, he'd just raise it, and if people didn't like it, he'd change it back.

"Well," he continued, "no one batted an eye, and so we kept it at 50¢."

Last year, single-seat bicycles were rented for \$4 per hour and tandem bikes for \$6 per hour.

By the early 1990s, Mrs. Baker and Mr. Pfeiffelmann downsized the company to operate just as a bicycle

rental business.

Last fall, when Mr. Green purchased the property they leased to rent bicycles, Mr. Pfeiffelmann and Mrs. Baker saw an opportunity to retire. Faced with the possibility of moving one more time, they decided instead to sell their licenses and close the business.

"Gwen and I, at that time, just decided that we've done this long enough and it was a good time to retire," said Mr. Pfeiffelmann.

"What I loved most about the business was the many different people I met," said Mrs. Baker. "It was such a cultural experience because we had people from all parts of the world visit us. We had many returning customers."

With the bicycle rental business now off their minds, Mr. Pfeiffelmann will put his full focus on his new position as CEO of Star Line ferry company, as he was promoted to the post from general manager earlier this winter. Mrs. Baker is looking forward to starting up a business in which she will be available for hire to entertain children with storytelling.

Toddler Lapsit Classes Offered in Pickford

Toddler Lapsit classes will begin Saturday, March 28, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Pickford United Methodist Church fellowship hall.

The language-based activities are for toddlers ages 24 months to 36 months to help them learn to listen, participate, and share in activities, with the guidance of a participating adult.

Snacks will be provided. The cost for the class is \$2. Registration is required, and should be made by contacting Melanie Greenfield at 647-2556.

Friends of the Pickford Community Library and the Early Childhood Department of Lake Superior State University are hosting the program.

Chantelle Cook Named to Dean's List at CMU



Chantelle Cook (Photograph by Linda Drayton)

Chantelle Cook of St. Ignace has been named to the dean's list at Central Michigan University for the fall 2008 semester.

Miss Cook is a 2007 graduate of LaSalle High School. She is the daughter of Robert and Laura Cook of St. Ignace and the granddaughter of Ruth McCahey of Engadine.

Pickford Bands Earn Division I Ratings

The Pickford Middle School and High School bands performed in the Michigan State Band and Orchestra District 13 Festival at Cedarville High School Friday, February 27, and Saturday, February 28. Three adjudicators rated the bands in the categories of tone, intonation, rhythm, technique, and interpretation.

The middle school band earned a Division I rating, receiving all I's in concert and a I in sight reading, for an overall rating of I. A Division I rating represents an excellent level of performance and musicianship by the band.

The high school earned a Division I rating, receiving a I, II, and a I in concert and II in sight reading, for an overall rating of I.

Both bands will perform at State Band Festival at Les Cheneaux Community School in Cedarville Tuesday, April 28.

Deer: From page 1

Pickford, Naubinway, Lakefield, near Newberry, and Naomikong, east of Tahquamenon Bay.

With a few more years of data, Mr. Minzey will be able to better determine each station's "trigger point," a point where the DNR can accurately determine that buck harvest will be lower in the next hunting season, and maybe even by how much.

"We will be able to determine if there is enough deer mortality to offset the number of births," he said.

This year's total measurements are higher in each area than during the 1995-96 winter, a year in which the DNR saw a high rate of die-offs across the Upper Peninsula.

The local deer herd still has not recovered from a 50% drop in numbers from that winter, Mr. Minzey said.

A big difference between this winter and the last five, he noted, is that the EUP has seen a deeper snowpack earlier this year, putting stress on the deer earlier and longer.

"We got snow early and it has stayed throughout the winter," he said.

The following is a list of total and long-term snow accumulation measurements in the EUP and current and average snowpack measurements in each station (as of Friday, March 7):

| Measure Stations | Total Accumulation |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Long-term Average (5 years) | |
| Rudyard area | 283 inches |
| 200 inches | |
| Pickford area | 276 inches |
| 200 inches | |
| Naubinway | 287 inches |
| 146 inches | |
| Lakefield | 284 inches |
| 191 inches | |
| Naomikong | 294 inches |
| 182 inches | |
| Measure Site | Current Snowpack |
| Average Snowpack (5 years) | |
| (as of March 7) | |
| Rudyard area | 23 inches |
| 19 inches | |
| Pickford area | 24 inches |
| 19 inches | |
| Naubinway | 22 inches |
| 18 inches | |
| Lakefield | 27 inches |
| 18 inches | |
| Naominking | 22 inches |
| 18 inches | |

Free Family Bowling Is March 24

A free family fun night of bowling is set for Tuesday, March 24, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Gateway Lanes in St. Ignace.

The event includes two games of bowling, shoes, pizza, and beverages.

The event is in recognition of parenting awareness month and is sponsored by Mackinac County Child Protection Roundtable.

Specials

Audie's Mackinaw City (231) 436-5744

MONDAY - THURSDAY • Audie Burger & Draft Beer \$7.00

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