

Jean Huskey, Donna Pope Honored for Contributions to School and Community

By Karen Gould

The countless volunteer hours and contributions made to the community by Jean Huskey and Donna Pope were recognized by members of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society. The two St. Ignace women were given the Friends of Education Award.

The organization, which promotes excellence in education and the personal and professional growth of women educators, surprised the two women with the awards Saturday, March 21. The presentations were made by the Eastern Upper Peninsula group at its March meeting, which was held at the United Methodist Church in St. Ignace.

Mrs. Pope, who had volunteered to help prepare the group's luncheon, was told that her friend, Mrs. Huskey, was going to receive the award and to keep it a surprise. Group members also asked for Mrs. Pope's assistance in getting Mrs. Huskey to the meeting, so

Mrs. Pope solicited her friend's help in preparing the lunch. What the women educators did not tell Mrs. Pope was that she, too, was going to be honored.

Both honorees, said organization members, contribute many volunteer hours to the school, sports programs, and other local organizations including St. Ignace Area Hope, community churches, Mackinac Straits Hospital, and raising funds to fight cancer.

Mrs. Huskey, who owns Art Huskey and Sons Excavating in St. Ignace, offers the company's equipment to help build the school's sledding hill each year and she volunteers for other events at the school and in the community, organization members noted.

"The Huskey trucks are up at the school constantly rearranging our snowbanks for the kids so they had a hill to sled on. She's always up there for the kids," said St. Ignace teacher Michelle LaTocha. "We appreciate you so much."



Even before arriving to help with the luncheon, Mrs. Huskey was delivering baked goods for a bake sale for the school.

Mrs. Pope, a former head cook at the school, always is at the

school, volunteering her time for events such as Apple Days and Snow Daze.

Mrs. Pope is "a quiet hero in the community with a work ethic that we only hope our kids will aspire

to," said Ms. LaTocha. "She gives 110% to both the kids and the community."

The women said they appreciated the award, although they pointed out they often receive help from

others. "I don't care what you do," said Mrs. Huskey, "You never do it alone." Mrs. Pope agreed. "You can't do it alone," she said. "There's always good help." Both ladies received plaques and a plant from members of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society.

County Buys Eight New Patrol Cars Locally

By Karen Gould

Mackinac County will purchase eight sheriff patrol cars for \$171,590 under a four-year, lease-to-buy program approved by county commissioners Thursday, March 12. The V-8 Ford Crown Victorias will be purchased from Mackinac Ford Sales in St. Ignace. \$22,315 each. Five will be black with white doors for \$22,315 each and three will be painted in single colors (brown, silver, and black) for \$20,005 each, according to Paul Krause of Mackinac Ford Sales.

The department now has nine brown vehicles and will keep one of them. The county will try to sell the eight old patrol cars locally before seeking an interested taxi cab company, which has been done in the past.

Newberry Motors bid \$22,862 each for eight-cylinder Dodge Chargers and \$21,877 six-cylinder versions. O'Connors Chrysler Dodge Jeep of Pickford bid \$23,087 and Signature Ford Lincoln-Mercury of Owosso provided catalog pricing, and not a bid, that totaled \$22,159 per car,

plus delivery charges.

Commissioners approved financing through First National Bank of St. Ignace at 4.1%, a rate obtained by Commission Chair Dawn Nelson. In seeking the bids, Sheriff Strait had asked the dealerships for financing. Mackinac Sales responded with Ford Motor Credit at 5.35% and Newberry Motors offered 5% through M-Bank or Soo-Coop Credit Union.

When payment of the four-year lease is complete, the county can buy the vehicles for \$1 each.

Vintage Sleds Compete at Cedarville Track



Tom Huff of Cedarville (far right) is followed around a turn by Shawn Robinson of Alanson (middle) and Steve Stec of Pickford during the Blizzard 200 Vintage Snowmobile Race in Cedarville.

By Jonathan Eppley

A week of warm weather convinced organizers of the Blizzard 200 Vintage Snowmobile Race that there wouldn't be enough snow left on the half-mile Cedarville race track to hold the event. So much snow had melted at Taylor's Pit that organizers hauled in snow from nearby snow banks to build a base for the track. Race organizer Dan Autore said more than 300 dump truck loads of snow, about 3,750 yards, was hauled three days prior to the race.

"Every parking lot in town I think we stole snow from," he said.

Over night Friday, March 20, an inch of new snow fell on the area, creating a perfect setting for the Saturday morning race. More than 500 spectators and crew members cheered on 42 racers, including 24 from the Eastern Upper Peninsula, as they zipped around a track that featured both left and right turns. The snowmobiles had to be at least 34 years old to be entered in the race.

Mark Williams of the Williams Welding team from Gulliver took first place, winning \$2,000, as well as \$1,000 for winning first place in the triple crown. The triple crown championship was based a point system for three races at Lincoln, Sault Ste. Marie, and Cedarville. The Williams Welding team also took first place in the Lincoln race Saturday, March 7.

As racers looped around the track, their machines created divots and bumps into the track, making the race that much more challenging. Many racers had to make



Tom Huff (left) and Tom Sherlund, both of Cedarville, zip down the track at the Blizzard 200 Vintage Snowmobile Race at Taylor's Pit in Cedarville Saturday, March 21.



Mark Williams of Gulliver leans into a turn in front of the Les Cheneaux Snowmobile Club during a vintage snowmobile race Saturday, March 21. Mr. Williams won first place at the race in Cedarville.

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727 and Counting...

Clock Maker Gives Away His Unique Pieces

By Audrey Hutchison

Robert "Bob" Van Horn of Cedarville has made and given away 727 clocks.

For a hobby, this gracious 85-year-old man makes what he calls "cabin clocks." He has made hundreds since that day in 1993 when his wife, Ann, asked him to build her one for their laundry room. He found he really enjoyed the creativity of the project.

At his home on Muskie Bay, Mr. Van Horn says he has now forgotten where he bought the works for that first clock, but since then, he orders the clock works from a catalog. In his first pieces, he made round holes to signify the hours, later coming up with the idea of plugging them with wooden plugs of various colors.

Now, he uses parts of discarded shotgun shells to mark the hours. Mr. Van Horn visits the Les Cheneaux Sportsman's Club firing range out by the quarry, which is open once a week, and picks up the brass from spent 12-gauge and .22 rifle shells. This touch of brass makes the clocks quite attractive. He gives the finished products to his friends.

Before retiring, Mr. Van Horn worked 10 to 14 hours a day as the owner and operator of four ready-mix cement plants. Three of the plants were in Oakland County and one in Macomb County, with a fleet of 40 trucks and five gravel trains.

Bob and Ann Van Horn moved to the Les Cheneaux Islands area from Pontiac in



Bob Van Horn is standing in front of some of the first clocks he made. They hang above the desk in his office.

Oakland County in 1971, when they purchased a home on McKay Bay. From 1981 to 1986, they owned and operated The Channel Marker Restaurant and Lounge. They moved in 1988 to Muskie Bay, where he lives now. After a series of bone surgeries and emphysema, Mrs. Van Horn passed away in January. Mr. Horn is planning a memorial service for his wife July 25 at Our Lady of the Snows Church.

The most enjoyable times of their life together, he said, were spent in their 26-foot boat, *The Island Hopper*. Many trips were taken across the water from Les Cheneaux to Mackinac Island's Grand Hotel.

The couple also enjoyed entertaining in their home in

years past. On many occasions, Les Cheneaux residents would see people enjoying a party at the Van Horn home on McKay Bay, where they had a player piano and a bar in their basement.

The couple traveled all over the United States and Canada, including Alaska. They went to Las Vegas once by air, but Mr. Van Horn was an uneasy air traveler and said he never wished to fly again.

This summer, Mr. Van Horn is looking forward to golfing and fishing in addition to clock making. His plans are to sell his home on the bay, and move into something smaller. For now, he enjoys his winter hobby and his home's panoramic view of Muskie Bay.

Extra \$25 in Jobless Benefits Begins This Week

Unemployed Michigan workers will begin collecting an extra \$25 a week in unemployment benefits, starting with payments issued March 23.

The compensation is payable to those who are otherwise entitled to either state or federal unemployment benefits. The extra federal-funded benefits are part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Unemployed workers will receive a retroactive lump sum payment for any weeks they claimed

and were eligible for going back to the week ending February 28, when the benefit increase became effective. The lump sum payment could be \$25 to \$75. These back payments are expected to be issued in April.

The extra \$25 a week is taxable. Those who have taxes withheld from their benefit payments will notice a slight decrease in the \$25 FAC, once taxes are deducted. The lump-sum payments will also be reduced if taxes are withheld.

The added benefits will temporarily increase all state and feder-

al unemployment benefit payments and temporarily boost Michigan's maximum weekly benefit from \$362 to \$387. The \$25 is a temporary payment that will be applied to weeks of unemployment for those with current claims and those who establish claims before the end of 2009. FAC payments will be phased out by the week ending July 3, 2010.

Michigan employers will not be charged for the extra unemployment benefits as they are federally funded.

Community Forums Set for Planning Area Trails

Community forums have been scheduled around the EUP in April to help regional planners develop a regional non-motorized transportation plan for Chippewa, Luce, and Mackinac counties.

EUP Regional Planning has initiated the effort, funded by the Michigan Department of Transportation. The plan can be used by the state highway department and local officials to prioritize projects, identify funding sources, and guide investment in the region's non-motorized transportation system. It will focus on bicycle and pedestrian facilities and is designed to complement other statewide trails initiatives.

The community forums will be

from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., with brief presentations scheduled at 3:15 p.m.; 4:15 p.m.; 5:15 p.m., and 6:15 p.m. People are welcome to stop in anytime during the open house to meet with staff, review maps, and help in identifying locations of future non-motorized trails, trail facilities, and trail connectors in their community. The community forums will take place at the following locations:

- Monday, April 6 - St. Ignace Public Library, St. Ignace
- Tuesday, April 7 - Clark Township Hall, Cedarville
- Wednesday, April 8 - Whitefish Township Hall, Paradise
- Thursday, April 9 - Avery

Square, Sault Ste. Marie

- Tuesday, April 14 - Curtis Community Building, Curtis

- Wednesday, April 15 - McMillan Township Hall, Newberry

- Thursday, April 16 - DeTour Village Town Hall, DeTour

Local community participation is crucial to the success of this planning effort, EUP Regional Planning reported. If people are unable to attend but would like to provide input, they can download a comment form from www.eup-planning.org. Click the Non-Motorized Trails Plan link on the main page to find the registration form, comment form, and other information about the project.