

School Board Seats, Ballot Proposals To Come Before Mackinac County Voters May 5

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Les Cheneaux

Dunn, Malkowski Race for Seat on Board; Ambulance Millage Sought

By Jonathan Eppley

School board seats, an ambulance services millage, and a school millage renewal will be on the ballot in Clark Township Tuesday, May 5.

Voters in the Les Cheneaux Community Schools district will be asked to renew 18 mills for school operations and choose one of two candidates running for one seat on the Board of Education. Lisa Dunn and Vernon Malkowski, both of Cedarville, are vying for the four-year position on the board.

An incumbent, Mrs. Dunn was appointed to the board in January to fill a vacancy left by Dan Burrows, who resigned for personal reasons after nearly 20 years on the board.

The 18 mills, assessed against non-homestead property, will generate an estimated \$2,305,459 for the school district.

Also on the ballot will be a five-year, 0.75 mill township tax levy proposal to fund two full-time emergency service workers for the Clark Township Volunteer Ambulance Corps. If approved, the millage will provide the ambulance corps with funding to hire at least two emergency service technicians as full-time employees to work the day shift Monday through Friday, or to contract the services through a third-party contractor.

Lisa Dunn

Mrs. Dunn earned a bachelor's degree in theater arts at Arizona State University. She is a homemaker and advisor to the Cedarville Schools Drama Club. She is also a member of the Les Cheneaux Education Foundation and secretary of the Fund the Future campaign.

She and her husband, Dale, have a son, Dale R. Dunn.

Mrs. Dunn has been associated with Les Cheneaux Community Schools for more than 22 years as both a parent and a volunteer. She was appointed interim trustee to the board of education in January to complete the remainder of Mr. Burrow's four-year term, which ends June 30.

Mrs. Dunn's biggest school concern is the uncertainty of future state funding, which has declined over the past several years owing to decreasing student enrollment. She hopes to work with the board to find solutions to the district's financial problems to keep pace with new teaching techniques, technologies, and course offerings.

"I believe that our school has always been an outstanding example of a rural school that provides top quality education on limited resources," she said. "I would like to help in any way I can to see that our school continues to thrive both educationally and financially."

Vernon Malkowski

Mr. Malkowski is a graduate of Les Cheneaux Community Schools. He owns and operates Vern's Handyman's Service and is a retired corrections officer who lives in Cedarville with his wife, Jacqueline.

Mr. Malkowski wants to work with the board of education to find ways to balance the district's budget and make sure no jobs are cut at Cedarville schools.

"Our present administration wants to cut support staff and outsource our janitorial service. The jobs that are cut take away from the quality of care and education for our children," he said. "The tax dollars you pay should stay in the area, and not go to an out-of-area company. Outsourcing jobs is not the answer."

He said if elected, he will ask the tough questions other board members may be afraid to ask, and bring about personal-agenda reform to the board.



Lisa Dunn



Vernon Malkowski

By Karen Gould

Across the county, 9,598 registered voters will consider a variety of school and township proposals when they head to the polls Tuesday, May 5. Polls will open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.

Absentee voters who wish to request a ballot by mail have until Saturday, May 2, at 2 p.m. or they can obtain an absentee ballot in person in their local clerk's office until 4 p.m. Monday, May 4. Emergency absentee voting is allowed up to 4 p.m. Tuesday, May 5.

Hudson and Portage township voters will vote on millages, as will voters in Clark Township (see *Les Cheneaux Community Schools district story*).

Hudson Township

Seeking a 2 mill increase for improving roads, the township is proposing six-year levy beginning in 2009 and running through 2015. For the first year, the millage is estimated to raise \$32,976.

Portage Township

Back on the ballot after failing in

November 2008, is a proposal for capital improvements of 1 mill. The three-year levy, running from 2009 through 2011, would generate an estimated \$72,447 the first year. The funds would be used to purchase and maintain the former Curtis Elementary School building and its 34.42 acres of property. The township plans to lease the site to Three Lakes Academy, if the millage is approved by voters.

Voters will consider renewals for school millages in four districts within the county.

Engadine Consolidated Schools

Voters will consider two proposals for school funding.

A renewal millage proposal would allow the school district to levy the statutory rate of 18 mills on all non-homestead property. The millage is required for the district to receive its per pupil allowance. The five-year millage beginning this year and running through 2013 would provide funding for operating. The levy would generate about \$1,934,930.

A second millage before voters is a 1 mill

levy for four years starting in 2010 and running through 2013, and would be levied only to the extent necessary to restore the Headlee reduction. The millage will provide funds for operating purposes. The first year of the levy is expected to raise about \$197,496.

Moran Township School District

A 1.75 mill levy renewal is proposed for the building and site sinking fund that expired last year. The two-year millage beginning in 2009 would collect about \$150,000 the first year. A levy of 1.7356 mills would be put in the school's sinking fund to be used for the purchase of real estate and for construction and maintenance of school buildings. A levy of 0.0144 mills would be used to restore the Headlee reduction.

Mackinac Island Public Schools

Mackinac Island voters will also consider a school millage of 7.4 mills. Information was published for Island voters in the February issue of the *Mackinac Island Town Crier* and is available at no charge at www.mackinacislandnews.com.

Incumbents Weiss, Litzner Run Unopposed for School Board in St. Ignace

By Karen Gould

Incumbents Jane Weiss and Rick Litzner are running unopposed for their seats on the St. Ignace Area Schools Board of Education. Their four-year positions will be on the May 5 ballot.

Jane Weiss has a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting from Lake Superior State University. She and her husband, Gary, have two grown sons, Richard and Joseph. Mrs. Weiss is employed at B-n-L Cafe in St. Ignace.

Mrs. Weiss is president of the board of education and is running for her third term.

"Young people are our future," she said. "I believe in the education process and hope that I can add to it by serving the district in this role."

Finances and curriculum are two major issues facing the local school. The financial issue is twofold, she said.

"We are and have been experiencing declining enrollment. With this we receive less money as the number [of students] decreases. We still need to maintain the programs with less students. We don't lose students in just one grade, it is throughout the system.

With the state's economic downturn, we need to be watchful of what funds we will receive from them. We have to have our school districts budget in place by July 1 so we can conduct business, and this is before the state tells us what we will be getting for that school year. So we have to be conservative while still trying to keep all programs.

"With new state guidelines for graduation for seniors, much more is put on the students of what is required. The Class of 2011 will be the first graduating class that has to meet the requirements. As a district, we need to be sure that all students are able to perform under these new guidelines.

Our goal is to have all graduates



Jane Weiss

go on to college, armed forces, or the workforce as well prepared as we can offer them. With all the new requirements, it will be our job to make sure all students receive the education they deserve."

Rick Litzner, who has served on the board for 16 years, is the vice president. He is a LaSalle High School graduate. He is retired from



Rick Litzner

the U.S. Forest Service and is a veterans' counselor for the county.

He and his wife, Jeanne, have two grown daughters, Stephanie and Samantha, and a son, Caleb, who is a sophomore at LaSalle.

People have asked him to run for reelection, he said, and he wants to make a contribution to the community.

12,000 Trees Will Be Planted Across U.P. for Earth Day

By Ryan Schlehober

More than 70 church congregations across the Upper Peninsula will participate in blessing and planting 12,000 young trees in their areas Wednesday, April 22, as a celebration of Earth Day. Many churches in Mackinac County will take part.

The Earth Keepers environmental group purchased 12,000 white pine and red pine trees, 12-inches to 16-inches in height, funded by an Environmental Protection Agency grant, and supported by nonprofit organizations Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and the Superior Watershed Partnership.

Each church or religious organization will be given between 100 and 150 trees to plant at their chosen location.

"This was a great opportunity to continue our stewardship of the earth, and, with the funding we

received, we had a chance to buy these trees," said Gail Griffith, co-chair of Earth Keepers and a member of the Marquette Unitarian Universalist Congregation. She co-chairs Earth Keepers with Zen Buddhist Paul Lehmborg of Marquette. "We tried to get as many trees as we could, and 12,000 is a significant number."

Participating congregations will receive their trees from their local conservation offices, and each one will bless the trees at 3 p.m. before planting them.

Congregations are being assisted by student teams from Northern Michigan University.

Earth Keepers collected more than 2,000 pounds of unwanted and outdated pharmaceuticals in 2007, and 320 tons of electronic waste in 2006. In 2005, the group collected 47 tons of household hazardous materials from across the Upper Peninsula.

"Everybody's got a civic duty," he said.

Through the years, he has found the work interesting and he has enjoyed being a member of the school board, even when difficult decisions were required.

Mr. Litzner sees the district's finances as the major issue faced by the board. He also said offering programs that will continue to improve the quality of education for students is important to the future.

"We have declining enrollment, so we have less students, that means less money," he said, "and you have to start cutting programs and we don't want to do that."

Determining a way to minimize cuts to have the least impact on programs will be something the board will be working on. The state's new curriculum requirement is a step in the right direction, he said, in improving education for all students.

Congregations participating in the Eastern Upper Peninsula include, in St. Ignace, St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church, Trinity Lutheran Church Zion Lutheran Church (in St. Ignace and Moran), and United Methodist Church; Bethel Lutheran Church in Cedarville; Pickford Presbyterian Church; St. Joseph Catholic Church in Rudyard; St. Gregory Catholic Church and Trinity Lutheran Church in Newberry; St. James Episcopal Church, Faith Lutheran Church, and First United Presbyterian Church in Sault Ste. Marie.

Earth Keepers started in 2004 as a faith-based, environmental organization and now has 140 participating congregations in the U.P.

For a fall project, Earth Keepers plans to coordinate a collective effort to create community gardens in the Upper Peninsula.

Incumbents O'Boyle, Brown Seek Reelection to Gros Cap School Board



Nicole Brown



Janice O'Boyle

By Karen Gould

In Moran Township, Gros Cap school board incumbents Janice O'Boyle and Nicole Brown are running unopposed for two seats in the Tuesday, May 5, election. Mrs. O'Boyle has served on the board for 15 years and Mrs. Brown was appointed to fill a seat vacated by Ed Radecki in 2008.

School board seats are for four years.

Janice O'Boyle of Brevort is a retired medical assistant and a former business owner. She and her husband, Sean, have two children in college, a daughter, Katelynn, and a son, Kyle, and their son, Lawrence, is a ninth grade student at LaSalle High School.

She has 15 years experience on the school board. She attended

Ohio Institute of Technology for computer programming and Ross Medical Institute and is a certified medical assistant.

She is seeking reelection for the students of the district.

The school is doing well, she said, and the board continually works to keep funding on course. The board also is responsible to plan for the future, and both funding and technology are major challenges the board faces, she said.

Technology is constantly changing, said Mrs. O'Boyle. Software requires upgrades, new products are always on the market, and the school needs to be kept up-to-date.

"As a board member," she said, "you're at least always trying to

Firefighters Receive New Custom-built Water Tanker in Clark Township

By Jonathan Eppley

The Clark Township volunteer fire department has a new, custom-built 3,500-gallon water tanker truck to make firefighting faster and more efficient. It took about two years to design and build the \$228,500 tanker, which was delivered about a month ago from Miami-based Engine and Accessory Manufacturing.

Features include two 3,500-gallon portable "drop-tanks" that are left on scene while the tanker is refilled elsewhere, two infrared blind-spot cameras to make hooking-up the drop-tanks easier, hose storage boxes, and a vacuum pump that can fill the stainless steel tank on the truck in about two minutes.

Tankers typically have only one drop-tank, but the department wanted to make replenishing the water supply as efficient as possible, said firefighter Mike Kasper.

"The idea is to not let this truck sit still. When we only had the one drop-tank, what we would find is we would come back to fill it, they would have the drop-tank only half empty. We would fill it back up, and then have to wait until they emptied it down to empty our truck. Now, with the two drop-tanks, we can hook them together,

empty out the truck, go, and come back to empty another load," he said. "Basically you're looking at 7,000 gallons on the ground compared to 2,400" gallons with the department's old tanker.

The new drop-tanks are also easier for firefighters to maneuver because they have aluminum frames instead of steel.

The vacuum pump and longer hoses allow firefighters to draw water from more than three times farther away than the old tanker. It can reach water up to 80 feet away, compared to the 25-foot reach of the old tanker. The new pump also allows less air to be sucked into the tank, which is almost 33% larger than the tank on the old truck.

"There's very few fire truck companies that produce a vacuum tanker. The technology isn't new, but the idea of using it for the fire service is new. So not a lot of major companies have embraced it," Mr. Kasper said. "Our problem here in Clark Township is we're surrounded by water wherever you go, we just couldn't get close enough to it with our trucks."

The new truck allows the department to access water from many spots it couldn't before.

The new truck is one of the



Clark Township Fire Chief Chet Kasper stands with the volunteer department's new 3,500-gallon water tanker in front of the firehall in Cedarville Thursday, April 16. The department recently received the new tanker, which it purchased for \$228,500 through a one-year millage approved by voters in 2006.

biggest tankers in the area, Mr. Kasper said, and he plans to use it to work with neighboring fire crews if necessary. Other tankers are typically between 2,000 and 2,500 gallons, he said.

Custom features on the new truck were chosen by a five-person committee of volunteer firefighters, including Fire Chief Chet Kasper, Steve Honnila, Mark Mercherberger, Mark Kester, and Mr. Kasper. It was paid for with a one-year, one-mill levy approved in 2006.

Clark Township is trying to sell the department's old tanker, a converted 1980s GMC milk truck, on the Internet. It was purchased in the early 1990s for about \$23,000.

"This is really a big improvement for us," Mr. Kasper said. "The tanker that we had was a good tanker and we had it for about 20 years. It served us well, but it was wearing out and it was time to replace it. I think we've done very well with this new truck."