

Mackinac Island

Repairs Underway After Spring Storm Takes Out Marina Pylons

By Karen Gould

Six outer pylons at the Mackinac Island Marina were destroyed when an early spring windstorm drove large ice chunks into the wooden pylons. One steel pylon was bent. At the nearby Mackinac Island State Park dock, a pylon is missing and will be replaced, and a second pylon will be repaired.

"When that ice blows in, it can do quite a lot of damage," said Tom Bajko of Ryba Marine Construction of Cheboygan.

Mr. Bajko was the project manager of the \$5 million marina renovation work that began in the fall of 2007. The 76-slip marina is owned and operated by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

Crews began replacing the missing pylons Monday, May 18, and the work is expected to be finished by the end of the week, depending on weather conditions.

Storms like the one experienced on the Island this spring are not uncommon, said Mr. Bajko.

"It's not every year, but you might get six out of 10 years that it happens."

The pylons being replaced are used by sailors to guide their boats during mooring. They also help secure larger boats that are tied to the poles with ropes.

The tug *Amber Mae* is guiding



From a small working barge, Ryba Marine crew members work in pouring rain to begin the process of replacing a pylon at the Mackinac Island marina.

the crane barge along the row of outer pylons as work progresses.

Crews also will perform warranty work from the marina's renovation project, including doing touch-up painting.

Aside from the windstorm

bringing in the damaging ice, the marina's new ice suppression system worked well protecting the rest of the dockage, said Mr. Bajko.

When work on the marina is completed, Ryba crews will work on other Island dock projects for

about three weeks, depending on weather. In addition to the work at the Mackinac State Park dock, they will be working on an addition to the Yoder Dock, and driving pylons for Arnold Transit Company at the Coal Dock.

Symposium on Emergency Planning Will Be June 3 at LSSU

For Health Care Workers, Police, Emergency Crews, Public

Cross-border, infectious disease, emergency preparedness, and response to public health events will be topics discussed at the fourth annual Rural and Ready 2009 Symposium at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie Wednesday, June 3.

The one-day symposium is for medical providers, healthcare personnel, governmental agencies, first responders, law enforcement, and preparedness personnel, as well as the public.

Keynote speakers will be Mary Chaffee and Michael Meit.

In the morning, Dr. Chaffee will discuss the willingness of health care staff to work in a disaster area.

Mr. Meit's afternoon discussion will focus on historical development of rural public health systems and the implications for public health preparedness, focusing on the issue of urban to rural evacuation following a disaster or public health

emergency.

Those attending throughout the day will be given information to enhance their abilities to respond and communicate during a public health emergency, identify cross-border peers and partners in public health preparedness, develop a fuller awareness of the area's emergency readiness, and identify issues in infectious diseases.

Presentations will also provide participants with an increased awareness of U.S. response to infectious diseases at the international border.

Registration check-in and breakfast will be from 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. at the university's Cislser Center. Registration is \$15 person and free of charge for employees of a sponsor business or organization. Members of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians will not be charged a fee.

To register, go online to www.chippewahd.com and click

on the Rural and Ready '09 Symposium link. Call Diane Krueger of Chippewa County Health Department at (906) 635-

3627 or Gail Marsh at the Tribal Health Center at (906) 632-5200, extension 23370, for more information.

Bridge Traffic Up 9.3% in April

Traffic crossing the Mackinac Bridge increased 9.3% for the month of April, compared to April 2008, according to the Mackinac Bridge Authority.

This April, 230,508 vehicles crossed the bridge, while 210,946

crossed during April 2008. Overall, traffic is up 0.6% in 2009 over the same period last year.

Fare revenue for April was down 1% compared to 2008, owing to a 15.9% decline in commercial traffic.

Veterans Officer on Mackinac Island Wed.

Rick Stewart, veterans service officer for the American Legion, will visit Mackinac Island Wednesday, May 27, offering assistance with military disability claims, Agent Orange issues, headstones and grave markers concerns, or any other questions involving the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Mr. Stewart will hold office hours from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the

Conference Room on the second floor of Community Hall. His visit comes at the request of Mackinac Island's Chapman-St. Onge-Dankowski Post 299.

Veterans are not required to bring any documents during their visit with Mr. Stewart. For more information, contact Post Commander Paul Wandrie at (906) 847-3516.

Man Arrested After M-129 Police Chase

A 47-year-old Barbeau man was arrested by troopers from the St. Ignace Michigan State Police post after he led them on a three-mile long chase that reached speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour Sunday, May 24, at 1:45 a.m.

After troopers turned around to investigate a vehicle that was weaving on M-129 north of Cedarville, the vehicle accelerated and ran the stop sign at M-129 and M-134 at a very high rate of speed. The driver continued to flee police and lost control of the vehicle near the intersection of Kromiller Road and 4

Mile Block Road, where he struck a tree.

The man then ran from the crash scene into a wooded area, where he had to be subdued by police to take him into custody.

He was examined and released from Mackinac Straits Hospital and was lodged in the Mackinac County Jail. He will be charged with fleeing and eluding, operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, second offense, and driving with a suspended license, police reported.

His name will not be available until he is arraigned in court.

St. Ignace News Policies

Letters:

All responsible letters will be considered for publication and may be edited. They must be signed and a telephone number must be included for verification. Personal thank-you notes, personal attacks against other people, form letters, and letters promoting political candidates are not accepted, although letters for or against ballot proposals are welcome.

Obituaries:

The St. Ignace News maintains a policy of not charging for obituaries and we do often add information or rewrite them for clarity and reader interest. Obituaries that the family wants published exactly as submitted can be placed in the newspaper for \$75. Photographs are welcome at no charge.

Weddings:

Weddings with photographs are published without charge within 45 days of the ceremony. After 45 days, a photograph can be included for \$35.00.

Internet:

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Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



Supreme Nominations Under Review

There is no darker cloud over Michigan politics than the stealth funding of the crazy-quilt process for electing justices to the Supreme Court.

Crazy because partisan conventions put candidates on a "non-partisan" ballot, and then the parties spend millions of partisan funds to tout their decidedly partisan nominees. Nothing wrong with being partisan – except when nominated under false colors.

Crazy because last year under Michigan's weak campaign finance law, "the greatest portion of campaign spending was not disclosed in any campaign finance report" for court spending, according to the nonprofit, non-partisan Michigan Campaign Finance Network (MCFN).

That's a severe indictment of the current system. But hope may be on the way, in large part because of bipartisan recognition in the Senate and House that better reporting and other changes are needed.

Among ideas afoot in Lansing: Getting rid of the "non-partisan" folly, more timely public disclosure of contributions, and electing justices by districts, as are Appeals Court judges.

Last year, for the first time in 24 years, an incumbent justice was defeated at the polls. Despite a record war chest, and the cherished "incumbent" designation on the ballot, Chief Justice Cliff Taylor, who raised a record \$1,937,759, was defeated by Circuit Court Judge Diane Marie Hathaway by nearly 370,000 votes out of 3.75 million votes cast.

Hathaway raised \$752,736. But beyond their individual figures were the third party expenditures on their behalf that were the dominant part of the campaigns.

Watchdog MCFN said: "The political parties and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce spent \$3.8 million on television issue advertisements that defined the character and qualifications of the candidates without explicitly exhorting a vote for or against either candidate."

These issue ads were replete among the \$5.6 million in TV court ads last year, including \$398,596 in the Traverse City-Alpena market and \$312,299 in the Marquette market.

"Among the notable issue ads," said MCFN, "was one sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce that said Judge Hathaway gave a low sentence to a sex offender; one sponsored by the Michigan Republican Party that featured a bikini-clad woman on a beach and said that Judge Hathaway had previously pursued a seat on the Court of Appeals so she could have any easy work schedule, and one sponsored by the Michigan Democratic Party that featured a 'dramatization' of a sleeping judge and testimony by litigants in a wrongful death case who accused Chief Justice Taylor of sleeping during oral argument of their case.

"Many observers asserted that the 'sleeping judge' ad was pivotal to the campaign's outcome."

It was indeed a memorable and effective ad, although not confirmed as accurate. But other factors, including anti-Taylor efforts by environmental and other interests, also were at play.

MCFN, in concluding the Supreme Court portion of its just-released Citizens Guide to Michigan Campaign Finance, said, "an appellant who wants to spend heavily to secure the selection of a justice who is perceived to be sympathetic can simply move his money under the table. The conflicts of interest that compromise due process can be concealed easily.

"The court cannot fix this problem. The Legislature must act to bring transparency and integrity to the state campaign advertising."

The Republican-ruled Senate appears ready to give priority to the issue, led by Senators Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau) and Alan Cropsey (R-DeWitt).

"I'm very hopeful there is going to be progress," said Republican Justice Betty Weaver of Glen Arbor, a leading advocate of change in the process.

High time.

Tribal Energy Conservation

Long before Indian casinos became big factors in the Michigan economy, the state's tribes were leaders in conserving natural resources. Last week, the state House, in passing and sending to the Senate a plan that will use \$194 million in federal stimulus dollars for energy conservation programs, included funds for a dozen tribes.

"Getting this money into the community will get our workers back on the job weatherizing buildings and working in the energy conservation sector, which will jump start our local economy," Representative Dan Scripps (D-Leland) said of funding in his district that includes \$160,000 for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and \$54,000 for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians.

The plan also includes these funds for northern tribes: Bay Mills Indian Community, \$51,000; Hannahville Indian Community, \$35,100; Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, \$68,900; Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, \$25,900; Little Traverse Bands of Odawa Indians, \$80,200; and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, \$382,400.

The Cawthorne Clout

The Lansing-based online *Dome Magazine* knows a success story when it sees one. It just published one about "Strait Shooter" Dennis Cawthorne, whose trail of achievement includes Manistee, Mackinac Island, and more than four decades on the Capital City political scene.

He was elected to the state House from Manistee in 1966 at age 26 and served 12 years, four of them as Republican minority leader. He co-founded a lobbying firm in 1979, and then, in 1999, formed a lobbying firm with legendary ex-Attorney General Frank Kelley, Democratic "Eternal General," who retired in 1998 after 37 years in office.

Chris Christoff, longtime Lansing bureau chief for the *Detroit Free Press* and author of *Dome's* lengthy article, called Cawthorne "Mackinac Island's most ardent advocate."

He was general manager of the Mackinac Island Chamber of Commerce summers while a Harvard Law student in the mid-60s; built the Village Inn, one of Mackinac's most popular eateries and watering holes; is registered to vote on the Island; built a waterfront home that has a spectacular view of sunsets and the Mackinac Bridge; was chairman of the Mackinac Island State Park Commission for a record 16 years until replaced by partner Kelley in 2007. Cawthorne now is vice chair.

Writes Christoff: "He's done much to protect the island from overdevelopment, and has considered writing a book about his island experiences."

George Weeks retired in 2006 after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.

Island Post Seeks Veterans Photographs

Photographs and memorabilia are needed for the veterans room exhibit at the Stuart House Museum on Market Street on Mackinac Island. Planned by American Legion Post 299, the room will pay tribute to the Island's military veterans.

Those with items or questions are asked to contact Post Commander Paul Wandrie at (906) 847-3516.

U.P. State Retirees Will Meet June 1

Upper Peninsula Chapter 16 of the State Employee Retirees Association will meet Monday, June 1, at 1:30 p.m. in the conference room of the State Office Building in Escanaba.

All members and their guests may attend.

The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.