

# The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave



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## Weekend To Feature 880 Old Tractors

By Michael Ayala

More than 800 vintage tractors from 1965 and earlier will come into Mackinaw City and St. Ignace beginning Thursday, September 17. After crossing the Mackinac Bridge

Friday, September 18, the tractors will pass through downtown St. Ignace and stop at Kewadin Shores Casino, where a showing of the vehicles will be from Friday afternoon through Sunday. The show is

free to the public. The parade across the bridge will feature Max Armstrong, co-host of television's "This Week in Agribusiness," marking the second annual tractor show produced by Nostalgia Productions of

St. Ignace.

Mr. Armstrong is well known to viewers of RFD-TV, "rural America's television network," offering

Turn to page 11: Tractors

## Ice Road Trucker Hauling To Show

Big Rigs To Wow Crowds in St. Ignace

By Mark Tower

Rolling into St. Ignace in a 2003 379 Peterbilt with 792 horsepower, a custom black and white paint job, and a trailer sporting more than 200 lights will be the guest of honor of the 2009 Richard Crane Memorial Big Rig Truck Show, Alex Debogorski.

One of the drivers featured on the History Channel's "Ice Road Truckers," Mr. Debogorski has driven routes in Alaska and Canada, including the famous "ice road" by which he carried equipment and supplies across 350 miles of permafrost and frozen lakes and rivers from Yellowknife, Northern Territories to recently opened diamond mines further north.

"That is the main access to get to those places," Mr. Debogorski said. "The muskeg, lakes, and rivers become the roads."

But don't be surprised if Mr. Debogorski pulls into the show late this weekend. Both he and the Peterbilt's owner, Carl Carstens, are known for running a little behind schedule. Aptly named, Mr. Carstens' beautiful behemoth has been christened "Running Late."

Mr. Carstens said he is looking forward to bringing Mr. Debogorski across the Mackinac Bridge for

Turn to page 11: Debogorski



Alex Debogorski, who has been hauling loads through northern Canada for about 20 years and was featured prominently on the television show "Ice Road Truckers," will be the guest of honor at this year's Richard Crane Memorial Big Rig Truck Show in St. Ignace this weekend. Mr. Debogorski, who lives with his family in Yellowknife, Northern Territories, will be available for autographs and to meet fans at Little Bear East Arena from Thursday, September 17, through Saturday, September 19. (Photograph by Bob Wilson)

## Straits View – From a WWII Skytrain



The tip of the Upper Peninsula and the shoreline of St. Ignace can be seen from a 1944 Douglas C-47 Skytrain as it circles over the Mackinac Bridge during one of two flights made Saturday, September 5. The plane had permission to enter the airspace.

## Plane Lands on Mackinac Island

By Karen Gould

The entire 3,500 feet of Mackinac Island's runway was needed for the 1944 Douglas C-47 Skytrain that landed on the Island Saturday, September 5. C-47s were used extensively during World War II to carry paratroopers and supplies into battle, and afterward to supply isolated outposts, and this one was on a goodwill run from its home base at the Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run Airport in Belleville.

"If we had different conditions, it would be a very spooky landing, but everything was perfect," said Larry Amprim, manager of the Dispatch Riders. "Right where the runway starts, you'd better have

decreased power and touch down there because that aircraft does not have the ability to create a counter force like modern jets. The C-47 has brakes, but nowhere near strong enough to stop 25,000 pounds."

The restored C-47, designated a DC-3 in civilian configuration, made a quick stop on the tarmac to pick up passengers for a tour above the Mackinac Bridge and around the Island before landing a second time and opening its doors for public tours.

Mr. Amprim organized the trip north on the historic plane. It has been restored and is one of four planes owned by the Yankee Air Museum. It was brought to the Island by the Dispatch Riders, a motorcycle group affiliated with the museum that is seeking funds and memorabil-

Turn to page 12: Plane

## Hospital Turns to USDA for Long Term Care Funds

By Mark Tower

Mackinac Straits Hospital is once again considering a new long-term care facility in St. Ignace to replace the current, outdated facility on Burdette Street and is submitting a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan application this week.

Several funding options have been discussed for construction of a new long-term building behind the new hospital on North State Street, but hospital CEO Rod Nelson said

a federal loan is the hospital's best bet.

"We feel pretty good about it. We are hoping we will get the same outcome we received last time," he said, referring to USDA loans received for the new hospital construction.

For a long term care facility, Mackinac Straits Hospital is seeking a \$5 million loan, which will be paid in monthly payments of \$22,458 for 40 years. If approved,

Turn to page 6: Hospital

## Mackinac Island Seeks To Avoid Building Tear-down

New Hotel May Go Up in Place of Historic McNally Cottage

By Karen Gould

The proposed demolition of McNally Cottage and the construction of a three-story hotel and retail complex in its place meets zoning requirements, although it may not meet all architectural review standards, say Mackinac Island planning commissioners, who tabled the issue last week until they have more

time to review the request for the zoning application. They plan to take action on it at their next meeting, Tuesday, October 13.

The proposal to demolish the historic building spurred residents and planning commissioners to share their views at a tense, two-hour Planning Commission meeting Tuesday, September 8.

McNally Development LLC, a company of multiple investors, wants to construct a 22-suite hotel and retail structure on the Main Street property, which would require demolishing the old McNally house. Formerly a home, it has been used as a bed and breakfast under the name McNally Cottage and, this summer, to house seasonal

employees.

Commissioners and residents in attendance at the meeting say they respect the rights of the property owners, but by demolishing a historic structure, the company would be contributing to the destruction of the very reason most tourists visit Mackinac Island, for its charm and historic character.

Turn to page 7: McNally

## Northern Michigan Bats Likely Target for Disease

Congregating in Western U.P. Mines Puts Them at Risk

By Jane Alexander

Mackinac Island Town Crier  
In 2006, when researchers in New York state found piles of dead bats in four caves near Albany, they didn't know exactly what they were dealing with, and, for the most part, scientists still don't.

White-nose syndrome in bats, so

named because of the white ring of fungus found on their muzzles, and occasionally on ears and wings, has devastated the hibernating bat population in the Eastern United States and is most likely coming this way. It is expected to reach Michigan in about three years. Because bats eat insects, they are beneficial animals

to the farming industry, and this is where the impact of the disease will most likely be felt.

It is still unclear how, exactly, the syndrome is killing the bats, but many researchers believe it is causing them to wake up too frequently during hibernation and use up their fat stores, weakening their immune

systems. Thus far, the disease has only shown itself in hibernating bats, which will be a problem for Michigan, particularly northern Michigan, when the disease does reach the state, as little brown bats, the most common bat in northern Michigan, hibernate in large numbers in abandoned mines and caves in the Western Upper Peninsula.

Turn to page 2: Bats

## Les Cheneaux Islands

## Dump Site Approved for Channel Dredging Spoils

Dredging spoils from Clark Township's channel maintenance project will be dumped in the southeast corner of Taylor's Pit on M-129 in Cedarville, federal, state, and local officials have decided. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Clark Township have approved the site, which is owned by Frank Taylor. Mr. Taylor is donating the use of the property provided that he doesn't not have to pay for any costs incurred during the project.

The dredging will remove sedimentation and weeds in the channels around the Les Cheneaux Islands, where problems with navigation are harming the boating-dependent economy.

Angie Mundell, operations project manager for the Corps of Engineers, said a contract for the dredging project will be awarded to a third-party contractor by the end of September, after a 30-day environmental assessment on the dump site is completed. Depending on the project.

Turn to page 6: Dredging

### Index

Letters - page 2  
Calendar of Events - page 4  
Crossword - page 4

Lead News Stories - pages 3, 13  
Births - page 8  
Weddings - page 9  
Obituaries - page 10

Sports - page 14 - 17  
Classifieds - pages 22 - 24  
Correspondents - Section Two

### Death Notices

Beverly Anderson - 52  
James Carpenter - 64

Jean Donaghue - 70  
Milton Smith - 90

