

St. Ignace Author Completes Mackinac Island Counting Book for Toddlers

Combines Interests in Nature, Island, Teaching in the Process

By Mark Tower

Jennifer Powell of St. Ignace has combined her passions for art, children, teaching, and nature to create a book for toddlers set on Mackinac Island.

The former elementary school teacher got feedback on the writing process from her two sons, ages 3 and 7, and said she learned that writing a good book involves a lot of research and forethought.

The book is sized for small hands, teaches young children through art, rhyming, and counting, and includes facts about Mackinac Island. Mrs. Powell said she drew from her language arts background, teaching experience, and her experience as a mother.

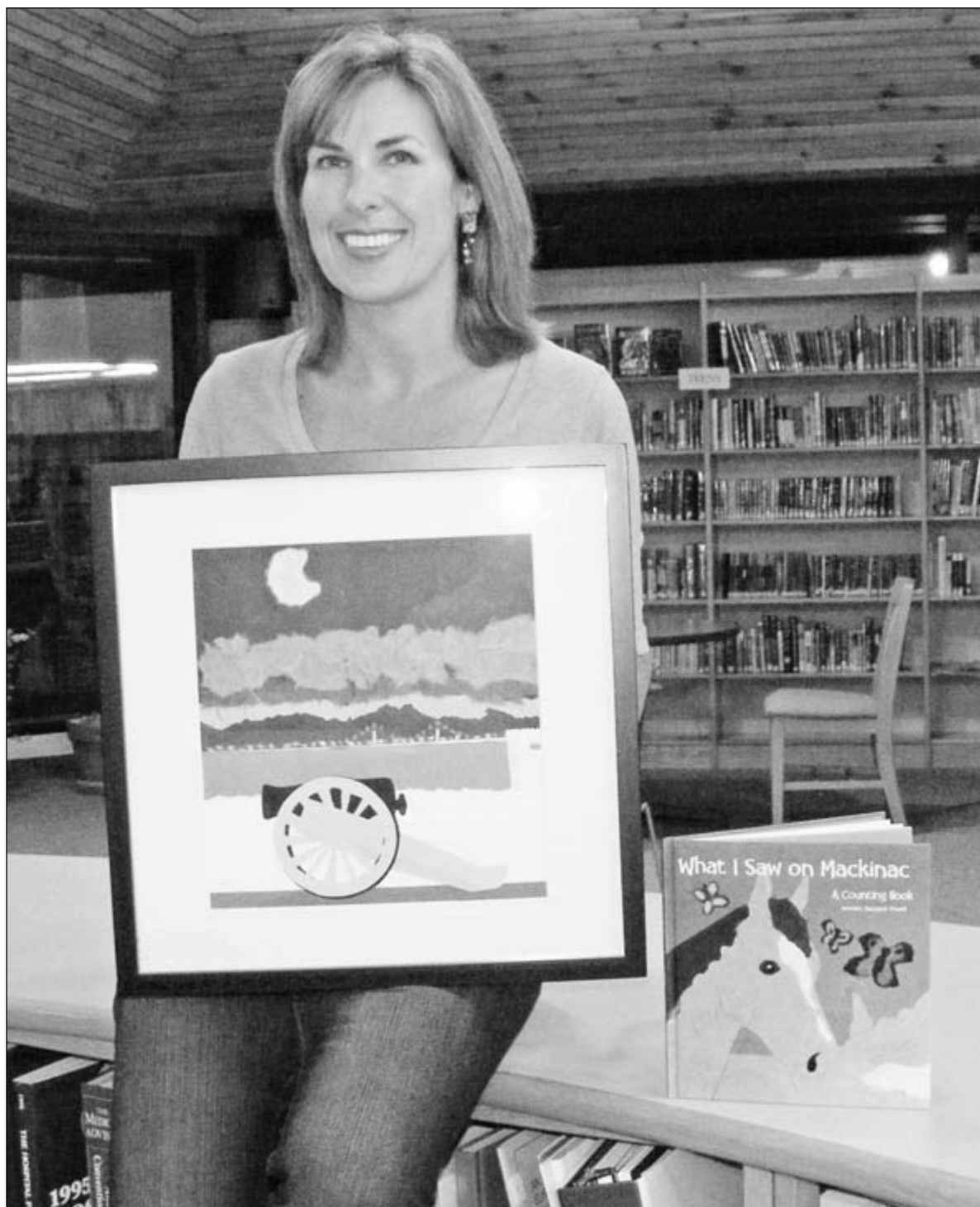
"Even with that, I still had to take classes to write this book," she said. "It's a lot more difficult than people may think."

The artwork, which Mrs. Powell did herself, uses cut and torn pieces of paper to bring her words to life. As both author and illustrator, she said she learned a lot about making a book in the process.

"I do everything from getting the copyright to making sure the books get shipped on time," Mrs. Powell said of her self-publishing venture.

She began the project when she saw an opportunity for a Mackinac Island book geared specifically for small children.

"It is a great promotional piece for Michigan," she said. "Writing about the area was a natural fit. I wanted to put something mean-



At left: Jennifer Powell, a St. Ignace resident who has been visiting Mackinac Island for many years, shows off some of the artwork included in her first book, "What I Saw on Mackinac," a counting book for toddlers centered around the Island. Mrs. Powell created the art, which consists entirely of cut and torn paper. She is planning an open house and book release celebration from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, December 10, at the St. Ignace Public Library.

there now," Mrs. Powell said.

She and her husband, Mike, and their two sons have been full-time residents of Mackinac County for 10 years.

The book is available at local and regional book stores and will be available next summer on Mackinac Island.

Island Mayor Margaret Doud writes on the back cover that the book is a "fun and lively learning tool."

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ingful out there for the toddlers being missed in the market."

She holds a bachelor's degree in education from Michigan State University and a master's degree in educational leadership from Eastern Michigan University and taught at St. Ignace Area Schools. Fifteen years of teaching experience, she said, enabled her to see the good and bad in the children's book market.

"My background allowed me to see a lot of the books over the years," she said. "Some of them were just not quite appropriate for children."

Her love for Mackinac Island stems from the summers she spent there each year since she was in college.

"It is my second home over

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