

Park Promotes Sites by Treating Island Employees

By Leslie Rott

For the eighth year, Mackinac State Historic Parks plans to reach vacationers by targeting the next best thing – businesses – with their Ambassador Program. By appealing to employees of tourist related businesses with free admission, park staff want to garner positive word-of-mouth promotion for park sites.

“We try and get them to see as many sites as we can,” said Lynne Wagner, guest services supervisor at Mackinac State Historic Parks. Employees throughout the Straits area can visit all four sites free, including Fort Mackinac, Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, and Historic Mill Creek, but Ms. Wagner said most visit Fort Mackinac, which is the most recognizable of the sites.

The site exhibits may change from year to year, she said, so it is important for employees to return each year.

“It is beneficial for them to know about our sites,” she said. When it comes to being in a tourist area such as this, “knowing your area is important.”

Ms. Wagner said the Ambassador Program has been streamlined to make it as easy as possible for employees, both regular and seasonal, to visit the park sites. Where before, employers had to register and obtain tickets, now employees need only sign in at the gate.

All business owners have to do is tell their employees about the program, and the employees sign in at the site with their name, their supervisor’s name, and the name and telephone number of the business they work for.

Personal guided tours of the sites can be prearranged with groups of five or more employees. Each employee will receive free admission to each of the sites, which can be used at any time during the

2005 season. Mackinac State Historic Parks employees also offer presentations at any of the participating businesses.

Employees who visit the sites can also take a quiz during their tour and be entered into a contest to win \$50, as an added incentive.

By joining the program and assisting the Parks in their marketing efforts, participating businesses have the opportunity to submit information about their businesses for binders at the agency’s visitors centers on the Island and the mainland.

Ms. Wagner said that she gets “a pretty good mix” of businesses in the program, and a large response from the hotels.

The Iroquois Hotel has been involved in the program for several years, and office manager Cindy Schad said she sends her 10-person front desk staff every year to Fort Mackinac.

“It allows our employees to

experience the Fort and share that with our guests,” Ms. Schad said, and added that her staff “appreciates being able to do it.”

This year, Ms. Wagner’s goal is to have more than 1,000 Straits area employees visit the

sites. She said her goal is to increase participation in the program by five to 10 percent each year.

To get involved in the Ambassador Program, call Mackinac State Historic Parks at (906) 847-3328.

Contests, Games To Mark Mackinac’s Fourth of July

*Continued from page 1

Mackinac Island Stone Skipping Tournament will begin on Windermere Point. The tournament is open to everyone and a \$3 entry fee allows the skipper to toss six stones. The event is sponsored by the Mackinac Island Stone Skipping and Gerplunking Club and proceeds go to the Mackinac Island Public Library.

• 11 a.m. As part of the stone skipping activities, Ryba’s Fudge Canoe arrives at Windermere Beach.

• Noon. Stone skipping professionals will compete at Windermere Point, including the 2005 Guinness Book World record holder for stone skipping, Kirk Steiner.

• Noon to 3 p.m. Free activities for children will be held at Windermere Point. Sponsored by the Mackinac Island Volunteer Fire Department, events include a greasy pole slide, sack races, digging for quarters, and a fire hose demonstration.

• 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Mackinac

State Historic Parks invites the public to celebrate the Fourth of July in true patriotic fashion on the grounds of the 225-year-old Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island. A ceremony at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. with historic interpreters dressed as 1880s American soldiers will present “A Star Spangled Fourth.” The ceremony will feature patriotic military music, a 38-gun salute (representing the 38 states in the union in the 1880s) and flag-raising ceremony. Victorian costumed ladies will present a program of children’s activities and games throughout the day.

• 6:30 p.m. “An American Picnic” will be served by Grand Hotel on the fort parade ground. Tickets for the dinner are extra and can be purchased at the fort or Grand Hotel.

• Dusk. Free fireworks will be shot from a barge off shore between Windermere Point and Grand Hotel. Good viewing is from the school yard and Fort Mackinac. Island viewers also may spot fireworks displays at Mackinac City and St. Ignace.

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



Odd Couple Unite for Free Speech, Political Rights

U.S. Reps. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., and Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., are at far opposite ends of the political spectrum. But they spoke and voted in unison last week to protect free speech and the right of political protest.

Hoekstra, of Holland, represents an 11-county district that has the strongest Republican base among Michigan’s 15 districts. His rating from the American Conservative Union is 92 percent; only 5 percent from the liberal Americans for Democratic Action.

Nadler, whose district includes parts of Brooklyn and Manhattan, gets a zero from ACU; 95 percent from ADA.

Hoekstra and Nadler were in the minority when the House voted 286-130 for a constitutional amendment to outlaw burning or other desecration of the U.S. flag. Only about a dozen Republicans were among the 130.

Hoekstra, who as chairman the House Intelligence Committee is at the forefront of the war on terror, voted against the measure when it passed the House five times previously. His latest words on point are worth pondering by any fellow conservatives who view opponents of the amendment as somehow anti-American:

“The American flag is an enduring symbol of democracy, justice and sacrifice, which is why I cannot understand why any American would disrespect it in any way. But to outlaw a form of political expression is to oppose the very individual liberty and personal freedom the American flag represents.

“Those who deface the American flag dishonor every man and woman who fought and died so that they can enjoy their ability to do so. However, regardless of one’s views or actions, and however much I might disagree with them, lim-

iting political protest is a drastic measure that I cannot support.”

Said Nadler: “If the flag needs protection at all, it needs protection from members of Congress who value the symbol more than the freedoms that the flag represents.”

To be enacted, the Flag Desecration Amendment must be adopted by two-thirds of the Senate and then ratified by three-fourths of the nation’s legislatures. An Associated Press survey indicates it faces an uphill battle in the Senate. Well it should.

Sen. Carl Levin will oppose it, as he has in the past. Sen. Debbie Stabenow voted for it when she was in the House, and will again.

In the House, the only two Michigan Democrats to vote for the amendment were Reps. Bart Stupak of Menominee and Dale Kildee of Flint.

Butler’s Northern Front

The Rev. Keith Butler, an ex-Detroit councilman and GOP activist, is getting expected early downstate urban support in his bid for the 2006

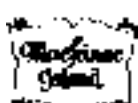
nomination to oppose Stabenow. GOP leaders in Macomb, Genesee, and Saginaw counties were among 26 county chairs whose endorsements he announced last week. Nearly half were from northern Michigan, where anti-Detroit sentiments often simmer.

Among 16 state lawmakers endorsing Butler: Sens. Jason Allen, Traverse City, and Tony Stamas, Midland, and Reps. Tom Casperson, Escanaba, and Howard Walker, Traverse City.

Republican National Committeeman Chuck Yob, who is neutral until the primary field jells, said of Butler: “He’s out there all over the place. His campaign is going very well.”

Butler’s announced Upper Peninsula endorsements by county party chairs: John Drennan, Baraga; Anthony Stackpoole, Chippewa; Frank Murphy, Houghton; Arlen Bright, Menominee; and David Schoenow, Schoolcraft.

George Weeks is the political columnist for The Detroit News and is syndicated by Superior Features.



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34 Market St., P.O. Box 532, Mackinac Island, MI 49757

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www.MackinacIslandTownCrier.com

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