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Conservancy Created To Protect Island Land

By Karen Gould

The Mackinac Conservancy has been created this winter to offer Mackinac Island property owners opportunities to protect the scenic, natural, and historic value of their property, and to work with local and state government to protect important scenic and natural areas on the Island.

"We wanted to start a con-

servancy on the Island to offer land owners a chance to protect the value of their property and use the conservancy as an option," said Anneke Myers, who helped organize the group,

along with Steve Murray and Marta Olson.

"The goal is to have a mechanism on the Island for conservancy," she added. "We wanted to do something that is posi-

tive."

The group isn't designed to be an aggressive protector of land from development, she noted, but rather to be available to assist with the legal and

financial complexities of conservancy, should a property owner need help.

An example of land conservancy would be a property owner selling or donating the development rights to the property to prevent future owners from building on it. The late John McCabe worked out a similar arrangement some years ago with the Mackinac Island State Park Commission for his property near British Landing.

The new Mackinac Conservancy will have a steering committee comprised of Island property owners and residents who will work with interested landowners. The Little Traverse Conservancy, with which the local group has affiliated itself, provides staff support and experienced leadership to assist Island landowners in developing a plan to fit individual needs, explained Mrs. Myers.

One means of land protection is the establishment of a conservation easement. An easement is a legal agreement between the conservancy and

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Nurse Karen Weersing Aids Gulf Coast Relief Efforts

She Provides Medical Care from Ship

By Karen Gould

When Karen Weersing saw the devastation caused by hurricanes Katrina and Rita on television, she wanted to help. She searched the Internet for information on assisting hurricane survivors, then signed up to volunteer with the United States Health and Human Services Administration in October. By November 27, she was in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where she was met by a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) worker at the airport. Within an hour, she arrived at her home for the next month, a Carnival Cruise Line ship named *Holiday*.

"My goal," she said, "was just to take care of people, whatever their needs were, whether it was physical or emotional. I was there to help."

On board ship, she became a part of a medical team that included three nurses and two doctors. One of the doctors worked in public health and the other was in the private sector.

Volunteers were asked to sign up for two-week stints, but after the first two weeks flew by, Mrs. Weersing, a registered nurse at the Mackinac Island Medical Center, decided to sign up for an additional two-week stay.

The ship and its crew are leased to the federal government to house refugees from the devastation, Mrs. Weersing said, and approximately 1,200 people made homeless by the hurricanes were living there.

The original plan, she said, was to move people into the community to find doctors and to close the ship's medical facilities by the end of December. The problem was the people on board had no transportation to get to other doctors, or they had jobs and needed to be at work. When Mrs. Weersing left, she said 800 people remained on board.

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Snowmobiles Replace Daily Bike Ride to School



Bicycles are replaced by snowmobiles in the winter at Mackinac Island Public School. Island students can operate snowmobiles once they complete a snowmobile safety course, earn a safety permit, and reach 12 years of age. Fire Chief Dennis Bradley teaches the class.



Dashing in Fashion

Four-month-old Aidon Ogle is pulled on a sled by Sassy in the sled decorating contest. The team tied for first place in the contest with five-year-old Nicholas Davis. Sassy belongs to Aidon's grandmother, Barb Fisher. The Mackinac Island Winter Festival is sponsored by Mackinac Island Recreational Development. (Photograph by Jennifer Blosswick)

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City Eyes Condo Sale

By Karen Gould

Setting a course to provide more housing for Mackinac Island's public safety officers, City Council approved the sale of one of its Rowe House condominiums at its Wednesday, February 1, meeting, although subsequent discussion has put the matter back on the agenda for Council's Wednesday, February 15 meeting.

On February 1, Council, on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, said it

planned to solicit sealed bids for the condo and use the proceeds to remodel the old medical center building into apartments.

Council set a minimum bid of \$350,000, although there now is speculation that the city may decide next week not to sell the property.

The condo is now used by Police Lieutenant Pete and Cindy Komblevitz.

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New Ambulance Provides Storage, Sanitized Interior

By Karen Gould

The design of Mackinac Island's new \$75,000 ambulance offers more storage space and a cleaner, safer environment for caregivers and patients. Equipment such as the heart monitor, which used to be stored on the floor, now has a cabinet. Many cracks and crevices have been eliminated, reducing places for germs to hide and making surfaces easier to disinfect.

"There's a place for everything," said Island Emergency Medical Technician Rick Linn.

The new ambulance arrived on Mackinac Island Friday, December 16, replacing a 1988 vehicle and allowing the ambulance corps to incorporate more modern technology into its emer-

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Inside of the Island's new ambulance with Emergency Medical Technicians Alan Burt, Rick Linn, Christine Roguska, and Sam Barnwell. (Photograph by Scott Roguska)