



Town Crier 75¢

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June 10 to June 16, 2006

57th Lilac Festival Celebrates Island's Floral Extravagance

By Bernie Nguyen

Lilacs are one of Mackinac Island's most noticeable and fragrant spring features, and they are the focus of the annual Lilac Festival, a 10-day celebration that includes special events, tours, and a festive parade through town. The festival this year is from June 9 to June 18.

The opening ceremony will begin at 4:30 p.m. Friday, June 9, at Marquette Park with a concert by Alex Graham and Grand Hotel Orchestra, followed by the crowning of this year's Lilac Queen and Princess by Mayor Margaret Doud.

Teenagers will celebrate later at the Queen's Rave Graffiti Party at the Lilac Tree Hotel. Attendees are encouraged to wear paintable clothing.

The Lilac Festival 10k run/walk begins at Windermere Point Saturday, June 10, at 9:30 a.m. Younger walkers may attend the Lil' Lilac 1/4 mile run/walk, which takes place at 11 a.m.

The Mackinac Island Public Library will host its annual book sale from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Most books are either donated or weeded from the library's collection. Magazines will be sold for 50¢, videos and



(From left) eighth grade students Jessica Ganzeroot, Carly DeLew, and Catherine Liptrot take a break by Fort Mackinac during their day trip to enjoy the lilacs and explore the Island. They are from Excel Charter Academy in Grand Rapids.

audiobooks for \$2, and books from 50¢ for children's paperbacks to \$2 for adult hardcovers. The library will also offer back issues of the *Town Crier* from 2002 to 2004.

The Farmington Community Band will celebrate its 40th anniversary Saturday with a free afternoon concert at Windermere

Point. Later in the evening, dancers can kick up their heels at the country line dance with the Western Michigan Bootscooters on Market Street.

The Lilac Festival Golf Tournament will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, June 12, on the Jewel at Grand Hotel. The registration will take place at Grand

Pro Shop.

Later on, the Straits of Mackinac Blues Cruise will leave at 7:30 p.m. from the Arnold Line dock with the Eddie King Band and is being catered by Goodfellows.

Free tours of the Governor's Summer Residence will begin Wednesday, June 14, at 9:30 a.m.

to 11:30 a.m. Later that day, the historic Inns Tour with Dan Seely will take place at 1 p.m. and will meet at the Windermere Hotel. At 7:30 p.m., Art of Entertaining, a popular event from last year, will

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5 Considered for School's Top Position

By Leslie Rott

"We've had a lot of interest in the position," School Board Trustee Trish Martin said when the Mackinac Island Board of Education held a special meeting Wednesday, May 31, to discuss the applications they received for superintendent.

Kent Bowden of Lansing, a mathematics teacher in the Alma School District, Beth Robb, a high school principal at Carson City, Roger Schrock, a superintendent at Three Rivers, Cynthia Leaman, a parochial school administrator at Grosse Pointe Woods, and Lee J. Turner of Owosso, a

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Commandant William Whistler

State Park Historians Hope To Buy Rare Collection From 1831

By Karen Gould

A rare portrait of William Whistler, who served as a commandant at Fort Mackinac in 1833, is part of a collection the Mackinac Island State Park Commission hopes to purchase, if it can raise \$54,000.

"The portrait was likely done when he was serving at Fort Niagara," around 1831, said Steve Brisson, the chief curator at Mackinac State Historic Parks.

The painting is one of three items in the collection that is owned by a Canadian antique dealer who acquired the pieces from Commandant Whistler's granddaughter. Also included is a silver Indian trading piece Mr. Brisson calls a gorget. The gorget contains an engraving depicting Winnebago Chief Red Bird surren-

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Council To Consider 1 Mill Tax Increase

By Karen Gould

The financial condition of the City of Mackinac Island is improving, say auditors, and, except for the Department of Public Works, the city does not have a lot of debt.

"The city is in better overall financial condition than it was a year ago, general fund and all the other funds," said auditor Michael Konicki of Rehmann and Robson of Cheboygan during his presentation of the 2005 audit Wednesday, June 7.

Later this month, Council is expected to vote on a one-mill

tax assessment increase to reduce the DPW's \$3 million debt load, but politicians have also hinted they could grant a future tax break if the city has money left over after renovating the old medical center building into a dormitory. It hopes to make at least \$800,000 by selling two condominiums to pay for the project.

"The loss for the Board of Public Works, which was for the water, sewer, and landfill, was reduced by \$258,000," Mr. Konicki said. "So they lost money, but they lost less by

\$258,000."

A DPW report to Council in September, he added, will offer suggestions regarding future water rates based on the latest use data the DPW had compiled.

Other than the DPW, the city's debt at the end of March 2005 (its fiscal year) was \$700,000, he said, which included the fire truck, road improvements, balance due on road repairs, and the fire hall building.

He said the city had a posi-

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U.P. Must Have Tourism 'Super Magnet'

By Karen Gould

"Why do we continue to persist in getting jobs related to the auto industry when we could get jobs in the tourism industry?" asked Dr. Don Holecek, the director of Michigan State University's Tourism Center. His question was posed to 40 area chamber of commerce and tourism directors, business owners, and local planners who gathered at Kewadin Casino Hotel in Sault Ste. Marie Thursday, June 1, for a Michigan Tourism Strategic Planning Project session. Thursday's session was one of seven to be held around the state and the only one taking place in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. A session was held a

week earlier in Iron Mountain.

Dr. Holecek is leading a team of state planners who are developing a tourism action plan to guide Michigan's tourism, now a \$17 billion industry. The plan will be to increase tourism, capture more tourism dollars, and establish Michigan as a tourist destination.

"We're creating the environment for the discussion and to identify their common goals," said Dr. Holecek of the tourism participants. "We're bringing the industry together to hammer out differences."

The plan is expected to be completed in one year at a cost of approximately \$400,000. Michigan State University

(MSU) and Travel Michigan are jointly contributing \$200,000 in staff time and additional funds to the project. The rest of the tab is being picked up by businesses and tourism organizations and agencies.

"One of the things the U.P. probably needs is an identifiable attraction that people feel they must see, must do, and go back to," Dr. Holecek said after the meeting. That will involve the creation of "a super magnet that sucks people across the [Mackinac] Bridge."

Carol Eavou, vice-president of hotel operations for Kewadin Casinos, which hosted Thursday's event, agreed.

"We can develop a product

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