

Donations Needed To Support Cutter *Mackinaw* Museum

By Paul Gingras

The Mackinaw City Village Council agreed to provide a temporary historical marker to draw attention to the recently decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter *Mackinaw*, which now floats in public view of downtown Mackinaw City, but Council stated that it could not allow the Icebreaker Mackinaw Maritime Museum (IMMM) to charge for tours until it completes its site plan and secures Village approval. IMMM is the organization in control of the vessel.

The public will be able to walk the decks of the *Mackinaw* Saturday, Septem-

ber 2, through Monday, September 4, where they will find donation boxes "all over the place" to benefit the museum project, said Marilyn McFarland of the Mackinaw Area Visitors Bureau, who addressed Council.

There will be people there to answer questions and informational signs will be placed on board to explain aspects of the ship, she added. Ms. McFarland said the Visitors Bureau hopes to draw in 30,000 visitors to view the *Mackinaw* over Labor Day weekend.

IMMM desperately needs funding, said councilwoman and IMMM member Sandra

Planisek. The sudden arrival of the vessel Friday, June 30, and the fact that it came with no funding, has had the organization scrambling to prepare it for public viewing for most of the summer. IMMM is now between \$60,000 and \$70,000 in debt and calling on the Village for help getting the museum started.

"It's like someone handed us a 290-foot skyscraper, and now we have to figure out how to turn it into a business," Ms. McFarland told *The Town Crier*.

Dick Moehl, also a member of IMMM, expressed frustration that his group has not been able to charge for tours,

even though IMMM needs funding and tourists have been besieging the organization for access to the vessel. These tourists are willing to pay, Mr. Moehl said, but owing to the lack of an approved site plan, the group has had to turn them away. IMMM, he added, needs the revenue to help pay for the site plan itself.

Steve Schnell, community development director, offered to be part of an ad hoc committee to help IMMM prepare the vessel for public viewing.

Village President Robert Heilman said the group is likely to receive many donations over Labor Day weekend, but Village zoning regulations forbid Council from allowing IMMM to charge for

tours. Allowing paid tours prior to securing an approved site plan could open the Village to litigation if anyone were hurt, he said.

Since it gained control of the vessel, IMMM has established a volunteer database, installed phone and cable lines, prepared for the sale of onboard fuel, graded the dock, cleaned the ship, connected it to the village's electrical grid, begun a site plan, secured all vertical ladders, produced merchandise, installed a security system, and installed bollards.

Once the site plan is finished and IMMM is ready, the public will be able to take part in guided tours inside the ship, Ms. McFarland said.



Michigan Politics

By George Weeks

DeVos Hits Trifecta With Running Mate Pick

Apart from capability and compatibility, balance is the most important electoral factor for a gubernatorial nominee to consider in selecting a running mate.

Geography was a balancing factor when Governor Bill Milliken of Traverse City picked former Detroit councilman Jim Brickley, an ex-FBI agent, as his running mate in 1970.

Gender was a factor when ex-U.S. Representative Martha Griffiths of Macomb County helped U.S. Representative Jim Blanchard of Oakland County get elected governor in 1982. She became Michigan's first elected female lieutenant governor.

Gender also was a factor when Senate Majority Leader John Engler of Beal City picked Senator Connie Binsfeld of Maple City and Munising as his running mate in 1990 (after Blanchard had dumped Griffiths and put another woman on his ticket for an unsuccessful bid for a third term).

In her successful 2002 bid to be Michigan's first female governor, Attorney General Jennifer Granholm of Northville selected Senate Minority Leader John Cherry of Clio, who brought legislative savvy to the ticket.

Now comes Grand Rapids-area businessman Dick DeVos with selection of Oakland County Clerk Ruth Johnson, an ex-teacher, former county commissioner, and 1999-2004 state representative who is widely viewed as a solid choice for No. 2 on the GOP ticket.

That's not a view shared by Democratic State Chairman Mark Brewer, who said: "The DeVos-Johnson ticket is a perfect match of two extremists."

As a balancing act, selection of Johnson was a trifecta: Gender, geography, and governmental experience.

It was a given that DeVos would pick a woman, probably from southeast Michigan to balance DeVos' western roots. Senator Nancy Cassis of Novi, chair of the Senate Finance

Committee and once a contender for the nomination that DeVos won, had been mentioned.

Oakland County's Cassis has more extensive legislative experience than Johnson, but DeVos was impressed with Johnson's countywide showing in 2004, when she knocked off an incumbent clerk by 12 percentage points and outpolled President George W. Bush by four points in a big county that has not been voting as Republican as it did.

Johnson was indeed a solid pick. But no running mate on a state or national ticket carries the day.

Northern Trails

As they launched their general election campaigns, Senator Debbie Stabenow and challenger Mike Bouchard, winner of the August 8 Republican primary, last week did what smart statewide candidates have done for decades: go to the Upper Peninsula State Fair in Escanaba.

Stabenow, after announcing her reelection bid and running her first TV ad ("Times are tough in Michigan - but so are we. ...we've got a great future here in Michigan and I'm fighting for it every day") went to the fair after attending a salute

to veterans. She scheduled numerous appearances early this week from Manistee to Petoskey.

Oakland County Sheriff Bouchard, who also attended a veterans' tribute before the fair, spent much of the week talking about homeland security. A member of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, he said Michigan's high profile bridges are "especially vulnerable to terrorist attack."

Not surprisingly, considering DeVos' heavy TV advertising across both peninsulas, he is doing better in polls against Granholm than Bouchard does against Stabenow.

In an August 9 to 15 statewide poll of 600 likely voters, Granholm had a 50-47 lead over DeVos, while Stabenow led Bouchard, 54-42. (Margin of error: plus or minus four percentage points).

The poll, first after Bouchard won the contested GOP primary, had Stabenow in a 52-48 lead in the northern Lower Peninsula; 53-34 above the bridge.

George Weeks recently retired after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Fond Memories of Carriage Tour Drivers of Yore

To the Editor:

A year ago my brother gave me a subscription to your newspaper. I love to read about events on the Island.

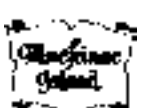
I worked for Mackinac Island Carriage Tours on the street for several years loading buggies. I have fond memories of the challenge to get 12 people on a buggy. Jay Gillespie, John Franks, Dunleavy Flannigan, Les O'Brien, Willard Laslie, and my two favorite businessmen, Harry Stamas, who owned the Astor Cafe, and

Robin Arbib, who owned several stores across the street.

Carriage drivers "Snapper" Bazinaw, Ed Cadotte, Duke Charnes, and many of the older teamsters who lived in the Lennox were a great bunch to work with.

George Wellington and I hauled a carriage from Jack Chambers' barn to the Iroquois Hotel and put it on the roof of the [Carriage House] restaurant.

Jim Fitzgerald
Caro



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7529 Market St., P.O. Box 532, Mackinac Island, MI 49757
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www.MackinacIslandTownCrier.com

For business and subscription matters, phone (906) 643-9150

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