

OBITUARY

Elizabeth 'Betty' Wandrie

Former Mackinac Island resident Elizabeth M. Wandrie, 85, of Spring Hill, Florida, died Sunday, December 31, 2006, at the Hernando-Pasco Hospice Care Center in Brooksville, Florida.

She was born November 17, 1921, in Detroit to Cecil and Adele (nee Diehl) Beattie. She married Otto B. Wandrie September 16, 1944, in Detroit, where they reared six sons and a daughter.

Mr. Wandrie retired from the Detroit Fire Department in 1971 and the couple moved to Mackinac Island, where, as a teenager, he had worked at his grandfather's restaurant, The Wandrie Restaurant.

While living on Mackinac Island, Mrs. Wandrie worked at Grand Hotel and First National Bank of St. Ignace.

The Wandries returned to the Detroit area in 1980 and, in 1987, they moved to Spring Hill.

In addition to Otto, to whom she has been married for 62 years, Mrs. Wandrie is survived by her seven children and their families, James and Mahrangiz Wandrie of the United Kingdom, David and Karen Wandrie of Port Hope, William and Janis Wandrie of Clinton Township, Peter and Genny Wandrie of Lake Orion,



Elizabeth Wandrie

Patrick and Nancy Wandrie of Spring Hill, Florida, Paul and Amanda Wandrie of Mackinac Island, and Diane and Ronald Preletz of Roseville; 25 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; five brothers, and two sisters.

She was preceded in death by her parents, three brothers, one sister-in-law, two brothers-in-law, and one great-granddaughter.

A memorial service has not yet been scheduled.

The family asks that memorials be sent to the Hernando-Pasco Hospice Care Center, 1114 Chatman Boulevard, Brooksville, FL 34601, or any Hospice.

Wage Hike Pushes Up Horse Operation Prices

Park Commission OKs Rate Increases

By Karen Gould

Owners of two horse operations on Mackinac Island say the new state minimum wage hike has forced them to seek rate increases to keep their companies operating. The increases vary, with a 21 percent rise in price for an adult sightseeing ticket to a 25¢ increase in taxi fares. The request was approved by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission Wednesday, January 10, in Lansing.

With rising prices, commissioners also discussed the need for more a comprehensive packaging program for visitors coming to Mackinac Island.

"It's difficult for us to come here and ask for a large increase in our fares," said Dr. Bill Chambers, president of Mackinac Island Carriage Tours. "If we don't do this, we're history."

Brad Chambers of Carriage Tours and Bill and Ted Gough of Gough-Brodeur Stables also attended the meeting.

Businesses operating in Mackinac Island State Park are regulated and licensed by the park commission.

Most of the seasonal employees hired by the two companies are paid minimum wage. Mackinac Island Carriage Tours employs about 200 people.

He said the minimum wage hike will force his company to increase wages across the board, from second-year employees on up.

The two companies need to increase their fees, or Mackinac Island not only would be "no cars," it also would be "no horses," said Dr. Chambers.

The Michigan minimum wage will increase 43.7 percent in three increments over two years. The first increase came in October, when it was raised from \$5.15 to \$6.95 per hour. It

will climb to \$7.15 per hour July 1 and to \$7.40 per hour July 1, 2008.

The rate hike request triggered a discussion on visitor traffic in general and how costs impact that traffic.

"What I am most concerned about is the Island losing its family appeal," said Commissioner Jim Williams.

"If Mackinac Island prices itself out of the market, it will affect Mackinaw City and St. Ignace."

He said Mackinac Island is not in competition with the two mainland communities, rather it is in competition with other resort areas like Traverse City.

Greg Hokans, chief of development and marketing for Mackinac State Historic Parks, said the park is working on a price packaging program to make traveling to the area easier for families.

There are 600,000 fewer visitors to the Straits area than there were in 1998, he noted.

"We have to stop the bleeding."

Mackinac State Historic Parks, which operates two 18th century forts and a reconstructed sawmill on Mackinac Island and in Mackinaw City, is designing a marketing program similar to Disney World and Sea World that will discount family packages for museum entry, carriage tours, and possibly boat tickets. Mr. Hokans said Mackinac Island Carriage Tours has offered to set up a Web site to promote and sell the packaging program.

Father Williams said that the price of a boat ticket has to be taken into account when comparisons are made with competitive locations.

"All I hear is it's too darn expensive to go over there anymore," he said. "We have a responsibility for our business people and we have a responsibility to people that this remains

the gem that it is, not just for a few, but for a family."

Before the commission voted to approve the rate increases for sightseeing and horse rentals, Commissioner Richard Manoojian said he like to see the horse companies "make a good faith effort to

come up with a package deal."

Mackinac Island Carriage Tours, which operates a horse livery, sightseeing service, and taxi, received approval for a price increase for sightseeing tours with adult tickets to cost \$23, up from \$19 in 2006. A ticket for children ages five through 12 will increase from \$8 to \$9. Livery prices are based on the number of persons in a carriage and will increase 19 percent, with a four-person fee jumping to \$100 per hour, up from \$84 per hour. Taxi fares will increase 25¢ for all zones around the Island.

Gough-Brodeur Stables operates drive-yourself carriages and saddle horses. Drive-yourself carriage rentals are based on the number of passengers and will increase on an average of 9.7 percent, with a two-passenger carriage costing \$54 per hour, up from \$48 per hour. Saddle horses will increase to \$35 per hour, up from \$30 per hour.

Funds Grounded for New Park Freight Boat

A \$250,000 federal appropriation for a new freight boat for Mackinac Island State Park died with other earmarked appropriations for 2007, when Congress failed to take action in December.

Following the November elections, in which Democrats won control of both the House and Senate, work slowed on the 2007 budget process, reported Commissioner Laurie Stupak to the Mackinac Island State Park Commission at its meeting in Lansing January 10. Instead, Congress appropriated the same money to federal agencies as

they received last year, and committee reports that included earmarked funding for special projects were not included.

U.S. Congressman Bart Stupak from Menominee, Commissioner Stupak's husband, had requested the funding. A new 74-foot vessel would have replaced the 1952 surplus Navy landing craft the park operates. The funds were part of Transportation, Treasury, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations legislation.

Funding recommendations for the craft had passed both the U.S. House of Representatives

and the Senate.

Congressman Stupak will continue to pursue funding for the craft, an aide in his office said Friday, January 12.

"As we begin the appropriations process for fiscal year 2008, the congressman will work with congressional appropriators to seek funding for the Mackinac Island landing craft," said press secretary Alex Haurek.

Phil Porter, director of Mackinac State Historic Parks, said park staff will look for other funding. Last summer, Mr. Porter said maintaining the 54-year-old vessel had become expensive.

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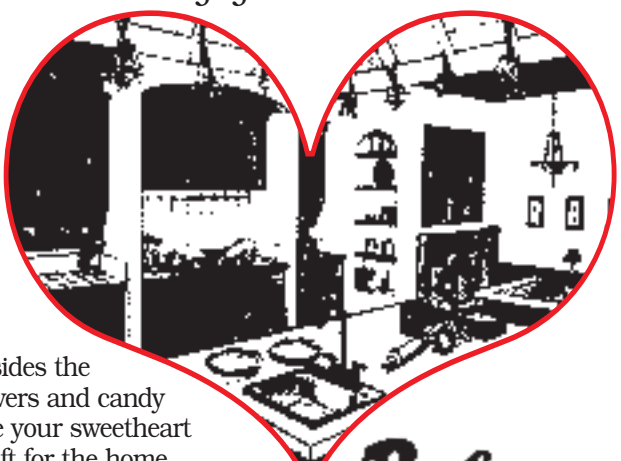
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