



**Jim "Old School" Marks, a Mackinac Island police officer, enjoys lunch with eighth-graders Andrew Chambers (left) and Thomas Rilenge Wednesday, January 31. Mr. Marks is the new school resource officer, a liaison between police and the school. He will teach students about decision making in life and build a foundation to create a better relationship between police and youth. (Photograph courtesy of Susan Bennett)**

## Jim Marks Named Island School Resource Officer

**By Ryan Schlehuber**

Students at Northville Schools knew Jim Marks as "Old School," some even called him "Gramps." To him, that meant they knew him and trusted him, even when he was in his police uniform, and it is that rapport he hopes to create with students on Mackinac Island as the school's new school resource officer (SRO).

Having been hired full-time on the Mackinac Island Police Department, after working part-time last summer, Mr. Marks, 56, originally from Northville, will teach safety classes, eat lunch with students, and build a rapport with them so they can come to him, or any police officer, for help.

"I want to help them make good, sound decisions in their lives," he said to the board. "Working with kids is one of the biggest thrills. Being able to work as a police officer and be a school liaison is the best of both worlds for me."

The school board agreed to the program at its regular meeting Thursday, January 25, and Mr. Marks began visiting the school Wednesday, January 31.

"The school will benefit from this through various programs that come along with the school resource officer program," said Superintendent Roger Schrock. Benefits, he said, include Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE), bicycle safety, decision-making, and the continuance of the school's Community Emergency Response Team, or CERT.

He said he will seek grants to help fund such programs.

For now, Mr. Marks visits every school day for several hours to familiarize himself with each of the 60 students in the K-12 school district.

"I want to show that police officers don't just arrest people and give out citations," Mr. Marks said to the school board. "I want to show them that we also are here to help whenever we can. We have to allow kids to know me as a person and not just a police officer."

He believes students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades are the most impressionable and need the most attention.

"Their habits usually haven't formed yet and they are at a

good age to begin setting good standards for them," Dr. Schrock added.

The SRO program, said school board member Jason St. Onge, will not be used to seek out students violating school or city regulations.

"It is not the program's intent to look for parties on Friday nights or search students' lockers," said Mr. St. Onge, who will chair a committee that will oversee the program. Committee members will include parents and students.

During his 35 years in law enforcement, Mr. Marks was the DARE officer for schools in Northville and Roscommon. He has also coordinated safety programs such as Stranger Danger, teaching children to be cautious when speaking to strangers, a program he hopes to establish here.

Mr. Marks is retired from the Roscommon Sheriff's Department and began working part-time as a police officer here last summer. When Officer Jim Beam resigned from the police department and moved away in December, a full-time position on the department became available.

Mr. Marks' wife, Nancy, who is still working in Roscommon, will move to the Island soon, he said.

## School Support Staff Gets 7 Percent Raise

### Archery May Soon Be Offered in District

**By Ryan Schlehuber**

Archery may soon be an extracurricular activity offered at Mackinac Island Public School, as Island resident Robin Dorman, a 4-H coordinator, was given permission by the Mackinac Island Board of Education to seek funding to purchase archery equipment. The board, at a regular meeting Thursday, January 25, also approved a seven percent raise for three staff members.

The archery program, which will be made available for students and adults after school, will receive about \$4,000 to purchase bows, arrows, padding for walls, and a tarpaulin, which will prevent arrows from marking up the area.

The board agreed the school's multipurpose room would be an ideal location for the activity. School Superintendent Robert Schrock suggested the school seek funding.

Mr. Dorman said archery can be offered any time of the year, outside or indoors.

"Archery has been a life-long interest for me, I love it," said Mr. Dorman, who earned his 4-H certification last spring. "It promotes sportsmanship, responsibility, and provides opportunities to participate in competitions."

Archery was offered on the Island at one time by Joe Brandonisio and Pete Komblevitz.

"I think it's a great idea because it's just another thing kids can do to not get into trouble," said board president Ben Mosley. "I'm 100 percent for this."

The school board agreed to give school secretary Barb Fisher, cook Donna Killips, and maintenance technician Michael Bradley a new one-year contract that includes a seven percent raise, which gives each of the three about \$1,600 more each year. The raise meets cost of living standards, according to the board.

Dr. Schrock explained that the support staff usually receives the same percentage raise as the teachers, however, he said, "they are not paid as high of a salary as a teacher, so a two- or three-percent raise

isn't as significant."

"We, as a committee, firmly believe they were due for a better raise," said Paul Wandrie, who chairs the board's negotiations committee.

"We're looking at the pay increase as a way to catch up for what is due to them because they have been tie-barred with the teachers, even though they are not part of the teachers contract," said Dr. Schrock. "The support staff works 12 months of the year and they do not have the luxury that teachers' have to seek extra income from a summer job or from running a summer business."

Teachers are still negotiating with the school board for a new contract and have been working under a contract that expired last June.

In other business, Trustees Trish Martin, Leanne Brodeur, and Larry Rickley were assigned to study possible repairs to the exterior of the school building.

Trustee Jason St. Onge told the board he has noticed many places that are or nearly rotting or falling apart and believes it is time to begin thinking about putting some funding toward improving these areas.

Writing is one area where Island students from third grade to ninth grade consistently struggle, said Dr. Schrock, while the board reviewed results of the school's Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), a test that was taken in the fall.

"The MEAP is the most inconsistent test in the world," said Mr. Mosley. "It changes every year. It's not a good evaluation tool because it's not consistent enough."

"The MEAP has been a moving target," said Dr. Schrock. "It is not an absolute measure to our students' education. These tests are but a slice in time. You have to keep in mind that students can be quite distracted at the time of testing; some have testing phobia, or they had a bad night of sleep."

Ms. Martin said she would like the results to explain better how the students rank with the rest of the state and have their results compared to state standards.

High school mathematics teacher Susan Bennett said the board will have more complete results by next month's meeting.

Dr. Schrock will report to the board about whether Donna Killips, the school's cheerleading coach, will accept the board's offer to make her volunteer coaching position a paid position. The board did not specify a pay wage but did agree to help pay for any costs for new uniforms.

"We need to embrace this program better," said Mr. St. Onge. "Donna has really made this program exceptional. She is really running a good, regular organization."

Ms. Killips created a cheerleading squad five years ago for elementary and middle school girls.

Ms. Brodeur agreed she is doing an excellent job coaching, but questioned whether the pay would subject her program to unforeseen school and state regulations.

Dr. Schrock said he will find out for the board's next meeting

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