

Mackinac Island 4-H Club Students Make Bluebird House

4-H Club volunteer Jack Armstrong worked with elementary students to construct and hang eight bird houses for bluebirds at Great Turtle Park.

"We researched to find the right height and the right distance between each house for bluebirds," said Mr. Armstrong.

The group will inspect the houses in the fall to see how well their project worked. Their next project will be houses for owls and other birds.

Working on the project are

Hailey Armstrong, Collin Armstrong, Paul Wandrie Jr., Colton Fisher, Leo Horn, Meadow Greenlee, Adrienne Rilenge, and Talon Greenlee.

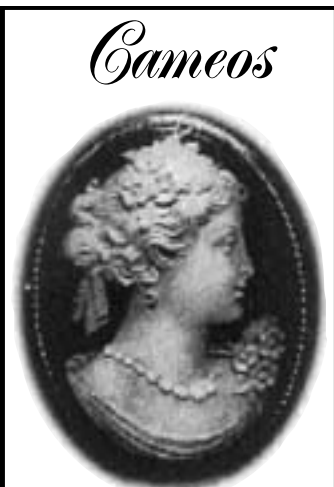
Kris Clark and Tim Leeper are leading another 4-H recreational activity, bicycling through the Island's many forest trails every Sunday afternoon.

Archery may be offered by fall, a project Island 4-H member Robin Dorman is setting up.

Mr. Dorman is raising funds to purchase equipment to allow people to participate in indoor archery in the multipurpose room at Mackinac Island Public School.



At right: Members of the 4-H Club are (front, from left) Colton Fisher, Hailey Armstrong; (back) Leo Horn, Meadow Greenlee, Adrienne Rilenge, and Talon Greenlee. Not pictured are Paul Wandrie Jr. and Collin Armstrong. (Photograph by Jack Armstrong)



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Fort Michilimackinac Pageant Is Indicator of Tourist Season

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"Gas prices, we thought, were going to hit us last year, but we still had standing room only," he said. "We found people that were coming just for the event. On a whole, we weren't down. We had a full contingent."

A possible reason for the increasing popularity is that the events remain free of charge.

Tourists still need to budget, however, for gas, food, and lodging.

"Last year, we didn't see anybody let up," Mr. Osborne said. "That's the showing of whether people are going to spend the extra money."

The Michilimackinac Pageant is an event of historical significance. Now in its 45th

consecutive performance, the event reenacts events that took place from 1715-1763, with an estimated 200 participants from Michigan and Canada costumed as Indians, British soldiers, and French fur traders. Among demonstrations, fashion shows, and other activities scheduled throughout the weekend (the schedule is at fmpcfestival.org),

the successful 1763 Indian attack of Fort Michilimackinac is depicted in an impressive reenactment Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. The weekend also features a parade that should feature more than 50 floats and a dozen bands. Northern Michigan's Grand Parade gets underway Saturday, May 26, at 1 p.m.

The Fort Michilimackinac Pageant is known as Michigan's longest free-running tradition.

"A lot of people know about it," said Jane Magers, event secretary and treasurer. "A lot of people have been here and a lot of people return."

Advertising the event hasn't been much of a problem, either. The pageant committee presents historical information to schools in a recruiting effort. The committee also publishes a yearly newsletter, and sends it out to subscribers.

"Our marketing thing is putting out this gazette," Mr. Osborne said. "We package these and send them all the way to Kentucky, New Orleans, all over the place."

The gazette is available by subscription, and like the event itself, subscribers have increased in number over the years.

"We had a 40,000 (person) subscription, now it's 50,000," Mr. Osborne said. "We send them out to all different cities in Michigan and out of state, and we have a good calling from out of state."

So far, the summer tourist season appears bright.

"What we have seen is a great start this May," said Mary McGuire Slevin, director of the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau. "Tourism is up, occupancy is up, and there has been a large increase in school groups this spring."

Ms. Slevin said that participation in the May 19 Zoo-De-Mackinac bicycle tour increased 20 percent from last year and is another reason for optimism.

"The weekend was a big success here on the Island," she said, "and that is really a great sign for tourism."

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