

Massaway Continues To Wage War on Island's Pesky Flies

By Eric Fish

Frank Massaway has been working for the City of Mackinac Island since 1982. He started as a street sweeper and has worked his way up to the head of maintenance and assistant city foreman. He also is the supervisor of Mackinac Island's fly control program, under which he monitors the fly populations at hotels, restaurants, and commercial and private stables. It is a job he has held for the past 10 years.

On a weekly basis, Mr. Massaway makes sure that businesses maintain a clean garbage area so flies won't breed there. At stables, he inspects the manure disposal and ensures stables and barns are using the appropriate fly traps, which are devices that capture adult flies using a yeast bait.

Businesses and stable owners who fail an inspection get a written warning. If they continue to fail inspections, more serious measures can be taken to ensure the fly population is

kept low.

"We can fine them in order to clean up their act or we can revoke their business licenses," Mr. Massaway said, adding that fines can be as much as \$500.

Since fly larvae thrive in garbage and manure, cleanliness is key to keeping populations under control. But other tactics are also employed. Fly traps that are placed around the Island and a tiny, gnat-sized predatory wasp is released by the thousands each week to attack fly pupae.

About 100,000 of the wasp eggs are purchased each week from a company in California for release on the Island.

"They're no harm to anybody," Mr. Massaway said of the wasps; "just to the flies."

There are various types of these wasps employed here, including a nocturnal variety.

"They come out just at night and all they do is just go after the fly pupa in the manure wagons or wherever the fly pupa will be out," Mr. Massaway said.

Another class of fly wasps

surface in the morning and evening. Some attack the fly.

"They only attack just the flies," Mr. Massaway assures inquiring people. "They'll fly around, catch a fly, land on him, lay an egg, and let the fly go about its way. Then the fly will die, the little tiny wasp will hatch, and then he'll go after more."

Mr. Massaway normally puts anywhere from one million to two million eggs around the city, alternating locations on a weekly basis. He estimates that about 10 million fly wasps hatch each summer on the Island.

"I put them around the manure wagons one week," he said. "The next week I'll put them on the manure wagon. The week after, I'll put them in a different spot in the barns. I put a few here, a few there in other spots where I know the fly problem might be bad."

With cleanliness, fly traps, and fly wasps, Mr. Massaway is able to keep the fly population on the Island to a minimum.

Without controls, he noted, "You'd be able to walk, but



Fly control officer Frank Massaway models fly traps that he places around the city to control the fly population. Mr. Massaway has worked for the City of Mackinac Island since 1982 and is the head of maintenance and the assistant city foreman, in addition to his fly control duties.

you'd be pretty well overrun by flies. The horses would be covered with them. That's one

thing we don't like.

"It's very important to help control the flies."

Fly Control Tips for Horse Owners, Businesses

To ensure cleanliness and limit the spread of flies around the Island, the City asks businesses and horse owners to abide by the following guidelines:

Horse stalls - Manure and solid bedding must be removed regularly. The stalls must be cleaned before a weekly application of salt, lime, or sodium borate can be applied between the floorboards, and other cracks in the foundation where fly pupa may be found. Accumulated

feed and excess bedding should also be removed on a weekly basis.

Manure wagons - Wagons must be parked over a concrete or asphalt slab to contain spilling and to prevent mixing of manure and soil. Wagons containing manure must be covered with a tight-fitting cover in order to reduce fly feeding and breeding. Wagons also are required to be thoroughly swept and cleaned after each emptying.

Manure boxes - Boxes must

be built on a concrete or asphalt slab to contain spillage and must be built to be fly proof with tight-fitting doors and screens. Boxes must be cleaned weekly.

Food waste/garbage storage sites - Food wastes and garbage must be stored in fly-proof containers and constructed over a concrete or asphalt slab to contain spillage. In addition, storage sites must be cleaned on a weekly basis.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

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The world has turned over many times since that first Lilac Day, but every year when the lilacs bloom again, wherever I am, I think of Ling, whose brainchild became the first Lilac Day, and now a week-long festival. The birth of an idea she had harbored so long ago.

So, Ling, if you happen to be reading the *Town Crier* today, you will know someone out there is celebrating your day and the future Island historians will understand a little better the correct Island history of Lilac Day. I am sorry it took so long to correct it.

Bob "Little Bob" Hughey
St. Ignace

Editor's Note: Mr. Hughey is a former mayor of Mackinac Island. Ling, Stella, and Steven have all passed away.

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