

May 6 Election Sees 3 Candidates for Council, 4 for School Board

By Ryan Schlehner

Mackinac Island voters will be going to the polls Tuesday, May 6, to choose from three candidates to fill two City Council seats and four candidates to fill two seats on the Board of Education.

Anneke Myers will vie for one of the two seats on City Council against incumbents Jason St. Onge and Armin Porter.

School board incumbent trustee Larry Rickley will run against three other candidates, Kelly Bean, Jen Daniels, and Katrina Platzke, for two open seats. The second seat now is occupied by Trish Martin, who has served eight years and is not seeking another term.

Council terms are for three years and school board terms are four years. Members of both boards are paid \$35 for each meeting they attend.

Running unopposed for one-year terms in the city election are Margaret Doud, who is seeking her 33rd term as mayor, Karen Lennard, who seeks her fifth term as city clerk, Rick Linn, on the ballot for his fourth term as treasurer, Ron Dufina, running for the 26th year as supervisor, and Robert Benser, who is seeking his 10th year as assessor.

Write-in candidates for either school or city posts have until 4 p.m. Friday, April 25, to file. As of Wednesday, April 9, the only write-in candidate is Jack Armstrong, who seeks a school board seat.

Candidates were asked the same five questions posed by *Mackinac Island Town Crier*.

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Anneke Myers has lived on Mackinac Island year-around since 1998, and lived each summer on the Island since birth, as her father, David Armour, was a historian for the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. She is the accounting and personnel manager for Village Inn Restaurant, Balsam Shops, and Pontiac Lodge and is bookkeeper for Wawashkamo Golf Club, Mackinac Island Yacht Club, and Mackinac Woodworks. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Calvin College in Grand Rapids and is married to contractor Matt Myers.

Jason St. Onge has lived on the Island all his life. He is a 1992 graduate of Mackinac Island Public School and a 1998 graduate of the University of Michigan, where he majored in general studies. He owns St. Onge Latex and Groove. Mr. St. Onge is also a member and vice president of the Mackinac Island school board and a sergeant on the Island Fire Department. He has served two three-year terms on the city council.

Armin Porter is originally from Grosse Pointe Woods and has been an Island resident since 1976. He is general manager for Nephew Enterprises and serves on the Mackinac Island Fire Department and the Mackinac Island Planning Commission. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children, Sarah, 18, and Anne, 15. He has served one three-year term on the city council.

— Council Response to Questionnaire —

• Why are you running for office?

Myers: I can bring a positive,

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES





Anneke Myers

Armin Porter

Jason St. Onge

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES






Larry Rickley

Katrina Platzke

Jennifer Daniels

Kelly Bean

reasoned approach to the duties and responsibilities required of a member of City Council. I have the time and energy to devote to the position.

St. Onge: First and foremost, I think it is important to serve your community. I have served the Island my entire adult life, and to be a part of this community I feel compelled to give back. After serving two terms, I believe I bring experience and insight to the issues facing the City of Mackinac Island.

Porter: To be a responsible voice for the Island residents, and to preserve Mackinac Island's unique history and charm.

• What are the two major issues facing the city?

Myers: The two issues facing the City of Mackinac Island are tied together; planning for the future and infrastructure upgrades. The Master Plan that is currently under review needs to accurately reflect and address the community's ideas about zoning and future development. Sewer and water plant upgrade decisions need to follow from this planning.

St. Onge: Unfortunately, there are not "two" major issues, there are dozens. As a councilman, you can't just pick two issues and concentrate. Rarely can you find two that the masses agree are most important. What I mean by this is, to some, historical preservation is most important; to others, preserving our horse culture; to our seniors on fixed income, the most important issue is keeping taxes down and user rates in check. As a councilman, you cannot just work on the issues most important to yourself, you have to work equally hard on all the issues important to everyone else.

Porter: Planning for the future in particular, upgrading the sewer and water system, historical preservation, and fiscal responsibility. I know that's four issues, but they are all important.

• What do you hope to bring to Council?

Myers: My varied business background has prepared me to oversee the city finances and work with city staff. I am a problem solver and have a willingness to hear all sides of an issue.

St. Onge: If re-elected, I will continue to bring my no-non-

sense approach to the decision-making City Council needs. I have, and will, continue to use straight talk and forthright communication with the citizens and the departments of the city.

Porter: A voice for the concerns of all the Island's people and fiscal responsibility.

• What can City Council do to improve the Island's economy?

Myers: Residents and businesses alike facing rising fuel and utility costs and the threat of a recession. It is City Council's responsibility to control spending in order to keep taxes as low as possible.

St. Onge: Certainly the economy of the Island is tourism based. That base is influenced by the state and federal economy, obviously there isn't a whole lot the city can do to help there. However, as my record indicates, I have always stood for, and voted for, lowering taxes, which helps everyone in regard to their economic well being. As the economic woes continue, it is important for the city to be very guarded when it comes to taxing and spending.

Porter: Keep taxes down. Also, preserve the Island's history, which will encourage tourism.

• What is one important feature of the Island that City Council must protect?

Myers: The use of non-motorized modes of transportation is what makes our community unique and draws tourists to the Island.

St. Onge: Quite simply, our uniqueness. The Mackinac way of life needs to be protected on so many levels. We cannot just become another tourist destination or a theme park. We must maintain our autonomy. This needs to be done by keeping a sharp eye on our master plan to ensure we don't grow beyond our means and lose our core values.

Porter: The horse culture.

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

Larry Rickley is a carpenter for Mackinac State Historic Parks for 13 years and is a volunteer firefighter. He is a 1993 graduate of Mackinac Island Public School and has been a lifelong Island resident. He and his wife, Kathleen, have a son, Anthony, 14, who is a student at the school, and a daughter,

Makayla, 2. He has served one four-year term on the school board.

Jennifer Daniels has been the manager of the Caddywampus store since 2003. She is originally from Flint and has spent 10 summers and five winters on the Island. She is a 1997 honors graduate of Genesee Christian School in Burton.

Kelly Bean has been administrative assistant to Mayor Margaret Doud for the past three years. She has lived on the Island year-around since 2000. She is a 1993 graduate of Lapeer West High School. She has been an active volunteer with Mackinac Island Recreational Development, the annual Christmas Bazaar, and Mackinac Horsemen's Association. She has two daughters in the school system, Hailey, 13, and Mackenzie, 10.

Katrina Platzke is an employee at Mackinac Wheels. She is a 1989 graduate and salutatorian of Mackinac Island Public School. She is also a 2003 medical assistant program honors graduate of Olympia Career Training Institution. She and high school sweetheart, Brett Horn, have a two-year-old son, Dakota.

— School Board Response to Questionnaire —

• Why are you running for office?

Rickley: As a life-long Islander who was graduated from Mackinac Island Public School, I am a firm believer in being a volunteer to the community.

Daniels: I am running because I care deeply about this community and our children who will be the future caretakers of it.

Bean: I would like to assist the community in an area that will determine the future of our community. Making sure the children of the Mackinac Island community continue to have a good education means a great deal, and I would love to be a part of that.

Platzke: I'm running for the school board because I want to give something back to my former school. Also, I now have a future Island student.

• What are the two major issues facing the school?

Rickley: To keep our school as maintenance-free as possible and to continue to reach out for educational needs of our students.

Daniels: I believe two of the

major issues the school faces right now are 1) attracting and retaining enthusiastic and qualified teachers, and 2) addressing inappropriate and harmful behaviors in students.

Bean: Mackinac Island Public School is always facing enrollment issues. Getting and keeping students is a difficult task we face because of employment issues for families. Technology is always changing, and making sure the students have access to that technology will offer them more choices in their curriculum.

Platzke: The two major issues facing the school are the declining enrollment (there's approximately 30 less students than when I attended) and keeping up with the challenges of the federal program "No Child Left Behind." That program requires things like a swimming credit for the physical education section. The Island's school doesn't have a pool. There are other aspects of the program that smaller schools are challenged with.

• What do you hope to bring to the school board?

Rickley: As a current board member, and having four years of experience, I would like to see the completion of projects that have already been set in motion.

Daniels: I hope to bring a fresh point of view, sound judgment, and open-mindedness to the board.

Bean: I have some challenging and wonderful experiences with the city. I have learned a great deal and believe that knowledge and experience that I have gained can be an asset to all that is represented in the school board already.

Platzke: I hope to bring experience as a former student.

• How can the school board improve curriculum, the facility, or general education?

Rickley: Our curriculum is always being upgraded to give a better education to our kids. We are in the process of improving the facility. I feel that the general education that the kids are receiving is very good.

Daniels: I would like to add some music programs to the curriculum, but mostly, I believe that each student should have at least a basic knowledge in each subject before advancing on. The change in curriculum since the passing of No Child Left Behind has made it difficult for some students to catch up.

Bean: Again, technology. With the advances in technology, the students, teachers, and staff will have access to greater resources to expand their knowledge and experience.

Platzke: I think the school might gain improvement by getting new, fresh ideas. One way could be to have an anonymous survey to be filled by staff and parents. People can be a lot open with thoughts and ideas when they are anonymous.

• How can the school board help retain year-around families and encourage graduating students to return?

Rickley: By giving our students the best education so we can prepare them for their adult life.

* Please turn to page 16: Vote