

Tribe conscious of regulations

Fishing rights of Michigan Indians defended



ELAINE SCHUSTER

"People say Indians can't or won't police their fishing," says Elaine Schuster of Southfield, who is half Chippewa Indian and a complaint investigator for the Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

According to Ms. Schuster: "The Chippewa tribe has organized a conservation committee that issues licenses from the tribe to exercise and regulate our treaty fishing rights. We know we must regulate our fishing."

To conservationists who claim Indians are using Whitefish Bay of fish for commercial profit, she answers that the tribe is conscious of the possibility of depleting the fish in the bay.

She said the Bay Mills reservation has hired a game biologist to keep tabs on the fishery population. Whitefish Bay is on Lake Superior west of Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula.

Ms. Schuster said the tribe seeks to issue a limited number of licenses yearly and invites the Department of Natural Resources to prosecute any In-

dian who doesn't have a tribal license.

"How can a small tribe with one policeman police the fishing on the bay?" she asks. "There is the problem of Indians fishing without a license — that is why we say if an Indian doesn't have a tribal license to fish, the DNR (Department of Natural Resources) should prosecute that person the same as a white poacher. Fine them, confiscate their fish and their gill nets."

PRESENTLY, according to federal court rulings, it is the Indian's exclu-

sive right to fish in Whitefish Bay, and their right to fish all but the western portion of Lake Superior without state restriction.

That right, said U.S. District Judge Noel Fox, dates back to an 1836 treaty between Henry R. Schoolcraft, U.S. Commissioner and the Ottawa and Chippewa Indian nations. Under the U.S. Constitution, states cannot enter into treaties with foreign nations, only federal governments can.

Ms. Schuster's father's cousin is A.B. LeBlanc, a Chippewa Indian named in

an appeal of a lawsuit lost by the state attorney general which seeks to prohibit Indians from using gill nets and fishing fleets to catch fish in Whitefish Bay in Lake Superior. Her father is a frequent debater on the fishing rates issue.

Judge Fox ruled this year that the state of Michigan "lacks authority to arrest and prosecute Indians for violation of its statutes governing fishing."

It is against the law for non-Indians to fish the lakes with gill nets, which

have a small mesh and trap and kill all fish, including excess or fish that are illegal because they are out of season.

Ms. Schuster remains a tireless supporter of Indian fishing rights, a stand that puts her at odds with most of the state's sport fishermen, the Michigan United Conservation Club (MUCC) and the Michigan attorney general's office.

She said that about 60 tribal licenses could be issued, giving each Indian the right to haul in about 1,000 pounds of fish per week.

Auto experts go to pot

As sure as crocuses bloom in the spring so, too, do chuckholes. Both reflect the vagaries of Mother Nature at her best and at her worst. Crocuses, in all their fragile beauty, are a delight to the eye of the beholder. Chuckholes, on the other hand, are the bane of motorists everywhere.

When a vehicle unsuspectingly slams into a pothole, a fire can be blown out, a wheel rim bent, suspension systems and front end alignment knocked out of kilter, if not ruined, and wheel covers popped off.

Automotive and industry sources estimate that the miniature crater that pockmarks highways with the spring thaw are responsible for more than \$200 million in damages to vehicles annually.

In fact, the problem is so serious that engineers at Chrysler Corporation decided years ago they would not wait for the forces of nature. They created their own chuckholes to test vehicle reliability.

At the corporation's Chelsea Proving Grounds, 60 miles west of Detroit, chuckholes, built to specifications, have been designed into roads at the facility to test vehicle suspension systems before they are installed on cars or trucks.

Later, production cars and trucks are run over the same tortuous course to make sure the parts are performing as they were designed. The testing con-

tinues year around.

Chrysler engineers used to use public roads for this type of testing before the proving grounds were opened 20 years ago.

But a good chuckhole located one day might not be around long enough because road repair crews would fill it in.

Today, if an engineer spots a particularly "good" chuckhole on a highway, they may have the road crew at the proving grounds duplicate it there.

Robert Steere, A Chrysler executive, feels the continuing research has paid off in many areas.

For example, Steer pointed out that tests show that if you, the motorist, encounter one of those chasms in the road and are unable to avoid it, damage can be minimized by not braking and locking the wheels in one position.

Story hours planned

The month of August will bring some late summer fun for 3-to-5-year-olds. Baldwin Public Library will be offering Drop-In Story Hours Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 7, 14, 21 and 28.

These half-hour programs begin at 2. No registration is being taken and participation is free.

For further information contact the young people's room of the Baldwin Library, Martin at Bates.

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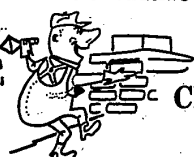
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