

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



Governor Granholm's Attack on Republican DeVos Backfires

Governor Jennifer Granholm may want to reconsider her re-election strategy of attacking Republican businessman Dick DeVos on the Asian front. A Red Herring on Red China?

"Maybe you remember reading about how he outsourced Michigan jobs to China when he took over the family business," Granholm said in a June 29 campaign fundraising letter that began with four paragraphs denouncing DeVos, former president of Amway/Alticor. "...the last thing Michigan needs at a time like this is an extreme governor who supports outsourcing."

Granholm, upon returning from her important recent trade/investment mission to Japan, understandably trumpeted it as Michigan's most important Asian trading partner, importing about \$1 billion in Michigan products last year.

Guess what? Of the \$267.4 million exported to Japan by Ada-based Alticor, now parent of Amway Corp., co-founded by DeVos' father, \$173.5 million came from Michigan--17 percent of the \$1 billion touted by Granholm. Alticor's exports to China include \$68.2 million directly from Michigan facilities--third best after \$82.5 million to South Korea.

These figures were provided by Alticor in response to my request of about 11 weeks ago when DeVos announced his intention to run. That day, Democratic State Chairman Mark Brewer accused DeVos of outsourcing Michigan jobs to China, citing 1998 and 2000 downsizings as part of a 21 percent reduction in global workforce.

The DeVos camp initially said it would not respond to Brewer every time he attacks on Granholm's behalf. Then, wisely, it said Alticor would compile job and economic figures. The long delay gave Brewer an opening to periodically complain that DeVos was stonewalling about the land of The Great Wall.

"This is somebody who could have invested in Michigan, and chose not to," scolded Brewer.

Flyspecking Democrats, and economists, may find contrary information in the details that

Alticor will release generally Monday. But it strikes me they support DeVos' contention that jobs did not move from Alticor in Michigan to Amway China, which, it says, "is legally required to manufacture in China all of the products it distributes in China."

Meanwhile, having reported for many weeks on those who have rapped him on the issue, here's what DeVos had to say after release of the Alticor material when I talked to him by phone last week while he campaigned in the Upper Peninsula (where ex-Lt. Gov. Connie Binsfeld of Maple City and Munising Friday endorsed DeVos, saying she was "saddened to see" results of Granholm's watch):

"The way I read it is that despite the rhetoric that Democrats put out, to be going negative, to be attacking me as a candidate as early as they did on this whole (outsourcing) issue, would suggest how nervous they are about their situation (and) how viable they consider me as a candidate. The clear message (is) they must be lacking positive messages about their own candidate that they are already quickly trying to take me down.

"It appears they'd rather talk about me than talk about the lack of accomplishments of this administration."

DeVos said Granholm's letter was replete "with inaccurate assertions, simply misleading and not true. This (campaign) ought to be how to make Michigan better, not harm your opponent. We have a positive vision about the future."

He said, "The result of expanding in China hasn't taken one job from America, or from Michigan, and has in fact added hundreds of jobs to Michigan as a result of expansion there. You go all the way back to when I got involved in the international side of the Amway business and began to push its growth, the result has been hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars of Michigan exports."

DeVos, after weeks of silence, has offered a good case, and we'll see how it plays out in months ahead. *George Weeks is the political columnist for The Detroit News and is syndicated by Superior Features.*

Les Cheneaux Wooden Boat School Meeting is August 30 at Library

A committee is forming to develop a wooden boat building school in the Les Cheneaux Islands.

Organizers will meet Tuesday, August 30, at 7 p.m. in the meeting room of in the Les Cheneaux Community Library on Hodeck Street in Cedarville.

Those who want to be involved with creating and establishing a wooden boat building school are invited to come and hear more about the proposed project.

The committee will include volunteers both interested in boats and with organizational skills and knowledge.

St. Ignace Schools' Opening Hinges on Renovations

The 2005-2006 school year is expected get underway for the St. Ignace Area School District students and staff Tuesday, September 6.

The first day of school, however, is contingent on the completion of the summer renovations to LaSalle High School. "I'd say we're going to open on time, but it will be very close," Superintendent Mike Springsteen said Tuesday, August 23. "Unless there's an unforeseen major problem, we should be set."

He added that work on the electrical and fire alarm systems is basically complete, and that work on the classroom heaters is near completion. New cabinets for many of the classrooms will be installed in the next week, as will the windows. "Then we should have just enough time to clean up," he said.

If the work and cleanup cannot be completed before September 6, the entire district's opening will be postponed however many days are needed to finish. Additional information will be made available as the school opening date nears.

All students in grades kinder-

garten through 12 will attend in the morning only Tuesday, September 6. Young 5s students will attend each day for half-days beginning Wednesday, September 7. Kindergarten through sixth grade students will start each day at 8:10 a.m., while seventh through 12th grade students will start at 8:05 a.m. Dismissal time for kindergarten through 12th Tuesday, September 6, will be 11:25 a.m.

Classes will dismiss at 2:55 p.m. for kindergarten through sixth grade students and 3 p.m. for seventh through 12th grade students on full days.

Parents who transport their students are asked to get their children to the school 10 minutes before the start of classes. School doors will open at 7:30 a.m. daily.

Parents of kindergarten and Young 5s students have been sent a letter regarding a specific schedule for their child. If you have not registered your child for the 2005-2006 school year, you may phone 643-8500 to arrange to do so. Immunizations must be up to date to allow attendance in public school.

Registration for high school

classes will be Tuesday, August 30, for juniors and seniors. Eighth grade, freshmen, and sophomores will register Wednesday, August 31.

The school breakfast program will begin Tuesday, September 6, the first day of school.

The school lunch program will begin for all students Wednesday, September 7. Lunch prices for the school year are \$1.80 for elementary and middle school students and \$2.10 for high school students. Class lists for grades kindergarten through seventh are posted on the school doors one week before school starts.

Athletic event prices for the 2005-2006 school year will be as follows: middle school/freshmen contests, adults \$4, students \$3, and family ticket \$12. High school JV and varsity events would be adult \$5, students \$4, and family ticket \$15. Season pass would be \$80 for students, \$100 adult, and \$200 for family.

Bus schedules for the school year will be as follows:

John Beaudoin, bus 01, will be driving the St. Ignace Township routes with the first pick-up in the

Pine River area about 6:30 a.m. and ending in Evergreen Shores at 7:35 a.m. (includes reservation pick-ups).

David Crisp, bus 05, will pick up at Worth Road, Brevort, US-2, Gros Cap, Pte. LaBarbe, North Portage, Woods Road, Cedar Lane, and South Portage starting at 6:30 a.m.

Sandy Thorin, bus 05A, will pick-up in the city from Spring Street South starting at 6:55 a.m.

Frank Beaudoin, bus 97, will be driving the Brevort Township area starting at 6:30 a.m. on Belonga Road.

Randy Gustin, bus 02, will be driving the North City route with pick-ups starting at 7 a.m. at 829 North State Street.

Parents are urged to bring their kindergarten students on the first day and walk them into the school. They will be made aware of bus schedules at that time.

Questions regarding the above information should be directed to the specific principal's office: high school, Mr. Gustafson at 643-8800, elementary/middle school, Ms. Ledy at 643-8500 or 643-7822.

Letters to The Editor

Improved Shelter and its Animals Deserve a Chance

To the Editor:

I would like to say a few words about the Mackinac Animal Aid Association.

When our family pet, Buddy, was adopted in 2004, he had been there for six months. Back then, the shelter was treated like a kennel. It was very dirty and reeked of animal waste. Now, just a year later, we have adopted our second family pet, Meeka. The shelter is 100 percent different and 200 percent better! It's a temporary home and refuge for these animals, it's clean, it doesn't smell bad, and the animals are being trained and getting attention they never would have gotten just one year ago. The difference? Ginger Valentine and Mackinac Animal Aid Association's hard work to get the shelter in the condition it is in now.

Before you decide to take a refuge away from these abandoned, lost, and lonely animals, please consider all the work that has been done and is being done by the Mackinac Animal Aid Association. Through working hard to acquire donations from both the community and businesses like Glens Market and B.C. Pizza, they have raised awareness of the shelter's needs.

Most shelters do not include any veterinary costs with the adoption fee. The charge for adoption is \$60. You get your new pet, a collar, a leash, some food, and a coupon for spaying or neutering. When you raise awareness of the shelter's needs within the community, the shelter could become more self-supported.

Please consider how many animals have been saved and placed in homes where they are loved like family. Consider how many pet owners there are that would have never found such a friend had it been put down a mere week after its arrival at the shelter.

Imagine that you lost your own family pet. Would you think to look at the shelter right away? What if you didn't and later learned that your companion had been put down because no one had claimed or saved it?

These animals deserve a fair chance to adjust to the shelter and win the love and affection of a family.

Dawn M. Grulke
Houghton

Editor's Note: Ms. Grulke is the daughter of Wayne and Michele Pemble of St. Ignace.

More Support Expressed for Animal Shelter

To the Editor:

We would like to say few words about the Mackinac County Shelter, the Mackinac Animal Aid Association, George and Joann Ford, Ginger Valentine, and our wonderful, furry friends.

The shelter. Now when Leila [Robach] took care of the shelter, she sure loved her cats and dogs. She would be the first one to enjoy the makeover the shelter has received. She wouldn't want any of her babies euthanized. She stayed at the shelter as long as she was able to because she was comforted being with the cats and dogs. Leila loved every kitten, cat, puppy, and dog that came through the door.

I don't know what's going on about the phone at the shelter. When I would call the shelter I'd receive a message giving me two choices. First, for the animal control officer, and second for the animal shelter. When I needed Bob, I pressed one; when I wanted to talk to Ginger I pressed two and left messages. When you are busy picking up an animal, cleaning kennels, or talking with prospective adoptive parents, you don't want to be interrupted. Ginger always called back. I have talked to Bob personally about the cats and he told me they have eminent domain. But Bob, cats don't have eminent domain. According to the city ordinance, they have the same restrictions as dogs.

The Mackinac Animal Aid Association. Wow! I have never seen so few do so much before. They just love those dogs and cats.

Joann and George Ford are tireless advocates for our furry friends. They are like the Energizer bunny, they just don't quit. They have done so much for the county shelter on improvements, money raised, and found homes for animals. They did it for the animals, but they sure were making you look good at the same time. Mackinac County has this wonderfully run shelter. Clean, neat, and add a helpful, knowledgeable Ginger working there, and you've got a great combination for success. You have the best, why not try to help and not hinder?

Ginger and Andy [Valentine] are another example. Even though Ginger works for the county, she and Andy put in much of their own time. They work tirelessly at fundraisers and have gotten many people involved with the shelter, including us. If it wasn't for Ginger, Joann, George, Andy, and the other shelter helpers, the shelter would not be in the wonderful condition it is now. We're so proud of these people, the job they do, and the shelter they have worked so hard to improve.

How anyone could hurt these thoughtful, caring people is beyond me. I hope the newspaper article will be cleared up and an apology and clarification printed. They would only be fair.

We've been blessed to be able to adopt two wonderfully smart dogs. We wouldn't have been able to do that if the shelter only kept them for seven days. We hope you keep the Mackinac Animal Aid Association on at the shelter and help them find loving homes for the unwanted pets that are dropped off in our county.

Would you like to know the best part of all? A few of these animals have found homes outside of our state as well as in the lower part of Michigan. Can you imagine the word of mouth advertising that

Mackinac County is receiving every time they talk about their pet? "Oh, your dog is so cute! Where did you get him?" "Well, you're not going to believe this, but while we were on vacation in St. Ignace, we were in a restaurant where we saw a posted ad with pictures of dogs and cats at the Mackinac County Animal Shelter for adoption. The animals were so cute, we decided to go look since it was too hot to do anything else."

You do know there is no better advertising than word of mouth, don't you? Word of mouth advertising is priceless.

Wayne and Michele Pemble
St. Ignace

Family's Adoption Experience Leads to Gratitude

To the Editor:

I am writing to express my heartfelt support for the Mackinac Animal Aid Association. My family and I visited St. Ignace last weekend and we were lucky to adopt a beautiful dog from the animal shelter in that city. During my visit, I read an article that ran in the St. Ignace newspaper. There seems to be some controversy involving the shelter. I am deeply concerned that some pettiness may affect the work that is being done on behalf of the animals in your area.

I am personally very impressed with the caring and professional manner in which the facility in St. Ignace is being run. I found Ginger Valentine to be knowledgeable, helpful, dependable, patient, and very loving toward the animals in her care. I also spent time with her assistant and a variety of volunteers. I can assure you that the shelter is a clean, friendly place to visit.

The mission of the Mackinac Animal Aid Association is a very noble one. As county commissioners, you must feel very proud that such a successful program is taking place in your area. Countless volunteers have given time and resources to save the lives of animals in Mackinac County. These animals will not have a chance to live without the efforts of the Mackinac Animal Aid Association. Please do not allow pettiness to put an end to a caring group of people who are doing great work to save the lives of animals.

I understand that the animal shelter issue is on the agenda of your board. Please give careful consideration to the issues at hand. An organization that works hard to provide food, shelter, and medication to animals who need a home should be supported and acknowledged, not publicly ridiculed and made to feel that their efforts are unnecessary. Instead, I would suggest financial support and public accolades for the group. My family and I are personally grateful for the work of these fine people. The dog that we adopted last weekend, and have already grown to love, would not have been alive without the dedication and efforts of the Mackinac Animal Aid Association. Please allow them to continue their mission. I encourage you to resolve the issues facing this

organization and the animal shelter in St. Ignace in a fair and timely manner.

Dana R. Smith
Ferndale

Program Could Save County Insurance Dollars

To the Editor:

I am happy to see that Rob Winkelman brought the insurance situation to our attention, for it needs to be discussed. Over the past three years, as a county commissioner, I have spent many days in insurance meetings and, through aggressive programs, the commission has developed a plan that, at this point, is saving Mackinac County roughly \$75,000 a year. This means that rather than a 15 percent to 20 percent increase in premiums, we have been able to keep the increase to approximately seven percent a year without cutting the benefits to county employees.

I am looking into a new program that has the potential of saving the county considerably more in insurance dollars. As a matter of fact, if it works, we could pay less in 2006 than we did in 2005.

Second, since we are on the topic of county budget, this commission has done a stellar job in keeping it within the framework of our revenue. As a matter of fact, with recent adjustments, the 2005 revised budget will be under the 2004 budget and with a surplus. This is an important factor, for the state cut roughly \$200,000 in revenue sharing, which we had to make up.

Joe Durm
County Commissioner
5th District

Different Choice Could Have Avoided Heartache

To the Editor:

I have to confess, I wasn't there when the incident took place at the home of my daughter, Tracy, but I do know how it affected the whole family. I'm talking about the shooting of their much loved dog, Max.

Tracy called me, crying so hard that I could barely understand what she was saying. I knew someone had been shot and someone or something was dead. I was horrified when I finally realized what had happened. I just know my grandchildren will never feel the same about police officers, and it shouldn't have happened that way. They felt degraded by the very people that should have been there to protect them.

The public needs to be made aware that there are some officers out there who have a legal right to carry a gun, but also should be trained that they don't have to use it. That's when they should step back, give it a second thought, and think maybe there is a better way of looking at the situation. It would have saved a lot of heartache.

Glady's Grogan
St. Ignace

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The quotation under the flag of *The St. Ignace News* on Page 1 is from the 10 triads written by Dr. Fred Newton Scott, creator and teacher of the first continuous course in journalism in the United States at the University of Michigan in 1890. The 10 triads are chiseled on the parapet of the Detroit News Building at 615 Lafayette Boulevard, Detroit. They were headed "Ideals of the Press" or "The Newspaper in a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.