

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



Water Protection Package Is a Start

About this time four years ago, Democrat Jennifer Granholm and Republican Dick Posthumus, eventual 2002 gubernatorial nominees, vowed to assure that Michigan finally would catch up with other Great Lakes states in regulating large-scale water diversions.

Posthumus grandly touted an ill-defined comprehensive "Marshall Plan for Water." Other Republicans trumpeted the concept.

Subsequently, the GOP-ruled Legislature and Granholm could not agree on a management framework – until last week when lawmakers overwhelmingly approved a compromise that Granholm says she will sign as Michigan's first comprehensive water use package. They include some provisions of her own proposed Water Legacy Act.

Business and environmental groups generally praised the package. Policy Director James Clift of the Michigan Environmental Council called the bills "a huge step forward for Michigan...Our Great Lakes and all of our waterways are, for the first time, being provided protection from overuse by large water users."

Not quite. There's a loophole for large water bottling operations, whose containers smaller than 5.7 gallons are exempt from being considered a diversion outside the Great Lakes basin.

Rochelle Breitenbach of the Detroit Audubon Society joined Clift in applauding the package, but said: "Exempting bottled water from being considered a diversion creates a dangerous loophole in protections of Great Lakes water. We will continue to work to close this loophole and protect Michigan's water from being exported, no matter the size of the container."

Jim Olson, the Traverse City attorney representing Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation that has fought the Ice Mountain bottling operation in Mecosta County, is outraged that the legislation treats such water as "a product, not a diversion." He said Granholm should show "backbone (and) refuse to sign it."

Not likely. Both parties prefer in this election year to declare victory.

Russ Harding, director of the Department of Environmental Quality during the Engler Administration and now with the conservative Mackinac Center for Public Policy, calls the package "one more obstacle for job providers looking to expand or locate here."

Not so. Rep. David Palsrok (R-Manistee), who chairs the House committee on natural resources

and related issues, says the bills "protect and conserve Michigan's water and still allow for managed use that will help economic recovery and growth in the state."

My view: The Michigan package is a good start, but only that, at playing catch-up with other lakes states.

A Plus for Parks

Granholm had little to say about the environment in January's jobs-oriented State of the State Address. But in last week's budget message she said, "strengthening our economy and quality of life requires (protecting) our precious natural resources."

She proposed \$22 million in capital outlay funding – through bonding through the State Building Authority to be repaid out of the general fund – to improve deteriorating state parks and increase tourism. Specifics were not cited, but the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) said Friday state parks with immediate needs (notably the toilets) include those at Ludington, Traverse City, Interlochen, St. Ignace, Fayette, Copper Harbor, and Porcupine Mountains.

State parks have not received general fund money since 2003. In fact, potential DNR money from user-funded cookie jars has been raided for general fund needs.

A welcome proposed ballot proposition would thwart tapping of those funds. Unfortunately, there so far has been little steam behind the effort to promote this idea on what shapes up as a cluttered ballot.

Some northern Michigan Republican lawmakers have had success, however limited, impacting Granholm's budget proposal.

Over objections of Senator Jason Allen of Traverse City, she once wanted to eliminate general fund support of the Mackinac Island State Park. Although there's a slight reduction, such funding is in her latest budget proposal.

Representative Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba), a former logger who champions the timber industry and has lured about 40 other lawmakers Up North to view its operations, is pleased by what Granholm says about its importance.

Citing the furniture industry and other downstate economics, Casperson correctly said: "This is not a U.P. issue; it is a Michigan issue."

George Weeks recently retired after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.

Voters To Choose Mayor From 7 Candidates Feb. 28

By Ryan Schlehuber

St. Ignace voters will go to the polls Tuesday, February 28, to elect a mayor from among seven candidates, Susan Tamlyn-Massaway, John Becker, Dean Baker, William LaLonde, Steve DuFresne, Patrick Rickley, and Paul Grondin. It will be the first time in 22 years the title will belong to someone other than Bruce Dodson, who stepped down this past fall.

The St. Ignace News, in cooperation with the candidates, asked the candidates to provide readers with some biographical information and to share their feelings about several issues they feel are important to St. Ignace residents. Their responses, in their own words, are printed here.

Susan Tamlyn-Massaway, 48, is a part-time coordinator for the Mackinac County Health Access Coalition Development and is co-publisher of *A Woman's Perspective* magazine. She has a master's degree in public administration from Northern Michigan University.

Mrs. Tamlyn-Massaway is a member of the St. Ignace City Council, the St. Ignace Planning Commission, and the St. Ignace Kiwanis Club. She is treasurer of the St. Ignace Area Community Foundation, board secretary for Housing Opportunities Made Equal, and serves on the board of the Drug Abuse Resistance Education program.

She and her husband, Daryl, have four daughters, Angela, Melissa, Jenny, and Jessica.

John "Zeke" Becker, 42, a 1982 graduate of LaSalle High School, is a maintenance employee with the First National Bank of St. Ignace. He has five brothers, Terry, Tim, Greg, Kevin, and Brian, and said he has been an active community volunteer and regularly attended city council meetings a few years ago.

Dean Baker, 64, a 1960 graduate of Byron Center High School, is a retired construction worker and carpenter, earning an associate's degree in architectural drafting and design from North Central Community College in Petoskey in 1993. Mr. Baker moved to St. Ignace from Byron Center in 1984. He retired in 2003 owing to arthritis.

Mr. Baker is a member of the city's Zoning Board of Appeals and is a former member of the St. Ignace City Council, serving from 1989 to 1993.

He has a wife, Gwen, a daughter, Jacquelyn Baker, a stepdaughter, Bridgett Pfeiffelmann-Anzlon, and a stepson, Karlton Pfeiffelmann.

William "Willie" LaLonde, 43, a 1981 graduate of LaSalle, is a Mackinac County deputy sheriff. He has been on the St. Ignace City Council for six years and is a 19-



Paul Grondin

year veteran volunteer firefighter with St. Ignace Fire Department. Mr. LaLonde is also a member of the Lions Club and volunteers as a coach for youth softball, baseball, and soccer.

Mr. LaLonde and his wife, Donna, have three daughters, Kayley, Mallory, and Lydia.

Steve "Frenchy" DuFresne, 41, is originally from Fenton and was graduated from Fenton High School in 1982. Mr. DuFresne is a barber at the St. Ignace Barber Shop. He has a wife, Barbara, and two daughters, Carlie Levi, and Margaret.

Mr. DuFresne's civic involvements include being vice president for Mackinac County Off-Road Vehicle Association, he is a master mason, and he is a member of the Straits Area Sportsmen's Club. Mr. DuFresne also volunteered to develop and constructed a free disc golf course at Silver Mountain.

Patrick Rickley, 42, is a 1981 graduate of LaSalle High School and served in the United States Army for four years. While in the military, he completed the Primary Noncommissioned Officers Course and the Primary Leadership Development Course. He was honorably discharged as an E-5 sergeant.

He is a bridge safety officer (toll collector) for the Mackinac Bridge Authority.

Mr. Rickley is a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. He said he enjoys attending many local events and is always willing to volunteer his help when it is needed.

He has a daughter, Erica Marie Rickley, a son, Trevor Matson, and a dog named Sampson.

Paul Grondin, 49, a 1974 graduate of Battle Creek Pennfield High School, is a 17-year employee of the Michigan Department of Corrections as a sergeant on the day shift at Kinross Correctional Facility. He earned an Associate of Arts degree from Kellogg Community College in 1976, and a Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice, with a minor in political science, from Western Michigan University in 1981.

Mr. Grondin has been a city council member since 2002. He serves on the city's Recreation Advisory Committee, Golf Course



Dean Baker



William LaLonde



Susan Tamlyn-Massaway



Steve DuFresne



John Becker



Patrick Rickley

Committee, and the St. Ignace Library Board.

He has served on the St. Ignace Area Schools Board of Education from 1993 to 2001, with four of those eight years as board president. He is also a member of Relay for Life and the St. Ignace Lions Club.

Why are you running for mayor of St. Ignace?

JOHN BECKER: I was always interested in running as mayor of St. Ignace and how the mayor and council decide on things. I am running to help the people of St. Ignace. I am interested in deciding things to help the tourist economy of St. Ignace.

DEAN BAKER: I enjoyed my tenure on city council back in the early 1990s and have wanted to get back involved again. I had considered running for mayor several years ago but could not define my reasons well enough to feel comfortable with it; also, I didn't have the time that I felt the position deserved if I should win. Being retired, it gives me that time.

I have talked to many people in town over the past few years and especially in the last two weeks

going door to door. I tried to listen to their feelings and concerns and I have come to the conclusion that many people feel a huge disconnection from their local government.

I love clichés, and one of my favorites is, "You can please some of the people all the time, and all the people some of the time, but you can't please all the people all the time."

If elected, I will try and start a once-a-month or perhaps bimonthly open meeting in the council chambers. These meetings would be open to the public to come and discuss with me, and any public official who would like to attend, any concerns that they might have about the city.

I will try and encourage more people to run for council seats. I will try and encourage more people to attend council meetings and participate in the public comment time. I will maintain an e-mail address and I will be available by telephone at my home or through City Hall. We continually need new faces, ideas, and input.

WILLIE LaLONDE: I was raised in a family of public service to this great city and county. My

*Please turn to page 12

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Attend the HBH Meetings and See Where Your Dollars Go

To the Editor:

Since the death of our daughter five years ago from untreated mental illness, we have worked to improve mental health care in Chippewa, Mackinac, and Schoolcraft counties. Those efforts focus on how Hiawatha Behavioral Health (HBH) spends tax dollars.

We have expressed our views at every monthly HBH board meeting in the 60 months since Karen died. We have circulated petitions, written letters, testified before legislative committees, and talked to governmental officials. Those efforts have accomplished little except the Chippewa County Commission has appointed two new public members to the HBH Board. We believe, during those same 60 months, a number of area residents have died in hospitals, jails, and back alleys because they did not receive appropriate care and treatment.

An increase in inpatient treatment has caused budget problems. To address this budget problem, the board canceled last year's bonuses, changed their Christmas party to a potluck, and eliminated the successful Take Five Alzheimer's respite program. HBH, then, approved a garage for the Sault, purchased vehicles, including a plow truck for Manistique, and solicited bids for a study regarding an addition to the Manistique office.

We agree with canceling bonuses and changing the Christmas party but disagree with eliminating the Take Five program while buying more vehicles. We also disagree with plans to expand the Manistique office. It appears HBH could save money by moving the administrative offices to St. Ignace or the Sault. Both are more centrally located; 65 percent of the population resides in Chippewa County and 20 percent reside in Mackinac County. A management office in St. Ignace or the Sault could reduce the 250-plus overnight trips HBH management made last year, saving the cost of motels, meals, gas, and lost travel time.

Recently, HBH management made a \$70,000 mistake to a Physicians Assistant contract. It took two meetings for management to acknowledge the error and admit, even with the correction, the \$178,000 Physician Assistant was the highest paid in the United States. The CEO claimed the salary was justified because of difficulties getting professionals to locate in the Upper Peninsula. Moving management offices to St. Ignace or the Sault would make recruitment of employees easier as both are closer to medical, educational, travel, cultural, and entertainment opportunities.

Money saved by moving the offices could restore programs like Take Five, meet inpatient costs, and improve services to the residents of all three counties. We need to join together to provide the best care and treatment for those suffering with mental difficulties.

The next HBH meeting is Monday, February 20, at 6:30 p.m. in the Sault. We urge people to talk to HBH board members, county commissioners, and to attend the meeting and see where your dollars go.

Donald and Christine McLean
Brimley

Contact Congressman To Protect National Forests From Sale

To the Editor:

The Bush Administration plans to sell 200,000 acres of national forest land.

The sale is part of a National Forest Service plan to raise \$800 million over the next five years. The Forest Service plans to sell about 175,000 to 200,000 acres, according to Forest Service spokeswoman Heidi Valetkevitch; they could be from every national forest.

The president's new fiscal 2007 federal budget calls for the bureau to raise \$1 million in 2007 land sales, \$28 million in 2008, \$40 million in 2009, \$42 million in 2010, and \$71 million in 2011.

From 2000 to 2004, the bureau sold 13,160 acres for an average price of \$320 an acre. At that rate, the government would have to sell more than half a million acres to total \$182 million.

Rural schools get 25 percent of federal forest timber sale proceeds, but those funds have fallen, so the idea is to sell forest land to make up for that. Of course it follows that proceeds from timber sales will be even less after selling of these public lands.

Does it really make sense to cut taxes (\$8 billion just for the Energy Industries), and then make up for the shortfall by selling our National Forests?

The only hope of stopping this wholesale sell off of our public lands is for Congress to put a stop to it. Contact Congressman Bart Stupak and ask him to protect our public lands.

Daniel G Fenlon
St. Ignace

The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

359 Reagon Street, PO Box 277, Saint Ignace, MI 49781

Telephone (906) 643-9150 • Facsimile (906) 643-9122

Hessel Office: 138 Pickford Avenue (906) 484-2268

www.SaintIgnaceNews.com

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Publisher/Editor

Wesley H. Maurer, Jr.

Associate Publisher

Mary R. Maurer

Advertising Director

Dawn R. Huskey

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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.