

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



Couple of Moderate Joes Ousted in Primary

Out East and in the Midwest, a couple of moderate Joes on Capitol Hill took it on the chin last week from extremes of their parties.

The primary defeat of Representative Joe Schwarz (R-Battle Creek) at the hand of the hard right was not as major a national story as the hard left's defeat of Senator Joe Lieberman (D-Connecticut). But there were national implications to Schwarz's loss.

The Wall Street Journal, in a Tuesday Tea Leaves editorial that incorrectly tagged Schwarz as "a big spender," noted that the Michigan election marked the first time that the anti-tax Club for Growth, believed to have spent about \$1 million to support opponent Tim Walberg, has defeated a Republican in a primary after several tries.

Schwarz told the Associated Press: "I look at this election as probably a victory for right-to-life, anti-abortion, anti-embryonic stem cell groups, but it's a net loss for the Republican Party because it just pushes the party farther to the right."

Ex-Governor Bill Milliken, a moderate soul mate, was encouraged by Schwarz' comments that he is "too competitive" to quit politics and "there will be more elections." Milliken said, "he is the kind of thoughtful, intelligent and committed person we need in public office."

Schwarz, a former state senator, had the support of President George W. Bush, ex-Governor John Engler, and the Michigan GOP. But he proved too moderate for the district when pitted against a conservative challenger who had big bucks from afar.

As for Lieberman, founder Al From of the Democratic Leadership Council (early members were then-Governors Jim Blanchard of Michigan and Bill Clinton of Arkansas) said the left should "stop trying to purify our party with venomous attacks on pro-defense Democrats like Lieberman and California Representative Jane Harman, who survived their attacks in her primary this spring."

Harman is ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee chaired by Representative Pete Hoekstra (R-Holland).

Dresch: A Special Breed

Of all the lawmakers I have known in Lansing, the most memorable, certainly per capita, have been from the Upper Peninsula. Among them: such long timers as combative Senator Joe Mack, who did high visibility battle with the Department of Natural Resources and environmentalists; Representative Dominic Jacobetti, an appropriations czar with enormous power; and, going back decades ago when I started covering the Capitol, Representative Jimmy Goulette, who had an Iron Mountain mink ranch and wore trademark mink bow ties.

I thought of the U.P.'s unique lawmakers upon learning of the

death from lung cancer in Hancock of ex-Representative Stephen Dresch, who – like Goulette and current Representative Tom Casperson of Escanaba – was a Republican from a land not noted for dispatching Republicans to Lansing.

Dresch, who made an unsuccessful 1992 stab at the 1st Congressional seat won that year by Bart Stupak (D-Menominee), was a Michigan Technological University dean and brainy fellow who after public service was a forensic analyst involved in many a high profile case.

Representative Rich Brown (D-Bessemer), who has the seat once held by Dresch, told the *Houghton Daily Mining Gazette*: "He was a fighter for the folks he felt had been wronged by the government...he never wavered in his desire to make the things he felt were wrong right."

As the *Detroit Free Press* headlined: "U.P.'s eccentric lawmaker lived to right wrongs."

Good epitaph for a good man.

Another Mackinac Melee?

Every so often, there's a fuss over gubernatorial appointment to the seven-member Mackinac Island State Park Commission – a plum, especially for downstaters. There's a nifty East Bluff cottage where commissioners can stay.

The latest flap is that the Mackinaw City Village Council has voiced opposition to Governor Jennifer Granholm's appointment of Father Jim Williams, a Catholic priest in St. Ignace and Moran but a resident of Mackinaw City, as the Mackinaw City representative on the commission.

Apart from the fuss over whether Williams can be a true representative of Mackinaw City (required by a 1958 law because of the park's fort in the city), there's an issue of whether Williams is a Democrat – as Republicans contend – or an independent, as most recently described by Granholm's office.

No more than four of the seven members can be of one political party. If indeed Williams, appointed to replace Republican Audrey Jaggi, is a Democrat, that's the limit.

Mackinaw City Village Council President Robert Heilman, according to *The St. Ignace News*, while praising Father Williams as a person, called his appointment "a slap in the face of the community," because Heilman contends the community was not consulted beforehand.

The residency issue may not be enough to zap his confirmation in the GOP-ruled Senate. But there are Republicans who want the Senate to pin Williams down on whether he is a Democrat as originally reported, or an independent.

Confess, Father.

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

Lime Island Is an Undiscovered Gem in St. Marys River

Most people may be unfamiliar with a hidden gem that lies in the St. Marys River Navigation Channel at the eastern end of the Upper Peninsula, just upstream from the DeTour Passage.

It's Lime Island, and to get there you need to take a 15-minute boat ride across the aqua-green waters of Raber Bay.

The 980-acre island is owned by the state of Michigan and managed by the Department of Natural Resources. To those who have been there, the island is a premier outdoor recreation area, but even most of them don't know that the island was the site of summer camps of Woodland Indians some 5,000 years ago, or that lime kilns were constructed there in the early 1700s, or that it was a 20th century sportsmen's club, attracting the likes of Hoot Gibson, Diamond Jim Brady, and Mae West.

"More recently, Lime Island was owned by Consolidated Coal, which supplied coal-burning steamers and, later, bunker oil to diesel-powered ships plying the Great Lakes," said Janet Chilson, a volunteer host on Lime Island.

Mrs. Chilson and her husband, Howard, live on the island from May through September, caring for the island, interpreting its amazing history, and helping campers to enjoy their visit.

"When the company pulled out in 1982, the island's little village, including the small cottages, the one-room schoolhouse, and the company superintendent's house, became a ghost town," Mrs. Chilson said.

"Consolidated Coal then sold the island to the state for one dollar, but with no money for development, the village quickly deteriorated at the hands of vandals, until the DNR was given management oversight and began bringing the island back to life."

Today, though you need a boat to get there, or rent a charter, Lime Island has become a wonderful vacation retreat. Visitors can camp on specially designed platforms lining the shores of both the north and south ends of the island, or stay in beautifully refurbished rental cabins. There are miles of hiking trails, beautiful beaches and, in season, the island offers wild asparagus and mushrooms, apple trees, and even an ancient mulberry tree from which to pluck succulent fruit.

The forests are mature, with large pines along the southern end, hardwoods in the middle, and cedar and tamarack lining the north shore. Moose occasionally swim across from nearby St. Joseph's Island, and Lime Island is home to one of the most valuable colonies of common terns in Michigan.

"The entire island is fascinating," said Pat Halfrisch, area manager for the DNR Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Division at Sault Ste. Marie. "The area is a gold mine of natural fossils. It also hosts many unique plants, and birders will thrill at the variety of birds that pass through in the spring and fall."

At the north end of the island,



Six cabins sit atop a bluff overlooking the St. Marys River, where occupants can watch Great Lake freighters pass by, hike on the many trails that lace the island, fish from shore, or enjoy a sandy beach. Cottages are available at \$45 per night. (DNR photographs by David Kenyon)



Lime Island's prominent location in the shipping lanes led to its evolution as a significant refueling stop for freighters. The lime kilns industrial site, an island point of interest, provides visitors with a rare opportunity to view remnants of the actual kilns.

also known as the town site, is a harbor of refuge that features a 900-foot dock. During bad weather, boats will line its entire length seeking shelter from the storm. When the weather is good, as many as 100 pleasure boats may be at the dock, not only because it's a nice, friendly place to be, but also because the fishing is terrific.

Freighter watching also is popular. The big Great Lakes freighters slip past the island practically within touching distance. At night, the freighters are lit from bow to stern, but when there's fog, the quiet thrum of the propellers may be the only signal that a ship



Outdoor Matters

A column from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

is passing by.

"The DNR built a walkway that allows visitors to look into the ongoing archaeological excavations that give clues to prehistoric activities," Mrs. Chilson said. "Copper points, some 4,000 years old, from Native American arrows have been discovered here."

Lime Island cottages have two

or three bedrooms to accommodate up to eight individuals and are barrier free. Guests should bring their own bedding, cooking equipment, tableware, flashlights, lanterns, and a first aid kit. Warm clothing is recommended. Tent camping on the platforms or elsewhere is available.

* Please turn to page 8

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Fr. Williams Can, Does Represent Mackinaw City Well

To the Editor:

I am writing in regard to the article in *The St. Ignace News* entitled "Mackinaw City Council Challenges Williams' Appoint-

ment to MISPC." Having grown up in Mackinaw City, I was very disappointed and embarrassed to learn of the request and overall behavior of the city council asking for Jim Williams to step down from the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. I believe Jim Williams would be a highly qualified person to sit on the Mackinac Island State Park Commission for the following reasons:

First, the mission of the Mackinac State Historic Parks is "to protect, preserve and present Mackinac's rich cultural and natural resources to provide outstanding educational and recreational experiences for the public."

What better candidate for this position than Jim Williams, who has a degree in history and who has at one time taught children. The park system will only benefit from Father Williams being on the commission because he will want to ensure that history is kept alive for future generations at all of the Mackinac State Historic Park Sites.

I understand this from a teacher's perspective, but also from a person who worked for Mackinac State Historic Parks for eight years. I believe he will help keep alive the vision that directors like Dr. Eugene Peterson, Dr. David Armour (assistant director and interim director), Carl Nold, and Phil Porter worked so hard to establish over the years.

In regard to Father Williams not being involved in Saint Anthony's Parish, that is an issue you will have to take up with the bishops. Father Williams has been involved in your community, if you look. He has been present at hockey games and elementary school events.

He has married some of your young people; he has baptized some of the grandchildren of the community; he has prayed with the families of the community when friends and loved ones have been sick, and he has buried your loved ones and grieved with you at your time of loss. I cannot fathom how you can imply this man is not a member of your community.

I have worked with Jim Williams in the past and know him since I was a child. You will not find a more proactive man that will work with you to achieve your goals. Go to the table, sit down and talk with Father Williams, and he will hear you out.

You should have no worries of digressing to "pre-1958" status, if your needs are beneficial for Mackinac State Historic Parks.

In closing, let us all remember that the job of a Mackinac Island State Park Commissioner is to be a guardian to protect and preserve all Mackinac State Historic Park sites and to keep living history alive in the Straits Area for future generations!

Michelle LaTocha
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

USPS Periodical Publication Number - 462-380

ESTABLISHED 1878

Published each Thursday at Saint Ignace, Mackinac County, Michigan

Entered in Saint Ignace, Michigan Post Office as Periodical Mail Matter, Act of March 3, 1879

Periodical Postage Paid at Saint Ignace, MI • Additional Postage Paid at Gaylord, MI

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to St. Ignace News, PO Box 277, St. Ignace, MI 49781

Volume 127, Number 19, Thursday, August 17, 2006

Publisher/Editor

Wesley H. Maurer, Jr.

Associate Publisher

Mary R. Maurer

Advertising Director

Dawn R. Huskey

Publisher 1975-1995

Wesley H. Maurer, Sr. (1897-1995)



Subscriptions:

\$35 in Mackinac, Chippewa, Emmet, Luce, and Cheboygan counties.

\$42 elsewhere in the United States and military post offices.

\$30 for the Web edition at www.saintignaceneews.com

We take Visa, MasterCard, and Discover

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.

St. Ignace News Policies

Letters:

All responsible letters will be considered for publication and may be edited. They must be signed and a telephone number must be included for verification. Personal thank-you notes, personal attacks against other people, form letters, and letters promoting political candidates are not accepted, although letters for or against ballot proposals are welcome.

Obituaries:

The St. Ignace News maintains a policy of not charging for obituaries and we sometimes add information or rewrite them for clarity and reader interest. Obituaries that the family wants published exactly as submitted can be placed in the newspaper for \$75. Photographs are welcome at no charge.

Weddings:

Weddings with photographs are published without charge within 45 days of the ceremony. After 45 days, a photograph can be included for \$32.80.

Internet:

The complete edition of The St. Ignace News is available online at stignaceneews.com.

Contact:

The St. Ignace News

359 Reagon Street

PO Box 277

Saint Ignace, MI 49781

(906) 643-9150 (phone)

(906) 643-9122 (fax)

e-mail: news@stignaceneews.com