

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Remark Based on Philosophy,  
Not Performance of City Attorney

To the Editor:

In last week's *St. Ignace News*, an article was written regarding enforcement of city ordinance violations (December 14 issue, front page). I was quoted as saying "the problem starts with the city attorney," and wish to explain the total concept under which it was said.

The Planning Commission has been working for several months on a sign ordinance, and after hearing public comment and making a few modifications, it was approved and sent to the City Council for their review and approval. During the public comment, a member of the audience questioned how and who would enforce the ordinance.

The city manager advised it would be the building inspector, and the audience member stated he wanted to be clear who was responsible and who he should report violations to. It was at that point I stated there was more to the process than just that, as the Planning Commission has been involved in other ordinance issues where enforcement has been questioned, more specifically the motor home ordinance violation and enforcement of same.

When there was much debate over the motor home ordinance and it was bouncing back and forth between City Council and the Planning Commission, I had discussions with city officials and was told that ordinance enforcement did not take place until someone made a complaint. I argued this made no sense, and equated it to a law enforcement person seeing someone steal jewelry from the Gold Mine, but they had to wait until someone else saw it or made a complaint before taking action.

I then asked if we weren't going to enforce the ordinances we have, why do we have them? I was told that the city attorney has the sole authority and discretion to decide what to do about ordinance enforcement, and he is the one who said there must be a complaint first before anything can be done. Simply put, if the enforcement member sees a violation of an ordinance "driving around," they can take no action without anyone complaining.

I explained to the audience member that based on what I have been told by city officials, it is the city attorney who has directed them into "reactive" instead of "proactive" enforcement of city ordinances. I am not implying that "Moie" Brown is not doing his job, my statements are to the point of a change in the way ordinances are enforced is needed, becoming "proactive," as the way things have always been done in the past may not work in the present.

I do not enjoy seeing ordinance violations being ignored until someone points them out. If we can see them, so can the enforcement members, and a simple contact can begin the process of addressing the violation. Hopefully, this allows members of the community to understand the full concept of my statements, in that ordinance enforcement problems start with the city attorney are based on philosophy, not performance.

Fred Strich  
St. Ignace

## Generous People Highlighted Trip

To the Editor:

As we approach the holiday season, my wife and I can't help but look back and reflect on the events in our lives this past year. One of the greatest highs for us was a day we spent in your fine town. We live in Ohio and visiting your area was a first for us. The countryside, lakefront, and islands are beautiful, and the history is fascinating. But the true highlight for us was meeting some very special people in St. Ignace.

Our car broke down on a Saturday night in a grocery store parking lot. A man who had just finished shopping was gracious enough to drive us across town to our motel. The next morning, two employees of the motel, with the manager's full support, drove us back to our car and attempted to get us on the road again. When this did not work out, one of them loaned us his personal tools and a woman working the desk loaned us her new car to drive 25 miles across the bridge to get parts. Fortunately, we were able to fix our problem and head toward Ohio by mid-afternoon.

Perhaps the biggest surprise came after we arrived home and received a refund from the motel for our night's stay. The manager enclosed a note expressing his regret for the difficulties we experienced while in St. Ignace. Instead, he could have sent us a bill for services rendered!

If the people in St. Ignace are all as gracious and helpful as those few we met at the grocery store and at the K-Royale Motor Inn, I fully understand why people keep coming back to visit your area. Thanks to you in St. Ignace for boosting our confidence in people, and have a Happy New Year!

David and Mary Kasler  
Circleville, Ohio

Viable Third Party Might Keep  
Political Brigands in Check

To the Editor:

On Wednesday, as I watched the glistening snow swirl around the wall I was framing in the woods of Trout Lake, I smiled at the thought of being called a Republican Big Wig. I wonder how many Big Wigs have snow blow down their neck while kneeling in the snow pounding nails?

Congressman Bart Stupak was a close friend to my brother and sister-in-law, and Representative Gary McDowell I have known for a long time. I have voted for both of these good men in every election they have run in, and I always vote for the best person, though I kinda like being compared to Shawn Hannity and Bill O'Reilly. Good company, thanks!

I like to think that if I had been a citizen of Nazi Germany, I would have taken the side of those who spoke out against the evil of Hitler, at whatever cost. It is said that evil happens when good men do nothing, and so I spoke out against one of the few people in the world that is working to destroy America, and that is George Soros. He is, in my opinion, the epitome of evil.

I enjoyed Brian Grondin's letter. I agree with most of what he said except I never did say that Mr. Ramelis was a traitor. What I did say was "contributions to MoveOn.org, to me, is tantamount to treason," tantamount meaning "equal to." Mr. Ramelis, if I offended you in any way, I apologize most sincerely. As far as those political panderers I mentioned, facts are facts, check the congressional record. I concede that there are a lot of very good, caring Democrat politicians. Though as an equal opportunity satirist, I have to add that the sorry affairs of the State of Michigan lie directly at the feet of our Republican legislators. It is my opinion that most politicians, no matter what party, are self-serving thieves of low moral turpitude.

It is just too bad that there is not a viable third party in America to keep these brigands in check. The only other option is to vote out all incumbents every election, that is, except the ones you own through PAC's that you support personally. I do wish that Governor Granholm will invest into Michigan a viable, state-owned health care for all workers, though, but she won't.

Mr. Ramelis has noted that he works in the Newberry prison. Good for you, sir. It is my belief that the state of Michigan, by raising the number of inmates to a cube, and by the short staffing of officers, is putting you and your fellow officers at great peril. Inmates are being reclassified from three to two so as to lodge them in level two prisons. Riots are not far off. Once again, it is our legislatures of both parties and our Governor that spend hundreds of thousands on money for cool cities, but could give a damn about those who keep us all safe, whether correction officers or policemen. I had written many letters to legislators and the *Detroit Free Press* to keep the prison in Newberry open, as opposed to the private, expensive one in Buckley. But it was public pressure, not any certain party, that saved that institution.

I am not in favor of using nuclear bombs. America has them and we used them, twice, not to mention the small tactical battlefield nukes that are kept at the ready 24/7 on ships and in Air Force and Army bases. During the cold war, the U.S. Army had small tactical nukes ready to go out the end of cannons. Now we have small nukes in cruise missiles. A tactical nuke, though, is probably not as affective as a bomb known as a Daisy Cutter. We have been using hundreds of those in the Gulf wars. The kill range is everyone in one square mile. If Iran or North Korea sell or give nuclear bombs to terrorists, I have no doubt that America will, in fact, turn those countries into glass, like an animal rights activist who would eat a live gerbil if there was a great Depression like in 1929. If it was the survival of either your family or innocent children and women in Iran, which would you choose, your family or them?

Rick Weiss  
St. Ignace

## 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 [stignacenews.com](http://stignacenews.com).

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## Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



## Pols Line Up Early Behind Prez Contenders

Victors on Michigan's 2006 ballot have yet to take their new oaths of office, but many already are enlisting in the cause of those who want to be sworn in as president in 2009.

Most notably, Attorney General Mike Cox last week became Michigan chairman for the John McCain 2008 Exploratory Committee, and national chairman for McCain's law enforcement supporters.

Arizona Senator McCain, winner of Michigan's 2000 Republican presidential primary, and outgoing Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, a son of Oakland County and the late Governor George Romney, are stirring the biggest waves here organizationally after being frequent visitors and big contributors for GOP candidates.

Michigan candidates this year also had support of other potential Republican presidential contenders, as well as such Democrats as New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and the latest national media star, Illinois Senator Barack Obama, thin of credentials but thick of clippings.

Another potential Democratic contender, ex-Senator John Edwards of North Carolina, recently gained support of ex-U.S. Representative David Bonior, former House minority whip and unsuccessful contender for the 2002 Democratic gubernatorial nomination.

Winner of that nomination and of two terms as governor, Jennifer Granholm is keeping her powder dry on her 2008 presidential preferences. But Republican Cox weighed in last week:

"I look forward to helping Senator McCain win Michigan again and recruit law enforcement across the country to support him should he decide to run for president...[He] is very popular in Michigan and someone who I have always admired for his integrity and straight talk."

Republican National Committeeman Chuck Yob has declared for McCain, and it is likely that Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land will declare for him when McCain declares for the race.

John Yob, Chuck's son and a political consultant for recent statewide campaigns for Land and others, is state director for McCain's committee. Detroit area industrialist and civic leader Jim Nicholson, who unsuccessfully sought the GOP U.S. Senate nomination in 1996, is expected to be McCain's finance chairman in Michigan.

Representative Kevin Elsenheimer (R-Bellaire) is a legislative co-chair for McCain's state committee. The McCain camp said the approximately \$180,000 that it distributed in Michigan for the 2006 cycle was "in the top two or three in the country." McCain also helped raise about \$1.3 million in appearances for the Michigan GOP, Cox, and Land.

The Romney camp said his Commonwealth PAC distributed \$267,000 to the state party and assorted candidates and groups, and he raised "well over \$1 million" for Michigan Republicans.

Senate Majority Leader-elect Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) (who defeated Senator Jason Allen (R- Traverse City) for the position), is among 50 legislators on Romney's state steering committee.

Media reports that Romney has wavered on abortion rights and gay marriage suggest that at least two

Michigan members of Romney's steering committee have second thoughts. One of them, Representative Jack Hoogendyke (R-Kalamazoo), told me Friday he has been discussing the issues with Romney and is "still hopeful" to continue support.

Further trumpeting gay marriage as an issue at this extremely early stage of Michigan presidential campaigning is the bizarre block that Kansas Senator Sam Brownback, who is wooing state conservatives, has placed on confirmation of Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Janet Neff of East Grand Rapids as a federal district judge, because of her participation in a gay marriage ceremony of a friend in 2002.

The Reverend Jerry Zandstra of Grand Rapids, who dropped out after a spirited but under-financed campaign for the 2006 Republican U.S. Senate primary and now is on the steering committee of Brownback's presidential exploration, said Friday he was the one who called Brownback's attention to an unconfirmed press report that Neff "officiated" at the ceremony.

It's not clear that Neff did any more than join in the ceremony by expressing best wishes, but even if she did more, that should not be enough to block confirmation.

While Zandstra said the issue of Neff's views should be explored, he correctly said it would be "extreme" to deny confirmation because of Neff's participation in the ceremony.

Zandstra, who is among those mentioned by Michigan GOP leaders as a potential 2008 challenger of Senator Carl Levin, said: "He's going to be hard to beat. He's gifted intellectually. ... I don't know whether taking him on makes sense. It could be a bit of a suicide mission."

Smart fellow.

Zandstra currently is a senior fellow at the religious-oriented Acton Institute in Grand Rapids, where he previously was the policy director, and is preaching at a Christian Reformed Church where he had been pastor before running this year.

**A.U.P. First**

Before his 2000 election to represent the western end of the Upper Peninsula, Representative Rich Brown (D-Bessemer) for 16 years was clerk of Gogebic County, became president of the Michigan Association of County Clerks, and in 1992 was Michigan County Clerk of the Year.

So the title was a good fit last week when Speaker-elect Andy Dillon (D-Redford), citing his extensive "wealth of experience," named term-limited Brown as House Clerk, a job with high visibility on the rostrum when the House is in session and vast administrative responsibilities off camera.

Brown, 56, a former reporter for the *Ironwood Daily Globe*, looks "forward to continuing my service to the people of Michigan." He'll be the first of 32 House clerks since statehood in 1835 to be from the Upper Peninsula.

Of the 70 speakers of the House since statehood, only two were from the Upper Peninsula, Chippewa County's Martin R. Bradley in 1933-34 and Victor A. Knox in 1947-1952.

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

## Kincheloe Woman Dies in Accident

Cheryl Lynn Thompson, 37, of Kincheloe, died as a result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident Friday, December 8, at 3 p.m. in Dafter Township in Chippewa County.

She was traveling north on Mackinac Trail, when witnesses said she lost control of the vehicle on the snow-covered road, and struck a tree. She and her two sons, ages 12 and 2, were transported to War Memorial Hospital in Sault Ste. Marie. The two boys were treated for non life-threatening injuries.

Michigan State Police are investigating the accident. Vehicle restraints were used, and alcohol is not believed to be a factor in the crash.

## Blood Drive Set for December 28

An American Red Cross Blood Drive has been scheduled for Thursday, December 28, in Cheboygan, to offset the increased need for blood during the holidays. The drive will take place from noon to 5:45 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church. As an incentive to donors, T-shirts will be given away while supplies last.

## The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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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.