

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why Waste Our Dollars on a Failed Policy?

To the Editor:

On Congressman Bart Stupak's official Web site, he has a section entitled "Bart's Views on Current Issues," which includes a "Position on Iraq" statement. The first sentence of the position paper says, "Our current policy in Iraq has failed." If Iraq is a failed policy, I would like to know why Congressman Stupak voted for the most recent war funding bill. Why is he so eager to waste our tax dollars on a failed policy?

Senators Levin and Stabenow also voted for the war bill funding bill. There are a lot of disappointed Democrats and independent voters who sent them to Congress to end this war. Their constituents are angry, and their enemies are calling them cowards without the courage of their convictions.

The idea that President Bush has to get a blank check, no strings attached, in order to support the troops is pure mass media ad campaign spin for the mindless mes-

merized masses and the Democrats and the Republicans are both using it. Some of us passed our GEDs and get our news from sources other than the mainstream. We are not going to cut funding for the troops until they run out of bullets and leave them without a ticket home. That con job is just another lie, like weapons of mass destruction, Jessica Lynch, Iraqi ties to 9/11, and we are there to democratize Iraq. We are there to take their oil.

The truth about why this bill got bipartisan support may be in the details. The bill requires that the Iraqis turn over the majority of their oil fields to the Big Oil companies.

To maximize profits, the oil companies need to control the flow of oil or competition, and real capitalism will result in lower prices. The oil industry is becoming increasingly monopolized as it price gouges us to poverty.

One final note, before someone

writes and tells me about Congressman's Stupak's recently proposed oil price gouging bill, let's examine one little detail: It requires the approval of the President, who declares an oil price gouging emergency, and spurs investigation into action to check the price gouging. President Bush is the best friend Big Oil ever had.

The average gasoline price in 2001 when he took office was \$1.13 a gallon. So if he just doesn't just veto the legislation, does anyone really think that the man who called a crowd of wealthy patrons, "his real constituency, the haves and the have mores," is going to check the major oil companies?

Our legislators will get to vote for it though, and tell us, "See, we did something about the out-of-control gasoline prices."

As a wise person once said, "What this country needs is a good second party."

Jim Ramelias
Gould City

Nature Preserve Hike Tour Aug. 4

A field trip to Carl Gerstacker Nature Preserve east of Cedarville, will be led by Nadine Cain Saturday, August 4. The hike is on easy terrain and will take participants over the rocky shore and gently rolling hills of the preserve.

Participants will learn about the rare birds, reptiles, amphibians, and wildflowers that inhabit the preserve.

Trip cost \$10 for individuals and \$25 per family, and payments qualify as a tax-deductible donation to The Nature Conservancy. Register by calling Carol Bryson at (517) 316-0300, extension 206, or by e-mailing her at mifotrips@tnc.org.

Space is limited. The best photographs taken on the tour will be posted on The Nature Conservancy's Web site.

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 do often 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 \$35.00.

Internet:

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

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NEWS ITEMS and SOCIAL NOTES
1 p.m. Monday

LETTERS to the EDITOR
Noon Monday

OBITUARIES
Noon Tuesday



Four LaSalle High School students received scholarships from the St. Ignace Masonic Lodge Saturday, May 19. Pictured here (back, from left) is mason Jon Arnold, student Dan Olsen, student Lewie Mullins, and mason Mark Eby; (front) students Erica Ahlich and Cally Klimczak. (Photograph by Lori Strich)

Scholarships Presented at 121st Lodge Event

Members of the Masonic Lodge No. 369 F. & A.M. held the 121st Annual Past Masters Night at the St. Ignace Masonic Lodge Saturday, May 19.

Scholarships were presented to St. Ignace students Erica Ahlich, Cally Klimczak, Lewie Mullins, and Dan Olsen by Jon Arnold and Mark Eby.

Les Nyland of Ozark received two honors, Mason of the Year and District 31 Mason of the Year. District 31 includes Sault Ste. Marie, Newberry, Cedarville, and St. Ignace.

Mr. Nyland is an outgoing member of the organization who has helped the lodge in a variety of ways, member Skip Jarman said.

He has been involved in making signs and donating his vehicle for the annual pasty sale.

The St. Ignace Masonic Lodge was established in 1885.

Home Invasion at Bay Mills Pt. Road

A home invasion on North Avenue near Bay Mills Point Road in Bay Mills Township has prompted Michigan State Police to seek information through the Crime Stoppers program.

Some time between May 4 and May 6, a stained glass jewelry box decorated with a hummingbird

design and containing approximately \$2,000 worth of necklaces, bracelets, and rings was stolen from this residence. Those who may have information are asked to call Crime Stoppers at (800) 465-7867.

Callers may remain anonymous and tips leading to arrest may receive a reward of up to \$1,000.

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



Term Limits Are Behind Lack of Budget Progress in Lansing

Among costly consequences of the long delay in resolving the state budget woes was the downgrading of Michigan's credit rating by all three Wall Street firms that deter-

mine how much the state pays to borrow money.

And, in the view of many current and former lawmakers whose views I share, the long delay was one of the consequences of the term limits that voters approved overwhelmingly in 1992.

"Some of our dysfunction is due to term limits," Representative Howard Walker (R-Traverse City) said in lamenting the current lack of relationships and trust that can develop across the aisles over time. The subject came up during a recent discussion I had with Walker, who has a Michigan Technological University degree in forestry and has been active in land conservancy, about his commendable push to foster wind energy projects in Michigan. It's among issues overshadowed by the budget battle.

As Governor Jennifer Granholm and the legislature neared agreement on dealing with an \$800 million deficit for the current fiscal year that ends September 30, and pondered a projected shortfall of nearly \$2 billion for the next year, Walker said: "We'll get it done" - but could get it done sooner were it not for term limits.

Walker, who favored the term limits ballot proposal, was elected in 2002 and now is in his third and last term. But his lament is not sour grapes. It is shared by many seasoned Lansing observers of the agonizing recent months of costly dysfunction and lack of trust.

Public television's Tim Skubick, longest-serving member of the Capitol press corps, wrote in his newspaper column last month: "The three major players trying to bang out an agreement have a combined total of 15 years of Lansing experience. To say that the governor, House speaker, and Senate GOP leader are old hands at this would be wrong. They aren't and it's showing. For openers, they don't always trust each other and minus that, you can't reach an accord."

Bill Ballenger, a former state senator and now editor-publisher of the *Inside Michigan Politics* newsletter, observed as gridlock ground into mid-April: "In the past, an effective governor has made a difference. George Romney and Bill Milliken, in particular, were nearly always

able to cobble together something that got narrow bipartisan support in the Legislature, even when one or both chambers were controlled by the opposition party. Those days are gone."

Northern Limits

As noted here previously, all four of northern Michigan's state senators are term-limited and cannot run again in 2010. There's not likely to be any change in the partisan lineup.

Inside Michigan Politics, which analyzes voting patterns in legislative districts to determine "base party strength," deems the seat of Senator Michael Prusi (D-Ishpeming) as "solid Dem." You bet. He was preceded by the long reigns of Democrats Philip Rahoi, Joe Mack, and Don Koivisto. (A Republican, Joseph P. Cloon of Wakefield, represented Dickinson, Gogebic, Iron, and Marquette counties in the mid-1900s.)

The seats of Senators Jason Allen (R-Traverse City) and Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau) are pegged "likely GOP." Allen's district includes the eastern Upper Peninsula, which has a Democratic state representative.

That of Senator Tony Stamas (R-Midland) is "lean GOP." Two Democratic House members, Representatives Joel Sheltrown of West Branch and Matthew Gillard, represent substantial portions of Stamas' district.

The seat of term-limited Gillard is rated "toss-up" for 2008, as is the seat of term-limited Representative David Palsrok (R-Manistee). Sheltrown's seat is called "likely Dem," as is that of Representative Gary McDowell (D-Rudyard).

Deemed "solid GOP" is Walker's to-be-open House seat, as well as those of Representatives Kelvin Elsenheimer, (R-Bellaire) and Darwin Booher (R-Evart).

Not so comfortable for Republicans is the "lean Dem" district of term-limited Representative Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba), who is considering a 2008 challenge of U.S. Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee).

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

It Is Time for Lansing To Save Public Education

To the Editor:

Private donors who made it possible for the students from Les Cheneaux Community Schools to rally for education at the state capitol.

As an educator, it was refreshing to see our students so excited and committed to the cause of trying to wake up our state legislature. I was proud of our students, who took their task very seriously, in asking tough questions to our legislators and speaking out about their needs for public education.

It is unfortunate that many in Lansing are playing partisan politics and continue to blame Michigan's problems on the other party, while our children in Michigan suffer. Without quality

public education, what will become of our democratic process? Will the power of government be handed to the rich and privileged?

Many in the world of education wonder why so many in our state government are willing to watch public education crumble to the ground.

I guess those are the few who didn't have to rely on public education for their opportunities.

It's time for Lansing to wake up and do the job they were elected to do: legislate to improve the quality and lives of the people in Michigan. First and foremost, it's time to save public education.

Gretchen Storey, teacher
Cedarville High School

Road Work Is Excellent

To the Editor:

On May 18, as directed, Dan Christensen, on the grader, and Donald Giacherio, in the truck, arrived to work on Black Point Road. The area they were instructed to work on was from Nothelfer Road to Government Road.

For the first time in many years, this road was properly worked on. The two men really knew what they were doing.

Each man did an excellent job in operating his equipment. Together, they worked in harmony

and repaired the road. The only additional thing needed is several loads of gravel, which they are not authorized to get or provide.

We who live on this road and use it daily appreciate these men and the excellent job they did, and would like this letter put in their individual personnel files.

Dr. David Craig
Moran

Editor's Note: This letter was also submitted to Mackinac County Road Commission.

The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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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 128, Number 9 Thursday, June 7, 2007

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Publisher 1975-1995

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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.saintignacenews.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.