

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



'Water Wonderland' Wonders About Water

Drought-stricken California just had its driest one-year period since 1924 and is all the more prone to wildfires. Georgia has been battling drought for five years.

Up in the Great Lakes, Michigan, the worried "Water Wonderland" state, wonders where the water is going and what to do about ever-expanding invasive aquatic species in the lakes that have 20% of the world's fresh water.

Lake Superior is headed toward a record low level. Lakes Michigan and Huron, which get up to a third of their water from Superior, were about 20 inches below normal last fall and expected to be again this autumn - bad for recreation and shipping.

It was fitting that lawmakers from these three states last week announced creation of the bipartisan Congressional Water Caucus.

As they seek to recruit members, they have two early priorities: Creation by the legislative and executive branches of an 18-member federal water commission, and more federal funding to search of aquifers yet to be identified.

"It is believed that there are many more aquifers to be discovered," said Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee), who co-chairs the caucus along with Republican John Linder of Georgia and three members from California, Republican George Radanovich and Democrats Grace Napolitano and Jim Costa.

Stupak, in a phone interview, said it costs up to \$300,000 to find an aquifer, but for each of the two latest fiscal years, the federal budget allotted the "paltry amount" of \$800,000 for annual searches.

He also said that in addition to seeking additional sources of water, the caucus will discuss such ideas as this one pushed by western lawmakers: Making dams six feet higher would go a long way to making reservoirs large enough to meet current needs.

Plight of the Great Lakes is getting increasing national media attention. Last week, CNN had vivid video of big Asian carp in the Illinois River leaping into open boats, including one in which the network's correspon-

dent was clobbered.

Some of the coverage has been overboard, as when CBS hyped an evening news segment by asking: "Why is America's largest lake disappearing?" and gravely pondering whether Superior is becoming "inferior."

Nonetheless, there's a global water crisis, and we are part of it. Stupak, who in the mid 1990s helped thwart a Canadian company's plans to sell water from the Great Lakes to China, said: "The challenge is a real threat to our livelihood and security. Wars will probably be fought."

Wars? This is not just idle rhetoric by a Michigan politician who legitimately trumpets Great Lakes and water issues among his signature priorities. Consider this from former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, now chairman of Green Cross International, in a Project Syndicate (www.projectsyndicate.org) column published by the *Detroit Free Press*:

"Given the unprecedented scale of the threat, business as usual is not an option. The Cold war came to a peaceful end, thanks to realism, foresight, and strength of will. These three qualities should be put to work if our planet is to be spared major water wars."

He suggests the amount of water available per person could possibly be halved by mid-century in the Middle East and Africa. Gorby contends the right to water "is explicitly enshrined" in United Nations human rights treaties.

There's little danger that the United States, under either party, would agree to a UN mandate to tap Great Lakes water. But it's good that there are bipartisan stirrings on Capitol Hill to take a broad look at crucial importance of sustainable water management for the economy and the environment, as well as the human condition.

Booming Northern Voice

Northern Michigan has had some powerful congressmen, including Victor Knox (R-Sault Ste. Marie) in the mid-1900s, and Robert Griffin (R-Traverse City) later in the century, before he became a prominent senator.

Its most powerful voice, literally, was that of 1966-93

Representative Guy Vander Jagt (R-Cadillac), who upon his death last week prompted Republican State Chairman Mike Duncan Friday to declare: "Few Republicans then or since could match his skill behind the podium, and his enthusiasm for spreading the Republican message. (He) electrified audiences with his wit, his eloquence, and his enthusiasm."

Said Duncan: "When the Great Communicator, Ronald Reagan, was chosen as the Republican presidential nominee in 1980, he knew there was only one person he wanted to deliver the keynote address to the Republican National Convention" - Vander Jagt.

As noted by Representative Dave Camp (R-Midland), Vander Jagt had an extraordinary run of nearly 20 years running the Republican House campaign committee. Among his legislative accomplishments was as a sponsor of legislation creating the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

Representative Pete Hoekstra (R-Holland), who upset Vander Jagt in a 1992 primary stunner, said he "will be fondly remembered."

My fondest memory, walking down a Mecosta County high school hallway toward an auditorium where he was about to speak: I heard this booming voice coming from a janitor's closet. It was Guy, the onetime radio announcer, warming up his vocal chords.

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.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

That Walleye Is No Walleye

To the Editor:

Your articles on hunting and fishing are usually well done.

However, the photo of Jimmie Miller holding Craig Kruger's winning "walleye," worth \$1,200, is not a photo of a walleye.

The fish shown on page 13 of the paper of June 14 is surely a smallmouth bass.

Don McNaught
St. Ignace

Editor's Note: The photographs were misidentified. Cindy Pongracy, the winner of the biggest pike contest, was holding a walleye she had caught. Jimmie Miller was holding a smallmouth bass caught by Fred Schlehuber of Moran. Thank you for noting our mistake.

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.

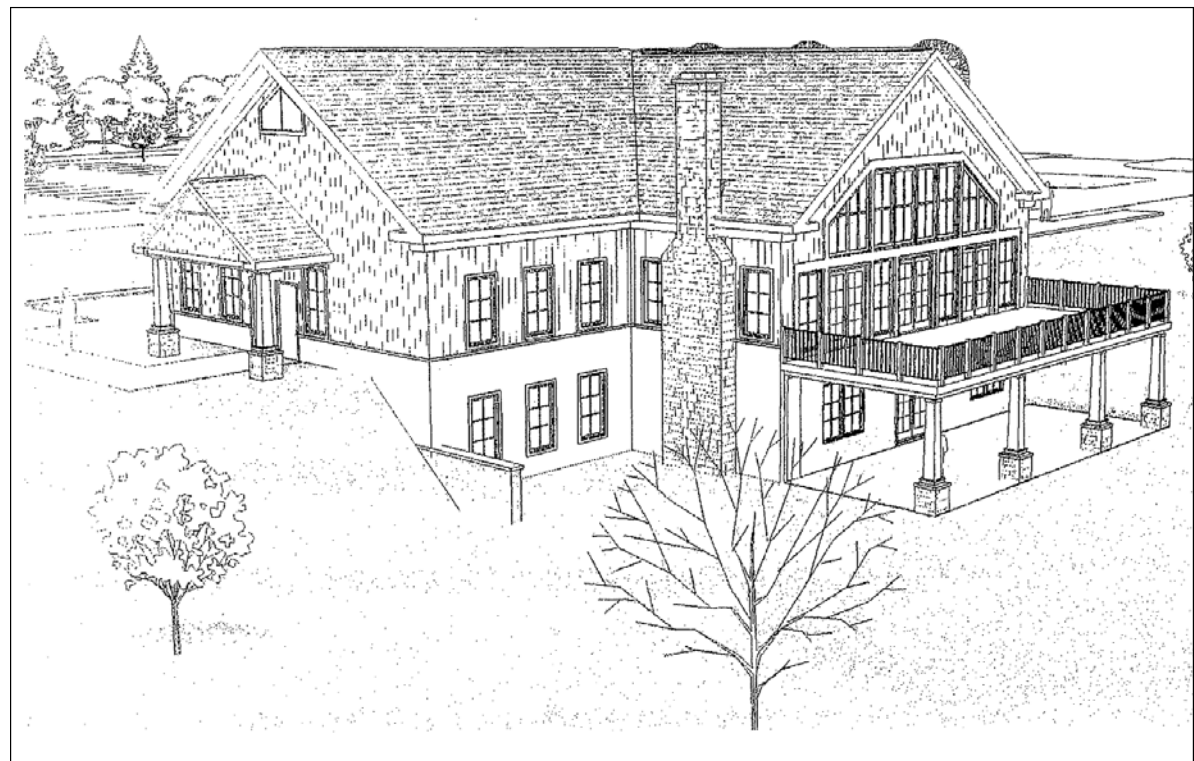
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Erickson Center Envisioned as Cultural Hub



The Erickson Center on South Manistique Lake in Curtis is designed to encourage artistic, theatrical, educational, and other cultural events in the region. (Rendering by Ken Czapski of U.P. Engineers and Architects, Inc.)

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Patrons will be able to step out from the second story onto a large deck and take in a panoramic view of South Manistique Lake.

The facility is an expansion for the Arts Council, which has been operating out of a house on 40 acres of land for the past five years. Both the house and the land were provided by the Ericksons. At the current building, the council holds classes, including carving, beading, weaving, smoking cessation, and weight reduction. After the center is completed, classes will be held at the house as well as on the first floor of the new facility. Larger events will be held upstairs.

The council is in the early stages of planning new events, and members are reaching out to Northern Michigan University and Lake Superior State University, which they hope will host cooperative ventures at the Erickson

Center, Mr. Danaher said.

The facility will host plays by the local Portage Players theatrical group. The council will plan "coffee house" events in which refreshments and musical entertainment will be offered.

While the Center is funded primarily by the Ericksons, who Mr. Danaher said "made this entire program viable and possible," the Curtis Community Arts Council also gathers donations. Some money is placed into the building fund, while most revenue is re-invested in programs, keeping costs low for patrons, Mr. Danaher said.

The "transitional community" of Curtis, characterized by a mixture of tourists, hunters, outdoorsmen, naturalists, and retirees, contributed many of the concepts of the Arts Council, he said.

The council includes Chairman Richard P. Erickson, Secretary Beth Nicholls, Treasurer Kelly

Chamberlin, Linda Soder, Ruthette Mills, Jeff Freeborn, Marcy Justice, Margery Painter, Pat MacLachlan, and President Danaher. Council members are enthusiastic and dedicated, and have widely varying backgrounds, including members knowledgeable in teaching, theater, art, and business, he said, and together, they develop programs, recruit volunteers, and manage the property.

The council sponsors Art on the Lake, a Labor Day weekend event that predates the Council and now falls under its umbrella. It is a forum for artists to sell their wares in Curtis Park, and includes concerts, food, and a silent auction. The council also sponsors "Follywood," a variety show in which participants dress in era garb and pantomime the '50s, '60s, and '70s.

Originally, the Arts Council was begun by Richard Erickson and Harlan Maurer of Curtis.

Youth Boating Safety Classes Offered in Cedarville

Boating safety classes for all ages will be offered in Cedarville Thursday, July 5, and Friday, July 6, and people who plan to take the class must register early, because space is limited. Classes will meet from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Clark Township Fire and Ambulance Hall on Meridian Street.

To register, call John Griffin at (906) 484-2022. Participants are asked to enter on the side facing First National Bank of St. Ignace, Les Cheneaux Branch.

A second course will be offered Thursday, August 2, and Friday, August 3, at the same time and location. Participants need only attend the July or the August session. They can register at the beginning of the course, but should arrive early to do so.

Information can be obtained by calling Jill Bigler at (906) 484-2990, or sending e-mail to dbiglerpi@aol.com.

The course is a requirement for people ages 12 to 16 years of age

who want a boating license, however, adults are welcome too. Mackinac County Sheriff Marine Deputy Tom Sherlund will instruct the courses.

The Les Cheneaux Islands Association and Mackinac County Sheriff's Department are co-hosting the classes.

Participants who successfully complete the course will receive a

free adult-size life jacket from the Les Cheneaux Islands Association.

The Islands Association will also offer an informal, hands-on course for anyone who wants to refresh their boating skills, taught by Diane Patrick and John Griffin, both of Cedarville.

To schedule a free session, call Mrs. Patrick at (906) 484-5555 or Mr. Griffin at (906) 484-2022.

Library Plans Summer Programs

A summer reading program will take place at the St. Ignace Public Library Wednesday, July 11, through August 15, meeting every Wednesday at 3 p.m.

The reading program for older students, "Connect with Nature," is for grades third through fifth. It will be July 3 through July 31, meeting every Tuesday at 1 p.m. This 4-H program, facilitated by AnneMarie Askwith and Joyce Belonga, promotes environmental education and wellness, and was developed by Michael J. Cohen, author of "How Nature Works" and "Well Mind, Well Earth." Mr. Cohen's research suggests that reconnecting with nature is the way to wellness.

The 4-H program will include creative activities and a self-designed project which can be taken to the Luce-West Mackinac Fair. Upcoming sessions and topics will include "wildflowers" July 3, "rocks" July 10, "trees" July 17, "moving life" July 24, and "stars" July 31. Enrollment is limited, and the deadline to register is Friday, June 29. Call MSU Extension for more information at 643-7307.

Reading log sheets can be completed at the library throughout the summer and returned for prizes and entry in a drawing for book store gift certificates.

The St. Ignace Public Library will hold a book sale Saturday, July 7, from 10 a.m. to noon.

Naubinway Snowmobile Museum To Open July 4 With Free Entrance

Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum and Welcome Center will mark its opening Wednesday, July 4, in Naubinway. The museum, featuring old snowmobiles, is located two blocks south of US-2. It will be open from 10 a.m. until the fireworks start at dusk.

Admission will be free on this day, and donations will be accepted. For more information, call (906) 477-6192.

Engadine Library Announces Book Sale

Used book donations are being accepted by Friends of the Engadine Library for the annual Fourth of July book sale. Books can be dropped off at the library during the following open hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from noon to 4:30 p.m.; Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon.

Heritage Day Set for July 22 at Engadine; Museum Open Tuesdays and Saturdays

Engadine Heritage Day will be Sunday, July 22, at the Mill Pond Park and Pavilion in Engadine from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Freeman Hastings House Museum and Fenske Log House Museum are open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday and Saturday on Melville Street in Engadine, through September.

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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.