

1957 Opening of Mackinac Bridge

One Transportation Era Ends, Another Begins

Reprinted from *The Republican-News and St. Ignace Enterprise* November 7, 1957:

Almost shirt-sleeve weather greeted the thousands who jammed the Mackinac Bridge at its opening last Friday afternoon and who stayed to witness the demise of Michigan's "Great White Fleet."

The sun peeked through the haze at high noon, when Gov. G. Mennen Williams, Prentiss M. Brown, Dr. D.B. Steinman, members of the bridge authority, official family of the state, distinguished guests, and 151 newspaper, TV, and radio men gathered in the center of the huge span across the Straits for interviews and pictures. Two such stops were made on the route to Mackinaw City, where the village provided the "inspection entourage" with luncheon.

While the inspection group was at the center of the bridge, pennies were dropped through the grating

roadway, freighters whistled salutes, and a foreign ship passed.

Gov. Williams gave postmaster O.C. Boynton Jr., of St. Ignace 53 "first day" invitations to the bridge dedication next June to be mailed to President Eisenhower and governors of the states and territories.

Former Gov. Murray D. VanWagoner was asked what he thought of his "folly" now.

"Well, we can't use it for fishing any more," he replied.

The cavalcade, consisting of about 100 cars and buses, returned to St. Ignace, where Prentiss M. Brown received from Gov. Williams a check for \$3.25, representing the first toll paid for crossing the bridge.

Thereupon thousands of autos, lined up for miles at Mackinaw City and nearly to the golf course on the St. Ignace side, commenced crossing the bridge. A total of 930 vehicles crossed in the first hour, and 3,005 during the 10 hours left in the first day.

In the caravans were outdated autos, one a Model T driven by Emil Syversen of St. Ignace. First truck across was a Stroh truck driven by Frank LaVake, who had been driving for Goudreau Sales for six years. LaVake had stayed with his truck at the head of the line in Mackinaw City for three days prior to the opening. Behind him came a 62-foot housetrailer driven by its builder, J. L. Houck of White Birch Trailers, Anchorage, Alaska. Houck had been in line for three days, en route home from Converse, Ind.

The Most Rev. Thomas L. Noa, bishop of the Catholic diocese of Marquette, sang high Mass in St. Ignatius Church to open the festivities for members of the faith.

Mayor A. G. Philips of St. Ignace was master of ceremonies at the observance of the termination of the state ferries. Gathered were officers of the fleet, Captains Frank U. Nelson, Aaron Sweeney, P. H. Gallagher, Alfred Tromblay,



A freighter passes beneath the center span of the Mackinac Bridge Sunday, July 8.

Peter Everson, and Andy Monson, along with Gov. Williams, members of the state official family, and ranking highway department men.

Eugene Paquin of St. Ignace was lauded by Commissioner John C. Mackie as the oldest employee in years in the ferry service.

Charles P. Rhoades was introduced as another "old-timer" on the shore side since 1929.

Meanwhile hundreds of cars, and thousands of people, gathered to witness the final salute, which culminated when officials from cities for whom the boats were named presented scrolls which are

to be "logged" on each ship as tribute to years of service.

Gov. Williams led a long line of autos aboard the *Vacationland*. Hundreds became foot passengers for the final trip to Mackinaw City which marked the end of the fleet activity, which was inaugurated on July 31, 1923.

Great Lakes Air Named 'FBO of Week'



Great Lakes Air at Mackinac County's airport terminal in St. Ignace was recognized as the Fixed-based Operator of the Week by AVweb, a Web site for aviation enthusiasts. Paul Fullerton, Great Lakes Air manager, with his dog, Sally, displays the blue ribbon he and his staff received in recognition of outstanding service.

Great Lakes Air in St. Ignace was named Fixed-based Operators of the Week for the second week of July by AVweb, a Web site for aviation enthusiasts. Airport manager Paul Fullerton received a blue ribbon in recognition of his staff's service.

AVweb readers Andrea and Tim

Olson, who recently visited the Mackinac County Airport, nominated the St. Ignace facility for the honor.

"We had just touched down and we were still rolling out down the runway when we were greeted over the intercom with a friendly 'Hello, welcome to Great Lakes

Air, will you be needing any fuel today?'" wrote Mrs. Olson on the Web site.

Even Mr. Fullerton's dog, who is often seen at the facility, received gracious comments from the Olsons.

"Sally, the resident Golden Retriever, was very well behaved and kept our young daughters busy while we paid for fuel," said Mrs. Olson. "A family-friendly, reasonable, well-maintained [fixed-based operation], located in a beautiful part of Michigan, in it for the love of aviation."

Great Lakes Air staff includes Mr. Fullerton, who is also a pilot, pilots Chris Monk, Al Stiller, and Jim Beale, secretary Sheryl Schraier, and maintenance technician Clark Smith.

Gros Cap Board Reviews Construction Progress

By Paul Gingras

In preparation for the upcoming school year, the Moran Township Board of Education elected officers, hired an elementary school aide, adopted a school calendar, and approved final adjustments to last year's budget at its Monday, July 16, meeting. Board members also reviewed ongoing building and site improvements with project engineer Gary Nitz of G.D. Nitz Associates.

No disruption of school opera-

tions will result from construction projects, some of which are expected to continue after classes begin Tuesday, September 4, said Superintendent Bill Peltier.

At the meeting, school board members walked the building and grounds with Mr. Nitz, who pointed out progress contractors have made this summer.

All tiles and pipe insulation containing asbestos have been removed, leaving several floors in the kindergarten-through-eighth-

grade school bare and ready for new surfaces.

"The teachers are going to love this," said school board president Janice O'Boyle, noting that new flooring will improve classroom appearance.

Several of the district's building and site projects will make the school more efficient, Mr. Peltier said, adding that the projects are funded by a three-year, 1.75-mill millage passed in May 2006. It

* Please turn to page 6

First Gentleman Talks Leadership to Governors

Dan Mulhern, husband of Governor Jennifer Granholm, is a unique figure in Michigan politics, and not just because he is the state's first "First Gentleman."

Beyond that, he is the most influential gubernatorial spouse on political and policy matters in the 170-year history of the Michigan governorship. That's not some "guy thing," but is based on research in the course of writing a book on stewards of the state going back to statehood in 1837.

(Stevens T. Mason, who at age 24 became Michigan's first elected governor and was 25 when he presided over admission to statehood, was single. His sister was dubbed our first first lady.)

Granholm is one of nine female governors, including Arizona's Janet Napolitano, outgoing chair of the National Governors Association (NGA). Being single, she asked Mulhern to assume the role of chairmanship of the NGA Spouse's Leadership Council usually filled by the spouse of the NGA chair.

That has given Mulhern an enhanced role at the NGA's 99th

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



annual conference this past weekend near Traverse City, beyond being spouse of the host governor.

One of his projects was to assemble the gubernatorial families for Sunday's Habitat for Humanity building of a house for a low-income family. No heavy lifting for the guys. They'll put in a ceremonial hour, but Mulhern and others will keep working.

On Saturday, Mulhern, who leads a mentoring project for Michigan, said: "We have many new governors and, therefore, new spouses. This conference offers a wonderful opportunity to help them with the tremendous opportunities to serve and also to help manage the extraordinary challenges of life in state leadership. It's been cool to hear first-time visitors talk about how gorgeous Michigan is. And then there are those who had childhood connections to Michigan, and it's still totally in their blood, and they get emotional talking about how they love this state. This place is special - period."

When Mulhern talked Saturday of "extraordinary challenges of life in state leadership," he spoke with the authority of one in a leadership teaching profession before his wife became governor, and as author of a book recently published by the University of Michigan Press, "Everyday Leadership: Getting Results in Business, Politics, and Life."

The book is no yawner. In asserting "how your authority can attack you from within," Mulhern cites lapses of such public figures as ex-President Bill Clinton, "who had his infamous affair(s). They are, of course, a thimbleful in an ocean of public figures whose personal behavioral storms left a wake of hurt, confusion, and pain."

Since writing the book, Mulhern has said that Clinton would be a great asset back in the White House if his wife, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, wins her presidential bid. Does that mean Mulhern supports her bid? He responded: "I likely will follow

my wife's lead." She has yet to tip her hand.

There are those who contend Granholm follows Mulhern's lead in Lansing. Not so. He does have extraordinary influence; occasionally speaks out at cabinet meetings, and gets the last word with the decider.

To a Granholm supporter who blamed "her circle of advisers" for an adverse decision by her on his environmental interest group, I suggested that on that issue, it was a circle of one.

There's hope that Granholm will be stronger on environmental issues in her second term than she was in her first.

There was an interesting exchange Saturday at the NGA opening conference between Napolitano of the thirsty West and Granholm of the Great Lakes.

Chair Napolitano: "We're looking at new ways of conservation that does not mean taking (water) from the Great Lakes."

Host Granholm: "Amen, sister."

At Saturday's opening NGA session devoted to "Fostering Innovation," Google CEO Eric Schmidt said that while those in the audience may have "come to Traverse City on the highway...while you are here you have access to the whole world" via the Internet highway.

Amen, brother.

Because of all of the shackles on the media imposed by the NGA, I found it easier to get a small portion of the above information from trusted sources through the Internet rather than, for one event, spending an extra two hours that would have involved being screened to assure that I did not have explosives in my pen and then being herded to and from the event on a NGA-chartered bus.

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*.

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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.

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:

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