

Caro Family Bikes Through St. Ignace for Fundraiser

By Paul Gingras

Twelve-year-old Jordan Brennan of Caro enlisted the company of her family for a fundraising bicycle ride of more than 300 miles. They traveled from Caro to Sault Ste. Marie to benefit the international Hearing Impaired Kids Endowment (HIKE). In good spirits and good health, the jovial riders arrived in St. Ignace Friday, August 3, and took a day-long break Saturday, before continuing north along Mackinac Trail.

Miss Brennan is part of a Masonic organization called Job's Daughters International. Her group, Bethel 77 of Caro, makes a point of helping hearing-impaired children obtain hearing aids.

Some children do not qualify for state or federal aid, nor do they have insurance, said Tami Brennan, Miss Brennan's mother. The HIKE program is designed to help them obtain the devices they need.

Along the way, public reaction to Miss Brennan's ride was positive.

"People are thrilled that she is taking this on," Mrs. Brennan said, adding that the family plans to do the same fundraiser next year.

The Brennans traveled along two rail trails, one near Bay City and another near Cheboygan, but the bulk of the Lower Peninsula portion of the ride took place along picturesque M-23, which follows the Lake Huron coast.

"It has been pretty fun," Miss Brennan said, "except for hills."

As they traveled, she created a

day-by-day blog, which described the trip. Her father, Tom Brennan, took notes for her via cell phone and typed the entries.

Chandler Brennan, Miss Brennan's brother, pointed out that the family very much appreciated the trees as they rode.

The ride began Sunday, July 29, and Mrs. Brennan said she was hoping to reach Brimley State Park Sunday, August 5. There, they will serve as campground hosts until Labor Day, when Mr. Brennan will pick them up and take them home.

The family was been well supplied with food, water, tire patches, and other needs by a "pit crew" composed of Mrs. Brennan's uncle, Chet Gross of Caro, and her youngest son, seven-year-old Charlie Brennan.

None of the family had been on a bike ride longer than 30 miles before.

Along the way, the family has collected pledges and donations.

People throughout the state tracked the family's progress and noted their progress on the Web site <http://bike4hike.tripod.com>. Information about the fundraiser, contributing to HIKE, and Job's Daughters International is available there.

Interested parties can contribute directly to HIKE on the site. Contributions can also be made by sending a check to the HIKE Fund at 156 North State Street, Caro, Michigan, 48723. Checks are received by the Masons and forwarded to HIKE.



During a fundraising bike ride to benefit hearing-impaired children, Jordan Brennan of Caro pauses with her family in St. Ignace Friday, August 3. Pictured (from left) are Jordan, her mother, Tami, her brother, Chandler, and her sister, Katy. The family rode from Caro to Sault Ste. Marie and stopped in St. Ignace for a day-long break.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hospitality and Events Were Great for Mackinac Bridge Anniversary

To the Editor:

To St. Ignace and Mackinaw City: What a great celebration! The atmosphere was great, the parades were great, the hospitality was great, the events were great! I had one of the best times ever over the weekend of the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge. You all really outdid yourselves. And last but not least, the fireworks were awesome! I really enjoyed the articles in *The St. Ignace News* also.

Congratulations and keep up the great work.

Kevin Stark
Custer

Discontinuation of Prison Work Crews Would Cause Hardship

To the Editor:

In regard to the recent announcement by our state government concerning the discontinuation of the Corrections Department's work crews, I have to question some of the reasons given for this decision.

The rumor is that this is a pressure-applying tactic by the party in power to get what they want in a new tax bill. If this is the situation, I just hope that after re-thinking this proposal, the decision to discontinue the work crews will be reversed.

If this decision actually goes into effect, it is going to cause a lot of hardship on many townships, counties, etc., who have been relying on these crews for a great deal of very important projects and maintenance.

The entire work program is a win-win situation for local governments, the state, and the young men in the program.

Local governments pay the state a majority of the expenses associated with the crews, but are getting a fantastic return for the money spent. The state is benefiting due to the fact that corrections officers will be required even if the inmates are inside the prison. Inmates working on the crews are receiving a form of quality rehabilitation that will eventually benefit society and themselves when they are released.

I think that anyone who takes a careful look at this situation and knows the facts concerning it will quickly realize that the numbers are skewed, and not even close to reality. When the facts are exposed, the supposed savings of \$7 million will be shown as very skewed.

I also believe that this type of governmental manipulating will definitely be remembered in 2008.

Please don't punish local governments, the people of the state, visitors to our state – all who benefit greatly from the work the crews do – to make a political point.

Bernie VanSloten
Rudyard

Editor's Note: The Department of Corrections Prison Work Crew Program is slated for cuts at the state level, reported Mackinac County Sheriff Scott Strait, but the court-ordered Community Service program administered by the Sheriff's Department, supervised by Robert St. Louis, will not be cut.

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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Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



Cars Are Symbolic in Auto State Campaigns

Cars have had high profile symbolic roles in some of Michigan's most notable political campaigns.

In the 1948 campaign that launched Democratic Governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams toward an unprecedented six terms, it was the battered gray DeSoto convertible driven on the trail by his wife, Nancy, former driver for the Red Cross Motor Corps.

Williams was an heir to the Mennen line of shaving and other skin preparations, but there he was on the trail as a regular guy in his dusty DeSoto.

In his successful 1990 populist campaign, Republican John Engler vowed to use "my Oldsmobile" instead of the State Police "jetcopter" used on occasion by Governor Jim Blanchard. A picture with his right foot on the front bumper of his black Olds in Leland was on the cover of a *Detroit News* book on Engler's campaign.

Democratic State Chairman Mark Brewer now strives, at a lower level and with lower expectations, to call attention to a black 2004 Ford 500 with leather seats in what could be a hot Michigan contest in 2008: the reelection bid of Republican Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Cliff Taylor.

Taylor, wisely in my view and under pressure in Brewer's view, prompted the move by all appellate judges to turn in their state-supplied cars as a response to the budget crunch.

When the state auctioned Taylor's turned-in Ford, with 52,000 miles, Brewer made the winning bid of \$12,000. He now drives it about the state, as replacement of his own Ford that had 250,000 miles, touting it as "a symbol of (Taylor's) attitude on perks."

Because of Taylor's trumpeting of his initiative on surrendering of state-supplied cars by all appellate judges, rapping him as perk-prone is a tough sell. Taylor's current push for reducing the number of judges, ill-advised as it is in the case of the Court of Appeals, also gives him talking points for frugality in his reelection bid.

Taylor faces what could be the toughest reelection quest in decades for an incumbent justice, assuming Democrats come up with a credible opponent. Brewer says, "Talks are underway to get a consensus candidate. [It's] a top priority for us."

I say "toughest" reelection bid because Taylor is the only justice up next year and will be the focus of recent controversy about the court, including Republican Justice Betty Weaver's criticism of Taylor and others among the court's "Engler Four" for actions "disorderly, unprofessional, and unfair;" environmentalists (usually paper tigers politically) and numerous editorial writers are fired up by the Supreme Court's recent crippling and ridiculing of the Michigan Environmental Protection Act, and no other hot statewide races loom, as Senator Carl Levin is up, but likely will coast again.

But, apart from the cherished "incumbent" designation on the sham "nonpartisan" ballot where Supreme Court candidates nomi-

nated by partisan conventions appear, it is money that talks in such races. It will abound for Taylor, and odds are that unions, trial lawyers, and others will pour it on for his Democratic challenger.

Taylor will have the support of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, which, according to the nonpartisan Michigan Campaign Finance Network (MCFN), since 2000 has spent more than \$6 million for Republican Supreme Court candidates but because of "Michigan's weak campaign finance law" did not have to disclose who gave the money to the chamber.

MCFN correctly calls this "a serious threat to judicial independence." Weaver, a former Leelanau County probate judge, agrees and is working with Senator Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau) to strengthen campaign finance laws.

But these Leelanau County ladies are faint voices for reform in Lansing, where status quo serves the special interests.

Camp, Stupak Spar

On Friday, Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) took a shot at Representative Dave Camp (R-Midland), who represents some northern Michigan counties (Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau) that Stupak represented before the last redistricting.

Camp on August 1 decried Democratic efforts to "take a giant step towards universal, government run health care" with their version of renewing the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

Asked about this in a Friday conference call from Washington with Michigan reporters, Stupak branded it "not true." As for Camp's view that the legislation "comes at the expense of Medicare—senior's health insurance, low-income seniors," Stupak said: "I think Mr. Camp is looking out for the insurance industry that is ripping off our seniors."

Stupak, chairman of the House Energy & Commerce Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee, said its 10 investigators "will be very busy" during the August break.

He said, "We fix a problem or get change" more aggressively than the subcommittee did under Republicans. He said, "There is so much to do because there has not been much done" previously.

For the current Congress, he cited such ongoing issues as food and drug safety, gas prices, and radiation detection in U.S. ports.

In Stupak's sprawling district, there are three of the four Michigan bridges similar to the I-35W bridge that collapsed in Minneapolis. He said the Michigan Department of Transportation has a critical bridges inspection program and believes the bridges are "in pretty good shape."

Asked about his personal concerns as a motorist, he said, "I'm not worried about going over a bridge anywhere in the United States."

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.

Senior Driving Class To Be Offered

AARP Safety Program Planned in St. Ignace

An eight-hour Safe Driving Class will be offered Monday, September 10, and Tuesday, September 11, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the United Methodist Church in St. Ignace. This class is designed to help drivers 50 years and older to improve their driving skills and prevent crashes. It covers age-related physical changes in perception, reaction time, rules of

the road, and local driving problems.

Cost of the class is \$10, which covers all course materials. Some auto insurance companies may give a discount for those who have attended the class, sponsored by AARP, a nonprofit organization for those age 50 and older, and the United Methodist Church.

For more information and enrollment, call Gladys Tamlyn at the church at 643-8088 between 9 a.m. and noon. Afternoon callers may leave a message.

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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.