

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## United Methodist Church Has Shown Gracious Hospitality

To the Editor:

Our town of St. Ignace has many loving families and caring people. Since my arrival here last July, I have also learned with delight how well the local churches work together. Case in point: For the past three months, while the interior of St. Ignatius Loyola Catholic Church has been torn up for renovation, the United Methodist Church of St. Ignace has graciously opened its doors and welcomed us to have Mass in their place of worship. Many people are aware of the major work going on at the Catholic church; I would also like everyone to know of the outstanding hospitality of the Methodist congregation!

Reverend James Balfour, pastor, and the members of the United Methodist Church of St. Ignace became our hosts and our "home away from home" September 8. Each weekend since, our Catholic Masses have been at the Methodist church at 5 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 a.m. Sunday. Our weddings, funerals, and Holyday Masses have also all been at the Methodist Church. Pastor Jim, quietly and always with a smile, made wonderful accommodations for us. "Here, use this room for your sacristy." "Lets move the altar a bit." "Here's how to adjust the sound system." And from the very first, he voluntarily posted our parish name and Mass times as top billing on the marquee in front of the Methodist Church, announcing our presence to all who pass by. This was a classy and welcoming touch.

As a new pastor and new member of the St. Ignace community, I have felt a great welcome from the St. Ignatius parishioners; and the Methodist congregation, as ambassador of the whole community, has exemplified what it means to be a St. Ignace saint. It is with heartfelt joy that I try to express the gratitude and appreciation of the St. Ignatius parish to Pastor Balfour and his congregation. This hospitality has made the craziness of being out of our place of worship a much easier situation. It is always important to build relationships of strong community, and the Methodists have done this in a most beautiful way. All of the members of St. Ignatius Loyola Parish and I are extremely grateful for the blessings and support we have received.

Fr. Allen P. Mott  
Pastor, St. Ignatius Loyola Parish

## Townships Have Struggled With Road Work Bids

To the Editor:

Now that the political dust has fallen from the departure of our Engineer/Manager Craig Kelso from the Mackinac County Road Commission, I think a number of things need to be addressed. Firstly, in my 50-plus years of experience being employed by the Wayne County Road Commission and private consulting engineering firms downstate, I have seen both sides of the coin, and I know micro managing when I smell it. I have worked for and with a number of outstanding engineers over those years, and Mr. Kelso would be right near the top of the list. In his dealings with contractors, he was always professional, and they knew where they stood once they were awarded a contract.

Unfortunately, his dealings with township boards and local citizens weren't so easy. One of the major problems was accepting and understanding Mr. Kelso's proposals for a project that required township monies. "Estimated Quantities" being key words. All items of work in a project are identified by a unit price: a cubic yard of gravel, a ton of asphalt, a square yard of topsoil, etc. Measurements and volumes are then calculated and all of these numbers are then combined into what will be the Estimated Quantities for a project to determine the bid price. In the meantime, while all these numbers are being crunched, the cost of labor and materials will increase by next year's bid dates. So you see, Estimated Quantities will still be a crapshoot at best. And remember, Mr. Kelso had 10 other townships ragging at him for their projects.

If you harbor any doubt as to Mr. Kelso's managerial capabilities, you need only to look back 10 or so years and see what equipment we had then, and the equipment we have now. Union people should not be allowed to set managerial policies. What will we do when it is time to negotiate labor contracts?

Bernie Sorrels  
Moran

## Continued Support of Master Plan Is Urged at Hessel

To the Editor:

In your November 29 edition of *The St. Ignace News and Weekly Wave*, Amy Polk reported that the Clark Township Planning Commission rejected a proposal for a special land use in order to build a 6,480 square foot boathouse on the waterfront in Hessel. I think few members of the community fully respect the strength and wisdom of those on the Planning Commission who voted against this proposal. The community has invested money, time, and effort in order to develop a master plan and zoning ordinances in order to protect the very nature of the Les Cheneaux area from this type of development.

We have been informed that the same people will present a proposal at the January 8 meeting of the Clark Township Planning Commission. They want to request a change in the zoning of the shore strip property to commercial, and to change the allowable uses of commercially zoned property to allow for the construction of the previously rejected boat house. I am sure most of the affected Hessel property owners who so strongly opposed this threat to the beauty of Hessel would oppose these efforts.

I hope that the members of the Planning Commission will continue to support the master plan of the community and the will of those who love Hessel and the Les Cheneaux area, and again reject the attack of this proposal on the charming area that Hessel represents.

Greg Malcho  
Hessel and Grosse Ile

## Opposes Rezoning Hessel Property To Accommodate Boathouse

To the Editor:

You recently reported that the Clark Township Planning Commission denied a request for a special use to build a huge commercial boathouse on the shore strip in Hessel. The proposal would have violated several provisions of the zoning ordinance. The planning commission is to be commended for voting to enforce the Clark Township Zoning Ordinance rather than giving in to pressure from a single special interest.

There was considerable opposition to the proposal by many members of the community, particularly, those most directly and adversely affected. The height and size of the building would have obstructed the view of adjacent property owners, cottages up and down the shoreline, and otherwise diminish the beneficial use and enjoyment of the properties. The proposal would dramatically detract from the character and charm that is Hessel. It could only be a negative for the community as a whole.

Unfortunately, the proponents of the project have chosen to disregard the decision of the township planning commission and objections of neighbors and members of the community. We understand they have now petitioned to have the property rezoned from shore strip to commercial use. The shore strip zoning district is a cornerstone of the township zoning ordinance and is intended to keep the waterfront in its natural state as much as practical so that it may be enjoyed by all citizens, rather than being destroyed by commercial development for individual financial gain.

The proponents of this project chose to petition and schedule the hearings on this issue when the property owners that are most directly and adversely impacted are away and, therefore, unaware or unavailable to make their opposition known. I am confident that I speak for many of them in requesting that the proposed amendment to the zoning ordinance be denied, and in requesting that citizens voice their opposition by attending the hearing on January 8, 2008, writing, calling or e-mailing the Clark Township Planning Commission.

Please let me conclude by indicating that we are very much in favor of development and progress, so long as it is done in such a way that preserves the wonderful and unique character of the Les Cheneaux area.

David A. Wallace  
Hessel and Hemlock

**Editor's Note:** For the convenience of summer residents, public notices published in *The St. Ignace News* can be viewed free on our Web site, [www.stignacenews.com](http://www.stignacenews.com). All the advertising and events calendars are free during the week of publication, and all the news archives are available free four weeks after publication.

## Mackinac County Jail Death Investigated

Mackinac County Sheriff's Department is investigating an apparent suicide Saturday, December 15, of a Mackinac County Jail inmate, Louie Sherrl Swanson, 44, of Adairsville, Georgia.

He was being held for extradition to Wisconsin on probation violation charges and was facing two felony assault charges stemming from an incident December 11 in the Mackinac County Jail.

The Mission Team of the Michigan Sheriff's Association will conduct an independent investigation.

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

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# Michigan Politics

By  
George Weeks



## Enhanced Role for Secretary of State

Their names have been on licenses in our wallets, and their branch offices abound across our two peninsulas.

Most of the 41 secretaries of state had brief tours and toiled in obscurity, although two became 20th century governors, Republicans Frank M. Fitzgerald and Harry Kelly.

In the past five decades, only four politicians have held the office: Democrats James M. Hare (15 years) and Richard Austin (22 years), and Republicans Candice Miller (eight years; the first limited to two four-year terms) and Terri Lynn Land, nearing the end of the first year of her second and final term.

Given the times, Land is developing the most unique portfolio of anyone who has held the job. Beyond the traditional roles of issuing driver's licenses, overseeing elections, and policing campaign finances, she has an emerging post-9/11 border-state role on homeland security.

Land's 10-page year-end report last week had the usual annual puffery issued by officeholders in Lansing. Her headline: "Solid results for taxpayers; Land continues dedication to customer service in '07."

There were indeed significant accomplishments, some of them obscure, including removal of 200,000 abandoned vehicles under a law she championed. (Most were in urban areas, but included 363 removed under sheriffs' jurisdiction in Grand Traverse County and 11 in Marquette County.)

On the security front:

- Land met with U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and other federal officials, and is confident that Michigan can join Washington State in having a pilot project to implement a dual-purpose border pass.

Her plan, which appears to have a good chance of the legislative approval that is needed for Chertoff to designate Michigan as a pilot project, combines the requirements of a driver's license and a passport for the convenience of travelers.

- Waterway Watch: Land has issued about 300,000 wallet cards and other material on how Michigan boaters can "keep an eye on the state's waterways by reporting suspicious activity as part of the America's Waterway Watch campaign" in partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard.

Land's office says the Coast Guard reports "favorable" results, but as a matter of policy does not reveal results of investigations of boater reports.

- Land has instituted special training for her inspectors in assuring that commercial trucks are not carrying cargo that threatens security.

She's hardly a secretary of defense. But Secretary of State Land, as do others in state government, has homeland security roles never envisioned when the oldest department in state government was created.

### DNR's \$ Surprise

Having written last week about financial woes of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), I was interested in protests by lawmakers who subsequently complained that the DNR had concealed the fact that it expected to end the fiscal year with a \$10 million surplus in the Fish and Game Fund.

"We were given a false sense of doom and gloom," said Representative Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba). "Nobody was aware that there was a 'slush fund or rainy day fund.'"

He said the Natural Resources Commission also was surprised, and referred me to commissioners John Madigan of Munising and James R. Richardson of Ontonagon. They did not return calls as of this writing. NRC Chairman Keith Charters of Traverse City was in Florida, and unreachable.

Senator Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau) said, "It appears the department's short-term budget woes have been greatly exaggerated in an attempt to ram through an ill-conceived fee increase. No one denies the long-term funding challenges the DNR is facing, but we need to be assured we are getting accurate information from the department about the extent of those problems if we are to find fair, sustainable solutions. How can we help if we don't know how big the problem really is?"

DNR Spokesperson Mary Dettloff said the NRC was advised in October that a better-than-expected balance was likely. The \$10 million figure was later arrived at because the DNR slightly exceeded the savings that Governor Jennifer Granholm had ordered; its funds invested by the Treasury Department had better returns than expected, and there was a "small spike" in sales of licenses.

Even before the \$10 million figure emerged, a deal was in the works to avoid hunting and fishing license fee hikes by transferring \$5 million from the general fund.

All of this does not diminish the need, as urged by DNR Director Becky Humphries and acknowledged by Casperson and McManus, to come up with a plan for stable long-term funding for the DNR, which now gets only single-digit support from the general fund.

### Michigan Art at White House

Scenes from Michigan's public lands are among those painted on ornaments from all 390 sites of the national park system decorating the Christmas tree in the Blue Room of the White House. All superintendents were given a blank, gold ball ornament on which the most recognizable feature of the site was to be portrayed.

Superintendent Dusty Shultz of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore enlisted her artist husband, Ken Shultz, who painted a sweeping view of the dunes with the Manitou Islands in the Lake Michigan background.

The ornament for Isle Royale National Park was painted by Tom Rudd, Margo McCafferty, and their son, Max, 2005 artists-in-residence at the remote island park. One scene shows a sunrise over Lake Superior.

The White House, which is also a National Park, chose the theme for this year's tree and other holiday decorations under the direction of First Lady Laura Bush, who said at a media preview of the decorations: "We think that our national parks are more precious than gold to the United States. They're our major and most fabulous and magnificent landscapes."

The tree, an 18-foot Fraser fir, came from a Christmas tree farm in North Carolina.

### Michigan man throws hat in presidential ring

A University of Michigan economics professor announced last week he is a candidate for president – of the Czech Republic.

Jan Svejnar, who was born in the former Czechoslovakia and fled communist rule in 1970, was an economic policy advisor to former Czech President Vaclav Havel.

The February 8 election will be decided by the Czech Parliament. The only other declared candidate is the current President, who is expected to win reelection.

*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.*

# 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.