

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Shame on the Bridge Authority

To the Editor:

How appropriately ironic during this wonderful season of charity and love that the Mackinac Bridge Authority has taken time away from listening to citizens' concerns to stick it to us all worse than even they promised. Merry Christmas to all, and while you're at it, better start putting away for the new toll structures because you will not have money for other things in your budget anymore. In an obvious time of financial challenge to Michigan in general, and Mackinac County even more acutely, this grand body has taken it upon themselves to have public hearings about a toll increase.

They presented two plans, which, surprisingly, both raised tolls on regular vehicles to \$4 per crossing. Hey, at least they gave us a choice! After less than two weeks of less than painful soul-searching, they announced that they have heard the voice of the common people, and are going to raise fares to \$4.50 per vehicle. This figure was not once mentioned at any time. Thank goodness they had public hearings, where not one person supported the toll increase. Can you imagine what they might have gotten us if we had not objected?

The Mackinac Bridge Authority had a grand aplomb of marching out a total of two members to three public hearings. Attendance at these delightful events was lackluster, to say the least. Perhaps the public had some silly notion that they were going to be ignored. Imagine that!

Now this group is going to ignore the findings of its own research group and try to pay for \$300 million of work needed on the bridge. This sum, three times the original construction amount, is to be paid solely with toll revenue. This, of course, contradicts its own findings that such work should be paid for by borrowing and paying off long-term.

Shame on this body for taking the lazy approach of just sticking the entire cost of these projects directly upon the toll customers. A little effort given to lobbying our state and national representatives for assistance in preserving this national treasure may have produced significant results.

This newspaper has been printing foreclosure notices for the last several issues. How nice that the bridge authority has figuratively posted a "Do Not Cross" notice to all who may consider coming to our area to contribute to our local economy, but now re-consider because they feel they are just getting gouged. This writer certainly feels their pain.

Tom Della-Moretta
St. Ignace

Boathouse Would Be a Welcome Asset to Hessel Community

To the Editor:

After reading the most recent letters to the editor (12/20/07) from Greg Malcho and David Wallace, we can't sit idly by while they falsely interpret our local Master Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and the wishes of our Les Cheneaux community.

Mr. Malcho asks that we "protect the very nature of the Les Cheneaux area from this type of development" and "reject the attack."

In our opinion, the very nature of the Les Cheneaux area is large, unique boathouses and antique wooden boats. As owners of waterfront property on Hessel Point and Marquette Island with a working non-commercial wooden boat restoration and maintenance shop attached to our boathouse on Hessel Point, we feel this boathouse project and berthing the *Canim* here are totally in keeping with the existing uses of Hessel Point shoreline and a welcome asset to the community. The only attacks we have witnessed, both in print and at the recent public hearing, have come from a small but vocal minority that includes Mr. Malcho. In fact, we don't recall having heard or seen a year-around resident who objects to this boathouse project, with the exception of one letter to the Planning Commission objecting on the basis of size and location.

Mr. Wallace calls the boathouse commercial, charges that there was "considerable objection" to it, and says the Shore Strip District is a "cornerstone" of the ordinance, "intended to keep the waterfront in its natural state as much as practical," and he wants to "preserve the wonderful and unique character of the Les Cheneaux area."

Firstly, the proposed boathouse is not commercial. The Zoning Ordinance states clearly that use and not the ownership determines whether it is commercial.

Secondly, a special land use permit would violate nothing in the ordinance. Special land uses are permitted, and the only criteria cited in granting them are "particular nature" and "certain circumstances." There are no height or size limitations unless stipulated by the permit when granted. In fact, the baseline stipulated in the ordinance of 600 sq. ft. relates to the fact that there are many 50 foot platted lots in the township.

When Mark was on the Planning Commission, it negotiated with the MDNR over size limitations relative to bottomlands leasing and the rule of thumb was that everyone has the right to a "2 car garage," so 1,200 sq. feet on a 100 foot lot became the norm for a boathouse, too.

Thirdly, the "considerable opposition," at least in the correspondence the township received, amounted to 31 letters opposed, of which seven were from Loreli residents and their attorneys and six were from the Malcho/Collins families. The overwhelming majority of letters (49) were in favor of the boathouse project. This is not to understate the concerns brought out, for some are these are valid and warrant consideration. However, we believe there are remedies that could have been investigated if the Planning Commission hadn't rushed to reject the original special land use permit application.

Fourthly, the Shore Strip District as a "cornerstone" argument is not only false, but warrants a little history. Mark was chair of the Planning Commission when a public meeting was held to discuss updating the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance to better balance waterfront development and the contact person when the RFPs went out in the fall of 1992 to revise the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission had outlined three possible waterfront districts for the township: Commercial Waterfront, Residential Waterfront, and Resort Waterfront. The current Shore Strip District, along a small portion of the Hessel waterfront, is the watered down version that resulted from the successful lobbying efforts of a Cedarville resort owner opposed to any waterfront development restrictions. Such was the political climate then. (Planning Commission to Update Master Plan, Review Zoning, Weekly Wave, 9/9/1991)

Lastly, how is one to define "wonderful" and "unique character"? In Mark's life experience here over the last 52 summers, and as a year-around and voting resident since 1974, and Pennie being a life-long resident, some of our most wonderful times have been cruising in and watching antique wooden boats. Providing a home port here for the *Canim* would continue a 100-plus year legacy of motor yachts in the area. Earlier in our lifetimes there were a dozen or more large motor yachts, many with full time captains, and, until recently, the *Vagabond Lady* with her own boat house off the end of Hessel Point on St. Ledger Island.

The most "unique characteristics" of the Les Cheneaux Islands, in our estimations, are the large and unique boat houses that dot the shorelines, the "Dance Hall" and "Dining Hall" boat houses on nearby Long Island being wonderful examples. The proposed boat house project for the *Canim* is certainly in keeping with the long and historic tradition of boats, boating, and boat houses here.

As we read through all the correspondence the township received on this issue, we were most struck by Mr. Wallace's own comments and those of his attorney's. As for blocking views, neither sunsets or the angle of view are stipulated in the ordinance. Here are some sample statements:

"Township Ordinance which mandates zero development on the shore strip" is just not true. The Shore Strip District allows for structures that are "auxiliary to the use of the lake." Wouldn't a boathouse qualify? (10/31/2007 letter to Planning Commission from Mr. Wallace)

Having a "dry dock that could only be for the purpose of a commercial enterprise." We have had a "dry dock" for over seven years now since the water went down, and no one that we are aware of considers our boat shop to be commercial. (11/6/2007 letter from Mr. Wallace's attorney John Danieleski, Jr.)

"... the owner of the property ... is a commercial enterprise." The Ordinance passage cited that defines boat house refers to "privately owned boat(s)," not property ownership at all. (11/6/2007 letter from Mr. Wallace's attorney John Danieleski, Jr.)

While it is true that the ordinance does not specifically authorize permits based on economic impact or job creation, neither does it preclude the Planning Commission from including them in the decision process. The public hearing was full of comments that had no relationship to the specifics of the Zoning Ordinance, and were allowed. When Mark questioned the lack of direction or boundaries at the meeting, the chairperson replied that this was only an "information gathering meeting." Based on this, he assumed that the Planning Commission would table a decision and take these public comments into consideration as they studied the proposal further. (11/6/2007 letter from Mr. Wallace's attorney John Danieleski, Jr.)

The "legal mandate to deny" has no basis in fact, as noted previously. Special land uses are permitted, and the only criteria cited in granting them are "particular nature" and "certain circumstances." Thus far there have been only two requests and no "crime" committed. Even the slander put forth about the dredging last fall has been proven false. (11/6/2007 letter from Mr. Wallace's attorney John Danieleski, Jr.) (11/8/2007 letter from Dan Carmichael)

Our Ordinance calls for the inclusion of an "accurate sketch" to be included with applications and nowhere asks for "certified architectural

plans." In this case, we feel that when and if this project goes further that it would be appropriate to ask for and keep detailed drawings on file at the township office. (11/6/2007 letter from Mr. Wallace's attorney John Danieleski, Jr.)

Mr. Wallace's assertion in his letter of 10/31/07 that "the negative impact of the proposed boathouse is far beyond comprehension, it is almost impossible to address it intelligently," pretty well documents his efforts in these matters.

The only valid assertion worth debating that we have heard regards the potential for a lack of "stewardship" on the part of the Kosters, in part due to experiences with Bruce Glupker, such as his letter of 8/15/94 (attached to Mr. Wallace's other attorney, L. William Smith's letter of 11/2/07) urging "extreme caution" in granting the Wallaces a special land use permit. Two wrongs do not make a right, and in the spirit of Christmas we encourage those that are making this personal to become part of the solution and look for ways to accommodate the *Canim* in our community with the least negative impact possible.

There are legal ways for the Planning Commission to set limitations and penalties on this proposed project, not to mention searching for alternative locations if suitable compromises aren't reached on lot 55. We would both be comfortable seeing the applicant's signature at the bottom of a list of possible stipulations, along with specific and enforceable penalties for infraction, rather than to look a gift horse in the mouth and run from this tremendous opportunity.

Mark and Pennie Clymer
Hessel

Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



Bhutto Death Calls on Candidates' Foreign Policy Experience

A TV ad pitch for the January 15 GOP presidential primary by native son Mitt Romney begins: "And for me, Michigan is personal." It concludes: "There's a lot we can do to strengthen Michigan."

John McCain, whose campaign was declared dead by some wizards of odds several weeks ago, is on the rebound and plans to retrace the steps that led to his 2000 upset victory over George W. Bush in Michigan's 2000 presidential primary – including an election eve stop in Traverse City.

Whatever momentum these and other contenders will have coming into Michigan – where the GOP primary has a full slate, but Hillary Clinton is the only top tier Democratic contender – depends in large part on what happens in the Iowa caucuses and New Hampshire's primary.

Meanwhile, after assassination of ex-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, much of the national media focus is on examination of foreign policy credentials of the presidential candidates. As CNN opined, "all are trying to make the case they are the best prepared" to deal with international affairs.

In announcing his call for moderation in the region, the campaign of Romney, former governor of Massachusetts, grandly pronounced that he "had a commander-in-chief moment by quickly making a statement about Bhutto and fielding questions from reporters" in New Hampshire.

Ex-Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee offered Pakistan "sincere concern and apologies." Apologies?

Ex-Senator John Edwards of North Carolina, who bowed to the Iowa/New Hampshire cabal and is off the Michigan Democratic primary ballot, said he understands "the dynamics and complexities" of what's going on in Pakistan.

On balance, presidential reigns of the 17 ex-governors elected to the job, including the two Roosevelts, were positive. (At least one governor was a major party candidate for president or vice-president in all but seven of the national campaigns since 1788.)

But when it comes to foreign policy credentials in the presidential current field, it would be hard to top those of long term senators McCain of Arizona and Joe Biden (D-Delaware), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

McCain, ranking Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, has met with both Bhutto and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, and was able to credibly declare that he has the "experience and judgment" to deal with such episodes.

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who after 9/11 knows more than a bit about security, played it well: "I don't want to make too much of a political point about all of this."

While the immediate national focus of the presidential campaign after the assassination was on foreign affairs, the well-crafted Romney 30-second ad pegged to Michigan continued to play during local TV news programs. He says:

"It's inexcusable that Michigan is undergoing a one-state recession. High levels of unemployment, industry is shrinking here, jobs are going away."

The ad was scripted before Michigan's latest blow: the Census report that it and Rhode Island were the only two states that lost population last year.

But, of course, Romney is not running against Governor Jennifer Granholm, and all the current focus on Pakistan likely will not impact outcome of the January 15 primary.

Michigan will not get the campaign focus that has been centered on Iowa and New Hampshire, and Democrats won't even campaign here. But at least there will be an early-January emphasis by Republicans, who, we can hope, will be quizzed by voters about Great Lakes and other Michigan-oriented issues that in past years came up too late in the presidential nominating process.

The reason Michigan gets an early shot is primarily because of Democratic Senator Carl Levin, who long ago started a campaign against the Iowa/New Hampshire stranglehold on the process.

"Look out there," he once said as we sat along the shores of Lake Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay many years ago. "They (presidential candidates) should be talking" as much about the Great Lakes as they do about the price of corn in Iowa.

Let's make sure they do.

George Weeks retired in 2006 after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.

Bridge Traffic Down for November

Traffic crossing the Mackinac Bridge decreased 3.4% for the month of November, compared to November 2006, according to the Mackinac Bridge Authority. This November, 283,780 vehicles

crossed the bridge, while 293,750 crossed during November 2006.

Traffic has been 1.6% behind last year's pace, with 3,845,117 vehicles through November in 2007 and 3,908,706 in 2006.

The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

359 Reagon Street, PO Box 277, Saint Ignace, MI 49781

Telephone (906) 643-9150 • Facsimile (906) 643-9122

Hessel Office: 138 Pickford Avenue (906) 484-2268

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 39 Thursday, January 3, 2008

Publisher/Editor

Wesley H. Maurer, Jr.

Associate Publisher

Mary R. Maurer

Publisher 1975-1995

Wesley H. Maurer, Sr. (1897-1995)

Editor

Ellen Paquin, news@saintignacenews.com

Staff Writers

Amy Polk, amy@saintignacenews.com

Ryan Schlehner, ryan@saintignacenews.com

Karen Gould, karen@saintignacenews.com

Paul Gingras, paul@saintignacenews.com

Advertising Department

Tammy Matson, David Moyalson

ads@saintignacenews.com

Print Shop Manager

Sherry Cece

Circulation Manager

Wendy Colegrove



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.

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.

Contact:

The St. Ignace News

359 Reagon Street

PO Box 277

Saint Ignace, MI 49781

(906) 643-9150 (phone)

(906) 643-9122 (fax)

e-mail: news@stignacenews.com