

Luepnitz Is Re-elected County Road Commission Chair

Amacher Says He Will Not Run for 3rd Term

By Amy Polk

After 12 years and two terms as a Mackinac County road commissioner, Paul Amacher of Moran Township announced last week, that he will not run again when his term expires at the end of this year. Mr. Amacher will serve through the end of 2008, he said during committee assignments at the January 8 meeting, where Frank Luepnitz was re-elected to his second term as chairman and Lester Livermore was elected vice chairman. Mr. Livermore will serve through 2010 and Mr. Luepnitz will serve through 2012.

Mr. Luepnitz, for the second year, will be the road commission liaison to the North Huron Scenic Pathway Committee, which is planning a non-motorized pathway from St. Ignace to Drummond Island.

Mr. Amacher was assigned to the finance committee and Mr. Livermore was assigned to the personnel, negotiations, and poli-

cy committees.

Road Commission Manager Karrie Abbitt was designated the road commission representative at county commission meetings, but Mr. Luepnitz will be the official liaison.

Road commission workers in the west and east district garages are busy modifying sanding equipment when they are not plowing.

Moran Township trustee Mark Spencer, who was seated in the audience, suggested the road commission install cameras on the backs of maintenance trucks so drivers can see when the sanders are plugged and not spreading.

Mr. Livermore and Mr. Luepnitz both said they have received complaints about too much sand on the roads, especially in residential neighborhoods. Curtis residents reportedly swept up three truckloads of sand last spring, said Hudson Township Supervisor Al Garavaglia. The comments prompted commission-

ers to ask Mrs. Abbitt to tell employees to spread a little less sand on local roads.

Mr. Spencer also suggested that plow drivers push back snow at the corners of intersections to prevent narrowing of the intersections when snow gets built up. Mrs. Abbitt agreed to ask drivers to clean up the intersections, as time allows.

Frank Harness, Clark Township Road Committee liaison to the road commission, told commissioners that Clark Township is withholding part of a payment for road commission work on Chard Road in Hessel.

The township complains that the road seems narrower and has soft shoulders after the gravel road was repaired and raised last year. Clark Township has asked Mrs. Abbitt to inspect the road and make recommendations, and Mr. Harness will be the contact person.

"The road may be too narrow now, and people feel there may be a safety issue there," Mr. Harness said.

The Mackinac County Road Commission met with the public and township officials Tuesday, January 15, at 7 p.m., to discuss its five-year project list for Mackinac County roads.

Mrs. Abbitt and West District foreman Bill Wagner will meet with western Mackinac County townships Tuesday, January 29, at 10 a.m. to discuss the road projects for 2008. The meeting will be at the Mackinac County Road Commission office in St. Ignace. The West District includes Garfield, Hendricks, Hudson, Newton, and Portage townships.

Mrs. Abbitt and East District Foreman Dale Williams will meet with eastern Mackinac County townships Wednesday, January 30, at 10 a.m. at the Mackinac County Road Commission offices in St. Ignace to discuss 2008 road goals. The East District includes Brevort, Clark, Moran, Marquette, and St. Ignace townships.

The next regular road commission meeting will be Tuesday, January 22, at 1:30 p.m.

Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



Presidential Progeny

In decades of covering presidential campaigns, I have never seen such focus as this year by candidates and the media on the father factor. There was, of course, interest in 2000 on the fact that candidate George W. Bush, now our 43rd president, is son of George H. W. Bush, our 41st. (The campaign of John Quincy Adams, sixth president and son of John Adams, the second, was a tad before my time.)

In his quest for the 2008 Republican nomination, former Governor Mitt Romney of Massachusetts has, understandably, cited the accomplishments of his late father, George, 1963-69 governor of Michigan, a blunt talker who failed in his bid for the 1968 GOP presidential nomination, in part, because he did not weigh words as carefully as does his son.

Romney has, in fact, said on national stages that his father's reputation should help him carry Michigan in 2008.

A *Washington Post* December headline on a David Broder column about their Mormon faith said, "Like Father, Like Son." But their differences on other issues have produced many commentaries. The father did not play the conservative card, as has his son.

Two other candidates who in their political careers have put a broad focus on, and written soul-searching memoirs about, their fathers and family heritage are Republican John McCain ("Faith of My Fathers") and Democrat Barack Obama ("Dreams From My Father").

As noted by the *Washington Post*: "John McCain's life has always been framed by his legendary Navy forebears, the father and grandfather who were illustrious admirals; the tough, passionate men whose code and calling McCain was preordained to share. He is the product of almost 80 years of family service, which included his five years of torture and deprivation in North Vietnamese prison camps."

The heritage is not so illustrious for Obama, but nonetheless compelling for those who read of how his thoughts "bubble up" about how, when he was just 2, his father abandoned the family, reappeared when he was 10, and died 11 years later.

A *Washington Post* headline last month summed it up: "The Ghost of a Father; Barack Obama channels a parent's abandonment into ambition."

The *Post* said: "When he talks about his father's desertion, Obama frequently summons a quotation that he believes explains how it directed him: 'Every man is either trying to make up for his father's mistakes or live up to his expectations.'"

Democrat John Edwards in his second presidential campaign, as in his first, talks of family hardships as "the son of a millworker...who was strong and good and worked incredibly hard."

Hillary Rodham Clinton's father was a tightfisted conservative, who, ex-president Bill Clinton said at Hugh Rodham's 1993 memorial service, was "passionately involved" with his children.

In the 1930s, Rudy Giuliani's father, according to a *Washington Post* profile, a decade before the future New York mayor was born, robbed a milkman and spent about a year in Sing Sing prison. The profile said Harold Giuliani taught the importance of loyalty to friends and family - "you have to be there for people who are there for you" it quoted Rudy as recalling his father's words.

Mitt Romney's father is not the only one among the 2008 crop of candidates worthy of note. But in Michigan, the heritage is special.

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.

Mackinac County Commissioners' 2007 Earnings for Salary, Meetings

Mackinac County Commissioners make \$4,222 a year in base salary and the commission chair earns \$5,049 annually. The five board members also are paid \$60 per day for meetings. Beginning this year, board members will earn an additional \$50 on days they attend more than one meeting.

Including any travel reimbursement, salary, and pay for attending commission and committee meetings, in 2007 commissioners earned the following pay:

Carl Frazier earned \$8,676.23. In addition, the county paid \$9,309.67 in health insurance premiums.

Larry Leveille earned \$10,146.44 plus \$9,451.87 in health insurance premiums.

Calvin McPhee earned \$14,284.23, including \$2,500 in lieu of health insurance.

Dawn Nelson, the commission

chair, earned \$15,307.63, including \$2,500 in lieu of health insurance.

Mike Patrick earned \$8,518.22 plus \$7,815.15 in health insurance premiums.

Serving on other Upper Peninsula agency boards, commissioners receive stipends or travel reimbursement depending on each agency's policy. Mrs. Nelson receives travel reimbursement from Upper Peninsula Commission on Area Progress (UPCAP) meetings in Escanaba.

Mr. Frazier and Mrs. Nelson are on the Michigan Works! board, which pays \$50 for meetings attended. Meetings rotate between Sault Ste. Marie, Newberry, and St. Ignace.

Serving on the LMAS Health Department board are Mr. McPhee and Mrs. Nelson. Meetings are held in Newberry and each are paid \$60 to attend.

Icebreaker Museum Program Planned at Mackinaw City Library January 30

"The Mackinaw Area and the Icebreaker Mackinaw Maritime Museum: The next 62 years" is the title of the Mackinaw Area Public Library's evening program Wednesday, January 30, at 7 p.m. at the library in Mackinaw City.

John Childs and Dick Moehl of the Icebreaker Mackinaw Maritime

Museum board will discuss the decommissioning and presence of the vessel in Mackinaw City, current operations of the museum, and future goals for preservation of the vessel. There is no charge for the program.

Mackinaw Area Public Library is at 528 West Central Avenue.

Kiwanis Club To Host Tailgate Dinner

The St. Ignace Kiwanis Club is planning a Tailgate Dinner to raise money for the band program at St. Ignace schools Friday, February 8, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the LaSalle High School cafeteria.

The cost is \$5 per adult and \$3 per child age five to 12. On the menu will be hamburgers, hot dogs, bratwurst, fish sandwiches, baked beans, potato salad, chips, dessert, and beverages.

Chippewa Democrats Will Meet Jan. 26

The next meeting of the Chippewa County Democratic Party will be Saturday, January 26, at 10 a.m. at the Country

Kitchen Restaurant in Sault Ste. Marie.

For more information, contact Paul Warrick at (906) 495-7343.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not a Tool for Government, City Charter Is a Tool for the People

To the Editor:

The news that in the coming months the City of Saint Ignace will be reviewing our city's charter to identify changes that will make the document more useful to government was uproariously funny.

For an informed citizen to do anything but laugh at these latest municipal antics is impossible!

The administration of the City continues to ignore whatever sections of the Charter that are not "useful" to them.

Oh, the powers, elected and unelected, are miffed and embarrassed when a mere citizen points out their non-compliance, but they consistently fail to take that massive step to actually do what the Charter requires.

This recent "review" has been rolled out with pomp and flourish, but, I suggest, it, too, will be meaningless to ensure that the Mayor and Council actually require that the City Manager discharges the duties outlined in the Charter.

Here are some choice examples of the efficient sidestepping of a very important section of Charter requirements, as orchestrated by our municipal management with the approval of the seven elected representatives:

Finance:

Section 8.3, Budget Hearing: "...Notice of such a public hearing, a summary of the proposed budget and notice that the proposed budget is open file in the office of the Clerk shall be published at least one week in advance of the hearing. The complete proposed budget shall be on file for not less than one week prior to such hearing."

Didn't happen.

Section 8.5, Budget Control: "The City Manager shall each month submit to the Council data showing the relation between the estimated and actual revenues and expenditures to date; and, if it shall appear that the revenues are less than anticipated, the Council shall endeavor to reduce the appropriations, except amounts required for debt and interest charges, to such a degree as may be necessary to keep expenditures with-

in the revenues."

Didn't happen.

If it had happened, how could this City have eight depleted funds in the budget?

And, of course, we must not forget that within the past fiscal quarter, the City Charter's Section 8.2 requiring the City Manager to prepare a recommended budget for the next fiscal year by the first meeting in October was ignored.

That eventually happened, but only after citizen objection to the negligence of the City Manager! Citizens were not allowed to ask questions at that meeting

Mayor Grondin's stated goal that, "It's our job, as the seven of us, to decide whether or not this document is something we can continue to live with or it's a document that needs to be changed," or "to make this document more useful to government," are wholesale misconceptions of the purpose of the Charter.

The Charter is to define the tasks, responsibilities, powers and, more importantly, limitations on those powers exercised by the City of Saint Ignace's City Manager, Mayor, and Council.

It is not meant to be a useful tool of "government," rather it is meant to be a useful tool for the people to determine whether or not the administration is doing the assigned job of government.

Clearly, whatever it is that is being done at City Hall, it is not in accordance with our City Charter. So, to have these same folks identify possible changes "to make this document more useful to government" is the best laugh I've had all year.

Instead of changing the Charter, wouldn't it be refreshing if the City complied with it? Then, after a few years, a review might be in order; even then, the initiative for any proposed Charter change should more appropriately come from the citizens, not from the powerful few.

Mary Elizabeth Nichols
St. Ignace

Employers Asked To Consider Many Local Job Candidates

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to your front-page article about work visas and the "shortage" of workers in the Straits area. I am sure I am not alone in seeking employment in this area, and have been doing so for quite some time. I am able to work full or part time, year-around.

My resume has been on my own Web site and I have visited several businesses in person. I check your paper's help wanted section weekly and I am also on the Michigan Works! registry. In these economic times, I would hope that everyone who needs and desires employment would be afforded every opportunity available in our community. I would like to encourage employers to take a look at the Michigan Works! Web site; hopefully they will find qualified employees to meet their needs.

Vicky Warner
St. Ignace

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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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 as a Free Society," and serve as a reminder of what a free press means to us.