

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## City Department Heads Should Be Held To Using Vacation Time

To the Editor:

I would go one step further than Councilman Willie LaLonde, who has suggested that certain salary and benefit policies for department heads "should be more scrutinized by Council" (*The St. Ignace News*, February 7, page 1). The policy of allowing "department heads to sell unused vacation days back to the city in exchange for cash" is inappropriate and irresponsible. It should be abandoned.

I doubt that any of the residents of St. Ignace in their working years have enjoyed such a benefit. I find it difficult to come up with any kind of rationale for this personnel policy. I find it an arrogant and self-serving misuse of the taxpayers' money. The policy should be abandoned. Department heads, like everyone else, should be held to using their vacation time, as well as other specified benefits, within a specified contractual time frame.

Bob Heywood  
St. Ignace

## It Is Our Responsibility To Question Elected Officials

To the Editor:

Last week, I wrote a letter to the editor with my concerns for the irresponsible spending of our tax dollars by City Hall. Another major concern I have with City Hall is the blatant disregard of the city charter. A letter was written several weeks ago by Mary Nichols, listing the abuses.

The city charter is the constitution of the city. It protects the citizens of St. Ignace from the public officials. In other words, the city charter limits the power of the city government. In Mary Nichols' letter, the abuses are numerous. Even worse, those involved make light of the charter, and feel it is for their use and discretion, and not for the protection of the people.

Another example of the abuse of City Hall was a "secret meeting" held a couple of months ago to hide the raise for a city employee. I wrote two letters pointing this out, and the county prosecutor went to the council and stated that such practice is illegal, and if it were to happen again, they would be fined.

My concern, again, is the apathy of all of us; it is what they depend upon. It is our responsibility to question our elected officials.

After last week's letter, I received several phone calls. One was amazing; the caller did not identify himself, and his parting comment to me was to call me a "commie pinko." I haven't been called that since the 1960s. Ironic that someone who speaks out or questions government is a commie pinko. Well, Putin, here I come.

Last, I would like to thank one, and only one, council member for standing up against the mass of mediocrity in City Hall. Thank you, Willie LaLonde, I am proud I voted for you.

Joe Durm  
St. Ignace

## Transportation Museum Idea Is Still in Fact-finding Stage

To the Editor:

This letter is being written in response to the letter to the editor February 7 entitled "Transportation Museum Would Require Taxpayer Investment." Although that letter did bring up some valid points, there were also some confusing details and misinformation included in it.

1. The proposed transportation museum is still in the fact-finding stage and not one piece of grant paperwork has been completed. All federal and state grant programs require that local public hearings be held before grant requests are submitted.

2. I don't know what the writer is referring to as "traditional" grants, but all state and federal grants that I know of are "reimbursement" grants. This simply means that the grantee (the City) must spend the money for the project and then submit all of the necessary paperwork to be reimbursed by the

granting agency for the money expended. When it comes to the state and federal government, a reimbursement grant is a traditional grant.

3. Local match will be paid by MDOT since this is technically an MDOT project in which the City/DDA would be a partner. Some people would say that it is still taxpayer money, but I contend that whether St. Ignace gets the money from the state or federal government, or Detroit does, either way, it is still taxpayer money and I would much rather that it be spent on a project in our community, if it is what the community wants, than somewhere else in Michigan.

4. The City/DDA would own, operate, and maintain the proposed museum and this is an issue that must be addressed. Museums, by their very nature, are normally not self-sustaining because people are not willing to pay large sums of money to visit them.

5. The City would be expected to execute and record an historic preservation easement to protect the federal funding investment. Each of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grants that we have received (Kiwanis Beach, American Legion Park, Dock 3) all required a commitment to maintain and keep those parks in public ownership and open to the public in perpetuity - that is standard procedure when funds are being given for specific projects in order to guarantee that those projects are protected for the public.

6. It is correct that the property and building where the proposed museum would be located would be taken off the tax rolls if the proposed museum could not be located on currently owned City/DDA property. If a privately owned building must be purchased, the pros and cons of this must be weighed as to the possible economic benefits that a facility would have in drawing tourism dollars to the area vs. property tax income that the City/DDA would lose.

7. I do not understand the writer's point about Manitowac vs. St. Ignace. I feel that St. Ignace is one of the most beautiful places in the country to live and visit and I love having a job that helps the City/DDA make it even more beautiful by bringing tax dollars back from Lansing and Washington in the form of grants.

I just want to stress to the City taxpayers that I have been the DDA director for almost 13 years and have never ever written a grant before getting input from the public at a very well publicized meeting and having everything approved by the City Council and Downtown Development Authority (and this time will be no different). We have had some successes and some letdowns in grant writing, but we have the best interest of this community and the downtown area in mind at all times.

Deb Evashevski  
St. Ignace DDA Director

## Charter Says Council Meetings Must Be Held Within City

To the Editor:

At the February 4 City Council meeting, during the public comment portion of the agenda, I asked the question whether it was legal for the Council to schedule a regular meeting March 17 at LaSalle High School, which is located outside the city limits.

The resolution to do so had been passed a short while earlier at last night's at the meeting, but no public comments, questions, or concerns were allowed to be heard prior to Council's resolution.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the lawyer employed by the City was unable to provide any written comment or legal citation of earlier precedents concerning my question. Instead, he gave me permission to call the Attorney General.

Also, the city attorney told me that this kind of thing happened "all the time." He went even further to state that the City of Royal Oak always has its meetings on Mackinac Island.

With his permission, I called Mary Ellen Graver, clerk, City of Royal Oak. Yes! There probably have been several city managers' conferences on the Island in the past, but not any regularly scheduled City of Royal Oak meetings have been held outside that city limits.

After all, that would make it a hardship for the citizens of Royal Oak to participate, at so great a distance!

The next thing I did was research our city charter, which clearly states at the very beginning (within the first 15 pages the Council read recently!) that nothing in the 1969 Charter would rescind the previous law, Public Act 215 of 1895, except as noted.

Of course, the next thing I did was research Public Act 215 of 1895; and, there, just as bright as day, in section 88.6 it reads:

"The council ... shall hold regular meetings for the transaction of business, at such time and places within the city as it shall prescribe, not less than two of which shall be held in each month."

Let's think about the phrase, "within the city." Do you think that needs a law degree to comprehend?

Is LaSalle High School "within the city?" No!

Does the Mayor plan to annex Moran Township before March 17 in order to go ahead with his council's resolution to hold the regular business meeting of the City of St. Ignace?

We can only wait and watch.

Mary Elizabeth Nichols  
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.

### Internet:

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## It Was Not Maliciousness That Led to Problems at Farm

To the Editor:

I have known Mr. Larry Rooney for 11 years. I have found him to be a proud and committed man. Committed to what, believe it or not, animal welfare. When I first came up to this great place (the U.P.), in 1997, one of the first things I was told out here in Epoufette was that if I had a problem with an animal, a bother around the house, or to find one injured, call "Lion Larry." He would take care of it. Now I had no idea who this was at the time, but between 1997 and 2005 (when I gave my store up), Larry and I got to know each other very well.

He would come down and pick up my scrap from my jerky meats, and when I had none, would be very troubled to find meat elsewhere. We tried giving the cats and other animals fish offal but he said cats wouldn't go for it.

I saw him weekly pull hay, not straw, up to his place for hooved animals. When I got rid of my store, I pretty much lost track of Larry, but saw him from time to time. Lately I had not seen him at all. This leads me to believe that his health or other problems led to the problems at his farm. Not any malicious feelings toward the animals. Keep in mind, this is a man who would live-trap mice to let them go in the woods, rather than kill them. A man whom I admired, and still do.

Paul Weichlein  
Epoufette

## Add Garrett Becker to Three-point Record List

To the Editor:

First of all, I want to congratulate young Anthony Lester for breaking the record of eight "three pointers" in one game, by getting nine.

Secondly, I question the list of players that held the previous record of eight "three pointers" in one game. My question is, why was Garrett Becker left off of this list? He hit eight in a February 2005 game against Lincoln Alcona.

Who was responsible for providing the list to the paper? They went back to 1999, so did they quit before getting to 2005? Mr. Becker was the last one to tie this record before it was broken last week.

He worked and played hard for the team, and to be left off the list is inexcusable.

I have had three grandsons play for the Saints teams, so I know how hard they worked and the hours they put in. I never once heard them complain. They loved every minute of it.

I believe something should be corrected in our paper to give credit where credit is due, and not just under corrections.

Betty Ritzert  
St. Ignace

*Editor's Note: Garrett Becker, 2005 graduate of LaSalle High School, should have been included in the list of names that were tied with eight three-point field goals. He scored a career-high 31 points, including eight triples, in the Saints' 70-58 win over Lincoln-Alcona in 2005. The point guard for St. Ignace hit three treys in the first quarter and five in the third period to tie the mark that was held by Jim Clement.*

## Michigan Politics

By  
George Weeks



## Mitt Calls Self 'Shadow of the Real Deal,' George

There are some similarities and stark contrasts among the factors in last week's demise of Mitt Romney's presidential campaign and that of his father's bid four decades ago.

Both men were success stories in the private sector before becoming governors, and both had political battles with Arizona senators.

For both, wars of the day were at play - shooting wars overseas and ideological wars within the GOP - as each Romney made an abrupt and surprise withdrawal from quest for the White House.

Group-think of journalists who do the first drafts of history was that Michigan Governor George Romney was done in by blurring out in a Detroit TV interview, "I just had the greatest brainwashing that anybody can get" during U.S briefings in Vietnam. But there was more to it than that.

While Romney acknowledged in a 1987 interview with this scribe that he was "cut to pieces" after his comment, he insisted there were other reasons, including "dirty tricks" the Richard Nixon camp used to spread "distortions" about Romney spending increases as governor.

In the latest issue of the *Michigan Historical Review*, Associate Vice-President Chris Bachelder of Hillsdale College documents a convincing case "that Romney's chances of winning the Republican nomination had become fairly remote by the time of his famous gaffe.

"When he said that he had been brainwashed, his status as the front-runner in public opinion polls, which he had enjoyed at the end of 1966, had already evaporated."

By the same token, the front-runner status of Mitt Romney had already evaporated when the former Massachusetts governor dropped out rather than, as he spun it, damage by a prolonged fight the chance of Senator John McCain, the post-Super Tuesday frontrunner who last summer was counted out by the media herd.

Said Romney: "I feel I have to now stand aside for our party and for our country. If I fight on in my campaign, all the way to the convention, I'd forestall the launch of a national campaign, and, frankly I'd make it easier for Sen. [Hillary] Clinton or [Barack] Obama to win. Frankly, in this time of war, I simply cannot let my campaign be a part of aiding a surrender to terror."

It was a noble declaration from a Michigan native who impressively won our January 15 GOP primary over McCain, victor over now-President George W. Bush here in 2000.

But there was more to it than that. The numbers just would not add up for Romney, especially as long as ex-Governor Mike Huckabee of Arkansas stays in the battle, drawing votes of the religious right.

In his Michigan travels, including in Traverse City, and in numerous national media interviews, the son suggested that his campaign, in a sense, was an extension of the father's.

Last December, in a New York Times interview, he said: "Like a baton has passed, like a relay team where the baton passed from generation to generation, I am a shadow of the real deal."

Last week, in reporting that Romney advisers acknowledged an array of tactical missteps and miscalculations, the same paper said: "Perhaps most significantly, they conceded that they had failed to overcome doubts about Mr. Romney's authenticity as they sought to position him as the most electable conservative in the race, a jarring contrast to his more moderate record as governor of Massachusetts."

# The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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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 45 Thursday, February 14, 2008

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Associate Publisher

Mary R. Maurer

Publisher 1975-1995

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

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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](http://www.saintignacenews.com)

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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.