

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Don't Let Landowners Take Away Access to Straits

To the Editor:

The proposed takeover of a long-time road-end public access in Wawatam Township by an adjacent landowner [*The St. Ignace News* March 27] is a familiar old story. This landowner bought property next to Headlands Road at McGulpin Point, just west of Mackinaw City, knowing it was a public access. In a feeble attempt to justify closing this beautiful access to the public, he's claiming that littering hooligans require that the county and township turn this public property over to him. He would then "grant" easement rights to "worthy" neighbors. Here's a better idea: Leave this wonderful access to Lake Michigan and the Straits of Mackinac in public hands, and he can use it whenever he wants.

The Michigan Legislature passed two bills in 1996 that gave local counties and townships a powerful weapon to keep these road-end accesses available to the public. They are public acts 218 and 219. They say that a public road, ending at water, cannot be abandoned by a county unless it first offers it to the township where it's located. The township can't abandon it before offering it to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. They can't give it up unless it's in "the best interest of the public." Each of these transfers has to be accompanied by public hearings.

Local county and township officials have done a good job protecting these road-end accesses in the past, but it's expensive. In today's economy, I worry that they won't be able to justify the legal fees necessary to fight those who would block access to future generations. If that happens, there will be a hemorrhage of road-end accesses lost around the state to selfish landowners, using this one as precedent. Let's help our local officials fight this. Show them your support by calling or writing Emmet County Commissioners, Road Commissioners, and Wawatam Township officers. Their contact information can be found on pages 48 and 49 in the Phone Guide.

The road-end at McGulpin Point is a wonderful place to launch a kayak, stroll along the shore of Lake Michigan, watch the twinkling lights of the Mackinac Bridge, or soak up a fiery sunset. Don't let one private landowner take this away from us.

Tim Calloway  
Harbor Springs

## Listen Carefully To Answers From Hospital Authority

To the Editor:

I was seated beside a Mr. Brian Schoenborn at the Straits Area Hospital board meeting last Monday, and I see he sent a letter of support for a new hospital to *The St. Ignace News* editor March 27.

Mr. Schoenborn is unknown to me, but I did listen to the many questions he had for the board over a large variety of subjects, and their responses, before the subject of the new hospital arose.

New hospital discussion was varied and very informative. I listened carefully to this, as it was the biggest reason I had attended. I'm not sure what Mr. Schoenborn was doing during this time, but he heard a few things that I did not. I quote [from his letter]:

1. "Private committees formed to make decisions regarding multi-million dollar projects that will ultimately fall to the taxpayers."

I heard: New nonprofit corporation that will borrow all money from a government entity with the land being supplied by the tribe. There would be no financial liability to the taxpayer. The previously voted millage for the long term care area would continue.

2. "It disturbs me our county commissioners were left in the dark while a private hospital committee was formed making decisions which will affect us all."

I heard: At a public hospital board meeting a committee was formed with the purpose of working directly with the county commissioners, with the commissioners notified that they now needed to set a meeting date. Their reply was that this would be done.

Under the new stand-alone entity, the taxpayers would no longer own the property or the new hospital, relieving them of all responsibility for hospital actions or debts. That's why there would be no public

meetings. Taxpayers will continue to have a say over the millage that will be paid by them to the new board for the care of our county's elderly and indigent. We will have our say via our votes.

I expect whoever decides what to do with the current hospital and long term care properties will have a couple of years yet to give extensive thought and planning to what the property can be used for. Since the properties are owned by the county, the taxpayers (us!) should have a lot of input. Hmmm – how about a vocational training school, a junior college, or affordable housing. The ideas could be pretty interesting and great!

I still have many questions I will seek answers for, and I hope all concerned taxpayers will ask any questions they may have. Please listen carefully to the answers, so we can be sure we get a full understanding. I hope I have cleared up some of Mr. Schoenborn's misunderstandings. Keeping a great asset to all in Mackinac County is worth the time and effort to learn.

By the way, our hospital is a profitable entity, while the long term care area is not.

Sally Hazen  
Hessel

## Clark Township Is Giving Carte Blanche to Property Owner

To the Editor:

It is time that our community focuses on property rights versus vilifying opponents. Bob Dunn recently wrote a letter to the editor about Greg Malcho, Chuck Malcho, and Dave Wallace that could not be further from the truth. If Mr. Dunn actually knew these men, he would know their deep commitment to the Les Cheneaux community. They and their families have been contributing to this area well before the Mackinac Bridge's existence. As mentioned in Mr. Dunn's letter, they sit on boards, dedicating their time and expertise. They, too, are wooden boat owners and opposed the destruction of the original boathouse by Hessel Bay Boat Works years ago.

During the decades that Messrs. Malcho, Malcho, and Wallace have been in the Les Cheneaux area, they have been responsible community members. For example, if Mr. Dunn knew the facts, he would know that Mr. Wallace's cabins on Hillcrest Lane are used exclusively for family and friends. They are not rentals. He would also know that the folks that are owners at Loreli were all hand-picked family and friends of Dave Wallace. Dave could have easily developed and sold that property to strangers or turned them into rentals, for which, as Mr. Dunn put it, would consist of loud drunken weekend warriors with babies and ATVs. Instead of doing what Mr. Dunn implied, Dave has exhibited exemplary citizenship. I can only hope that Hessel Bay Boat Works would exhibit the same type of consideration if they ever intend to develop residential property on their land.

This brings me to the issue at hand. As it stands now, the language in the new rezoning appears to have no limitations as to the size and use of the structure to be built. In fact, Hessel Bay Boat Works doesn't even have to build a boat house! There are no assurances in the rezoning requiring them to do so. It is this carte blanche the township is giving Hessel Bay Boat Works that perturbs the adjacent property owners and many members of the community. This is precisely what the current long-standing zoning and the Les Cheneaux Master Plan was designed to avoid. Also of concern is that during these uncertain times, no proof of financing for this project has been provided to the township. No proof of a lease or letter of intent has been provided by the owner of the *Canim*. Furthermore, I find it interesting the owner of the *Canim* has never written a letter to the township in support of the boat-house project. What assurances do the adjacent property owners and the Les Cheneaux community have that this project will be completed conscientiously, or even at all? Will a carte blanche zoning policy begin and end with this project? What kind of precedent will it set for future zoning in the area? Imagine your neighbor being given ultimate authority to do whatever they wish, with virtually no limitations!

I hope members of this community that are in favor of this rezoning can appreciate the position of Messrs. Malcho, Malcho, and Wallace along with others who oppose this type of carte blanche rezoning. These responsible members of the community believe they are having their property rights infringed upon. There are no villains here, as Mr. Dunn implies. Both sides are merely pursuing their proper interests.

I support wooden boats and boathouses. Most of all, I support responsible development and property rights.

Daniel Totonchi  
Hessel and Royal Oak

## Equalization Report To Be Presented

County commissioners are expected to adopt the 2008 county-wide equalization report during their Tuesday, April 15 meeting.

Equalization Director Jim Fenlon is expected to give a report at the meeting, which begins at 6 p.m.

## 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



## Blanchard Warns Dem Party Is Flirting With Disaster Over Primary Mess

Ex-Governor Jim Blanchard, who remains a player in the process long after leaving office, nailed it last week in declaring that "the presidential election process is broken and we have a mess" – most certainly, this cycle in Michigan.

By punishing Michigan and Florida for holding earlier-than-sanctioned presidential primaries, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) is "flirting with disaster...flirting with" a November victory by Republican John McCain, Blanchard said on the weekend "Off the Record" public TV show.

Blanchard, a self-proclaimed political junkie who at age 10 was hanging Democratic leaflets on neighborhood doorknobs and now at age 66 co-chairs Hillary Clinton's Michigan campaign, has more sustained active involvement in presidential politics than other governor I have known.

Over the decades, Michigan governors have had key roles in the process:

- Liberal Democratic Governor G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams (1949-60), after failing to click as a contender himself, staged a Mackinac Island visit by, and endorsement of, John F. Kennedy; stood on a chair at the national convention to shout "no, no" when Kennedy picked Lyndon B. Johnson as his running mate, and later had diplomatic appointments from both JFK and LBJ.

- Moderate Republican Governor George Romney (1963-69) shunned conservative 1964 GOP nominee Barry Goldwater ("I accept but do not endorse" him); faded in a 1968 presidential bid in which he once led in early polls, and ended up as President Richard Nixon's Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

- Moderate Republican Governor Bill Milliken (1969-82), who, as lieutenant governor, inherited the top spot upon Romney's resignation and went on to become the state's longest-serving governor, had no presidential ambitions. His support was instrumental in the 1980 Michigan primary victory of George H.W. Bush, who later said that was key to his selection as the running mate of Ronald Reagan – nominated at the GOP National Convention in Detroit.

- Moderate Democratic Governor Blanchard (1983-1990), not in the presidential contender mix himself, joined with then-Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton in forming the centrist Democratic Leadership Council; touted Clinton's presidential bid and was Clinton's ambassador to Canada, and now co-chairs Hillary Clinton's 2008 Michigan campaign.

- Conservative Republican Governor John Engler (1991-98), who defeated Blanchard, was instrumental in mobilizing governors and others behind the successful nomination of George W. Bush and had some mention as potential veep nominee in 2000. It didn't help that Bush lost the Michigan primary to John McCain.

- Current Governor Jennifer Granholm, who replaced term-limited Engler, is a Democratic centrist supporting Clinton. She has not been as critical of the DNC's stance as has Blanchard or Senator Carl Levin, who long has led the commendable effort to challenge the stranglehold New Hampshire and Iowa have had on the nominating process.

In lamenting that DNC members have "lost their way," Blanchard said: "They're going to

seat American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, but not Michigan and Florida. This is crazy. ...Whatever happened to voting rights, civil rights, human rights?"

What happened is that Michigan violated party rules.

Among those seeking a compromise is Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee), who supported Senator John Edwards before he abandoned his presidential campaign in January. Stupak is neutral between Senators Clinton and Obama, saying he is "advocating only for Michigan voters."

While as of this writing Stupak's plan was in draft form, his idea has been that the 83 Michigan pledged delegates to be chosen at the congressional district conventions be allocated according to results of Michigan's January 15 primary.

That would mean 47 for Clinton, who was on the ballot and won it, and 36 delegates for Obama, who was not on the ballot but would inherit the "uncommitted" vote. The remaining 73 delegates to be elected at the May 17 Democratic State Central Committee would be selected based on the percentage of the popular vote garnered nationwide for Clinton and Obama.

How to fix the flawed process that Blanchard deplors remains a work in progress in Michigan.

On Monday, Stupak released his proposal and, before returning to Washington from the district, talked to Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean about it. He said Dean's reaction was to ask what the Obama and Clinton people "are saying about it."

"They didn't say don't do it," said Stupak, although the Clinton camp was not sanguine about the provision for dividing up super delegates. As for Edwards followers, he said they remain "tight-lipped. ...They're not tipping their hand."

## What's Schuette's Next Duty?

Since his election in 2002, Michigan Court of Appeals Judge Bill Schuette of Midland has been one of seven judges representing the sprawling 4th District that covers all of the Upper Peninsula and all but 25 counties below the bridge.

He began his public service at age 31 when elected in 1984 as one of the youngest congressmen. After an unsuccessful GOP bid for the U.S. Senate in 1990, he was director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture and then had eight years in the state Senate.

Word now is that Schuette, whose court term expires January 1, 2009, will in 2010 seek GOP convention support for nomination to replace term-limited Attorney General Mike Cox, who may run for governor.

A strong contender for Schuette's seat on the bench will be state Representative Kevin Elsenheimer of Kewadin, a former municipal attorney and assistant prosecutor who could run again for the House and would be a prospect for caucus leadership beyond his current post as assistant minority leader.

But Elsenheimer will seek Schuette's seat on the bench, a chance for a lawmaker to sit in judgment on laws.

*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.*

## Break-in Reported at St. Ignace Store

Merchandise was stolen during a break-in of the Cellular Connection telephone store on South State Street in St. Ignace Friday, March 28, at 3:10 a.m.

Entry was gained through a window, according to St. Ignace City Police. City police and Michigan State Police are investigating the burglary.

## 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 52 Thursday, April 3, 2008

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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.