

## Volunteers Needed To Serve on Foster Care Review Board

Volunteers are needed to serve on the Foster Care Review Board, the State Court Administrative Office of the Michigan Supreme Court reports. Citizens interested in becoming a board member may call (989) 732-0494 for an application. The deadline for receiving applications is Monday, October 20.

The goal is to improve children's foster care programs.

The boards meet one day each month to review a representative sample of cases of children who have been removed from their homes and placed in foster care owing to abuse or neglect. At these reviews, board members interview parents, foster parents, caseworkers, attorneys, and other interested parties who may be involved in planning for the child's care.

The Foster Care Review Boards are comprised of citizens who reflect a broad cross section of their communities. The program is seeking volunteers who have demonstrated leadership in other settings. Minorities and men are especially encouraged to apply. Employees of the Department of Human Services, family court, or private child placement agencies are prohibited by law to serve on Foster Care Review Boards.

Each volunteer who is selected must attend a one-day orientation training in Ann Arbor November 5. This training is a requirement to serve on a board. Also, board members attend yearly training which is held in different locations throughout the state. Expenses for training are reimbursed.

## Mill Creek's Discovery Park Receives Excellence Award

The revitalized Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park in Mackinaw City received the Quest for Excellence Institutional Achievement Award by the Michigan Museum Association.

The award was accepted by Steve Brisson, curator of Mackinac State Historic Parks, at a special awards ceremony during the association's annual conference in Traverse City September 25.

The Discovery Park addition to the site opened in May and includes a 50-foot-high forest canopy bridge, an aerial cable line ride over Mill Creek, and a 40-foot-high climbing wall mounted to a tree-top lookout platform that offers a view of the Straits of Mackinac, Mackinac Island, and the Mackinac Bridge.

The Discovery Park also includes an 18th century water wheel Water Power Station replica and a Forest Friends Play Area for children, with a playground of fiberglass animals.

The Quest for Excellence program recognizes exceptional programs, graphic projects, and professional activities, and strives to inspire excellence in others. Projects are evaluated on relevancy, significance to the organization's

mission, visual quality, and unique or innovative character.

Since the opening of Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park attendance at the site has increased 31% from last year.

"This dramatic increase in attendance demonstrates that these types of engaging, interactive experiences truly appeal to our visitors," said Phil Porter, director of Mackinac State Historic Parks (MSHP), which oversees the historic site.

Historic Mill Creek is the site of northern Michigan's first industrial complex, according to MSHP, and dates to as early as 1790 when, owing to demand for sawn lumber on Mackinac Island, an entrepreneur obtained use of 640 acres along Mill Creek to build a sawmill. Its operation ceased in 1839 and it was rediscovered by Cheboygan residents in 1972. The area was officially opened as a historical site in June 1984.

Over the years, improvements at the 625-acre site have included the reconstruction of the British Workshops and American Millwright's House, the creation of an audio-visual program, and the construction of a 3.5-mile nature trail system.

## Police Investigate Restaurant Theft

A breaking and entering occurred at the Lockview Restaurant on West Portage Street in Sault Ste. Marie August 10, between 11:30 p.m. and 5:30 a.m., and a safe containing an undisclosed amount of money was stolen. A possible suspect vehicle was described as a mid '90s Ford

pickup, two tone, red and white or silver, with regular cab and writing on the doors.

Anyone with information may call Crime Stoppers at (800) 465-7867. Callers may remain anonymous and tips leading to an arrest could earn a \$1,000 reward.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Chamber Lacks Budget and Staff To Be Open On Weekends

To the Editor:

After discussing the Letters to the Editor regarding customer service and weekend tourism office hours printed in the September 18 issue of *The St. Ignace News*, the Chamber of Commerce feels that it is important to submit a response.

The complaint regarding unfriendly downtown staff discussed at a recent Downtown Development Authority (DDA) meeting came directly to the Chamber of Commerce. We would be remiss if we didn't discuss complaints received, so the matter was discussed with DDA. The intent of the discussion was not to criticize, but to determine how we address concerns about customer service. Although many businesses offer outstanding customer service, we know that even one instance of poor customer service can damage a community's reputation. We have offered customer service programs in the past and plan to introduce an exciting new program and speaker in the spring of 2009 in conjunction with the Downtown Development Authority and Michigan State University Extension. Detailed program information can be obtained by contacting the Chamber of Commerce.

The concern expressed about weekend hours at the Chamber of Commerce has often been discussed, even as recently as our September board meeting. We strongly agree that weekend hours, especially during the summer and during special events, is very important. However, we face two major obstacles:

1. Budget. The annual Chamber operating budget, which comes from voluntary membership dues, is approximately \$50,000. From that budget, we pay wages for two employees, heat, lights, telephone, postage, insurance, and other expenses. We would love to be open on weekends, but how do we finance such an endeavor?

2. Staff. During the summer months, the Chamber staff volunteers to work at events almost every weekend. They also work evening events during the week and staff the office full-time Monday through Friday. Many of our events would not happen without hundreds of volunteer hours donated by the Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors and community volunteers. The success of many St. Ignace events is often dependent on the Chamber staff, board, and local volunteers. We could always use more volunteers. Are you willing to help? With additional business support through Chamber of Commerce membership, we would be able to provide more services to our community. A heartfelt thank you to those that faithfully support the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce with their voluntary membership dues. To learn more about the Chamber of Commerce membership and benefits, visit our new Web site at [www.saintignace.org](http://www.saintignace.org).

Janet Peterson, Chamber Director  
Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

## Weekly Fireworks Display Would Bring More Business to Town

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to a Letter to the Editor entitled "Proposal of Weekly St. Ignace Fireworks Is Distressing," that appeared in the October 9 issue of *The St. Ignace News*.

First of all, I would like to commend the Chamber of Commerce for giving thought to the area businesses by proposing a weekly fireworks display. I think it would not only bring people across the Mackinac Bridge, and keep businesses open later, but help bring more business to this failing town.

It has been expressed that the fireworks would be "beyond irritating." However, as a resident of Moran Bay, I have spoken with several friends and business owners, who all agree that it most certainly could not hurt this "charming and attractive" town. If anything, the weekly display would help draw tourists over the bridge. It would be an event not offered by competing cities in the area.

Has anyone ever visited Mackinaw City during the summer? It is packed with families and tourists, and I think that these people would enjoy a night of fireworks. Visitors, tourists, families, and children would certainly enjoy the sight of a weekly fireworks display. In fact, it is only 10 nights out of 365 that this "pointless noise" would be heard. People generally watch fireworks, not listen to them.

Fireworks every weekend after dark is perfect. As of now, St. Ignace closes its doors by nightfall because of a lack of business. As stated before, it would keep businesses open later because there would be potential customers, and an opportunity to hopefully keep businesses running.

Moving out of town over 10 nights of noise is what is truly inappropriate, but that is your prerogative. So I say, "Adios, all you fuddy-duddies," and "Welcome" to the visitors and the families of St. Ignace.

May the summer of 2009 be a much better year to every business owner. Good luck!

Dean J. O'Brien  
St. Ignace

## Michigan Politics

By  
George Weeks



## Obama Takes Advantage of McCain's Michigan Pullout

Atop the Michigan ballot, Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama is in good shape, based on polling and the demoralizing impact on fellow Republicans of John McCain's puzzling pullout from a state where he had much going for him.

But way down the ballot – in fact on the nonpartisan ballot that far too many voters will ignore – the Democratic challenger of Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Cliff Taylor faces an uphill battle, despite some polling indicating that Taylor could be vulnerable in his quest for a third term.

The challenger, Wayne County Circuit Judge Diane Marie Hathaway, will undoubtedly be far outspent and has the disadvantage that Taylor, whose well-heeled fans include the Michigan Chamber of Commerce that has long been an effective force in high court races, will have incumbent designation on the ballot.

Both Taylor and Hathaway are firing off missives to their party loyalists urging them not to neglect to go to the nonpartisan portion of their ballots: "Remember, you are not finished until you've voted for Taylor" and "Vote all the way – vote Hathaway."

There was some early speculation about ex-Governor Jim Blanchard taking on Taylor. (Three ex-governors went on the Supreme Court in the last half of the 20th century, including Chief Justice G. Mennen Williams, and two were on the court in the 1800s before becoming governor.) Says Blanchard: Maybe later.

I had this recent exchange with Hathaway:

Q: What will be your primary sources of funding?

A: There's no question that Cliff Taylor is going to receive millions of dollars from insurance companies, large corporations, and the Chamber in order to fund his campaign. My funding will come from people from across the state of Michigan who are fed up with the Supreme Court not following the law, not allowing their voices to be heard. My funding is going to come from independents, Republicans, Democrats, laborers, worker – people across the state of Michigan who want a change on our Supreme Court.

Q: And the trial lawyers?

A: The trial lawyers will be included.

Q: What is the minimum amount you need?

A: I don't know what the minimum amount will be. I don't know what the maximum amount will be. But I feel that we will raise enough money to get our message across.

Q: What do you think of the method of nominating Supreme Court justices? (The folly is that partisan conventions nominate candidates to the nonpartisan ballot.)

A: I was nominated by the Democratic Party. Our Supreme Court was rated the worst supreme

court in the nation by the Chicago lawyers regarding judicial independence. (Her reference was to a controversial May study by the University of Chicago Law School that ranked Michigan's court 42nd in opinion quality, 40th in productivity, and last in partisan independence.)

And it is a little different that Michigan nominates their justices partisan, but then on the ballot it becomes a nonpartisan race. I don't know what the perfect formula would be.

Q: Justice Betty Weaver has recommended term limits for Supreme Court justices. What do you think of that?

A: I think that is not a bad idea. When Hathaway, who has strong support from organized labor, trial lawyers, and environmentalists, was asked by an Interlochen Public Radio reporter how she would avoid criticism that she has ties to "special interests," she replied:

"I have been a trial judge for almost 16 years, and my record speaks for itself. I am beholden to no one. I have a reputation for being fair and impartial."

Last week, Hathaway was endorsed by Clean Water Action, a leading voice in an environmental movement that is increasing its political clout but still contributes a mere trickle compared to, say, the Michigan Chamber, when it comes to the oft-noted "mother's milk of politics" – money.

In urging voters to "fire" Taylor, Clean Water Action said that Taylor and three other justices handed down a 2007 ruling that emasculated one of Michigan's most important environmental protections, the Michigan Environmental Protection Act that became law in 1970.

The West Michigan Environmental Action Council noted that Justice Weaver, often at odds with the four other Republicans on the seven-member court, dissented with blistering criticism of the majority.

### Northern Scorecard

Clean Water Action last week cited three northern state House members among "the most reliable defenders of Michigan's waters" – voting 100% correct on issues that it cited as important.

They are Representatives Matthew Gillard (D-Alpena), Steven Lindberg (D-Marquette), and Gary McDowell (D-Rudyard).

The percentages cited for other Northern House members: Darwin Booher (R-Evart), 34; Tom Casperson (R-Escanaba), 34; Kevin Elsenheimer (R-Kewadin), 21; Michael Lahti (D-Hancock), 93; David Palsrok (R-Manistee), 34; Joel Sheltron (D-West Branch), 93; Howard Walker (R-Traverse City), 34.

*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.*

## Free 'Doing Business With Michigan' Seminar Is Offered to Small Businesses

A free training seminar is being offered to small business owners and operators who would like to find out more about how the State of Michigan buys its products and services. The seminar is Wednesday, October 22, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Ontario Room of the Cisler Center at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie.

Whether selling milk, electrical supplies, computers, construction services, or janitorial services, businesses may be considered as a

Michigan vendor. Property owners with office or warehouse space to rent may also find opportunities with the state.

"Buy Michigan First" provides an opportunity to become acquainted with the process the state uses to purchase goods and services, and explains how a business can become a registered vendor.

Although the seminar is free, individuals who wish to attend must register to reserve a seat. Contact Tammy Moore at (989) 733-8548, extension 311.

## US-2 Ditching Project To End Friday

A three-week ditching project that used excavating equipment to clear the south edge of US-2 of encroaching lakeshore sand will end Friday, October 17.

The Michigan Department of Transportation's Dave Rausch said the \$146,000 ditching project

involved 1.56 miles of roadside in three locations in a 4.1 mile stretch extending east from the U.S. Forest Service campground near the Sand Dunes area, west of St. Ignace.

Five workers and four pieces of earth-moving equipment were involved.

## The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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[www.SaintIgnaceNews.com](http://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 129, Number 28 Thursday, October 16, 2008

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### Subscriptions:

\$42 in Mackinac, Chippewa, Emmet, Luce, and Cheboygan counties.

\$52 elsewhere in the United States and military post offices.

\$35 for the Web edition at [www.saintignaceneews.com](http://www.saintignaceneews.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 [stignaceneews.com](http://stignaceneews.com).

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