

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fall Fest Volunteer Encourages Others To Donate Time to Events

To the Editor:

Last year I wrote a letter to the paper regarding my concerns about the direction of the Bayside Fall Fest. I was concerned that it was being turned into an adult event, forgetting its original purpose. Because of these concerns, I offered to help with activities that would be in keeping with a family focused event.

The special events committee invited me to their Bayside Fall Fest planning meetings this year. I felt very welcome and the group was quite receptive to my ideas. Because of their openness to this partnership, many new games and auctions were added. We were also able to have a fun Pie in the Face Contest, which not only raised money for three local charities, but got many community members involved.

It is important to remember that when we are concerned about the direction of our community, it is our responsibility to not only raise those concerns, but also be willing to step up and help out. It is easy to voice our concerns and it's our right. But we must remember that the people on these committees are volunteers. They do not get paid for their participation and most or all have families and full time jobs.

Of course, ideally, these types of committees could plan great weekend-long events for every weekend of the year that everyone could agree on. But such events take more manpower than the six to eight people serving on the committees. And is it fair to expect that only a handful of people devote themselves and their families to this type of community service? No, it's not.

That is why it is so important that we all take not only an interest in what's going on in our community, but also be active in making St. Ignace the community we know it can be. A place where we're glad to raise our children, where visitors want to return year after year, and where everyone, adults and children alike, have not only a voice, but an important, active role.

We have many great volunteers in our community. If you are one, keep up the great work! If you're not yet a volunteer, please take the time to find a place where you can put your talents to work. Even if you only have a very small amount of time to offer, every bit helps.

Marcy North
St. Ignace

We played there when we were kids. The Historical Society had us cut that about 1950.

I hope something can be figured out. Some tourist might come into town looking for Fort de Buade and if the powers that be send them to where the museum is now, they may ask if Fr. Marquette drove a Ford or a Dodge. I guess I will have to just wait and see what the answer is.

Lawrence "Ashcan" Furlott
Farwell

High Regards for Paul Sved

To the Editor:

I would like to express my opinion about Paul Sved. Mr. Sved was hired in 1996 as the St. Ignace city building inspector. His part-time job includes: evaluating applications for building permits, issuing permits, inspecting building during construction and modification, and enforcing the city and state building and BOCA codes. He reviews, inspects, and updates rental housing regulations every two years. Mr. Sved's responsibilities also include following up on violations of building codes and, if necessary, initiating legal action. He advises and makes recommendations to the City Manager and City Council on policies relating to building codes, their enforcement, and reports. As a member of the Planning Commission, he schedules meetings, takes the minutes, and performs plan reviews.

I got to know Mr. Sved when I helped organize Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) of Mackinac County, which is now a successful nonprofit organization. Mr. Sved volunteered to inspect houses that might fit within HOME's criteria so low income residents could become first-time home buyers. I came to know Mr. Sved as a man of good character and morals, honest, trustworthy, treats all people equally, and has strong family values. Not to mention, he is also an active community servant. Although he is paid for 54 hours every two weeks, Kathy Cryderman, city executive secretary, indicated that he is at his desk or out in the field by 8 a.m., until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and occasionally works on weekends to get the job done. He is tireless in his responsibilities and as the city's building inspector, he takes his job seriously. In my opinion, he considers the safety of renters, landlords, construction companies, and homeowners.

I believe Mr. Sved's greatest assets are that he has the ability to work well with most people and has established a good working relationship with our public officials. I recently had a conversation with a gentleman from Traverse City who is in housing construction. He told me he met Mr. Sved and he is "the nicest building inspector" he had ever talked with. Mr. Sved takes his responsibilities seriously, he puts things in perspective, and is a problem solver – he is looking out for all of us. We are the lucky ones to have Mr. Sved as our city building inspector and we are certainly getting more than our taxpayers' money's worth from this devoted man, who goes above and beyond for us all.

Mary Lynn Swiderski
St. Ignace

Mackinac Bridge's Community Support Is 'Over and Above'

To the Editor:

We are affiliated with the planning of numerous events that take place in the Straits area. None are as unique as parading people and things across a five-mile long, awe-inspiring bridge over the Straits of Mackinac. Whether it's a bike, car, truck, or tractor parade, the staff at the Mackinac Bridge Authority in St. Ignace, hands down, always does a fantastic job of making sure things go off without a hitch. You already know they spend hours on end coordinating the successful annual Bridge Walk. That, in itself, is a huge undertaking. However, we think it's just as important to recognize them for all they do.

The behind-the-scenes crew at the bridge regularly goes over and above the call of duty to make sure public events, such as the antique tractor show/parade, are a success for everyone. True, coordinating events isn't in their job description. That's what makes this letter of appreciation so important.

The Mackinac Bridge Authority plays host to about a dozen different events each year. Their support is a vital in-kind service that positively impacts tourism in the Straits area and most definitely boosts the local (and state) economy. There are many people to be proud of besides those who conceptualized, secured funding, designed, and even built the bridge.

We know most of staff time is spent maintaining and operating the bridge to ensure that each crossing is a safe and secure one. Of course, the authority must continuously invest time and money into the bridge to retain its structural integrity. At the same time they do that, they assist us (and others) with high-profile events involving the bridge.

We look forward to a long and prosperous future together.

Lynne Piippo, executive director
St. Ignace Visitors Bureau

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.

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Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



AG Cox Fights Crimes of the Times

Historically, a politically-savvy, high-visibility attorney general is in a good position to launch a bid for governor, as Arkansas Attorney General (AG) Bill Clinton successfully did in 1978 and Jennifer Granholm did here in 2002.

Jim Blanchard had been an assistant attorney general for five years (and a congressman) before election as governor in 1982.

Several other Michigan governors previously were lawmen – an AG, U.S. attorney, or special prosecutor. Among them was flamboyant Republican corruption fighter "Hollywood Kim" Sigler, whose grand jury indictments and convictions in a 1940s legislative/lobbyist scandal put him on the road to the statehouse.

Term-limited Republican Attorney General Mike Cox is not flamboyant, but it's a good, bordering on safe, bet that he will run for governor in 2010, regardless of who else runs, including 2006 GOP nominee Dick DeVos.

"Well, I'm certainly looking at it," is as far as he would go when I asked last week in the press-politician dance that occurs at this speculative stage of a pending race.

Pressed, he indicated he'd be inclined to run "If I think I can move Michigan forward."

Granholm is term-limited and cannot run in 2010. But three of the four top statewide elected officeholders in the executive branch can: Cox; Democrat Lieutenant Governor John Cherry, who likely will; and Republican Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, who might.

Building on the record of 1961-98 Democratic AG Frank Kelley, legendary champion of consumers, Cox has won huge settlements for consumers against some of the big names of commerce, fought excessive utility rate hikes, price gouging, and exploitation of seniors.

New times bring new battles – joining AGs from 10 states to push subprime mortgage servicers to ease loan terms; charging Internet child predators; pressing for transparency in state spending by creating a free, publicly searchable database listing all state government expenditures, including all contracts and grants.

With a 2004 federal grant, he created a special unit to help counties prosecute domestic violence crimes. It prosecuted more than 3,615 cases, getting 3,220-plus convictions.

Although the grant expired September 30, Cox announced last week that his office and the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board would split the cost of paying for three special assistant attorneys general to continue working in nine counties: Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, Ogemaw, Otsego, and Roscommon.

Stryker Two

For the second consecutive election cycle, reclusive Kalamazoo billionaire Jon Stryker, Michigan's fifth richest person according to *Forbes Magazine*, is digging deep to help elect Democrats to the state House, now controlled by Democrats, thanks in no small measure to him.

It remains to be seen whether his stealth Coalition for Progress political action committee will match or exceed its 2006 independent spending of about \$5 million, including more than \$1.6 million on behalf of Granholm.

But Stryker's PAC is already the subject of an ugly development in the hotly contested 101st open seat race between Republican Ray Franz of Onkama and Dan Scripps of Leland.

In a campaign flyer that surfaced last week headlined "Exposing the Dirty Money Behind Dan Scripps," Franz said: "By now you have seen the TV ads and experienced the barrage of negative robo calls and mailings. All paid for by billionaire homosexual activist Jon Stryker's shadowy group called Coalition for Progress."

Asked why "homosexual activist" was in bold face type, Franz said, "I don't care what his lifestyle is." His concern, he said, is Stryker's "social agenda." "I don't think the public is ready [for a change of] our traditional values."

Among the causes supported through Stryker's Arcus Foundation is advancing rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

In March, *The Detroit News* reported that Stryker, whose fortune comes from holdings in a medical products firm founded by his grandfather, last year donated \$43.7 million to nonprofit organizations.

The News also reported that Executive Director Rich Robinson of the Michigan Campaign Finance Network said of Stryker's spending for state Democrats: "It's an extraordinary amount of influence for one individual to have. I don't see how you can square that with any conventional notion of Democracy."

Well said. Scripps says he does not know what Stryker is spending on his behalf – and he shouldn't, since such spending is supposed to be independent.

Representative Brian Calley (R-Portland), who heads the GOP House campaign committee and called me after I called Franz, said Stryker spent about \$150,000 on behalf of Scripps in 2006 when he ran a nearly successful campaign against Representative David Palsrok (R-Manistee).

Headlining "Exposing the Dirty Money" is certainly a way to catch eyes of voters receiving the flyer.

Just maybe some also held noses over the linking of dirty money and homosexual activist.

Green Scorecard

Based on 11 votes, Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow last week received a 100% perfect rating from the League of Conservation Voters on its 2008 National Environmental Scorecard.

Based on 13 House votes, these were the scores for northern Michigan congressmen: Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) 92; Dave Camp (R-Midland) 0; Pete Hoekstra (R-Holland) 0.

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.

Parent Steering Committee Will Meet

The Parent Coalition Steering Committee of the Great Start program for Mackinac County will meet Monday, October 27, from 6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Driftwood Restaurant in St. Ignace.

Parents of children from birth to

age five are welcome to attend. The meeting will cover parent group updates and upcoming events. Great Start is a program of the intermediate school district.

For more information, contact Heather Bird at 643-0096.

Pregnancy Care Center To Host Auction

The Care Net Pregnancy Center in Sault Ste Marie will host an auction Thursday, November 6, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Sault Area High School cafeteria. Dessert will be served.

Everyone is welcome, and items are now being accepted for the auction.

For more information, contact the Pregnancy Center at (906) 635-1103.

The St. Ignace News

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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.