

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hunting Memories Destroyed

To the Editor:

We know there are all types of people, but why be rude and inconsiderate.

Recently, my two older children and I had the pleasure of building this unique deer blind. My daughter's birthday happens to fall on opening day, November 15, so this would be a special time for us to sit and let them get the feel of it. I figured this would be a memorable day, as I have good memories of hunting with my father, Ed.

As we ventured back one warm day, we found chairs and other items missing, plus boughs were cut.

I'm pretty sure who this person is but I've just kept it to myself. I hope they enjoy ruining the good times I treasure with Trevor and Tabitha. If you needed chairs that badly and would have asked, you could have taken them.

May your future change for the better.

David Blair
St. Ignace

Smokefree Law Would Protect State Residents' Health

To the Editor:

Earlier this year, the Michigan Senate voted to adopt HB 4163, a statewide smokefree air law that is designed to make all Michigan workplaces, including bars, restaurants, and casinos, smokefree. We now call on the House of Representatives to support the Senate's vote and protect all Michigan's workers by passing HB 4163.

Physicians have become all too familiar with the detrimental impact of cigarette smoke on the health of our friends and neighbors, who also are future patients. It is imperative that we act now to protect their welfare, which is why I unequivocally support the passage of HB 4163. It is our ethical responsibility to act to eliminate this health threat and we strongly urge our representatives to take the action.

We have waited long enough for our leaders to act on this important issue. When the House returns to session, we hope that this issue gets an immediate vote.

Secondhand smoke is a serious health issue and it's one that our local officials should not take lightly. Secondhand smoke is the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States, killing 38,000 to 65,000 nonsmokers every year.

Secondhand smoke is a known cancer-causing agent in all humans – there is no safe level of exposure. Exposure to secondhand smoke, even for just 30 minutes, can impact an individual's health and is known to cause cancer, heart disease, stroke, and many other illnesses.

There is simply no good way to take the harmful chemicals out of smoke-filled air. Smoke knows no bounds. The problem with smoking in indoor places where air is shared is that everyone ends up breathing the same air. As a result, everyone is exposed to harmful chemicals, and that's not right.

Restaurant and bar workers are particularly vulnerable. According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, food service workers are 50% more likely than the general population to develop lung cancer, largely because of their exposure to secondhand smoke on the job. No one should have to choose between a job and good health.

Based on this latest evidence, statewide smokefree laws are an increasing trend. Currently 34 states have passed statewide smokefree legislation, including neighbors Ohio, Illinois, and Minnesota. Ontario has passed a similar law. I would like to see Michigan become a leading advocate for the health of its citizens.

There has been enough procrastination on this issue. The first reports of health problems linked to smoking date back to the 1950s. The only way to truly safeguard Michigan workers from the deadly risks of secondhand smoke is to adopt a comprehensive smokefree law, one that encompasses all workplaces, including casinos, restaurants, and bars.

A statewide smokefree law just makes sense. We urge the House of Representatives to deal with this issue and enact HB 4163.

James Terrian, M.D.
LMAS Health Department
Newberry

Residents Should Voice Opinions About Spot Zoning

To the Editor:

I would like to inform the residents of Clark Township that a small group of neighborhood citizens were able to protect our R-1 Single Family Residential area. Thanks to the work of our Planning Commission, a parking lot was denied in the R-1 district. If this had been allowed, it would have opened the door to a spot zoning nightmare. It would have set a precedence in the fact that all vacant parcels of land in R-1 zoning districts could become whatever notion the owner of that piece of land wanted to change it to.

We live in a zoned community, with zoning ordinances designed to protect and stabilize the essential characteristics of these areas, and to promote and encourage a suitable and safe environment for family life.

We must remain proactive to protect our neighborhoods from spot zoning.

Do you want parking lots where your children play and ride their bicycles?

The potential of opening your neighborhood to the increased traffic, and the possibility of strangers coming and going at all hours, seems to me very undesirable.

We rely on our Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals to protect and uphold the zoning districts in Clark Township. They have the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act to help guide them in making their decisions.

They also have input from the residents, year-around and seasonal, residing in Clark Township to help guide them.

It is our responsibility as residents here to voice our opinions, loud and clear.

This parking lot was put in place without permits, and without being in a proper zoning district that would have allowed it.

This business of committing the sin, and then asking for forgiveness, has to end.

The zoning enforcement officer now needs to complete the decision of denial made by the Planning Commission. This lot that has been stripped and filled with gravel and railroad ties needs to be returned to its former state, keeping in mind that it is in the middle of a residential street.

We would like to see grass, trees, and native plants that were all there prior to being stripped.

Lea Brunson
Hessel

City Property Values Should Be Questioned

To the Editor:

Why are the property values in the city of St. Ignace increasing each year? With many properties for sale and not selling, with multiple foreclosure notices posted in *The St. Ignace News* each week, with the economy in the tank and unemployment soaring to new highs. Our taxes are increased each year by an inexplicable increase in the property's value. If a property owner questions this, the answer given is that the only properties that are selling are the high priced properties, so all other properties increase in value. If only that were true.

I would like to see *The St. Ignace News* do a serious inquiry into this. For one thing I would like to know if the city council members' homes have increased in value these last two years, and especially the properties of the person who believes our property is on a constant increase in value, since he is responsible for these increases and he believes my property has increased, as well as many others – I would like to know if his also has increased. As for me, I've had enough and as soon as the market improves and I can recover at least the original cost of my home, I will sell both our homes and move out of the city limits. For me, that is an easy option, but for many lifelong residents on fixed incomes, there are no options. It's just not right and something should be done about it, but first of all we need the local paper to get the facts and present them to the community in this paper.

Daniel G Fenlon
St. Ignace

December Blood Drives Announced

American Red Cross blood drives will be held at the following locations in December:

Sault Ste. Marie: Thursday, December 4, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. at Lake Superior State University Cislser Center; Tuesday, December 9, from 11

a.m. to 4:45 p.m. at Health Center Auditorium; Friday, December 12, from 8:15 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Sault Ste. Marie High School.

Mackinaw City: Monday, December 8, from noon to 5:45 p.m. at Cedarbrook Village.

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



Clout Returns to North; Civility Pledged

"There are rocky breaches that need to be healed."

– Senate Democratic Leader-Elect Mike Prusi

"The people of Michigan have told us they expect us to work together."

– House Republican Leader-Elect Kevin Elsenheimer

With selection by their caucuses as minority leaders, two small town Up North lawmakers have ended the grip that downstate population centers have on the four top leadership posts in the Senate and House.

Senator Mike Prusi of Ishpeming, after narrowly defeating Senator Buzz Thomas of Detroit (by two votes, says one source), will take over as Senate Democratic Leader when Mark Schauer of Battle Creek goes to Congress in January. Although long-ago records are sketchy, Senate staffers believe him to be the first Upper Peninsula senator to win the post.

While the late legendary former state Representative Dominic Jacobetti (D-Negaunee) never served as caucus leader, his 1955-95 service, much of which as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, defined Up North legislative clout.

Other former northern legislative leaders of note include ex-Senator Mitch Irwin of Sault Ste. Marie and ex-Representative Pat Gagliardi, also from the eastern Upper Peninsula (Drummond Island), both Democrats.

Representative Kevin Elsenheimer of Kewadin, by edging Brian Calley of Portland, will replace term-limited Craig DeRoche of Novi as House Republican Leader. The most recent northerner to be the top House Republican was 2001-02 Speaker Rick Johnson of LeRoy.

It was encouraging to hear Prusi and Elsenheimer, in phone interviews Friday, vow to eschew rigid partisanship and seek cooperative relations with the opposition. Democrats will have a dominating 67-43 edge in the House (previously 58-52), and Republicans will rule 21-17 in the Senate, which was not up this year.

Both share a view – easier said than done – on one of the best solutions to Michigan's many woes: more jobs.

Both, upon election, made quick contact with their counterparts, Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) and House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Township).

Prusi, a 20-year iron ore miner

EAB Moves Into Schoolcraft County

An infestation of the ash-tree-killing beetle Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was found in Schoolcraft County in the Upper Peninsula October 30, the first time the insect had been found there.

The infestation was discovered by Michigan Department of Agriculture staff while inspecting ash trees adjacent to the most recent EAB find in Delta County. The Schoolcraft County infestation is in Inwood Township near the Village of Cooks, south of US-2.

Delta and Schoolcraft counties have been added to the list of quarantined areas where moving firewood is prohibited.

The other known infestations in the U.P. are in Mackinac and Houghton counties. An infestation at Brimley in Chippewa County has been eradicated by removing all ash in the area, the department has reported. In 2005, the infestation at Brimley State Park marked the first time the insect had been found in the U.P.

The Emerald Ash Borer quarantine for the Lower Peninsula was revised Monday, November 10, to consolidate all 68 counties of the peninsula into one quarantine level, meaning travelers are able to freely move firewood within the Lower Peninsula, but the department is still urging people not to do so, to avoid moving several other invasive insects that include the Asian long-horned beetle and the Sirex wood-wasp.

who headed his steelworkers union before serving three House terms, wants the two parties to heal breaches and "do something right out of the chute to set a positive tone," possibly in the area of transportation infrastructure.

Elsenheimer, a former assistant prosecuting attorney for Antrim County, said he and Dillon agreed to meet frequently. He also vowed to continue to work with northern House Democrats on economic programs benefiting both peninsulas.

Senator Jason Allen (R- Traverse City), the Senate's majority whip, said the elevation of Elsenheimer bodes well for northern Michigan on economic and other issues.

In his initial meeting as leader-elect with Governor Jennifer Granholm, Prusi got no clue as to whether she might join the Obama administration. But his impression is that she will stay in Lansing because she wants to deal with economic and other issues that would help her "to leave on a high note."

Clearly, if Granholm were to leave amid the state's economic distress, it would be on a low note that would haunt her legacy.

Elsenheimer joins the state's GOP leadership circle at a time when its members are thrashing about in the wake of losses on the presidential, congressional, legislative, and Supreme Court races.

Republican State Chairman Saul Anuzis, who is running to chair the Republican National Committee, said: "Kevin is an aggressive, politically savvy leader who will help rebuild our party's brand and lead the House Republicans back to gaining seats in 2010."

In echoing the "Big Tent – more inclusive" calls of such out-of-office Republicans as ex-Secretary of State Colin Powell, Elsenheimer said the Republican party of Michigan "needs to look more like" the people of Michigan. He said the party has not only has to rebuild, but "prove its relevance" to needs of the people.

The day after his selection, he named five task forces to help prepare for the new session. Among their leaders: Suzanne Miller-Allen, wife of Senator Allen. She was chief of staff to House Speaker Paul Hillegonds and Senate Majority Leader Sikkema, and as of last week was said to be in the large mix of possible contenders to chair the state GOP.

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.

Travelers are asked to use only local sources of firewood, burn all they buy, and not to take any unused firewood along to their next destination.

"Campers and hunters are reminded to purchase firewood locally," said Ron Olson, Parks and Recreation chief for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. "Bringing ash firewood onto state forests, state parks, recreation areas, and state forest campgrounds violates state land use rules."

The Lower Peninsula had previously been divided into two quarantine levels.

Hardwood firewood is still prohibited from leaving the Lower Peninsula because it is the leading cause of spreading EAB and other invasive insects.

"Quarantine violators can still face fines and jail time," said Ken Rauscher, the director of the Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division at the Department of Agriculture. "The inspection station at the Mackinac Bridge remains in place and will continue to prevent hardwood firewood and other regulated ash material from entering the U.P."

People found violating the state's quarantine may be fined from \$1,000 to \$25,000 and may be sentenced to jail time of up to five years.

First discovered in 2002, the borer is responsible for killing or damaging roughly 35 million ash trees in Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

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and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

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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.