

Les Cheneaux Community Foundation Awards \$8,100

Izzard Earns \$500 Nursing Scholarship

The Les Cheneaux Community Foundation granted more than \$8,100 to six area nonprofit organizations and one individual Saturday, December 13, at the Les Cheneaux Public Library. Among the beneficiaries are

the Les Cheneaux Tourist Association, which received \$3,500 to print a map and brochure, the Les Cheneaux Old-fashioned Christmas Committee, which received \$1,852 for advertising, promotional materials, and decorations.

Other grants went to the Friends of the Les Cheneaux Library, which received \$359 for

art display system, to Clark Township, which received \$1,000 for public hearing expenses for the committee exploring the possibility of a Downtown Development Authority, and to Amy Izzard, who received a \$500 scholarship for nursing school.

The Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee granted \$500 to the First Union Church

for the Les Cheneaux Community Christmas Party and \$426 to Les Cheneaux Community Schools for a computer monitor for the elementary school computer lab.

Foundation grants are awarded each fall and spring to students, and nonprofit organizations with missions to benefit the community and its residents.

City To Get Road Money From General Fund; Ratifies Contract

City: From page 1

we will be giving you some additional plans, probably the first meeting in February. I know that R.S. Scott has done a rating of all of our streets. That was a few years ago. The lowest rated streets are probably lower now."

Mr. Dodson said the city also is pursuing increased funding for plowing at the Mackinac County Airport and will be talking to county officials about the road program. The city receives \$10,000 from the county for road maintenance.

"Stay tuned," he said. "I'm not going to come to you tonight and recommend we take drastic actions this evening."

Responding to the discussion from the December 1 meeting, Councilmen Don Gustafson suggested expediting the audit. He said getting the final audit as soon as possible is critical in getting needed financial information in case Council decides to ask for a millage. He questioned if the city is receiving county road work comparable with taxes paid to the county. He also suggested that within the bargaining contract, some staff could be placed on weekend work with days off during the week, which may help reduce potential overtime.

Mr. Gustafson said he was not in favor of acting on the city council's ability to levy, without voter consent, an additional 0.8 mills, which still may not solve the problem for streets. Levying 0.8 mills would generate approximately \$71,000.

"To throw a half-mill at the problem is not acceptable to me," he said. "All that does is throw money at it. From my perspective, I need to know what we are throwing money at."

To further the discussion, Councilmen Tom Della-Moretta suggested the development of a "very specific" comprehensive plan for road maintenance. Mayor Paul Gronrod said that with such a document, they would consider asking voters to consider a millage increase.

Given the economic climate, said

Mr. Gustafson, he would still want to investigate other avenues before raising taxes.

With the adoption of the 2009 budget, the city is estimating it will collect \$1,423,520 in property taxes based on a 16.26 mil levy on \$87,821,121 taxable value. From the taxes collected, the Downtown Development Authority will receive \$233,000 and \$78,015 will be directed to the Recreation Department.

During the public hearing on the budget, resident Dean Baker read a letter he had sent to the mayor and city council declaring that raising taxes would be premature, that the city needs a long-term, comprehensive road maintenance program, and that staffing cuts should be made in the police department. He questioned the need for a marina director and harbormaster, noting the city could save about \$10,000 a year without them.

"I feel we are headed for a financial train wreck if council doesn't act decisively, immediately," he said.

He called for leadership and suggested the city put in place a three-year, 50% rollback on all elected officials compensation packages, a three-year, 25% rollback on all committee stipends, and a three-year freeze on pay packages for salaried and hourly employees. He said wages and compensation should be based on rank, responsibility, education, and seniority. Yearly bonuses should be based on merit.

He also suggested money could be saved by turning off the lights at Wawatam Lighthouse during the winter, and he questioned the need to remove snow from the boardwalk.

Deb Evashevski, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) director, explained the need to keep snow removed from the marina docks and the boardwalk to the lighthouse is an extension of it. The DDA purchased the snowblower and pays to keep the lights on year-around.

The community, she said, is trying to improve the economy and encourage year-around tourism.

"We don't want to roll up our sidewalks and roll up our streets in the wintertime," she said. "We don't want people to think we're not here in the wintertime. We don't want to turn off our lights in the wintertime. Our shoulder seasons are very important to our businesses that are open all year long. We're trying to stay alive."

She continued, "We don't want to turn our lights out, Dean. We don't want to go to sleep all winter." Mr. Baker said he was just looking for ways to cut spending.

Resident Donna Pope said she agreed with Mrs. Evashevski. The lighthouse helps draw people to the area, she said, and the light would be needed for snowmobilers crossing the ice bridge from Mackinac Island.

At the next council meeting, said Mr. Dodson, members will address 2008 budget adjustments. Council also will begin receiving a monthly financial report beginning in 2009,

and it will be issued at the second meeting of each month through the year.

"It's a little more comprehensive reporting by us to give you a full picture as you ride this roller coaster in 2009," said Mr. Dodson.

Sewer Project

Work on the project has stopped for the winter, reported Mr. Therrian.

Bus Station

The trusses and walls are scheduled to arrive this week and will be put in place, if the winds die down, said Mr. Dodson. The project remains on schedule for a May 29 completion, he said, although work may not be complete until the first week in June.

Marley Street Water Tower

The 300,000 gallon water tower needs exterior and interior painting. Council approved hiring Dixon Engineering of Lake Odessa for \$2,800 as project engineers and inspectors. The city will seek bids and is estimating the project cost at

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Luce County Center Needs Community Support

To the Editor:

Regarding Luce County Community Resource and Recreation Center, also known as YAP, I know times are hard, but we need your help so we won't have to close. I have written for grants, and I am still trying, but we need financial help to be able to stay open. Can you help us?

We all know tax time is coming. But what you may not know is, we are a nonprofit, and you could write the amount you donate off on your taxes.

We are a youth center where kids can go to play pool, video games, or to get help with homework, whatever their need is.

We provide a breakfast and lunch to any in need.

We plan and implement "free" community functions, like Santa and the Easter Bunny coming to town, the community Halloween party, the Spook House, and Community Tie Dyes and picnics, to name a few.

We help this community, as well as other communities, with any needs they may have, from Engadine to Gould City, Hulbert to Germfask, to Paradise. Wherever you call home, we're here for you, from homelessness, to help with finding funding for heat.

We house the local Red Cross, and have a food bank to help those in need. We also have information, on both video and books, about kids' issues and parenting issues, including substance abuse, medical and mental health issues, from having a new baby, to raising teens.

We try to help everyone, but now we need your help.

I have, and will keep writing for grants to keep this center open. Without the help of the people who have donated in the past, we wouldn't be able to keep going.

If you would like to help support the center, you can call me at (906) 293-3729, or write me at 103 West Helen Street, Newberry, Michigan 49868.

Remember, our youth is our future. We must take care of them, because someday they will be taking care of us.

Please continue helping me to help others, by supporting the center.

Mary P. Archambeau,
Coordinator, Luce County Community Resource and Recreation Center, Newberry

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.

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Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



Illinois Has No Lock on Capitol Scandals

Among the states, Michigan has had its share of scandals under the Capitol dome.

Most notably: A 1940s grand jury investigation into lobbyists buying off lawmakers resulting in more than 40 convictions and the murder of a senator who was about to testify.

In 1993, a House Fiscal Agency scandal led to convictions of four people; the downfall of longtime Appropriations Committee czar Dominic Jacobetti (D-Negaunee); changes in the way the Legislature conducts business, and a Pulitzer Prize for two *Detroit News* reporters who uncovered agency staff wrongdoing.

But, in wake of the stunning sequence in neighboring Illinois, where five of the last nine governors have been charged with a crime, and decades of gubernatorial scandals across the land, it is timely to note this: Michigan's governorship has been one of the nation's cleanest.

Last week, after Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich was arrested on charges of conspiring to sell or trade President-elect Barack Obama's vacant seat to the highest bidder, Obama said at a press conference: "You can get elected by playing it straight."

In Illinois, its 1953-61 governor was later indicted but acquitted on charges of income tax evasion. Subsequently, three former governors went to prison, and one is still there.

Since the mid-20th century, Michigan has had these governors who played it straight: Democrat G. Mennen Williams (1949-60), Republican George Romney (1963-69), Republican Bill Milliken (1969-82), Democrat Jim Blanchard (1983-90), Republican John Engler (1991-2002), and Democrat Jennifer Granholm (2003-).

Democrat John Swainson (1961-63) was a good governor but later resigned in disgrace from the Michigan Supreme Court after conviction by a federal jury of perjury during a probe on a charge that as a justice he had accepted a bribe to arrange a new trial for a convicted burglar. He was acquitted of the bribery charge but served 60 days in a Detroit halfway house on the perjury conviction.

Swainson, post-governor, twice pleaded guilty to drunken driving charges. Reflecting in 1987 on this for my "Stewards of the State: The Governors of Michigan" book, Swainson, then highly regarded president of the Michigan Historical Commission, said:

"I was psychologically unable, as a former governor and Supreme Court justice, to even bring myself to seek ordinary employment.

"I wanted at least to preserve my self-respect and this, too, got in my way. I sought refuge and escape – and escape came in a bottle. At least you could blot things out of your mind. That was a mistake that has victimized many."

Indeed.

The Swainson story was one of political successes between personal tragedies: He lost both legs in World War II, but went on to become the second youngest man elected governor of Michigan. (He was 35; Our first gov, Stevens T. Mason, was 25 when Michigan gained statehood in 1837 and was, in fact, the nation's youngest governor.)

Astounding as the Illinois story is, it is not unique.

There's Alabama, where in 1993 Governor Guy Hunt was forced out of office after a felony ethics conviction for looting an inaugural fund for personal items, including a marble shower at his farm. In 1996, Governor Jim Guy Tucker resigned after conviction on fraud and conspiracy charges.

There's Maryland, where ex-Governor Marvin Mandel got 19 months in federal prison after being convicted in 1978 of political corruption. Forever enshrined in history of the American governorship is Maryland's Spiro Agnew, who resigned as Vice President in 1973 in the wake of charges that he took kickbacks from contractors while governor.

And then there's Louisiana. *Time* magazine said in 1994: "Chicago politics may look just as slippery. Virginia politics is certainly more fractious. But for sheer, lip-smacking fun, there's still nothing that can beat Louisiana's." It noted that Governor Edwin W. Edwards, in his four terms, was twice tried for fraud and racketeering but never convicted.

Edwards' fabled predecessor, 1928-32 Governor Huey Long, is an example of an ethically challenged governor who was nonetheless an effective governor.

In a 1982 study conducted as a Kennedy Fellow at Harvard University's Institute of Politics, I dubbed Long one of the 10 outstanding governors of the 20th Century "for economic, anti-literacy, and other reforms" and "use of the governor's office and sheer personal force to impact his state and U.S. politics."

Looks like Rod Blagojevich of Illinois will be dubbed among outstanding gubernatorial jerks of the 21st Century.

Congressional Clout

It was a setback for Michigan recently when Representative John Dingell (D-Dearborn), dean of the House, was ousted by Representative Henry Waxman (D-California) as chairman of the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee. (Representative Bart Stupak (D-Menominee), a Dingell protégé, still chairs the committee's Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.)

A boost for Michigan came last week when Representative Dave Camp (R-Midland) was elected as the ranking Republican on the also powerful Ways and Means Committee. He defeated Representative Wally Herger (R-California), who had more seniority.

Apart from his record as top Republican on the subcommittees on taxes and health, Camp had this going for him: He donated \$1.4 million to other Republicans, and raised another \$1 million for them.

"That's part of it, too," he acknowledged.

Said Camp: "The legislation coming through Ways and Means will have a huge impact on our ability to climb out of this recession, increase American competitiveness, and guarantee access to quality, affordable health care for all Americans."

Twenty-two Michigan representatives have served on the committee, including the late Representative Guy VanderJagt (R-Luther). Representative Joseph Fordney (R-Saginaw) was the 1919-23 chairman of the committee.

Top GOP Aide

Suzanne Miller Allen, wife of Senator Jason Allen (R- Traverse City) was named last week by House Republican Leader Kevin Elsenheimer as his chief of staff.

It's a familiar role, one she had in the past for ex-House Speaker Paul Hillemonds and ex-Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema.

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.

Ken Drenth, Oliver House Reappointed to Serve County Planning Commission

Ken Drenth and Oliver House were reappointed to the Mackinac County Planning Commission Thursday, December 11.

Both men were reappointed by county commissioners to three-year terms expiring December 21, 2011.

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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.