



Lions Install New Officers

John Schieding Is Lion of Year

Lions District 10 Governor-elect Don Wojakowski of Stephenson installed officers for the St. Ignace Lions Club Tuesday, June 9, at the Galley restaurant. They are (above, from left, back row) Kayla Nixon, Lion Tamer; Don Gustafson, treasurer; Mr. Wojakowski; Mike Wilkins, secretary; Jim Mattson, Tail Twister; (seated) George Ford, third vice-president; John Schieding, second vice-president; Mary Kay Tamlyn, first vice-president; Fred Strich, King Lion. John Schieding was named Lion of the Year for his service to the organization by King Lion Fred Strich.

Michigan Politics

By
George Weeks



Legacy of Leaders Keeps Labor Relevant in state

Organized labor suffers from declining membership and political influence. But it has a legacy of achievements in Michigan and continuing clout within the Democratic party.

Much of that can be attributed to a series of savvy presidents of the Michigan AFL-CIO dating back to the role that lusty and legendary CIO President Gus Scholle played in the 1948 election of G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams, who went on to serve an unprecedented six two-year terms.

This came to mind after the death last week at age 74 of feisty state President Emeritus Frank Garrison, who led the union for nearly 13 years until his retirement in 1999 and was a labor leader for more than 40 years, including 1982-86 director of the United Auto Workers Community Action Program. He was true blue from birth, named Franklin Delano Garrison in honor of FDR.

Top Democrats, including Governor Jennifer Granholm, who early on had uneven relations with labor, and Lieutenant Governor John Cherry, who long has had close relations with labor and can rely on its support of his quest to succeed term-limited Granholm, praised Garrison's accomplishments.

So did foot soldiers from labor's trenches. Jack Finn, former lobbyist and attorney for three AFL-CIO affiliated unions and now an official in Granholm's multi-tasked Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth, said it well: Garrison's concern for the ranks from which he rose was underscored by his and his family's request that remembrances be made to a fund for laid-off GM employees.

Garrison, who in Granholm's words, became a "lion of the labor movement," was years from being a union figure when Gus Scholle made his unique impact on Michigan politics and reshaping of the Democratic party.

A long-time member of the glassworkers union, Scholle clicked early on with Soapy Williams; helped him block control of the state Democratic party by Teamsters President James R. Hoffa, and defeat a Hoffa-backed candidate in the gubernatorial primary, and then transform the party.

Scholle later became an influential member of the Conservation Commission. For a time during the administration of Republican Governor William G. Milliken, then-Michigan AFL-CIO President Bill Marshall was an appointee on the Transportation Commission and was instrumental in advances in public transportation.

In fact, during Milliken's 1978 successful bid for a third term, some AFL-CIO local leaders (local as in Detroit) were helpful, including mailing of pro-Milliken material to union members.

But that was a blip. Subsequently, and certainly today under President Mark T. Gaffney, the Michigan AFL-CIO is blue to the core, and shapes hue of the Democratic party.

Legislative Watch

Legislation introduced by Representative Mike Lahti (D-Hancock) to combine the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality passed the House last week. Ex-Governor John Engler had created the DEQ in 1995 with elements split from the DNR.

Lahti said creating the single entity could save up to \$2 million. Beyond that, it's a welcome move for conservation and the environment.

Another welcome move by Lahti is his bill in the House Government Operations Committee requiring that all state government-produced documents, and state advertising, that show map images of the state must depict both peninsulas.

He told the *Daily Mining Gazette* in Houghton that some former Yoopers living in other states sent him messages about seeing a TV ad from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation urging businesses to locate in the state. It showed an image of the Lower Peninsula, but left out the U.P.

"That's a lot of land to leave off a map," said Lahti, who recognizes that the Legislature has more immediate issues to deal with in these troubled times.

But, the *Gazette* said, "eventually he wants his bill to get attention."

As indeed it should. Mittens come in pairs, and the Granholm administration should be sensitive to this age-old complaint.

Congressional Watch

U.S. Rep. Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) drew well-deserved praise last week from a coalition of Midwestern citizen groups dedicated to protecting the Great Lakes Basin from water withdrawals.

The group, known as FLOW (For the Love of Water), hailed Stupak's resolution that water is a public trust, not a private commodity.

The statement was issued Friday in Traverse City, where attorney Jim Olson is the lead attorney representing a citizen's group's case against the Nestle Ice Mountain bottling operations in Michigan. He said, "This resolution, if passed, will seal the leaks" in the Great Lakes Compact approved by Congress last year.

Up North Law Feds

State Lottery Commissioner Scott Bowen and Michigan State Police Director Peter Munoz are likely to be the top federal law enforcers for most of northern Michigan.

Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow have recommended ex-district judge Bowen, who is close to Granholm, to be the Grand Rapids-based U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Michigan. (Traverse City attorney Mike Dettmer held the job in the 1990s.)

They recommended Munoz to be U.S. Marshal for the district, which includes the Upper Peninsula. Emmet is its northernmost county below the bridge.

They also recommended that President Barack Obama nominate Barbara McQuade, assistant U.S. Attorney for the Detroit-headquartered Eastern District, for the top job, and Robert Grubbs to retain the U.S. Marshal job. Cheboygan is that district's northernmost county.

Presidents usually heed recommendations from senators of the same party.

Blanchard on Chrysler Board

In the early 1980s, Democratic U.S. Representative Jim Blanchard and Republican 1969-82 Governor Bill Milliken were instrumental in getting federal and state loan guarantees that kept then-Chrysler Corporation out of bankruptcy court.

Upon leaving office, Milliken served several years on the Chrysler board during the era of President Lee Iacocca. Recently, trustees of the UAW retiree health care fund named Blanchard, who was 1983-90 governor, to the new Chrysler-Fiat venture called Chrysler Group L.L.C.

Importance of Mentoring

It was encouraging on Father's Day weekend to hear President Obama and Michigan First Gentleman Dan Mulhern promote mentoring, especially for the 20 million young people estimated to be without fathers.

It was extraordinary that a busy president devoted much of his Friday for assorted events touting fatherhood and mentoring.

Mulhern, in one of his occasional fill-ins for the weekly gubernatorial radio address of his wife, Jennifer Granholm, said one way to fill the void for those who don't have a dad "is Mentor Michigan, a program that's helping thousands of Michigan children receive guidance and inspiration from an adult." It supports more than 200 organizations around the state.

Interested? Call 1-800-VOLUNTEER.

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.

Special Assessment OK'd for Mackinaw City's North Huron Ave.

By Michael Ayala

The Mackinaw Village Council approved a bond sale to fund capital improvements Thursday, June 18. The bonds will be used to fund the North Huron Avenue project, the purchase of a new ambulance, and other village-wide improvements.

Village President Ronald Wallin voted against using bonds, saying the village should save up for projects before beginning them and having to use bonds as a source of funding.

The council also approved a special assessment for North Huron Avenue. The assessment will charge commercial property owners \$120 for each linear foot along the North Huron Avenue corridor. The village will collect \$42,000 over 10 years from the assessment. Owners affected by the assessment already have been contacted by mail, Village Manager Jeffery Lawson said.

Council Accepts Green Challenge

In other business, the council approved a resolution to accept the Michigan Green Community Challenge by making the village more energy efficient. Under the program, the village must also determine the total amount of energy used by the village and attempt to lower that amount.

The program will monitor the percentage of energy conserved, although Mr. Lawson expects the village's percentages to be lower than those of other communities. The village has made an effort to be more environmentally friendly since 2001, he said, so the percentages will be lower than communities just getting started at it. A new

boiler at the village hall was installed last year, reducing energy consumption by 35 percent, he said.

Several plans already have been proposed to improve village energy efficiency, Mr. Lawson said, including changing all of the downtown street lights to LED. He noted that induction lighting, which is nearly the same as LED, could also be used.

Such a project would be dependent on available funding.

Marina Pier Replacement

Two floating piers at the northern end of the marina have suffered ice damage and are slated to be replaced by next spring, Mr. Lawson said. The Michigan Waterways Commission will provide half the amount of money needed and the marina fund will supply the rest.

Restroom Stop To Be Added At Bike Trailhead

The village council received a conceptual drawing from the state of a toilet facility for the bicycle trailhead. The building is slated to have a stone exterior and a metal roof, according to the drawing. It will also be open all year, so hunters and snowmobile riders will be able to use it during the winter, Mr. Lawson said. The cost to construct the facility will come from state money for trailhead improvements, but the village will be responsible for its maintenance, he said.

Mr. Wallin asked that the building be constructed of Michigan-made materials, but Mr. Lawson said that likely would be out of the village's control because the state will be constructing the building.

The plans were given to the Trail Commission for further consideration.

Council Sponsors "Festival of the Americas"

The village will support the Festival of the Americas by contributing \$2,500 to the Mackinaw City Visitor's Bureau, which had asked it to sponsor the fireworks finale July 18. The fireworks will be after the American Wind Symphony Orchestra's performance.

Framing the festival as a community event instead of a tourist attraction would probably generate more attendance, especially from local residents, Mr. Lawson noted, and the council specified that it

wanted to help sponsor the festival as a whole, not just the fireworks.

Good Samaritan

Kyle Hingston Honored

The village council recognized Kyle Hingston, who saved a man's life May 26. Mr. Hingston found the man unconscious in his car and experiencing respiratory problems at a water park. Mr. Hingston tended to the man and called for an ambulance. His quick action saved the man's life, the council said, and an honorary plaque will be made and presented to him in a few weeks.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Oilmen Say Clean Energy Bill Will Drive Up Gas Prices

To the Editor:

There's a lot of frustration around these days with the big oil companies and the price of a gallon of gasoline. Here's some real concerning thoughts on future gasoline and energy costs in the U.S.

It's not just the big oil companies and distributors that are responsible for rising prices, but several other factors are at work contributing to the equation that leads to the price at the pump. Other major factors would be 1) the speculators (contract market price/barrel), 2) imports (OPEC, Canada, and Mexico), and 3) Washington. The first, creates the future costs of a barrel of oil that the oil companies must pay for at the refineries for their contract product requirements (now around \$70/barrel). The second, OPEC, is the major source that oil contracts emanate from (we only produce a small percent of our consumption). And third, government taxes, regulations, and false expenses are becoming a huge influence on the price of a gallon of gasoline at the pump.

First consider that all of the above costs to the energy infrastructure are expenses. Expenses determine the end cost of the product. The Administration and Congress are in the process of driving the cost of a gallon of gas sky high, along with all of our other energy costs. HR 2454, the Waxman/Markey "American Clean Energy and Security Act," will make today's gasoline cost look a huge bargain. Here's what HR2454 is predicted to do: Under the justification of cleaning up the air by reducing fossil fuel carbon emissions, the American people are being sold a monstrously expensive lie with this hidden tax bill. HR2454 will tax every segment of the fossil fuel chain -- drilling, mining, transmission, refining, and distribution.

Here are some estimates of what the results of this HR 2454 will be, as published in the June issue of Oil & Gas Journal: It will cut aggregate gross domestic product by \$9.6 trillion; destroy 1.105 million jobs on average, peaking in the worst years at 2.476 million jobs; raise electricity rates 90% after adjustments for inflation; raise inflation adjusted gasoline prices by 74% (\$2.95 x 1.74 = \$5.13); raise residential natural gas prices by 55%; raise the average family's home energy bill by \$1,500 per year; raise the cost of everything we buy; raise taxes to cover the subsidies paid to make alternative energies more competitive with fossil fuels.

HR 2454 does nothing to effect climate change except destroy the American economy. Hopefully America will wake up on this one before this bill slides through unnoticed under false pretenses.

W. James Chamberlain
Cheboygan

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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