

LETTERS TO
THE EDITORBridge Authority
Did Consider
Public Concerns

To the Editor:

As one of the more vocal critics of the Mackinac Bridge Authority (MBA), I'd be remiss if I didn't commend them for what I'd consider "good behavior." The MBA listened to the people who turned out for the committee meeting last week. Like most people, I could whine about what I disagree with them. That being said, the board obviously heard the public's concern over the 24-hour commuter limitation and changed their parameters to 36 hours. Lots of things inevitably go into decision-making, but the input allowed to the public was heard, and acted upon.

Tom Della-Moretta
St. Ignace

Stop Idolizing
Famous People

To the Editor:

What is wrong with our society? We put people on a pedestal because they are rich and/or famous, no matter what crime they commit. Elvis died from heart problems, in big part due to drug issues. Yet we idolize him. We are saying it is OK to do drugs, as long as you are rich and famous. On the same line, what about Mike Tyson? He was convicted of a sexual offense, yet when he got back into the ring, it was all forgotten. That was until he bit someone's ear.

Now we have Michael Jackson who has passed, and the news media will not stop with their relentless coverage.

You can be a druggie or sexual predator as long as you are rich and famous and that kind of behavior is acceptable. There are lots of other famous people convicted of crimes which are soon forgotten once they make a song, a home run, or a winning touchdown. People deserve a second chance, yes, but we as a society need to stop idolizing these people, because like the rest of us, they are just people.

Lana Lenington
St. Ignace

Road Commission Audit Is Stable

By Michael Ayala

The Mackinac County Road Commission will take a new look at its dust control and funding match programs, after concerns were brought to the attention of commissioners. It also learned last week it received a favorable financial audit.

The commission's finances are in order and its reporting methods are in line with government standards, Larry Allen of the Stewart, Beauvais and Whipple public accounting firm reported when he presented his audit Tuesday, July 7.

The audit of the year ending December 31, 2008, reported the commission's net assets increased from 2007, from \$32,516,337 to \$32,977,752.

The commission reduced its expenditures in 2008, from \$7,828,441 in 2007 to \$4,868,474. Reduced projects and lower diesel fuel prices led to the decline in expenditures, Mackinac County Road Commission Manager Dirk Heckman said.

The budget for 2009 is likely to be similar to 2008. As a result of the economy, expenditures are expected to decrease during 2009, resulting in an increase of approximately \$39,000 in the commission's fund balance, or one percent.

Match Project Reevaluation Requested

Mark Spencer, Moran Township trustee and Zoning Administrator, requested the road commission review the match project program.

The match program provides for the road commission and the Mackinac County Board of Commissioners to contribute one-third the cost of township road maintenance, up to a maximum of \$10,000 each.

The issue, Mr. Spencer said, is that townships are required to pay for two-thirds of the project up front, then collect the money the county commission is supposed to pay after the project is complete. Paying that amount can be difficult, Mr. Spencer said.

"I think too much of the burden has been shifted to the townships," he said.

The other problem is in identifying what kinds of road projects qualify as match projects. According to the match program policy, "cold patching, paving, dust control, and mowing will not be eligible under this program."

"I'm lost as to what we can do with the match program," Mr. Spencer said.

"There always seems to be a struggle with how our match money is used," said Al Garavaglia, Hudson Township supervisor.

Mr. Spencer wanted to use the the match program money for clearing work, but was unsure if it would qualify.

Commissioner Lester Livermore was not present at the meeting, but was contacted afterward about Mr.

Spencer's clearing question. Mr. Heckman told *The St. Ignace News*. Mr. Livermore said that as long as clearing was part of a capital improvement and safety effort, it would qualify. It will be discussed further at the next meeting, Mr. Heckman said.

Mr. Heckman offered several solutions. For match project money, the road commission could pay its share as it normally does and provide the money for the county's share. Once the work is finished, the road commission would be reimbursed for the money it provided on the county's behalf.

Match money use would have to be presented to the Mackinac County Commission for review, Mr. Heckman said. The match project was created to aid townships paying for pavement preservation, he said, but as the townships' needs have changed, it may be necessary to change the match program accordingly.

The road commission tabled both matters for further review.

Hog Island Road Update

Hog Island Road in Hudson Township is in better shape than it was when loggers first started using it, Mr. Garavaglia said. He had brought concerns about logging damage there to the road commission June 23.

The Department of National Resources (DNR) contacted Mr. Heckman when logging activities began and reported it would maintain the road and regulate logging activities as necessary.

Mr. Garavaglia was happy with the condition of the road, but cited a concern, saying he spoke with loggers who reported they would not hear from the DNR for a week at a time. Mr. Garavaglia asked for Mr. Heckman's opinion on the matter.

"So long as the residents can get home and the loggers leave the road in as good as shape or better, I don't want to initiate another conflict [over restrictions] with them," Mr. Heckman said.

No action will be taken as the road is in good condition and no incidents have been reported.

Dust Control Program Reviewed

A change should be considered in the way the dust control program is handled, Mr. Heckman told commissioners.

The road commission typically obtains bids from companies for dust control, offers the bids to the townships for their review, schedules when the dust control will take place, and takes the bidder on a tour of the area where the dust control is needed.

The problem, Mr. Heckman said, is some companies will treat the wrong locations, leading to complaints from property owners.

Turn to page 9: Road Commission

Two Reporters Join News Staff

Tower, Ayala Newest Additions; Schlehuber Leaves Paper

The *St. Ignace News* has welcomed two new journalists to its staff, Mark Tower of Grandville and Michael Ayala of Hammond, Indiana.

Mr. Tower, 25, is a recent graduate of Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, where he majored in professional writing with a minor in journalism. There he worked at the university's student newspaper, *The Eastern*

Echo, for two years, holding the position of reporter, entertainment editor, and editor in chief.

He was hired at *The St. Ignace News* May 4, and is covering news

in St. Ignace and surrounding area, including the schools, city council, Downtown Development Authority, and community events and organizations.

Mr. Ayala, 24, was graduated from the journalism program at Purdue University-Calumet in Indiana in 2008. He worked as a reporter for the university's student newspaper, *The Chronicle*, for three years during his college career.

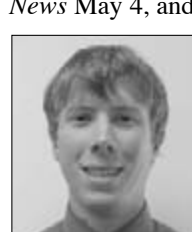
He was hired at *The St. Ignace News* June 1 and is covering news

in Mackinaw City, Brevort Township, Moran Township, and Gros Cap School, as well as other stories by assignment.

Ryan Schlehuber, formerly a reporter for *The St. Ignace News* and *Mackinac Island Town Crier*, relocated to Ithaca in May to work for *The Gratiot County Herald*.

Other writers on staff include Karen Gould covering Mackinac Island and the Straits region, Jonathan Eppley covering the Les Cheneaux Islands and Pickford areas, sportswriter David Latva, and editor Ellen Paquin.

The newspaper's coverage area includes the communities of the Eastern Upper Peninsula and the Straits of Mackinac.



Mark Tower



Michael Ayala

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.

Contact:

The *St. Ignace News*
359 Reagon Street
PO Box 277
Saint Ignace, MI 49781
(906) 643-9150 (phone)
(906) 643-9122 (fax)
e-mail: news@stignaceneews.com

Michigan Politics

By
George WeeksContrasting Styles of State
Party Chairs

As Campaign 2010 heats up on several fronts, there's a sharp contrast in how Michigan chairmen of the two major parties currently approach the battle. It was evident when I talked with both recently.

True to form after his election in 1995, Democratic Chairman Mark Brewer, 55, longest serving in the job and senior among the nation's Democratic state party chairs, is a confrontational, in-your-face critic of specific GOP candidates. He calls each of its gubernatorial contenders "second tier" now that 2006 nominee Dick DeVos and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson have said they won't run.

Battlin' Brewer periodically zaps Republican Michigan Supreme Court Justice Robert Young, who is up for reelection, with slings and arrows similar to those that contributed to the surprise defeat of Chief Justice Cliff Taylor in 2008.

In his first months on the job, Republican State Chairman Ron Weisner, 63, a success in party fundraising as well as business and diplomacy, is wisely concentrating on strengthening the state party organization and finances.

DeVos told *Detroit News* columnist Daniel Howes "the way the Republican Party communicates its message has got to change."

He said Weisner is "absolutely going to be a bulldog" on such matters as making the party more inclusive and stressing solutions for Michigan's economic recovery.

Does the bulldog bark? Howes wrote July 9 that DeVos' observation is "not necessarily supported by the party's tepid counterpoints to [Governor Jennifer] Granholm's attempts to manage Michigan's slide."

I've been puzzled why a number of those counterpoints have been issued by Weisner's deputy or co-chair. But Weisner has been picking up combative steam and said Friday:

"This week the state's unemployment rate reached an astronomical 15.2% as another 31,000 jobs were lost in June.

"Enough is enough!

"Michigan has suffered for nearly seven years from a lack of leadership. It's time for a change in direction. We must elect leaders who will re-establish Michigan as a state of growth, development, and jobs."

Weisner may not be well known to the public but his is a name of special significance within the GOP.

In fact, its Lansing headquarters, named well before Weisner became chairman, is called Secchia-Weisner Republican Center. (Like Weisner, ex-Republican National Committeeman Peter Secchia, former ambassador to Italy, has been a major party contributor.)

Project Backpack Now
Accepting Donations

Program Helps Students Who Need Backpacks and Back-to-school Supplies

Project Backpack will soon provide area students in need with backpacks filled with clothes, school supplies, and other items children heading back to school would enjoy.

The program is seeking donors who wish to sponsor a child's back-to-school needs or who would like to make contributions of money or school supplies.

To learn more about donating school supplies or sponsoring a child, call Candy Dekeyser of the

Weisner deftly handled some delicate matters as President George W. Bush's ambassador to Slovakia, which many centuries ago was part of Hungary, and then, in the 20th century, part of Czechoslovakia (for a time in the Soviet orbit) and now one of Europe's fastest-growing economies as a republic with a population of about 5.5 million.

Back to Brewer: In our chat, we discussed a relatively unknown GOP contender who strikes me as having potential without baggage -- Ann Arbor businessman and civic leader Rick Snyder, former head of the Gateway computer operation who announced his candidacy with a tour that includes 10 northern stops.

(Snyder's tour takes him Friday to Traverse City, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, St. Ignace, and Sault Ste Marie. On Saturday: Gwinn, Houghton-Hancock, Iron River, Vulcan, and Escanaba.)

Brewer insists Snyder has baggage. He tags Snyder, as he effectively did DeVos in 2006, as "outsourcer of jobs to China - a record of sending jobs overseas."

Snyder spokesman Jake Suski says: "Gateway didn't really have a presence in Michigan so they won't even be able to allege that Michigan jobs were lost.

The facts clearly show Rick is not an outsourcer. He managed Gateway, created nearly 10,000 American jobs, and then returned to Michigan [from South Dakota] to invest and grow innovative startups.

Mark Brewer is lying about Rick's record in order to distract people from the obvious contrast with the current administration's record."

When GOP gubernatorial campaigns rap the current administration they swipe at Lieutenant Governor John Cherry, frontrunner for the 2010 Democratic nomination and, to Republicans, Granholm's co-conspirator in Michigan's woes.

That also is the view of downstate Representative Alma Wheeler Smith of Salem Township, who seeks the Democratic nomination, as she did as a state senator from Ypsilanti in 2002 before dropping out of a primary won by Granholm.

On a recent appearance on the Michigan Public Television "Off the Record" show, she said voters "are not looking for four more years of the Granholm/Cherry administration. At some point in time we have to stop blaming (ex-Gov.) John Engler for our situation."

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.

The St. Ignace News

and Les Cheneaux Islands Weekly Wave

359 Reagon Street, PO Box 277, Saint Ignace, MI 49781

Telephone (906) 643-9150 • Facsimile (906) 643-9122

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 130, Number 16 Thursday, July 23, 2009

Publisher/Editor

Wesley H. Maurer, Jr.

Associate Publisher

Mary R. Maurer

Publisher 1975-1995

Wesley H. Maurer, Sr. (1897-1995)

Editor

Ellen Paquin, news@saintignaceneews.com

Staff Writers

Karen Gould, karen@saintignaceneews.com

Jonathan Eppley, jon@saintignaceneews.com

Mark Tower, mark@stignaceneews.com

Michael Ayala, mike@stignaceneews.com

Advertising Department

Tammy Matson, David Movalson

ads@saintignaceneews.com

Print Shop Manager

Sherry Cece

Circulation Manager

Wendy Colegrove



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

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.