

# Letters to the Editor

## Clarifying Water Line Concerns

To the Editor:

This letter is in response to the remarks that were made in the October 8 *Town Crier* article regarding the water line dispute. The article states that the city does not own the water line and offered to build a new access line. Further, the article states that we rejected the new pipe.

The water line that serves our property starts at a shut-off valve in Hubbard's Annex. The water line travels north and services the former Rhoeder cottage in the Annex, then crosses our property to our house and on to service the Burkes' cottage. This water line was installed by Edison Sault in approximately 1903, serves several houses, not just ours, and has always been maintained by Edison Sault and the city, after the city acquired the line from Edison Sault. In fact, there is an easement for water pipe which includes the statement, "the right to properly maintain" the line.

There was a break in the line last winter due to a faulty weeping valve at the Annex shut-off, which we understand has still not been repaired as of November 2005. We recommend that the DPW examine and repair this valve, prior to it freezing, to avoid additional breaks and the cost to repair the line again. We have had an engineer examine the line as it crosses our property and there are no current defects.

While it is true the city offered to build a new access line, the access line that was offered was a black plastic pipe that was to travel on top of the ground to our house. I am sure most of the readers have drank

warm water out of a garden hose; it is not the best tasting water, let alone the possible health problems associated with this type of "water line."

This type of plastic water line is also known to leak frequently. In fact, there is a section of this type of pipe located between our cottage and the Burke cottage. The leak was reported to Bruce Zimmerman during the summer and he let it leak the entire summer, at the city's expense. We have not had any problems with the water service to our property for over 50 years. Then, due to the DPW's improper maintenance on a valve, the water pipe is our responsibility?

Another point of concern we have is regarding how motor vehicle permits are awarded. We were denied a motor vehicle permit to have a tractor pull our "horse trailer" that we load up with provisions for the season, to our cottage last spring. While reading the council minutes, it seems others have no problem getting approved for motor vehicle permits. We get denied for trying to have our horse trailer brought to our house and some hotels get approved to have automobiles brought to their property for display?

We have generously supported the City of Mackinac Island and its various charities for years. It troubles us to see the way some current city officials are alienating the friends that have supported this beautiful Island. Hopefully, the future residents of our property will not have to endure what we have been put through.

Elliot and Rita Sue Cohen  
Mackinac Island

## Remembering Jack McCabe

To the Editor:

Jack McCabe came to Mackinac to teach theater. At the time he was a tenured professor at New York University, with no intention of leaving. But when the recruiters from Mackinac College showed him the theater and soundstage facilities he would direct, he jumped at the chance.

By the time Mackinac College failed four years later, Jack was in love with Mackinac, and never left.

Jack was a scholar of formidable learning who brooked few challenges and no questions, and a writer of well-received biographies of actors James Cagney and Laurel and Hardy, whom he knew well. In his last years he was writing a novel from the point of view of actors backstage, a take he said had not been done.

Jack loved language. He told me he had had a profound stutter as a boy. He lived in a rooming house which became home to an acting company in Detroit. One day one of the actors came to Jack's mother and said he could fix that boy's stutter. And he did, immediately, teaching Jack the technique of controlled breathing known to actors. The company then brought Jack in to play children's roles, and he was hooked.

All of this I know from con-

versations with Jack, often after his Shakespeare course at the Grand Hotel, which he began on the island 27 years ago. I attended every chance I could, and hoped it would go on forever. For Jack knew his Shakespeare, and revered language. One fact Jack drove home was the much larger vocabulary an average Elizabethan had versus even skilled speakers today, and how rich even an elementary school education was back then, steeped in the classics in Greek and Latin.

I once asked him why he didn't

leave Mackinac after the college failed, given his admirable academic credentials. He looked at me, then looked out the window.

"I couldn't leave. I was in love."

Jack's lovely and loyal wife, Karen, and the rest of the people of Mackinac Island have lost a bright star from this magnetic island which has attracted and held so many unusually luminous people over its hundreds of years of human visitors.

Jim Lenfestey  
East Bluff and Minneapolis

# Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



## Bipartisan Water Deal for Granholm, GOP?

Lawmakers are near deal on Great Lakes water legislation.

At long last, after a closed door meeting last week with interest groups in a room behind the Senate chambers, it appears the Granholm Administration and GOP lawmakers are near a bipartisan deal on Great Lakes water legislation.

In 2002, water issues got more attention than in any previous gubernatorial campaign. Republican nominee Dick Posthumus called for comprehensive legislation, including standards for withdrawal of groundwaters that feed the lakes.

After her election, Governor Jennifer Granholm, although herself a bit wobbly at times on some environmental issues, pushed for strong action by Great Lakes governors and the GOP-ruled Michigan Legislature.

A task force named by Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema (R-Wyoming) called for comprehensive water withdrawal laws including "an aquifer protection statute."

But for nearly three years, Michigan has seemed to be treading water on water.

On November 28, a coalition of 43 environmental groups proclaimed opposition to "weak water use bills" introduced by Republicans.

Subsequently, James Clift of the Michigan Environmental Council said the bills "seem to be steadily improving," as honed in the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee chaired by Senator

Patricia Birkholz (R-Saugatuck). But he said more changes are needed.

Senator Michelle McManus (R-Lake Leelanau), who chairs the Appropriations subcommittee on environmental quality, credited Birkholz with forging compromise.

On Thursday, revised language emerged from a meeting Birkholz convened at the Capitol that included representatives of Granholm, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and business and environmental groups.

On Friday, DEQ spokesman Robert McCann said: "Thankfully, and to her credit, we are very close to being fully behind" the package as revised by "a good bipartisan effort."

The original bills applied only to inland lakes and streams. One strengthening provision adds a specific standard for proposed withdrawals from the Great Lakes including its groundwaters, requiring that all withdrawals beyond a certain limit for certain uses "be returned to the source watershed" and not result in "significant adverse resource impact."

Birkholz says: "All of a sudden, the stars are lining up," and she hopes the package will clear the Senate by Christmas.

Maybe all the rhetoric of

2002 will produce results before Campaign 2006.

The executive and legislative branches had better soon get their acts together on how best to balance economic and environmental interests on water withdrawals. Otherwise, extent of export of our water will be the call of the courts, as it has been with the Ice Mountain pumping/bottling operation near Big Rapids.

Meanwhile, Granholm is reviewing draft "Annex 2001" Great Lakes protection proposals to be considered by eight governors and two Canadian province premiers later this month in Milwaukee.

Traverse City attorney Jim Olson, representing Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation, says the proposals would allow "export of hundreds of millions of gallons of water a year in a bottle from watersheds, as much as in a ship or large containers."

Director Ken DeBeaussaert of DEQ's Office of Great Lakes says he's gathering views of interest groups to give to Granholm before she decides whether to sign the annex that is an amendment to the Great Lakes Charter.

*George Weeks is the political columnist for The Detroit News and is syndicated by Superior Features.*



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