

# Bridge To Close Briefly for Events

The Mackinac Bridge will be closed to traffic for three brief periods during the celebration of its 50th anniversary Saturday, July 28.

The first closure will last approximately 15 minutes, during a military aircraft salute at 10:30 a.m. The proposed plan will take the planes north to south over the parade route in St. Ignace to the bridge. The jet fighters are scheduled to fly parallel to the bridge before heading toward Mackinaw City.

The second closure will be for a parade crossing. Northbound lanes will be closed from approximately 11:45 a.m. to

11:55 a.m. Southbound lanes will be closed from approximately 11:50 a.m. until noon.

The third closure will occur during the fireworks display in the evening. The fireworks will be shot over the Straits from both Mackinaw City and St. Ignace on the east side of the

bridge. All lanes will be closed on the bridge from 10:30 p.m. until 11 p.m.

Closure times for the bridge are tentative and could vary, depending on events schedules. Emergency vehicles will be able to cross during the closures.

## View Bridge Events Photos Online

Photographs of the Mackinac Bridge 50th anniversary celebration this weekend will be available for viewing online at the Web site of Michigan Department of Transportation as early as Saturday evening, July 28.

The Web site, [www.michigan.gov/mackinacbridge](http://www.michigan.gov/mackinacbridge), will have photographs of the bridge during past events and, by Saturday evening, the site will include up-to-date photographs of the many anniversary events, available for news media and the general public.

# First Gentleman Talks Leadership to Governors

Dan Mulhern, husband of Governor Jennifer Granholm, is a unique figure in Michigan politics, and not just because he is the state's first "First Gentleman."

Beyond that, he is the most influential gubernatorial spouse on political and policy matters in the 170-year history of the Michigan governorship. That's not some "guy thing," but is based on research in the course of writing a book on stewards of the state going back to statehood in 1837.

(Stevens T. Mason, who at age 24 became Michigan's first elected governor and was 25 when he presided over admission to statehood, was single. His sister was dubbed our first first lady.)

Granholm is one of nine female governors, including Arizona's Janet Napolitano, outgoing chair of the National Governors Association (NGA). Being single, she asked Mulhern to assume the role of chairmanship of the NGA Spouse's Leadership Council usually filled by the spouse of the NGA chair.

That has given Mulhern an enhanced role at the NGA's 99th annual conference this past weekend near Traverse City, beyond being spouse of the host governor.

One of his projects was to assemble the gubernatorial families for Sunday's Habitat for Humanity building of a house for a low-income family. No heavy lifting for the guys. They'll put in a ceremonial hour, but Mulhern and others will keep working.

On Saturday, Mulhern, who leads a mentoring project for Michigan, said: "We have many new governors and, therefore, new spouses. This conference offers a wonderful opportunity to help them with the tremendous opportunities to serve and also to help manage the extraordinary challenges of life in state leadership. It's been cool to hear first-time visitors talk about how gorgeous Michigan is. And then there are those who had childhood connections to Michigan, and it's still totally in their blood, and they get emotional talking about how they love this state. This place is special - period."

When Mulhern talked Saturday of "extraordinary challenges of life in state leadership," he spoke with the authority of one in a leadership teaching profession before his wife became governor, and as author of a book recently published by

the University of Michigan Press, "Everyday Leadership: Getting Results in Business, Politics, and Life."

The book is no yawner. In asserting "how your authority can attack you from within," Mulhern cites lapses of such public figures as ex-President Bill Clinton, "who had his infamous affair(s). They are, of course, a thimbleful in an ocean of public figures whose personal behavioral storms left a wake of hurt, confusion, and pain."

Since writing the book, Mulhern has said that Clinton would be a great asset back in the White House if his wife, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, wins her presidential bid. Does that mean Mulhern supports her bid? He responded: "I likely will follow my wife's lead." She has yet to tip her hand.

There are those who contend Granholm follows Mulhern's lead in Lansing. Not so. He does have extraordinary influence; occasionally speaks out at cabinet meetings, and gets the last word with the decider.

To a Granholm supporter who blamed "her circle of advisers" for an adverse decision by her on his environmental interest group, I suggested that on that issue, it was a circle of one.

There's hope that Granholm will be stronger on environmental issues in her second term than

she was in her first. There was an interesting exchange Saturday at the NGA opening conference between Napolitano of the thirsty West and Granholm of the Great Lakes.

Chair Napolitano: "We're looking at new ways of conservation that does not mean taking (water) from the Great Lakes."

Host Granholm: "Amen, sister."

At Saturday's opening NGA session devoted to "Fostering Innovation," Google CEO Eric Schmidt said that while those in the audience may have "come to Traverse City on the highway...while you are here you have access to the whole world" via the Internet highway.

Amen, brother.

Because of all of the shackles on the media imposed by the NGA, I found it easier to get a small portion of the above information from trusted sources through the Internet rather than, for one event, spending an extra two hours that would have involved being screened to assure that I did not have explosives in my pen and then being herded to and from the event on a NGA-chartered bus.

*George Weeks retired last year after 22 years as political columnist for The Detroit News. His weekly Michigan Politics column is syndicated by Superior Features.*

## Michigan Politics

By George Weeks



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Slight Error in Mitchell Family, Golf Course History

To the Editor:

I have been a subscriber to the *Town Crier* for many years and I eagerly look forward to your history column by Frank Straus each week. For me, his writings create a romantic and life-like bridge to the past, on endless topics about Mackinac and the surrounding area. Rarely do I feel inclined to correct the experts, but I do wish to point out a slight error made by Mr. Straus in the July 7 issue of the *Town Crier*, in his article on the history of the Jewel Golf Course at Grand Hotel.

While describing early uses of the land for pasture and garden, Mr. Straus mentions the Mitchell family and incorrectly states the name of Elizabeth Mitchell's husband as George. Dr. Mitchell's name was David (ref. David and Elizabeth, "The Mitchell Family of the Straits of Mackinac," by David A. Armour, Mackinac History, Vol. II, 1982). George was one of their sons. Additional comments by Mr. Straus about the Mitchells seem to agree with other documents I've read, however, at the time of her death (February 1827), Elizabeth had joined David at his farm on Drummond Island. This makes me question exactly when the Mitchells surrendered ownership of their properties on Mackinac.

Even though Elizabeth and David Mitchell were living on Drummond in early 1827, it's probable that at least one of their

sons (very likely George) still resided on Mackinac Island. This is evidenced in Mrs. John (Juliette) Kenzie's book, "Wabun," published in 1873, which provides an account of her visit to Mackinac in September 1830, where she was received by Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell. Her schedule planned for her to dine with Mr. Mitchell, "an old friend of my husband."

As she narrates her stroll through the village en route to the Mitchell home, one gets the impression, from the order in which she describes the houses and buildings, that she is headed for the old Mitchell homestead, which was originally on Market Street across from the Biddle House. This had always been my assumption, until Mr. Strauss' piece appeared.

Interestingly, this ties closely to another published error of historical fact regarding the Mitchell family, in Eugene Petersen's, "Mackinac Island, Its History In Pictures, 1973." In describing Elizabeth Mitchell, he notes she had stayed behind to care for the family's home on Mackinac after David Mitchell left with the British Army in 1796. Many of Petersen's other statements regarding the Mitchells are not supported in David Armour's vignette. The most striking discrepancy, though, occurs when Dr. Petersen says of Elizabeth:

"One contemporary described  
\* Please turn to page 10



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