

## Our View

### Mark your calendar!

If you happened to be out and around Petoskey in the early evening hours New Year's Eve, you may have witnessed a surprising sight — a large, brightly-lighted ball hovering over Division Street near Lake Street.

“Is it the moon, or an alien space ship?” we wondered.

None of those! But it was probably a Petoskey first — a honest-to-Gods New Year's Eve Ball set to descend and mark the new year!

We were impressed, and delighted, to have a little taste of Times Square in little old Petoskey!

We can thank Tom Moran of Moran Ironworks in Onaway for the 6-foot diameter ball speckled with Christmas lights by Cindy McSurely, and lofted 138 feet in the sky on a 20-ton crane provided by Moran.

Moran happens to be a Crooked Tree Arts Center board member, and it was the Crooked Tree Arts Center folks who “brought the ball” to downtown Petoskey.

The dazzling ball was the nightcap, one small part of the pizzazz, for an evening of celebration akin to First Night celebrations around the world, which revel in the arts in a fun, family-friendly, alcohol-free way.

Arts center executive director Liz Ahrens — also the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce's 2007 president — said event planning started more than six months ago when Petoskey Downtown Management Board coordinator Becky Goodman floated the idea. It got the “ball” rolling and the arts center was the perfect place, since official First Night Organization celebrations are focused on the arts, Ahrens said.

Blissfest Music Organization, Little Traverse Civic Theatre and Petoskey Public Library were important players in this event, held over the family-oriented hours of 5-9 p.m. It included music, food, story-telling and



NEWS-REVIEW FILE PHOTO

**Gabriel Wright**, 7, of Boyne City learns how to work with clay during a pottery workshop New Year's Eve at Crooked Tree Arts Center in Petoskey.

comedy entertainment and numerous workshops. Ever wanted to throw a pot on a potter's wheel? Here was your chance. Or learn some hip-hop moves? Some basic ballet? It was there to try.

Ahrens was delighted with the turnout. She said she was expecting maybe 50 people to show up. More than 250 came, happily paying the mere \$1 per child, \$5 per adult fee.

Petoskey needs this to repeat for Dec. 31, 2008, and Ahrens said plans are already in the works. Here was a unique activity, centered on children but with tons for grown-ups to do, held in a culturally-rich, booze-free environment, all topped off with an actual ball-drop countdown at a reasonable hour — 9:15 p.m. — for all to enjoy.

Ahrens envisions this event expanding to include more venues in the arts center vicinity and eventually much more of downtown.

We'll be there later this year, and so should you!

“Our View” represents the opinion of the News-Review Editorial Board: Doug Caldwell, Kendall P. Stanley, Babette Stenuis, Jeremy McBain and Neil Stilwell.



## We've got a new look for you

**Kendall P. Stanley**  
(231)439-9349 - kstanley@petoskeynews.com

Welcome to the New Year, and welcome to a new look for the Petoskey News-Review.

The fresh looking newspaper in your hands is the first redesign of the paper in seven years. That redesign, working with consultant Ed Henninger, radically changed the look of the News-Review.

This change is relatively dramatic as well, the culmination of a lot of ideas brought together by our senior graphic designer, Reneé Tanner, into the look you see before you.

Pitching ideas and working toward the new look at page placement were Tanner, publisher Doug Caldwell, marketing director Dena Sydow, retail advertising director Christy Lyons, classified advertising manager Shirley Gibson, production manager Paul Gunderson,

wire service editor Neil Stilwell, sports editor Andy Sneddon, people editor Babette Stenuis and page editor Debbie McGuinness and me.

Some of the things we've worked to bring to you will make navigation of the paper easier. If a story jumps from page A1, you'll find the end of the stories on page A2.

Big changes have come to the items that used to inhabit page A2. The weather can now be found on the Tea Table/Community Notes page, at the back of the B section.

After many years on page A2, the obituaries are moving to page A6. We are designating that full page for obituaries because with a narrower web width, a standard obituary runs a little longer than it did in the past.



**Kendall P. Stanley**

That meant more often than we'd like, we had to put obituaries on other pages.

Moving some of the obituaries to another page was probably the number one complaint to end up on my and Stenuis' desk this past year.

The biggest change outside of the way the paper is presented graphically will come Thursday, Jan. 10, when the entertainment section moves to a Thursday publication date.

By moving entertainment up a day, we are aiming to provide readers with the ability to plan their weekends earlier in their week. Those who pick up a Friday paper at newsstands will also find the entertainment section there.

We hope you like the look of this first issue in our redesign. If you have thoughts and comments on the design, feel free to call or e-mail me here at the News-Review.

## Meeting of minds

**Cal Thomas**

Tribune Media Services - CallThomas@tribune.com

Let's have a show of hands by people who are fed up with the way politics is practiced in America. Activists, party operatives, media guest bookers interested in conflict, not resolution of problems and all fund-raisers, put your hands down. The rest of you pay attention.

On Jan. 7 in Oklahoma City comes what may be the best chance we've had in a long time to begin to end the polarization and partisanship that has gripped our political system for more than three decades, a political system that benefits a limited few and harms most of the rest of us.

Conveners of the meeting include several prominent Democrats: former senators Sam Nunn of Georgia, Charles Robb of Virginia and David Boren of Oklahoma, and former presidential candidate Gary Hart. Republican organizers include: Sen. Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, former Republican Party chairman Bill Brock, former Missouri senator John Danforth and former New Jersey governor Christine Todd Whitman.

New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a former Democrat and former Republican who is now a potential independent candidate for president, will also attend. There is speculation Bloomberg might use the gathering to launch his own candidacy on a fusion model, though he denies it. Boren told The Washington Post, “It is not a gathering to urge any one person to run for president or

to say there necessarily ought to be an independent option. But if we don't see a re-focusing of the campaign on a bipartisan approach, I would feel I would want to encourage an independent candidacy.”

Cynics might view this gathering of moderate Republicans and Democrats as a Trojan horse for the Hillary Clinton campaign, though a Bloomberg candidacy might take votes from both party candidates. This would be different from when Ross Perot ran in 1992, taking votes away from President George H.W. Bush and handing the election to Bill Clinton who won with only 43 percent of the popular vote.

Still, let's accept this gathering as a sincere attempt to repair our broken politics, unless it proves otherwise. The stated purpose of the meeting is to “go beyond tokenism in building an administration that seeks national consensus” on important issues and problems facing the country. This would mean naming more than a single cabinet member from the opposing party. Any administration committed to consensus must go further, while selecting people who pledge not to undermine the president's policies.

How would such a bipartisan administration operate? As Democratic strategist Bob Beckel and I have written in our



**Cal Thomas**

See THOMAS on PAGE A5

### Add road millage to Jan. 15 primary

**Editor:**

I saw on a local TV station this week where an area is adding a local question to the Jan. 15 primary ballot.

I thought that perhaps the Charlevoix County Road Commission could also add the to Jan. 15 ballot for Charlevoix County a request for millage to be able to plow the secondary roads on weekends.

I can see where the road commission needs to stay in the black on its budget and I can also see where the people living on these roads want to be able to get out. Plus, the issues of emergency vehicle access and being able to have school on Mondays.

Perhaps the road commission could give a figure of the amount needed, what it comes to in millage, and what that amounts to per household.

Just a thought...

**Marybeth Wallick Ellsworth**

### Facts about the presidential candidates

**Editor:**

All eight Democratic candidates support taxpayer funded

### Send us your letters

Letters on public interest issues should be 300 words or less. Guest commentaries should be 600 words or less. Letters and personally written guest commentaries should be signed, and include a telephone number for verification or to answer any questions (address and phone number will not be printed). We do not accept letters of petition or poetry. The editor reserves the right to edit letters. In the interest of fair play we will not publish “last minute” letters on any election. If voting is on a Monday or Tuesday, letters must be in our office by 5 p.m. the preceding Wednesday for publication Thursday. Letters, guest commentaries and columns published do not reflect the editorial policies or beliefs of this newspaper. Send your letters and guest commentaries to: Editor, News-Review, 319 State Street, Petoskey, Mich. 49770, fax at 347-5461, or e-mail to petoskeynews@petoskeynews.com, or fill out the letter form at our Web site: petoskeynews.com.

abortion-on-demand. Four of them would appoint judges who would uphold Roe v. Wade. Source: National Pro-Life Alliance.

Rudy Giuliani supports amnesty on the grounds that entering and re-entering this nation illegally is somehow “not a crime.” He also supports abortion rights and gun control. Source: National Pro-Life Alliance and American Free Press (A.F.P.).

John McCain went in on a bill for amnesty with Ted Kennedy. Source: A matter of record.

Mitt Romney consistently supported abortion-on-demand as governor of Massachusetts and says states should choose whether or not to allow abortion. Source: National Pro-Life Alliance.

Fred Thompson during his eight years in the Senate repeatedly supported amnesty for criminal aliens. Source: A.F.P.

Mike Huckabee as governor of Arkansas vehemently opposed a bill in the legislature that would have prohibited state benefits for illegal immigrants as “un-American” and “un-Christian.” Source: A.F.P.

Sam Brownback is nowhere. Duncan Hunter is nowhere. Tom Tancredo is O.K., but nowhere.

Finally there is the “America First” candidate, the only candidate from any party who can pull this country out of the mess it's in. Ron Paul!

**Ed Aulph Clawson**

### The big dig

**Editor:**

I read, with great dismay, the article the other evening that the company who dug that big hole right in the middle of town is being afforded two more years to correct their horrendous grievance against our fair city.

I could not believe it! Just what we need, another two summers of blue tarps flapping in the summer breeze and our beautiful brick crosswalks replaced with quickly thrown down asphalt.

The time has come to fill in the hole. Why doesn't the city build the subterranean parking structure that they agreed to construct — we need the parking — and then cover the top of it with a lush green space with trees and flowers. That, in my opinion, would be a much better alternative than a “shell” by 2009.

**Christopher D. LePage Petoskey**

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#### NEWSROOM

**Jeremy McBain** newsroom editor  
Phone 347-2544  
After 5 p.m. 439-9302  
Sports after 5 p.m. 439-9301  
News fax 347-5461  
Email: jmc bain@petoskeynews.com

#### CLASSIFIEDS

**Shirley Gibson** classified advertising manager  
Classifieds 439-9300  
Classifieds Email: sgibson@petoskeynews.com  
Classifieds fax: 347-6833  
Classifieds after 5 p.m. 439-9300  
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**Christy Lyons** retail advertising director  
**Lisa Kelso** retail advertising manager  
Display 347-2544  
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