

Page for people not afraid (yet) to voice their opinion

30-Year Feud – Township chooses sides

By Mariann Cooper

The Mark Diederich home that has been condemned by township supervisor, Brian Werschem, on Pontaluna Road is the subject of a 30-year problem between one of his neighbors. Unfortunately, the neighbor is using the township to 'settle' the dispute. It dates back to the 80's when this neighbor complained about Mr. Diederich's homestead. This husband and wife shall be termed 'they' in the context of this article. Out of courtesy, their names will not be mentioned.

One of the early disputes involved some small spruce trees that Mark Diederich planted in the back of his property that he obtained from the DNR. A few of them came up missing at the same time that some were planted on or near the property line between these neighbors, according to Mark. 'They' said their son planted them. When Mark informed them they had to be moved because of the property line, either one way or the other. 'They' said they didn't care about the trees so Mark waited a few years, then pulled them out. He waited a couple of days and replanted them in another location. Another incident of record, was when 'they' took a video of Mark's property while he was away.

'They' complained because he had been taking in leaves and brush for a charge, and then 'they' dumped their leaves, without paying, on Mark's property because 'they' had permission from Mark's dad, who had been dead for years already, but when they asked Mark if he charged for composting, he said "Yes". It was like asking Wesco if they charge for gas and then drive off without paying.

Sometime along the way, the township rezoned his area to R-1. However, those already living and practicing business were not supposed to be affected so as not to cause hardship to these people. Now, all these rules and regulations the township is forcing on Mark are related to R-1 zoning but Mark feels his property should continue to be agriculture as it always has been. He not only resides there, but he makes his living there. He raises and sells shrubs, trees, produce, maple syrup and firewood. Yes, Mark was made to dispose of some vehicles he could no longer use, and he kept some that he wants to use in the future. But some of the changes Mark has had to make don't coincide with his livelihood.

The township supervisor required him to get rid of the outside refrigerator accessible to his customers, which he used to store and sell fresh berries and produce. He used an outside cook stove to make his maple syrup.

Other items, which were clutter to the supervisor, were items that Mark could, and did use.

Mark's front porch had deteriorated, and that has since been removed. Boards have rotted and need to be replaced.

Fortunately, there are enough 'good neighbors' out there that are willing to help Mark with some of the cleanup. We have 'work bees' each Saturday from 10:00 – 12:00 to help him. It is quite overwhelming for one person to do by himself, and still cut wood to make a living. The cooperation and willingness of these people is extraordinary, and they truly care about Mark's plight. He is creative and able to use many things most people would consider junk. We are sensitive to this.

Years ago, back when Ed Engle (deceased) was Fruitport's supervisor, I have been told by residents that he directed them to Mark to dispose of their yard waste. I don't know what year that was, but that's how long ago Mark's property was used for dumping and composting. When Ron Cooper was supervisor, he also directed people to take compost-able materials to Mark. In 1995 Fred Convertini from Michigan Township Services wrote to Mark that the township has no problem with the composting behind the house and acknowledged that an unlicensed van was a farm vehicle. It seems the township is ignoring the grandfather clause because of pressure from a few neighbors. The township should not have the right to tell someone what he can and cannot keep inside his house, but they're telling Mark!

I read the Affidavit given to the Judge to get permission to inspect inside of Mark's house, and I feel the Judge was misled by the township to get his authorization.

When the windstorm went through Fruitport a few years ago, a tree went through Mark's roof. Before he could get it removed and the hole covered, we had quite a bit of rain, but Mark still managed to repair and replace all the roofing and it looks very nice. He still has some touch-ups that need finishing, but the house is protected at this point.

Mark works every day cutting wood and trying to clean up the fallen timbers from the windstorms we've had in this area. This income provides money for the taxes and for his necessities. The township put yellow tape across his driveway. He has been banned from taking any more leaves or brush, so some of Mark's income has been stripped by the township. This order should be lifted at once because this is causing undue hardship

on Mark. The township should be sued for lost income because of this order.

On December 19, 1990, Michigan Township Services received a typewritten letter from Mark stating he considers the place a farm, as it always has been, not residential.

Mark has put up barriers of firewood toward the front of his property to obstruct view from the road of his 'work area.' His neighbors to the west have to look at his backyard, but he also has to look at their backyards, of which he is not complaining. Mark has not yet been able to clean up from all the windstorm damage, but he has been working it in whenever he can.

To my knowledge only three or four neighbors of all of them, have complained and continuing from one administration to another. He has a good relationship with most of them. All of his neighbors moved there after Mark and his dad were operating their farm composting.

The neighbors may not agree with his lifestyle, but 'they' should not condemn a man until they have walked in his shoes! Some of the neighbors have generous retirement incomes so it's really easy for them to find fault. Mark doesn't have that kind of income, or time. I think it's time for them to become 'good neighbors,' roll up their sleeves, and see if there's something they can do for Mark, instead of against him. That is the neighborly way.

Township Supervisor Brian Werschem told me on Saturday, May 5th that Mark was in violation and the township has the right to demolish his house now because he had not acquired a plumbing permit according to a deadline. I spoke with Building Inspector, Greg Mason the following Monday and was informed it was a heating permit that was in violation. Mark has a used outside wood burner which he applied for a permit to install, but he was denied because it wasn't UL and EPA approved. Now he needs to purchase another heater that's acceptable to the township.

Mark tested his plumbing in the house and it required three O-rings which he replaced, but evidently, neglected to get a plumbing permit first. What next?

Please remember to stop by between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 on Saturdays if you are able to help out. For more information, you can call me at 231-288-9873.

GOOD RIDDANCE TO ONE OF THE MOST HATED MEN IN MUSKEGON COUNTY !!!

Letter to the Editor:

Of course, "TV Tony" Tague had to stroke his ego one more time by televising on Wood TV 8, April 10, 2012 that he is not running for re-election this fall. Tague said the firing of two of his assistant prosecutors had nothing to do with his decision not to run again. This leaves the door open for all his seniors and assistants to run. In fact, one of the fired prosecutors, Marc Curtis, announced on television that he is running; and so is another one, Dale Hilson. This is all Muskegon County needs, for all these senior and assistant prosecutors running for this position after their minds have been tainted for years by pure evil. Muskegon County needs fresh new leadership and team players without the corrupt minds. After 24 years, it is time to clean house and put in a new mind set for justice not conviction, for conviction does not end in results, only harms the justice system and us taxpayers.

All of the phone calls, letters, and reading comments on Mlive in the past three years truly made me realize Tony Tague is disliked if not truly hated in Muskegon County, and so are several of his senior and assistant prosecutors. He and his assistants have ruined several innocent people's lives. Believe me, someday they all will have to answer to a higher power for all their lies, corruption, and blackmail. I truly wonder how these prosecutors sleep at night. In my opinion they have no compassionate heart or conscience. The law even states that prosecutors are

allowed to lie in interrogations and also they are protected by the Supreme Court from ever being sued. This is an injustice to our judicial system. The main reason I have been driven to inform the public here in Muskegon County and to give my opinion of all this corruption is because innocent people are truly being destroyed; their lives, careers, and financially. I have stood by and watched them laugh, make faces, and have seen several of them stand around in the courtroom so they could intimidate while on the clock of us taxpayers.

On April 12, 2012 on HLN television, Dr. Drew stated, "In our country, people never give their opinions, especially like they do in other countries."

Having worked for International Student Exchange for several years and traveling all over the world, I found this to be true.

A couple articles written and paid for by three master lawyers: Ladas, Knudsen, and Waters, in the *Muskegon Chronicle* really stood out and backed up my opinions. The first article on October 27, 2010 states that members in the prosecuting attorney's office engaged in a smear campaign against Judge Wierengo. He would not yield to their demands and does not do bidding with them. They go on to say, "Its real intent is to intimidate and to dominate the courts by threatening when they do not meet the demands of the prosecuting attorney's office." Then again on October 29, 2010 the master lawyers say to Muskegon County: "Do not "Fall" for the negative attacks by

Judge Wierengo's opponent, Raymond Kostrzewa, a senior prosecutor who, I have heard, is planning on running for Judge Graves' position this fall. Graves will be unable to run for re-election because of age limits. On November 1, 2010, Judge Wierengo wrote a long article in the *Muskegon Chronicle*. He stated "I have fought with the Prosecutors office for 12 years to keep our court independent of their meddling, pressure and outright intimidation." "Now they wish to teach me a lesson: Mess with us and we will run someone against you and we will come at you with gun blazing and use every tactic we can from deception and distortion, to out right lying about your record and matters of the court."

Sounds familiar, this smear campaign that Tony Tague has against Al Swanson. Al ran against Tony Tague three years ago, so his payback is to ruin his career and life by making false accusations. Al Swanson is a very ethical person and is one of the finest attorneys in the state of Michigan, and a dedicated National Guardsman. He did not or would not do what he has been accused of.

Muskegon County voters, please be real careful this fall when you vote. We need to have new people with fresh ideas in the prosecutor's office and in the courts who are ethical and have morals. They surely do not need to come from the old crop.

Sandie Christiansen
Sullivan Township

Chamber launches first community mobile application

(Submitted by Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce)

Muskegon has gone mobile and now has its own app packed with information for the lakeshore community and its visitors. The Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Muskegon County Convention and Visitors Bureau, launched the community's first mobile application recently. This free GOMuskegon! mobile application is currently available for iPhone, Android and Blackberry mobile web.

The mobile app allows users to search more than 1,150 local businesses, look for local deals, connect to local business news, view community events, and register for chamber events; GPS navigates users to their location.

Chamber President Cindy Larsen said, "We are

very excited to be able to offer the community and our members such a valuable resource. This mobile app will really put our members on the map and literally put them at people's fingertips."

The Chamber is partnering with the Muskegon Convention and Visitors Bureau (Muskegon CVB) to launch and market the app to both those living in the Lakeshore communities and those looking to vacation in our area.

The GOMuskegon! mobile app features all of the following:

- Business directory of chamber members with geo-location and mapping technology.
- Touch to call option
- Touch to visit website option
- Chamber member special offers and deals
- Community calendar of events with option

to register and share event

- QR code scanner
- "Near me" button which shows businesses nearby, searchable by distance and category
- There's more, too!

"All chamber member businesses receive a free listing, and with more smartphones in the marketplace we saw the importance to promote our members to this audience," said Larsen. "I think everyday users will also enjoy the community calendar of events and local deals."

The app is currently available for download in the iPhone App Store and Android Market as well as at the following web address for Blackberry users: www.gomuskegon.mobi.