

Egyptian-Muslim says he lost because of race

It's the day after the night before and they are picking up the pieces inside the Abdul El Sayed campaign after the Aug. 7 vote. The guy who finished second in the Democratic primary for governor is fielding all sorts of "I'm sorry we let you down" apologies from his now former campaign staffers.

He quickly put those comments in perspective and offered this to console those who were trying to console him. "Look it. You just helped somebody named Abdulrahman Mohamed El Sayed receive 340,000 votes" in Michigan for governor. He didn't have to say anything more.

Some 23 days after that night, he sat down again for his first post-election debriefing with the Off the Record panel. He was quick to pin-point the highs and lows of his first ever campaign for statewide office.

He recounts that the momentum of his campaign was building nicely as checks came rolling in from all over the country. As former President George H.W. Bush described it, he had "Big Mo" going for him — until he didn't.

The protracted story about his eligibility to be on the ticket shut-off the money spicket, closed down momentum and forced the campaign to undo what had been done with a story that turned out to be, in his mind, a non-story.

He thinks it was part of an opposition movement from somewhere and somebody who did not want him to get the nomination. And while Dr. El Sayed battled that, including a back and forth with his own Democratic Party, Shri Thanedar started to moved in the polls just as the first Muslim to run for governor in Michigan was marking time.

"I did not expect to have Shri in the race," he said, and you can tell he still harbored hard feelings. He calls his "progressive" opponent a "rich opportunist who doesn't have a moral core."

In other words the two have not patched up differences that surfaced during the campaign.

"Without Shri in the race it's a different race," he told the OTR panel.

Then there was the Bernie Sander's thing that also hurt.

Yes, the former progressive candidate for president endorsed Dr. El Sayed and appeared at a rally — but it was late. The campaign wanted him in before absentee ballots were mailed, but the Sander' folks would not endorse while there was an outside chance the candidate would be bounced off the ballot. Such a move could make Sen. Sanders look a little silly.

Dr. El Sayed reflects the eligibility stuff was, "the lowest point of the campaign" and may have cost him upwards of \$2 million dollars in contributions while the four-month story painfully unfolded.

He confides that race and religion were factors in a contest that resulted in "some of the most vile things being said to me." In fact it got so bad that in the waning days of the campaign a body guard was hired "because of the threats against my life."

He adds, "I didn't win because I was an Egyptian-Muslim."

With the dust settled, he reports, "I



By Tim Skubick

have no grudges." Looking at his tiny daughter born just after the election, he was "upset" because "this was the first time I had failed."

But looking into her eyes, he thought, "She doesn't know I lost."

And that put everything in perspective.

"I'll be back...I will likely run again" for an office yet TBD.

The interview may be seen on Public Television, with a special "overtime" segment posted at wkar.org.

more letters

To Munson nurses' union: Stick to the issues

To the editor:

Last year the nurses at Munson Medical Center voted to be represented by a union and to address their economic and non-economic issues through collective bargaining. Affiliating with a union provides the nurses with negotiating experience. It also brings a third party to the table.

Munson's nurses and management have different views on compensation and work rules but they both understand how important Munson is to our region. They do not want these negotiations to undermine the quality and integrity of the institution that they both work every day to build and maintain.

The appearance of yard signs and an unfair labor practice filing are troubling indications that the union may feel that attacking Munson will strengthen their position in negotiations. However, attacking the institution rather than the issues is a losing proposition for everyone else. The nurses, the hospital and our entire community.

These are hard times in the health-care business. The negotiations will be difficult as the hospital and the nurses struggle to stay competitive. However, as a community, we need to demand that both sides stick to the issues. Munson and its reputation are too important a community asset to be undermined as a part of a negotiating strategy.

David Hunter
N. Manitou Trail
Leland

Reader's Forum: Sewer in quagmire; twp. tax needed

By Joan Brovins

Though I do not reside in or have property in the Leelanau Township Special Assessment District (SAD), I note the \$1.56 million deficit in sewer revenues, excluding the Village of Northport's shortfall. Both government units must pay off \$13.2 million in sewer bonds. In 2005, public officials made a gross miscalculation. But now we must pay the due bill.

The MDEQ required sewer funding based on actual users, not future growth. Yet government leaders imagined a rapid growth rate. Increased sewer connections would result in higher revenue. But the growth never happened.

Government officials approved the inflated numbers, anticipating numbers that never materialized, demonstrating why sewer connections must reflect actual users only.

How will Township officials raise revenue to pay the \$1.56 million deficit? Option No. 1, pay from the general fund; Option No. 2, place the burden on 94 Township property owners in the SAD; Option No. 3, a combination.

One former 2007 trustee publicly opposes township-wide pain-sharing.

The County Treasurer joins the chorus incorrectly proclaiming a township-wide tax requires a sewer connection. Rubbish.

Childless taxpayers fund schools. Healthy taxpayers fund EMS. We all fund the Fire Department. We all pay for parks, beaches, tennis courts, or library materials and services we might not use. Everyone pays taxes though benefitting indirectly.

We all benefit indirectly from the sewer by having a Post Office, Tom's Market, Deeps Corner Store, restaurants, bank, bakery, the hardware, Village Arts Building, and Northport Inn. The Township Board must marshal the political will to adopt township-wide pain-sharing.

If the entire financial burden for the sewer shortfall is placed solely on 94 Township households, each must pay \$8,480 more. While morally repugnant, this is also a breach of contract.

In 2007, Leelanau Township and Northport Village signed an Agreement with the county, requiring any deficit be paid by a Township-wide tax. Northport Point is exempt having paid for a 2003 community sewer.

Ignoring this contractual obligation, just one month later the township adopted Ordinance No. 5, unilaterally

canceling its duty to impose a township-wide tax. This happened though no single party may change the county contract. Days later, the \$13.29 million bond issued, incorporating the township-wide tax plan required by the County Agreement.

The township 94 are beneficiaries of the county agreement which is intertwined with the bond, both requiring a township-wide tax. The township 94 may enforce the county agreement to compel all township property owners to pay the \$1.56 million deficit, exempting Northport Point.

If Leelanau Township officials disregard the agreement and bond, then listen for the politicians' howling about attorney fees and legal costs. This previous political fiasco created the costliest sewer per capita in Michigan history. Our current leaders should avoid the next imbroglio.

About the author: Attorneys Joan Brovins and Tom Oehmke reside in Leelanau Township, and have been active in several local issues. They placed an ad in the Enterprise promoting Millage for Sewer and in 2006 actively lobbied Township officials to impose a township-wide "Millage for Village."

Reader's Forum: Northport pitches in for streetscape

By Kathy Garthe and Sherry Koenig

The following is a more accurate depiction of the fund-raising effort in conjunction with the Northport Streetscape and Street Light project:

Early in 2016, Northport was awarded a federal grant through the Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay to be used to reconstruct Nagonaba in a way that would reduce the amount of storm water runoff into the Bay. After receiving this grant there remained \$225,800 of expenses to be raised in order to bring this entire expanded project to fruition since the project now included 21 dark sky streetlights and the associated electri-

cal infrastructure to make it possible to install the lights. The lighting infrastructure would be installed at the same time that the runoff reduction work was done.

In the spring of 2017, the Leelanau Township Community Foundation gave a grant of \$51,000, the Village of Northport pledged an additional \$55,000 and an anonymous donor contributed \$50,000. These contributions would cover the cost for the two electrical controllers and additional conduit needed to reach from the street to each light as well as to place wiring in the lights.

What was left to fund were the streetlights themselves, the electric conduit to each light, and some smaller incidentals, such as a banner and flower basket brackets.

In May of 2017, we launched a campaign to buy and install the streetlights while the watershed construction was underway. Each streetlight cost \$3,500 and many generous donors from the community, including organizations and individuals, funded all 21 lights!

In addition, we are working with

the Village to fund the incidental additional expenses by selling engraved pavers. A 4x8 paver costs \$100 and allows for two lines of text and an 8x8 paver costs \$150 and has room for four lines of text. Street light donors are celebrated with an engraved 12x12 paver at the base of their donated light.

We believe this is a great example of a community working together in a public-private partnership. Between the Village, the Leelanau Township Community Foundation, and community members, we made this project come alive.

Thank you for clarifying the financial part of the story for your readers.

About the authors: If you named an Northport all-star team, Kathy Garthe and Sherry Koenig would be starters. The two have been involved in many, many community-minded projects. They emailed after a news story ran about the streetscape project, asking for space to explain in more detail the fundraising effort and high level of community support involved.

Handling of forums deemed judge-worthy

To the editor:

Our family has lived in the Suttons Bay school district for 30 years. I had the privilege of serving on the school board for 20 of those years. While doing this I've had many opportunities to interact with Marian Kromkowski. In the past few years,

I observed her presentations at League of Women Voters forums. She clearly displayed the qualities that would make an excellent Probate Court Judge. She possesses the intellect, a remarkable sense of fairness, and a willingness to listen, that a judgeship requires. This county would be well served by electing her. Marian has my vote.

Roger Merriman
4955 S. Westbay Shore Dr.
Suttons Bay

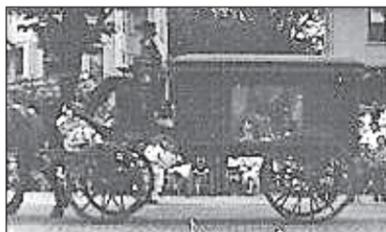
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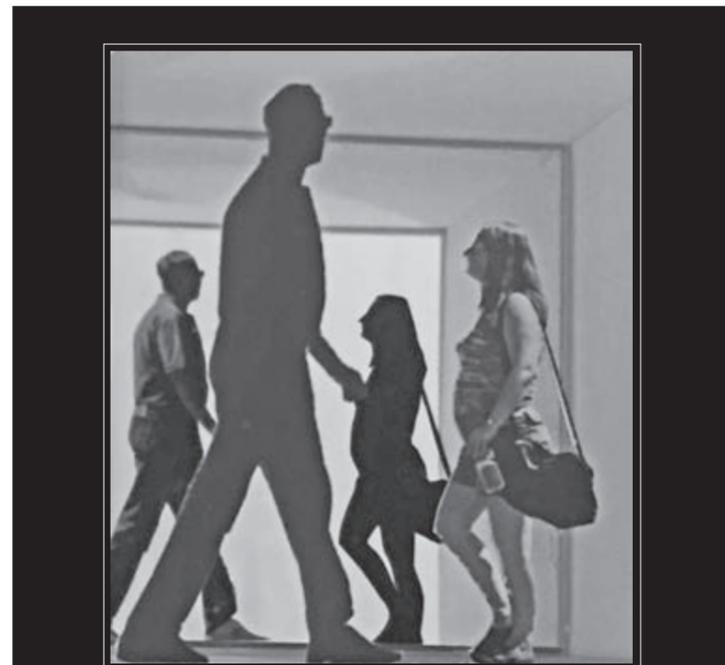


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The Original 1917 Horse Drawn Hearse, used until 1925. Now residing at the Empire Area Museum.
Photo from 1956 SB Centennial Parade

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