Buyer beware;voter be wary

To the editor:

Based on what I understand to be Michigan law where township expenditures are concerned, a township may legally expend public funds for a public purpose only if an interpretation of the state constitution and/or statutes indicates the township is authorized to make that particular expenditure.

An expenditure that does not meet this standard is illegal and prohibited, even though the purpose seems worthwhile.

Some illegal expenditures cited on the Michigan Township Association website include "promoting election proposals or candidates" … "retroactive pay increases for township officials"… and "donations to a community organization" where there is no explicit contract for appropriate services to be received by the township from the organization. An article that summarizes laws that permit and laws that prohibit township expenditures can be read at: www.michigantownships.org/downloads/novfeat_1.pdf

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Available at the same website is information about the laws that township leadership must follow in millage proposal and election procedures.

For example, the Michigan Campaign Finance Act strictly prohibits the use of public money to influence voters in a millage election. Statute also prohibits the use of public resources by the Township Board to persuade voters in favor of a millage proposal or to otherwise influence the outcome of a millage election. Also prohibited by law is the misrepresentation of a millage proposal as a "renewal" of an expired millage levy subject to the Headlee Amendment.

The quarter-page ad that the Iron River Township Board purchased and published in the Nov. 2 Iron County Reporter is confusing and illegal on at least three points.

First, it misrepresents the 2 mills proposed as a renewal of the millage amount that expired in 2008 when the amount of the millage expiring in 2008 was less than 2 mills.

Second, it tries to persuade me to think that township road maintenance is hampered by the need to cover other expenses covered by the general fund, but it doesn't tell me anything about current road millage revenue or the current general fund balance that as of Sept. 30 was over $700,000.

Third, at the public expense, it directs me to vote YES, to keep the township financially strong.

I have brought my concerns about illegal expenditure issues to the township board and its attorneys several times in the past five years.

Within the past year, I brought my frustration and the same issues to the attention of the Iron County prosecuting attorney. Nothing I've tried has caused a change in how township leadership performs under state mandates.

I think the Iron River Township Board needs to rethink its outlaw style of governance before it loses the respect of the people it is entrusted to serve.

-s- Tom Peterson
Iron River Township

In response
To the editor:
This is my second and hopefully last installment to a previous letter concerning an article which appeared in the Sept. 28 issue of The Reporter entitled: Recall supporters give their side of the story.
This letter is in response to Jim Shepich and George Brunswick's comments. Jim Shepich says that the fair is a $100,000 business and not a $10,000 business. That's all the more reason for an audit to take place. George Brunswick doesn't want to pay an outside auditor to audit the books. That money doesn't belong to either Jim or George. It belongs to the people of Iron County and the County Board is acting in the best interest of the residents of the county in requesting an audit.
It makes me ask: what are they hiding? This group leaves more questions than answers with their recall efforts.
Wayne, as I said before, is only one person and has only one vote. This is still the United States of America and is a democracy where it takes the majority to make binding decisions. I firmly belief that Wayne is doing an excellent job as my representative on the County Board despite the nitpicking by some people. He's doing a yeoman's job. As Walter Cronkite used to say at the end of each of his news broadcasts, "That's the way it is." No truer words have been spoken especially in this instance.
-s- Patrick Ward
Crystal Falls

For the good
of the nation
To the editor:
Many Americans believe right now that the president, Congress and everyone should be in complete agreement for the good of the nation.
When the founding fathers founded the United States, they deliberately set up three branches of government, with one, the Legislative Branch with two parts. The reason being was so that each branch would compete with the other, thus preserving a limited government.
The founding fathers saw what type of expansive tyrannical government came about when a king and parliament were in complete agreement. They also had the recent memory when the progressive dictator Oliver Cromwell and an agreeable parliament ruled England with an iron fist.
The founding fathers believed a limited government would not intrude on its citizenry and take away their God-given rights.
President Harry S. Truman was once asked how the United States could become an efficient and well run government. His reply was to say the United States would have to become a dictatorship. President Truman went on to say he would much rather have a slow working, inefficient and infighting democracy like we have than a dictatorship any day.
So this Veteran's Day, remember all the veterans past and present who fought to give us a limited government where all citizens have inalienable rights granted by God that no man can

take away.
-s- Don Wolf
Iron River