

LETTERS

Hanson Technology Center is an area game-changer

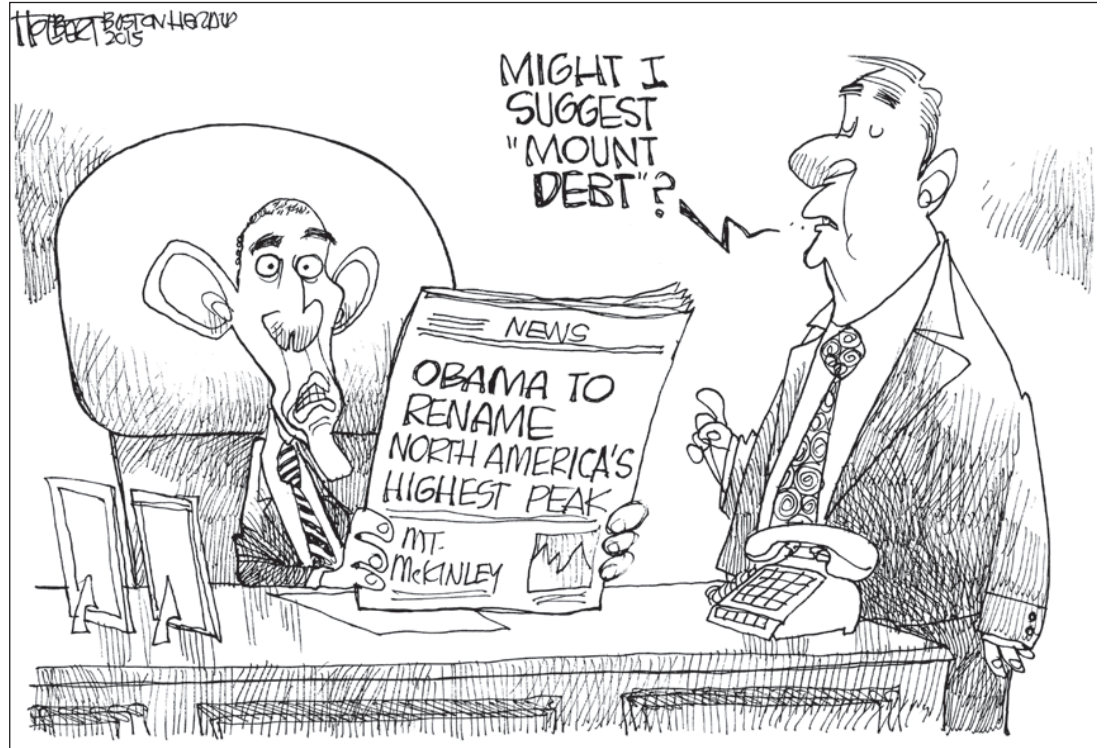
Editor,

Lake Michigan College's new Hanson Technology Center will have a direct impact on our region's manufacturing workforce, especially in automation, machining and fabrication. The benefits will be felt by existing companies, local companies that have the ability to grow. In addition, prospective companies looking to relocate their business to an area that can develop a workforce will certainly take note of what LMC is looking to accomplish. This is a benefit to us all.

The center will be located on the Napier Avenue campus in Benton Harbor. It's not uncommon for students to begin their college experience still unclear of exactly what career path they will take. Now, those students will be exposed to an impressive, state-of-the-art facility that will expose them, as we have never been able to do before, to a career in manufacturing technology. I see this as part of a general stereotype shift relating to manufacturing – the way our international competitors such as Germany and Japan view their workforces. One that is high-skilled and career-oriented. The Hanson Technology Center will reflect the current state of industrial manufacturing: high tech, clean, progressive and exciting.

Through this center and other initiatives, LMC's Campaign for Tomorrow is poised to be a boom to the economic development in our region. From development of the manufacturing workforce – a draw to businesses looking to locate in an area with skilled labor and great potential – to the Great Lakes Wine Institute – which will have a huge impact on further developing a vineyard culture in our area – the campaign deserves our support.

Matt Tyler
President and CEO
Vickers Engineering Inc.
New Troy



People far and wide pitched in for Mutt March

Editor,

On Aug. 22 in Lake Bluff Park in St. Joseph, Animal Aid of Southwest Michigan held its annual Mutt March. I was privileged to be the event coordinator and would be remiss if I did not express my thanks to a community that turned out in droves to support this "medieval" miracle.

Over eight months in the planning, our small but mighty band of volunteers rose to the challenge of erecting 41 tents, tables and props to transform the bluff into "The Kingdom of Dunroamin," where every dog finds their forever home. From all accounts it was a smashing success. Heaven smiled down upon us with a beautiful day. Local veterinarians, pet-sitting services, boarding facilities, many of our area pet-rescue groups and pet-related businesses turned out to support this year's theme of a medieval marketplace.

At my side were co-chair Deb Lightner of Hartford and publicity chair Victoria

Dunlop of Coloma. With their brilliant talents, we came up with a vision that was embraced by the public. Just as vital were the volunteers from the Elder's Quorum and Relief Society of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and their families who added this event to their list of community service projects and assisted in every aspect.

Our king, James Gehring, and queen, Tiffany Crane, presided over the event with grace in the shadow of a magnificent clock tower conceived and built by master craftsman Matthew Coleman, and our magician's apprentice, Travis Witt, spent hours learning his craft from a generous mentor, Bob Wigent, Zendor, The Magician. Francis Cherry and Ruth Smith of the United Kingdom sent materials which lent an authentic flair and were most appreciated.

Friends and relatives traveled from across the state and from Chicago to support "The Kingdom." When Vicki and Roger Robinson came to call, area businesses generously donated to our "wag bags" and prizes. Also, though home-

bound, dear friend and Animal Aid volunteer Shirley Stinson worked uncomplainingly from her living room completing the mundane but necessary projects I requested of her. Vicki Florin whipped up costumes for our young volunteers. My sister, Carole King, imported friends Connie and Pete Peterson to run the Queen's Tea Shoppe, and the genius of erecting the throne area was designed by cousins Jane and Gordon Jeswek of Cadillac. Even my artist brother, Robert Miller, a potter living in Mexico, sent hand-thrown dog dishes for our gift bags.

While this event may live temporarily in the memories of those who happened to be walking the bluff that day, the miracles and friendships forged over this experience will remain indelibly etched in my heart for years to come. Thank you all for your love and support on behalf of our "beasties." I am most grateful to be a part of this community.

Toni Miller
Event Planner
Animal Aid 2015 Mutt March