

## The Betsie Current Flows Again

Buoyed by citizen support, community newspaper reemerges after eight-year hiatus

By Jordan Bates and Jacob Wheeler  
Current Editors

Spring has returned to Benzie County and not a moment too soon. That record-breaking winter we just survived was long and trying. Sure, the avid skiers, snowboarders, and ice frolickers among us reveled in the encore that Jack Frost dealt us. For others, the snowy season was a time of hibernation, reading books, cooking slow meals, and keeping the wood stove ablaze.

Now it's time for birdsong, green grass, morel mushrooms, and asparagus (check out Aubrey Ann Parker's "Spring Transitions" photo essay on the back page). Soon we'll wear t-shirts and swim trunks and jump in our great lake. As we do every year, we Michiganders celebrate the change of seasons. For up here in the north woods, we're lucky enough to be chameleons who camouflage ourselves in whatever garb and emotions fit the moment. Spring, the season of rebirth, is

the favorite for many.

This newspaper you hold in your hands also represents a rebirth. *The Betsie Current*, which will chronicle Benzie County, its news and events, commerce, characters, and culture, returns this spring after an eight-year hiatus. *The Current* enjoyed a brief run in 2005-06, and we're bringing it back by popular demand — and with the sincere belief that a community needs local media to rally its citizens and tell its



Jacob Wheeler and Jordan Bates, co-editors of *The Betsie Current*. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

pression in recent years is well documented. Corporate media consolidations, declining revenues, and online news have killed many

papers, and forced others, such as *The Detroit News*, *Free Press*, and *Ann Arbor News* to scale back their print frequency or go exclusively online. But we think this model of hyper-local, community-driven, and community-supported news has staying power.

This is the first of 12 editions that we'll publish between now and January 2015. We hope you'll pick up a copy and read it at the beach or the brewery, on the boat or in your backyard. Use our stories, events calendar, and websites ([BetsieCurrent.com](http://BetsieCurrent.com) and [Benzie-Calendar.com](http://Benzie-Calendar.com)) as community resources. Please send us story ideas, missives, and constructive criticism, too. Email us at [editor@betsiecurrent.com](mailto:editor@betsiecurrent.com) or send us a letter at PO Box 90, Frankfort, MI 49635. If you're a business who would like to advertise with us, check out our rates at [BetsieCurrent.com/index.php/advertise-current/](http://BetsieCurrent.com/index.php/advertise-current/). During peak summer season, we'll distribute thousands of

Please see Current Flows on page 6

## Oliver Art Center Celebrates Young Local Artists

The first in a series about local artists and events

By Jenny Robertson  
Current Contributor

Usually each Benzie County elementary, middle and high school has its own art fair, and the only people who get to see our young artists at work are their teachers and families. But once a year, during the Regional Student Exhibition, the best K-12 art in the county is showcased at the Oliver Art Center in Frankfort.

The gala opening for this year's exhibition is Friday, April 18, from 5-7 p.m. High school submissions will be judged, and 12 Awards of Excellence will be presented at 6:15 p.m. Fourteen categories of artistic media are allowed, from drawing, painting, and photography to fiber arts, sculpture, and furniture, film, and digital art. All high school work will be included in the show, but only original works — those not copied from

other original works such as magazines, masterpieces, and advertisements — are eligible for the Awards of Excellence.

"This is a celebration of creativity," says Oliver Art Center executive director Steve Brown. "It's a testament to the hard work of all of our local art teachers. A good art teacher can make a student look at the world differently for the rest of their life."

Jurors are ceramic artist Schyler Binkley ([www.schylerbinkley.com](http://www.schylerbinkley.com)), co-owner of Daybreak Gallery & Studios in Manistee, and Leland multimedia artist and art teacher Daniel Lisuk, whose work "The Birth of Steel" — acrylic on canvas, with wood, steel, milkweed and tar — is featured on the Grand Rapids ArtPrize website.

Entries will be judged on their creativity, originality and execution. Lisuk says he looks for thought, for depth, and for quality of technique in any show that he judges,

whether the artists are students or adults. Lisuk, who taught art for 32 years in Traverse City, says it's "an honor to be asked" to serve as a juror for this year's exhibition.

"I'm excited to see what the kids have done," he says. "A teacher is a person who passes on culture."

This student exhibition, the only one of its kind in Northern Michigan, is a way for the community to celebrate the good work our art students and art teachers do throughout the year.

Student artwork will hang from April 18 through May 16. Stop by to cast your vote for the People's Choice Award. Popular majority will determine which artwork will be featured on Oliver Art Center's summer t-shirt (the winner will be announced at the Center's annual open house, June 27-29).



This incredible cat drawing by Elijah Hoxley was featured at the 2013 exhibit at the Oliver Art Center. See what's on display this year from April 18-May 16. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

## Jubilee Kicks Off Drive-in Season

Theatre goes digital in 2014

From Staff Reports

The Benzie County Chamber of Commerce will hold a Cherry Bowl Jubilee at the popular Cherry Bowl Drive-in Theatre on Thursday, May 1, the night before the theatre opens for its 62nd season. This year, the Cherry Bowl boasts a new digital projection system, which it won from American Honda Motor Co. in an online voting contest last fall.

The Jubilee, which benefits the Benzie Chamber, runs from 6:30-11 p.m. (gates open at 6) and will feature fun family activities, including putt-putt golf, a cake walk, a dunk tank, music, and face painting. The popular movie E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, selected through an online poll, will be the evening's feature film and begin at dusk (approximately 8:50). Tickets for the event cost \$10 in advance for ages 6 and up, \$13 at the gate, and children under age 6 get in free. Your ticket

price includes the movie, small popcorn, small soda, games, and activities.

The Cherry Bowl offers an authentic throwback experience to the 1950s, including a sound system with the original vacuum tube motiograph amplifiers that still power

Please see Cherry Bowl on page 2



Honor's Cherry Bowl Drive-In is going digital this spring. Photo courtesy of Honda's "Project Drive-In" social media campaign.

## Keeping Our Waters Blue

Water Festival on April 25 at The Garden Theater

From Staff Reports

The Benzie County Water Festival is designed to engage the public in the stewardship of the Great Lakes, the response to the global freshwater crisis, and the cultivation of a vibrant and sustainable local culture. The theme for this year's festival — the fourth annual on Friday, April 25 — is "Keeping Our Waters Blue". The festival seeks to attract, entertain, educate, and activate individuals and groups within the community. This is a family-oriented, community-centered event that fosters education, engagement, and networking opportunities.

Thanks to an ongoing partnership with the Benzie Conservation District and Benzie County's Recycling Program, the 2014 Water Festival will begin at 1 p.m. with kids' activities for all K-6 Platte River Elementary students,



The live reptile and amphibian exhibit is a perennial favorite, with kids and adults alike taking turns holding all kinds of Michigan frogs, snakes, and salamanders. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

Please see Water Festival on page 7



# Bill Kennis Takes Over as Benzie Bus Executive Director

Question & Answer with community faces

From Staff Reports

“Connecting people to community” is the motto of Benzie Bus, and the public transit organization’s new mission is to connect communities in Benzie County with one another and with Traverse City.

To undertake this mission, Benzie Bus hired Bill Kennis in March as its new executive director. According to a press release, Kennis was recommended for the position by Tom Menzel, executive director of the Bay Area Transportation Authority (BATA), which serves Grand Traverse and Leelanau counties.

“We look forward to working closely with Mr. Kennis and his staff on finding innovative and creative ways to add value to the respective areas that we service,” said Mr. Menzel. “We know that he believed in collaboration with others while working at the History Center, and we feel that approach will put our two organizations in philosophical alignment going forward.”

This year, Kennis and Benzie Bus operations manager Chad Hollenbeck will collaborate to lead a major study of the transportation needs of Benzie County residents and visitors using grant funds that were recently awarded by the Michigan Department of Transportation and Rotary Charities of Traverse City. The results will guide the design and implementation of future routes and services within Benzie County, as well as links to neighboring counties. The mission of Benzie Bus is to connect people of all ages and abilities to our community and promote independence and prosperity through a safe and convenient public transit system.

We talked with Kennis about this new mission and how he came aboard.

**BETSIE CURRENT:** Congratulations on taking the helm of the Benzie Bus! Tell us what led you to this opportunity.

**BILL KENNIS:** “I was looking for a new job after leaving the History Center of Traverse City. My experiences downstate — leading a school board and serving on Troy’s DDA — had given me some knowledge about community stewardship, and I felt that the Benzie Transit Authority Team was a solid organization that I’d be honored to work with.”

**CURRENT:** You live in the community, yes? What are your favorite local activities? Any favorite dining, recreation, or hiking spots?

**KENNIS:** “We’ve been homeowners in

**CURRENT:** In general, how does this public transportation service enhance the Benzie community?

**KENNIS:** “We provide about 90,000 customers exceptional service. Our riders rely on Benzie Bus to meet their non-emergency medical needs, for shopping, for school and work. It’s hard to imagine many of our riders functioning without our cost-effective dial-a-ride and flex-route services.”

**CURRENT:** Any particular compliments you’ve received from citizens? How about constructive critiques?

accomplish in coming years?

**KENNIS:** “On May 10, the entire board and staff along with community leaders will participate in a Strategic Visioning Session, facilitated by NorthSky, that will be the first step in laying the groundwork for superior bus services for everyone.”

**CURRENT:** Any message you’d like to broadcast to our Benzie readership?

**KENNIS:** “Try us, you’ll like us! It’s our community, and we all win with fewer cars on the road and a reliable, cost-effective public transit service that helps everyone. We’re bringing workers to jobs and growing the Benzie economy. Great place to work and live.”

Approximately one-third of Benzie Bus riders are senior citizens, one-third are people with disabilities, and the remainder includes students, commuters, and shoppers. The Benzie Bus system operates countywide Monday through Friday from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. Benzie Bus also offers hourly connections — from approximately 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. by reservation only — to the BATA Bus system at Ric’s Food Center in Interlochen. For more information or to schedule a ride, call Benzie Bus at (231) 325-3000 or toll free at (866) 325-3380. Visit the bus system online at [www.BenzieBus.com](http://www.BenzieBus.com).



The Benzie Bus staff, Karin Miner, Chad Hollenbeck, Jennifer Kolinske, and Bill Kennis. Photo courtesy of the Benzie Bus.

Frankfort since 2004, and I’m active with Boy Scouts and Little League Baseball. We’ve hiked North Country Trail in Mesick, which is such an amazing local trek. Regarding dining spots, there are so many, like Fusion, Mayfair for Wings, Cru, and now Stormcloud ... Frankfort/Elberta is a foodie area!”

**CURRENT:** We understand that the Benzie Bus is taking something of a new direction. What is that direction, and how will it impact Benzie citizens?

**KENNIS:** “I’m fortunate that the Benzie Transit Authority Board successfully received grants for conducting a County Needs Assessment to determine whether citizens would like express routes to Traverse City, M-22 destinations, seasonal festivals, and generally what programs can we offer inter- and intra-county to serve our customers better. ‘Buses Without Boarders.’ We need to work in a collaborative fashion with the other counties and their public transit providers to continuously improve and become more efficient. If we can do more with less funding, potentially we can expand and maybe offer evening and weekend service.”

**KENNIS:** “Surveys suggest that our drivers and dispatchers are truly customer focused: “They are courteous and helpful,” and “[it is] easy to get around,” according to some riders. Four out of five riders rate Benzie Bus service as “excellent” for on-time, affordability, convenience, friendliness & cleanliness, and comfort ... it’s a great program and the staff and board aim to make it better!”

**CURRENT:** What inherent challenges do you face in your job? What’s the toughest part?

**KENNIS:** “The toughest part will be attracting riders who are, like many of us, used to driving themselves everywhere, which costs much more than a \$3 bus fare. We have to be ready to service the non-riders and change habits. Teens should feel comfortable with going to the mall for a movie. And wouldn’t it be great to attend the Film Festival without driving and the stress and costs associated with parking? How about airport service someday? ‘Buses Without Boarders’ is our mantra.”

**CURRENT:** What’s on the horizon for Benzie Bus? What does the organization aspire to

the speakers. An added bonus: the speaker posts light up with a warm red glow for an exceptional visual experience during the show. The Cherry Bowl also offers FM radio sound, so you can hear the movie’s entire soundtrack through your car stereo system.

The Cherry Bowl was one of 122 drive-in theatres to participate in the Japanese carmaker’s “Project Drive-in” social media campaign. According to *MLive.com*, the campaign was an attempt to save as many drive-ins as possible through increased awareness, community involvement, and fundraising. Michigan has at least 10 drive-in theatres, but as many as 150 others throughout the state have already closed in recent decades.

Check out a video promoting Honda’s “Project Drive-in” on our website, [BetsieCurrent.com](http://BetsieCurrent.com), and support the Benzie Chamber and the Cherry Bowl Drive-in on May 1.

## Cherry Bowl

Continued from page 1

### The Betsie Current

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# Soaring Sleeping Bear’s Wild Blue Yonder

Area’s rural airports gliding and soaring through history

By Kelly Ottinger  
Current Contributor

As a high school student in 1938, Bob Laubach had more than the usual distractions outside his classroom window. On sunny days, shadows cast from airplane wings danced silently over the school grounds as planes glided toward landing on the Frankfort Airport turf strip.

The first successful flight of a Michigan-built glider (manned, unpowered plane) was in 1909. By 1937, magazines such as *National Geographic*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Reader’s Digest*, and *Life* touted the Frankfort and Elberta area as one of the nation’s premier spots for “soaring”, the hobby of glider plane enthusiasts. During this time, national soaring meets took place in two locations each year: Elmira, New York, and Frankfort. The Northwest Soaring Club eventually established its headquarters at the Frankfort Airport.

One of the mandates from The Service-men’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (informally known as the G.I. Bill) provided free flight instruction to servicemen returning from World War II. A flight school was established in Frankfort, bringing additional business to Frankfort’s Dow Memorial Field.

When Laubach returned to Benzie County after having served in WWII, he became an active member of the Frankfort Airport Authority for several years. In the late 1950s, he was instrumental in finding matching federal funds for needed airport improvements.

Originally the Frankfort Airport had two runways, one facing north/south and one east/west. Lake Michigan air currents sometimes caused unstable conditions for takeoff and landing, and the airport was the scene of fatal accidents in 1947, 1949, and 1960.

Under direction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the funding was used in 1961 to eliminate the original runways and to build one paved 2,800-foot runway facing northwest/southeast (with lighting capability). In 2006, the runway was lengthened to its present 4,050 feet, and the current terminal building was added, providing an indoor seating area and additional amenities for airport patrons.

Although the Northwest Soaring Club moved operational headquarters from Frankfort to Cadillac in 2011, Frankfort’s Dow Memorial Field continues to be the area’s busiest small recreational air hub.

“We’re the only area airport, other than

Traverse City and Manistee, offering fuel on site,” says Frankfort’s current manager Jay Darling. “In the summer season, we’ve sometimes accommodated more than 500 flights a month.” Dow Memorial Field remains open year-round, although winter conditions do cause the runway to be closed as necessary. “We have to make decisions on those sub-zero days, knowing we need to use common sense for our equipment and to stay within our budget,” notes Darling.

Although Frankfort’s airport (owned by the Frankfort City-County Airport Author-

Thompsonville Airport is the primary base for the Benzie Area Radio Controllers (BARC), a private club whose members build and fly small radio-controlled aircraft. Two major fundraising events are hosted each year by BARC, with the public being encouraged to attend. In 2014, the Spring Thing — one of the largest radio-controlled flying events in Michigan — will be May 17. Spring Thing proceeds will primarily fund needed airport improvements. The Summer Air Show will be held August 23, with proceeds being given to the Wounded Warrior Project.

Sleeping Bear area airports cater mainly to summer visitors and local air enthusiasts. The majority are open to the public, although some private airstrips also allow public use after permission is granted. Although private air flight dropped sharply during the recent eco-

nomic recession, the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore’s recognition in 2011 as “the most beautiful place in America” by *Good Morning American* helped spark a renewed interest. Benzie County may be Michigan’s smallest, but it’s one of the richest both in aviation history and future possibilities.

Sleeping Bear area airports are sometimes staffed during the busy summer season. However, since employees of small local airports are often employed elsewhere, manned hours can be irregular. Runways have wind socks, but most do not have lights. Takeoff and landing decisions are made at the discretion of individual pilots according to weather conditions and competing air traffic. Those interested in using these airports can call ahead to learn of runway conditions or any obstructions, or to receive any needed permission for landing.

For more information, call the Frankfort City-County Airport Authority at (231) 352-9118 or the Village of Thompsonville at (231) 378-2575.

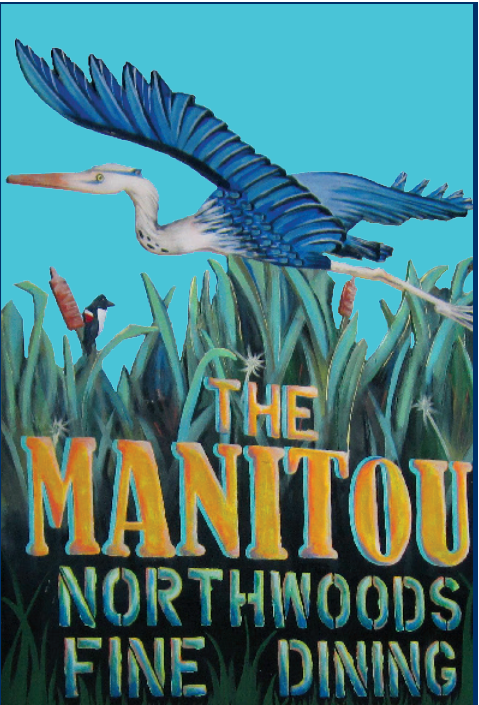


Gliders take over the Elberta beach during the ‘70s. Photo courtesy The Pete Sandman Collection.

ity) is the area’s busiest, there are 10 more airports recognized by the FAA that are located in the Sleeping Bear area. The second busiest is the Thompsonville Airport, owned by the Village of Thompsonville.

In the late 1940s, Benzie County citizens successfully blocked a military effort to create an airbase in Homestead Township near Interlochen. The Homestead Airbase would have needed a 12,000-foot runway to accommodate takeoff and landings of B-52 fighter planes, and citizens were concerned about possible noise impact on the nearby National Music Camp (now Interlochen Academy of Arts). The Thompsonville Airport was built shortly after the Homestead Airbase defeat, as a vehicle for the area’s casual flight enthusiasts.

Today, the Thompsonville Airport, offers two runways (one turf and one asphalt). Thompsonville Airport manager Tim Windrim says the airport traffic is a good mix of local enthusiasts and tourists. “Some of the summer folks would rather land over here [in Thompsonville], because the wind situation is a little better than in Frankfort.”



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONSTANTLY FLOWING

Tuesdays

Improvisational partner dancing every Tuesday evening at the Mills Community House, Benzonia. 6:00-7:00 class (fee) taught by James and Maia of Zipper Dance followed by 3 hours of open dance (free/donations welcome).

Tuesdays

Benzie Shores District Library offers assistance with technology every Tuesday, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Learn how to download ebooks, audiobooks and magazines to your personal devices.

Thursdays

Open Mic Night at the Cabbage Shed in Elberta. 8 p.m. 231-352-9843

Saturdays

Join a ranger for a different walk or talk or hike every Saturday. There's always something happening at 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays. To find out what's happening visit <http://www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/events.htm> or call 231-326-5134 for details.

Saturdays

Frankfort Farmers' Market at the Lion's Club building in Frankfort. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

ON THE DOCK

Thursday, April 17

Benzie County Chamber of Commerce April Business After Hours at The Independent Order of Odd Fellows building across the street from the NEW Betsie Valley District Library, in Thompsonville. 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Friday, April 18

Elizabeth Lane Oliver Center for the Arts is hosting their annual Regional Student Exhibition. Awards of Excellence will be presented during the Exhibition Opening on Friday, April 18 from 5 p.m. -7 p.m. The Exhibition runs from April 18 until May 16.

Friday, April 18

The True Falsettos play at the Cabbage Shed in Elberta. The swing duo features Joe Wilson (steel guitar, guitar, vocals) and Kevin Gills (bass, vocals). Embracing the

hot jazz & swing styles of the '30s and '40s, Joe & Kevin play some of the liveliest, most danceable music around. 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 19

Frankfort Easter Egg Hunt in Mineral Springs Park, Downtown Frankfort. Over 3,000 eggs to be found in the new playground! The Easter Bunny will arrive at 9:30 a.m. and will be available for pictures. Be on time for this fun event – the eggs are found quickly! The Hunt begins at 10 a.m. SHARP! For more info call 231-352-7251

Saturday, April 19

Benzie Audubon Club's Arcadia Marsh field trip. This field trip is a perennial favorite to see waterfowl and returning spring migrants. We'll meet at Arcadia Beach (at the west end of Lake Street in Arcadia on Lake Michigan) and then break into smaller groups to car pool to favorite areas. Brian Allen (723-7956) will lead the trip. 8 a.m.

Saturday, April 19

Friends of Betsie Bay hosts The GREEN FIRE Film Project: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for our Time at The Garden Theater in Frankfort. 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday, April 19

Billy Strings visits Stormcloud for the first time. Come out and check out this musical phenom from Northern Michigan! 8 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday, April 19-20

Crystal Mountain Easter Egg-stravaganza Search for over 3000 eggs. Find the Golden Egg and win an Easter Basket full of fun. Held on the grounds of Crystal Mountain, 10 a.m. sharp. After the Easter egg hunt, get a photo with the Easter Bunny, 11 a.m. - Noon in the Inn at the Mountain lounge. Easter Buffet - Sunday 11 a.m. -4 p.m. Easter Sunday Brunch at the Crystal Center is your time to celebrate the holiday with family and friends. Watch everyone's eyes grow wide when they see this feast! 800-968-4676 to make yours today.

Saturday, April 19

Benzonia Easter Egg Hunt 1 p.m. at Benzonia Memorial Park (soccer/ball fields). For more information visit [www.clcba.org](http://www.clcba.org)

MORE EVENTS AT [BENZIE-CALENDAR.COM](http://BENZIE-CALENDAR.COM)

Saturday, April 19

Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre's upcoming workshop, "Clowning with Shakespeare" on April 19, 2014. Members of the Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre ensemble will lead the free workshop, which culminates in an evening performance at the Oliver Art Center in Frankfort, Michigan.

Sunday, April 20

Easter Sunday.

Tuesday, April 22

Benzie Chamber of Commerce Business EXPO 2014 at Crystal Mountain, Thompsonville. Open to the Public, Free Admission, Door Prizes. NEW this year - Breakfast Seminar at 8:30 a.m. presented by GOOGLE and LUNA TECH 3D! Expo hours 11 a.m. -5 p.m.

Wednesday, April 23

At public meetings in March and April, the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Fisheries Division staff will present information and take comments on possible changes to lake trout size and daily catch limits for northern Lake Michigan lake trout management zones MM-3, 4 and 5. Comments received will inform potential lake trout regulation changes in 2015. 5 p.m. at the Frankfort City Hall, 412 Main St., Frankfort

Wednesday, April 23

Trivia Night at Stormcloud every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Teams up to four people. Nightly prizes for winning team. Compete for season prize and the coveted Stormly Cup! 7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

JUST AROUND THE BEND

Friday, April 25

Benzie Community Water Council Hosts 2014 Water Festival - Keeping Our Waters Blue. 1 p.m - 5:00 p.m. Platte River Elementary School - KID TIME with the return of live amphibians, Marlene Woods Recycling Corner and Kid's Science Fair. THEN 6 p.m. -9 p.m. at The Garden Theater with Derek Bailey, keynote speaker, the Blue Water panel of area experts such as Bernie Ware, Rob Karner, Chris Olsen and Bill Crawford. The celebration of water comes from the popular band Graham Parsons and the Go Rounds. For more information call 231-882-4391 or visit [www.water-festival.org](http://www.water-festival.org).

Saturday, April 25

Arbor Day! Benzie Conservation District spring seedlings pickup. Beulah Park Pavilion. 9:30 a.m. - 6:30 a.m.

Saturday, April 26

David Collini, Piano Man extraordinaire will play all the favorites for a night of sing-along at Stormcloud. 8 p.m. – 11 p.m.

Saturday, April 26

sub-Prime Blues Band plays at the Cabbage Shed. The band consists of an eclectic group of local players, all on hiatus, on the mend, or on the run from other bands, corporate lives and business alter-egos. 9:30 p.m.

Monday, April 28

Grow Benzie Incubator Kitchen - Basic Small Business Accounting/Quickbooks 101. Cindy Niswonger & Jennifer Christopher of Weishaar and Company, Beulah. 6 p.m. Grow Benzie, 5885 Frankfort Hwy, Benzonia. 231-882-9510. [GrowBenzie.org](http://GrowBenzie.org)

Tuesday, April 29

Benzie Shores District Library is offering an evening of conversation in Spanish! Come and practice your language skills and meet other Spanish speakers. 7 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Tuesday, April 29

Benzie Conservation District Volunteer Stream Monitoring Training. 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. at the Benzie Conservation District, South Benzie Boulevard, Beulah. Join us to learn how to monitor our local streams. This is a training event for our upcoming collection event on May 10. Feel free to join this training event even if you can't make it on May 10. For more information call 231-882-4391 or visit [www.benziecd.org](http://www.benziecd.org)

FURTHER DOWNSTREAM

Thursday, May 1

Benzie Audubon Club's Wildflowers at Pete's Woods. Arcadia Dunes Preserve Steward Paula Dreeszen (275-7199) will lead these weekly hikes. Pete's Woods is known for its incredible display of spring ephemeral wildflowers. Hikes will be ~ 1 ½ miles and will conclude around noon. Meeting Location: Swamp Road parking lot south of Joyfield Road. 10 a.m.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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The Betsie Current

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Contributors: Kelly Ottinger, Aubrey Ann Parker, Jenny Robertson

The Betsie Current is a free tabloid, published 12 times this year and distributed throughout Benzie County. Advertising inquiries, comments, suggestions, critiques, articles, photos, poems, and letters are welcome. © 2014, The Betsie Current, all rights reserved.

PUBLISHING DATES 2014

April 17  
May 22  
June 12  
July 3  
July 17  
July 31  
August 14  
August 28  
September 11  
October 2  
November 13  
January 14 (2015)



Thursday, May 1

Benzie County Chamber of Commerce presents CHERRY BOWL JUBILEE. Celebrate the new digital projection system at The Cherry Bowl Drive In Theatre in Honor. Family fun activities including Putt-Putt, Cake Walk, Dunk Tank, Music, Face Painting, and of course the classic movie: E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial. Gate opens at 6 p.m.

Thursday, May 1

Benzie Audubon Club presents Bob Sanders on American Martens. Come to the Tribal Outpost (7282 Hoadley Rd, Benzonia) and learn about this long, slender member of the weasel family found in mature forests in Michigan and other northern states. 7 p.m.

MORE EVENTS AT BENZIE-CALENDAR.COM

Saturday, May 3

Mark Lavengood and the Bluegrass Bonanza play at the Cabbage Shed. 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 3

3rd Annual Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP) Auction & Benefit Dinner. 5 p.m. Social Hour & Silent Auction, 6 p.m. dinner & program, 7:30 p.m. Live Auction. Live Music, Cash Bar, Door Prizes. Tickets \$30/person available at the Benzie County Chamber of Commerce. Visit [www.restorehonor.org](http://www.restorehonor.org).

Thursday, May 8

Benzie Audubon Club's Wildflowers at Pete's Woods. Arcadia Dunes Preserve Steward Paula Dreeszen (275-7199) will lead these weekly hikes. Pete's Woods is known for its incredible display of spring ephemeral wildflowers. Hikes will be ~ 1 ½ miles and will conclude around noon. Meeting Location: Swamp Road parking lot south of Joyfield Road. 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, May 9

Faux Grass CD release party at the Cabbage Shed. 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 10

Benzie Audubon Club and North American Migratory Bird Count for Manistee County. Like a Christmas Bird Count in May to tally all the birds in the County. Results will be tabulated with counts from all over North America. Call Brian Allen (723-7956) to join a group. Time TBD.

Sunday, May 10

Benzie Conservation District Volunteer Stream Monitoring Field Collection 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Benzie Conservation District, South Benzie Boulevard, Beulah. Join us in monitoring the health of our local streams. For more information call 231-882-4391 or visit [www.benziecd.org](http://www.benziecd.org)

Thursday, May 15

Benzie County Chamber of Commerce May Business After Hours. 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. at Live For Art Gallery, Beulah. Hors-d'oeuvres, 50/50 Raffle, Door Prizes, \$ Member Raffle. Sponsored by Live For Art Gallery.

Friday-Saturday, May 16-17

David Gerald Band plays at the Cabbage Shed. 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 17

Third annual Grit & Gravel Mountain Bike Race. The AG&G race spans territory covering two counties and is like no other in the state. <http://www.endomanpromotions.com/events/arcadian.php>

Saturday, May 17

Benzie Conservation District Garlic Mustard Pull. Garlic Mustard Pull with the Benzie Conservation District at Tank Hill and Railroad Point. Join us to prevent the spread of invasive species! More details to come. For more information call 231-882-4391 or visit [www.benziecd.org](http://www.benziecd.org)

Friday, May 23

Benzie Conservation District Otter Creek Water Tour. 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. Otter Creek at Aral Rd, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. Join us for our first water tour of the year. For more information call 231-882-4391 or visit [www.benziecd.org](http://www.benziecd.org)

All June

Frankfort Community Federal Credit Union will be collecting donations each month for Benzie Area Christian Neighbors (BACN). A collection box is located in the credit union lobby.

Saturday, June 7

Beginning Birding with Carl Freeman. Freeman will lead this trip to help birders develop their identification skills. There should be enough warblers around to

challenge everyone, beginner or not. Location: Adams Road parking lot on River Road. 8 a.m. 352-4739

Saturday, June 14

Bike Benzie is taking on a new look this year, and a new date! Now being held in June, in addition to tour rides of 30, 62 and 100 miles, riders can also opt to participate in our new Fondo to experience the challenge of a timed ride. Participants will also enjoy a Party with food and music at Crystal Mountain after the ride. Registration opens at 8 a.m. on March 1 at [www.zapevent.com](http://www.zapevent.com)

MORE EVENTS AT BENZIE-CALENDAR.COM Submit events, press releases, or historical dates to [Calendar@BetsieCurrent.com](mailto:Calendar@BetsieCurrent.com).

You can find a complete community calendar, updated by multiple businesses and organizations, at Benzie-Calendar.com.

BENZIE-CALENDAR.COM

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*The Betsie Current flows again*



Super-host Stacy Pasche (left) kept the chaos in check long enough for Aubrey Ann Parker (middle) and Emily Votruba (right) to knock out all the other competitors at the Spelling Bee. The winning word was “eudaemonic”.

Some of you donated to our Kickstarter fundraising campaign:

Dan Aldridge, Chris Arvidson, Jon Bald, Jim Barnes, Ben Bates, Sean Brown, Debbie Burditt, Kimberly Chinavare, Ted and Marcia Curran, Liz Davis, Quinn Davis, Sylvia Duncan, Diane Dupuis, Sarah Eichberger, Luke Evans, David Gardner, Angela Gerych, William Gittlen and Sarah Campbell, Jason Gollan, Jack Gyr, Ben Houston, Heather Huffstutler, Evan Jones, Floyd Kearns, Emily Kotz, Kris Kunz, Katie Krezoski, Ellen MacDonald, Don Marks, Charlie McDaniel, Wendy McDaniel, Kristine Mills, Anne-Marie Oomen, Ann Parker, Tad Peacock, Pressmeister Oils, Ron and Terri Parker, Linnea Priest, Katherine Rapin, Christina Ryan-Stoltz, Ken Scott, Jack Seaman, Trevor Seela, Joshua Stoltz, Yancey Strickler, Marie Sweetman, Steve Tebo, Ryan Thompson, John Vinkemulder, Brett Walton, Julie Weeks, Mimi and Norm Wheeler, Timothy Fitzgerald Young.

Others celebrated our official launch party and Spelling Bee Fundraiser on April 11. Together with Stormcloud Brewing Company, \$800 was raised for journalism and art programs at Frankfort-Elberta High School and Benzie Central High School.

We hope all of you will read us in print and online and contribute story ideas and constructive criticism. Say hello to us at [editor@BetsieCurrent.com](mailto:editor@BetsieCurrent.com).



# Beulah Environmentalists with an Impact

Get to know Joan Wolfe and Jeannette Feeheley

By Jacob Wheeler  
Current Editor

A couple of environmental advocates from Beulah were recently honored for their impassioned grassroots efforts.

Joan Wolfe was inducted into the Michigan Environmental Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the Gerald Ford Museum in Grand Rapids on April 10. Wolfe founded the West Michigan Environmental Action Council and coordinated the passage of the landmark Michigan Environmental Protection Act of 1970. She was also active in the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Inland Lakes and Streams Act of 1972.

In 1973, she was appointed by former Governor William Milliken to the Michigan Natural Resources Commission; she was the first woman to be named to such a state commission, and she eventually became its chair. She was also a member of the first Natural Resources Trust Fund Board. Wolfe is author of the book *Making Things Happen: How to be an Effective Volunteer* (Island Press, 1991), which is based on her experience in the environmental movement and outlines the basic skills that volunteers need to make a stronger impact.

The induction ceremony in Grand Rapids honored Michigan environmental stalwarts including: Norm Spring for leading the fight to ban the pesticide DDT in Michigan; the late Tom Washington for suggesting that Michigan put a 10-cent refund on bottles and cans; Don Inman for conceiving of the

Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund; and Dave Dempsey for authoring six conservation books. The honorees waxed poetic about previous environmental victories, but also foreboded about current and future battles, such as the struggle over fracking for oil and gas in Michigan's shale formations. Here in Benzie County, a new generation of environmentalists are organizing to preserve Beulah's Cold Creek.



Fracking for oil and gas in Michigan's shale formations is an important new battle facing environmentalists. Photo by Jacob Wheeler.

A month earlier, Jeannette Feeheley's 13-year struggle to both protect the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore from development and preserve the public's access to it triumphed. President Obama signed the Sleeping Bear Wilderness bill into law on March 13, nine days after it passed the House of Representatives. The bipartisan legislation was shepherded by Republican Congressman Dan Benishek and Democratic Senator Carl Levin, representing a rare across-the-aisle effort in Washington, D.C.

"I'm ecstatic that we got it past the finish line," Benishek told *The Current's* sister publication, the *Glen Arbor Sun*. "This is the first wilderness-type bill that has passed in five years. It's a model for how these types of bills should be done in the future, because it's based on what local citizens want. This was developed in the area to make sure that the Park remains open."

The wilderness bill, a rare example of popular legislation with bipartisan support, designates approximately 32,500 acres of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore as "wilderness" areas. Just as important to both citizens and lawmakers, the bill protects county roads, historical structures, and access to recreation and enjoyment of Lake Michigan. The right to hunt and fish in designated wilderness areas is specifically protected in this legislation.

Here's how Feeheley got involved: a 1981 Wilderness Study by the National Park recommended that the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, which 33 years ago was still in its infancy, attempt to acquire all county roads within the Park and zone them as "wilderness", thereby keeping out all motor vehicles and heavy foot traffic from such cherished Lake Michigan beaches as Port Oneida, Good Harbor, and Esch Road.

The full implications of that Wilderness Study didn't surface until 2002 when Lakeshore officials proposed a General Management Plan (GMP) that, in keeping with the 1981 recommendation, would close county roads to the public, potentially demolish historic structures such as barns, and also push fishermen and hunters off the land. By 2002, though, communities surrounding Sleeping Bear had grown into booming destinations for tourism and recreation and were largely dependent on those beaches, those iconic symbols, and those resources. Shutting much of the Lakeshore to those public uses would have dealt a devastating blow to our towns and townspeople.

Reaction to the 2002 GMP was swift and angry. Public meetings at Lakeshore headquarters in Empire were swarmed by the impassioned masses; Frankfort resident and then-Park interpreter Bill Herd told the *Glen Arbor Sun* that the Lakeshore's push for wilderness was being done behind the backs of the public, and without the basis of any concrete scientific studies. Meanwhile, Feeheley and other concerned citizens formed the

advocacy group "Citizens for Access to the Lakeshore" to fight the Park's 2002 GMP.

As Feeheley pointed out during her testimony to Congress last summer, "this Park had not originated with vast amounts of never-used or never-privately owned land, but of land that had been mostly held and used by small, private landowners for two centuries ... In order for the Park to become a reality, most of those private owners had to be removed from their land after the 1970 enabling legislation was passed." In other words, the Park was trying to turn back the clock and create wilderness where wilderness hadn't existed for many decades.

"The bill is a win/win for proponents of wilderness and conservation as well as proponents of public access and varied recreation usage," the Beulah native concluded. "It is not a bill where the proponents give grudging, reluctant support, feeling compromised and unhappy about something. Rather, this is a bill wherein almost everyone involved has emerged quite satisfied."

## Current Flows

Continued from page 1

copies of this free, full-color, advertisement-funded paper to businesses throughout Benzie County. Similarly, our story coverage area will stretch from the beaches of Elberta to the slopes of Crystal Mountain and include the vibrant communities surrounding Crystal Lake — Frankfort, Beulah, and Benzonia.

We'll cover upcoming events including art, music, and film festivals. You'll also find feature stories about favorite local businesses and the devoted characters who make these towns thrive, both as summer boom towns and as tight-knit communities in the fall and winter. We'll also run in-depth stories that analyze larger trends in our towns and in the region at large: what's happening with the charter fishing industry; what's happening in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore; what direction the Benzie Bus is taking and how it will impact riders; how Stormcloud brewery and the Oliver Art Center have become new community anchors in downtown Frankfort; and what ideas might take hold in Beulah and Honor to help revive those communities.

*The Betsie Current* will publish its next edition on May 22, just before Memorial Day weekend, the unofficial kickoff to the summer tourism season. In mid-June, we'll preview the Frankfort Craft Fair and reel in a story about marina fishing. By high summer, we'll print approximately every two weeks and preview all the action: Fourth of July fireworks, art fairs, street sales, barbecues and car shows. Keep current with *The Current*.

## Who's Pushing The Current?

*The Betsie Current* is edited and published



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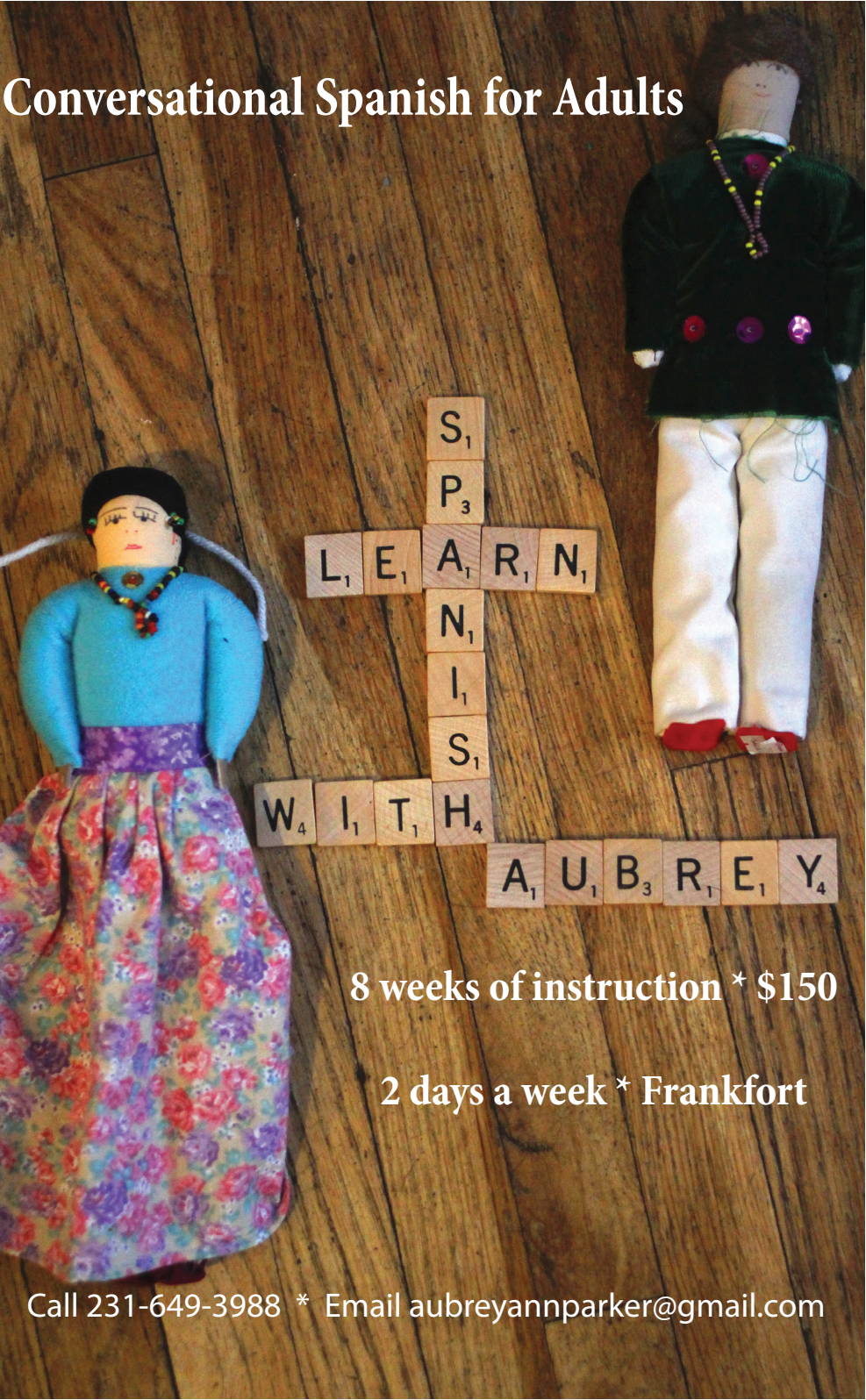
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# Water Festival

Continued from page 1

including an interactive recycling exhibit and crafts, water tasting (tap vs. bottled), a worm farm, an aquatic bugs display, and the Nature Discovery Live Reptile & Amphibian Exhibit, which has probably been the most popular part of past festivals, with kids and adults alike taking turns holding all kinds of Michigan frogs, snakes, and salamanders. Students from other elementary schools are invited to come with their parents once the school day is finished, from 3-6 p.m.

From 6- 9 p.m., the Water Festival will move to The Garden Theater for a panel discussion, a keynote address, and foot-stomping music. Interlochen Public Radio's Peter Payette will return to lead this year's panel discussion, which centers around the theme of "Keeping Our Waters Blue," with an emphasis on the many different industries that affect our water quality. The panel features Benzie County Drain Commissioner Christy Anderson, Benzie County Department of Public Health's Bill Crawford, Glen Lake Association watershed biologist Rob Karner, and Bernie and Sandee Ware of the Ware Farm in Bear Lake.

Keynote speaker Derek Bailey will offer an indigenous perspective regarding our beautiful waters. He holds a Master's degree in Social Work and was appointed by President Obama in May 2010 to the National Advisory Council on Indian Education. Kalamazoo-based Graham Parsons & The Go Rounds are

by two local journalists and entrepreneurs.

Jordan Bates is a Frankfort native and web editor at Circle of Blue, a dynamic online publication that reports on global water issues and its relationship to food, energy, and health. Bates holds a BGS from the University of Michigan. For 29 years, he has lived in Benzie County, hiking its trails, swimming its lakes, exploring its forests, and most recently learning to fish its waters. For the past 12 years, Bates has built, optimized, and fixed websites, sold eco-building products online, laid a few brick-paver sidewalks, and auctioned off the odd antique or two. He's also a summer fixture on the Frankfort beach volleyball courts. Contact him at Jordan@BetsieCurrent.com.

Jacob Wheeler, who grew up in nearby Glen Arbor, has published the *Glen Arbor Sun* (GlenArborSun.com), a similar community newspaper in nearby Leelanau County, since graduating from high school in 1996 (together with Bates). He is a 35-year-old independent journalist, editor, and teacher who recently returned to Northern Michigan after stints in Minneapolis and Chicago, together with his wife, Sarah Eichberger, a Beulah native and Benzie Central alum. In addition to *The Betsie Current* and the *Glen Arbor Sun*, Wheeler teaches journalism at Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City. He holds an MFA in Creative Nonfiction from Goucher College and a BA from the University of Michigan. Wheeler's book *Between Light and Shadow, a narrative investigation of the Guatemalan baby adoption industry*, was published by the University of Nebraska Press in 2011. Wheeler loves to bike, swim, travel, and promote all things Northern Michigan through the written word. Contact him at editor@BetsieCurrent.com.

Thanks for your readership, and have a great spring!

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The inaugural Benzie County Water Festival in March 2011 attracted more than 300 attendees during a weekend of events that also featured world-class Michigan musicians, speakers and workshops. "Come Softly, Stand Firmly: Understanding the responsibilities of being the most beautiful place in America" was the theme of the second festival in April 2012, a one-day event that featured three panels of local experts



Rock on at the water festival. Photo courtesy of Sarah Lousignau.

who addressed the state of Benzie County's watersheds, as well as the economic impact of entrepreneurial business in our region. "Under The Surface," the theme for last year's festival in April 2013, included panels on fracking in Michigan and the dredging of Betsie Bay, as well as a keynote address about Northwestern Michigan College's Water Studies Institute. Last year, the Festival broadened its reach to more young people with a Water Science Fair by 50 Benzie Central High School science students.

Seeking to emulate the precedent set by the past three years, this year's festival will again feature world-class Michigan musicians, panel discussions and speeches from water luminaries, interactive multimedia projects and presentations, visual art, children's activities, and connections to local campaigns and projects. Through fundraising efforts, the Benzie County Water Festival is free and open to the public, however donations are encouraged and will help to fund future events. For more information, check out [www.water-festival.org](http://www.water-festival.org) or contact Aubrey Ann Parker at (231) 649-3988.

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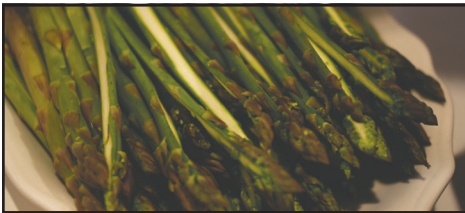
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### Spring Transitions, By Aubrey Ann Parker

The snow melts, and the sap runs. The flurries give way to showers, and from the drying puddles emerge green shoots. The transition from winter's slumber to spring's revival is one we can delight in through traditions that have been passed down through generations and those that we've just created. All you wild northern creatures, it's time to come out of your burrows and step into the sun. Shake out your feathers and brush off your fur. Sew your seeds, put down roots, gather asparagus, rhubarb, wild leaks, and morels. It's time to be social, so join in the fun.

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### Upcoming Workshops

**Still Life – Oil or Pastel**  
Instructor: Marianna Defer-Pfeifer  
May 15 – 17, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

**Loosen Up with Confidence**  
Instructor: Helga Flower  
May 19 – 22, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

**Spring Flowers – Watercolor**  
Instructor: Edee Joppich  
May 28 – 30, 9:30 am – 3:00 pm

**Exploring Watercolor**  
Instructor: Susan Lingg  
May 30, 1:00 – 4:00 pm

**Pastel Painting: An Introduction**  
Instructor: Debra VanLeen  
June 4 – 6, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

**Painting Animals with Soft Pastel**  
Instructor: Debra VanLeen  
June 12 and 13, 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

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“Out of the Box” Ladies Event—June 12  
Field Trip to Dow Gardens—June 18

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