

Mr. Eagan’s Opus

Retiring Benzie Band director also a community leader

By Mitch Kennis

Current Contributor

Typically, band directors conduct music. Few also conduct the events that rally an entire community.

With a whistle around his neck and a floppy sun hat to hide his fair skin and red hair, Michael Eagan smiles from the front of a sea of red t-shirts. Students carry instruments that glimmer and shine, while the drums keep rhythm to the stride of their feet down the main stretch of town.

“This will be my 24th time doing the parade, the first one being in 1993,” says Eagan, who retired earlier this month after serving 24 years as Benzie Central’s band director. Eagan has led the marching band in Beulah’s Fourth of July parade for nearly a quarter century, and

he plans to finish this tradition on a high note, by inviting alumni to join the current students.

“This one is essentially the same thing, except we invited alumni to come back and play in the band,” Eagan says. “They can bring a red shirt and their instrument. If they don’t have their instrument, we’ll hand them a flag.”



For the 24th year, Michael Eagan will once again lead the Benzie Central marching band in Beulah’s Fourth of July parade. This year, Benzie Central alumni are encouraged to join in. Photo courtesy of Michael Eagan.

The invitation to Eagan’s past students is also open to any alumni who played in the Benzie Central band under the direction of Cameron Tonn or Calvin T. Whitmore, the band directors who preceded Eagan. This could potentially double the size of the usual marching band that tramps down Crystal Avenue, past Myers Granary Antique Market, to South Benzie Boulevard and follows it through downtown Beulah, all the way to US-31. The turnout is expected to make this parade the liveliest in years, though he has had some other lively moments with the marching band.

“I remember one year, all the lights went out just before halftime at a football game,” Eagan says. “I think they turned on the lawn sprinklers, and it couldn’t handle the

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Food-glorious Food Trucks

Elberta Farmers’ Market welcomes Grow Benzie

By Jacob Wheeler

Current Editor

The gourmet food truck craze has brought diverse culinary options with a low-carbon footprint to city streets and public parks nationwide over the past decade—to the delight of millennials, hipsters, and tourists, as well as working Americans who no longer have the time to drive home for a relaxing lunch hour. Food trucks have surged in the age of Facebook, the DIY career, and the frenetic pace that now defines life in 21st-century America.

Food trucks have also arrived in Benzie County, but forget about 15-minute lunch breaks or hustling for an \$8 taco between business calls. Here in our woods, the laidback summertime ritual still resembles a meandering creek.

Over the winter, there was lots of discussion in Benzie about whether food trucks should be allowed, and if so, where they should be allowed and when. Deliberations are ongoing. Mobile vending has been tried here before.

Food trucks may never become as a big of a hit in this county as they are in nearby Traverse City, but a spark has definitely been lit, and they may yet catch on.

Up For Discussion

In Elberta, the village council—under advisement from the Parks & Recreation Commission—decided in March to allow food trucks this summer on a trial basis during the Thursday farmers’ market.

“Everyone who has approved of this concept at the farmers’ market thinks this

Please see Fud Trucks on page 14

Celebrate The Fourth

8am - Firecracker 5k Race, Beulah

9am - 3pm Lake Ann Homecoming

10am - Independence Day Parade, Frankfort

10am - Art at Mineral Springs Park, Frankfort

10am - Carnival opens (July 1 - 4), Frankfort

10:30am - Kids’ Games in the Park, Beulah

11am - Face Painting in the Park, Beulah

Noon - Lion’s Club Chicken BBQ, Frankfort

Noon - 3pm - Sand Sculpture Contest, Frankfort

Noon - Food Concessions, Beulah

1:30pm - Independence Day Parade, Beulah

Dusk - Fireworks! Frankfort and Beulah

Cream Cup Dairy

Milk with a personal touch

By Aubrey Ann Parker

Current Editor

A full-sized white Ford van pulls into the driveway. A compressor that sits on top of the van keeps the body of the van—essentially a refrigerator box—at a cool 40 degrees Fahrenheit inside, and a small chest freezer sits just inside the back doors. In forest green letters, it says, “Cream Cup Dairy, Kaleva, MI,” along with a phone number on both the driver’s side and passenger’s side of the van, and both front doors say, “Home Delivery.”

A middle-aged man in black slacks, black shoes, and a light blue button-down shirt hops out of the van with a wire metal carrier in his hand. He moves fast to the house and pulls three clean, half-gallon glass bottles from a blue plastic cooler on the porch stoop. He places them in the wire carrier, grabs an

envelope from the cooler, and walks back to the van. He opens the back door to the refrigerator box and places the empty glass containers inside. Then he pulls cash and a paper order form, filled out with pencil, from the envelope. Inspecting the order form, the man reaches into the refrigerator box and pulls out two half-gallon bottles of skim milk and a plastic tub filled with one pound of salted butter, all of which he places into his metal carrier. He sets the carrier on the ground briefly as he opens the passenger door and places the cash into a black bag on the seat. He pulls out some change, places it back into the envelope with a new, blank order form, and goes to the back of the van.

“Since I have a freezer with me, I can carry ice cream all the time now,” says David Miller, whose eyes smile from behind his glasses as he opens the back doors and reaches into the freezer, opens the top, and pulls out a pint of vanilla.



David Miller is the milk man. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

In his other hand, he picks up the wire metal carrier and walks briskly back to the house where he carefully places the fresh, cold products into the blue cooler. He walks back to his van, hops in, and is on to the next house in less than four minutes total.

Miller has the delivery system worked out—but he is not just the deliveryman.

Today is Thursday. Miller pasteurized, separated, and bottled this batch of milk on Monday. He also milked the cows, which he and his son do every morning and evening. He will deliver to about 65 more homes today. He delivered to about 40 yesterday. And tomorrow, he will do another batch of bottling. On Tuesday and Wednesday, Miller’s one employee delivered to 16 stores as far south as Montague, as far west as Frankfort, and as far north as Beulah. He also delivered milk to Frankfort and Manistee Catholic Schools, as

Please see Moo on page 10

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Nicole Bates: Encouraging Expression

Questions & Answers with community faces

Nicole Bates, 38, has had a special connection to Benzie County for as long as she can remember. When she was growing up, her grandparents had a cottage on Otter Lake and her family spent time there every summer. Years later, Bates met her husband, Ben, while both were attending Northern Michigan University; as it turns out, Ben grew up less than 20 miles from her family cabin. Needless to say, the couple said their vows at the site of the family cabin (gone by that time, as the property was acquired by Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore).

However, the couple would not settle here for another 13 years—Ben joined the U.S. Air Force out of college, and the couple has lived in a bevy of states from Mississippi to Oklahoma, from Kansas to Washington. While her husband has consistently worked in the air, Bates has held jobs related to her training in speech therapy, but she has also been a stay-at-home mom, an organic-farm homesteader, and a sci-fi and fantasy writer.

Finally landing in Frankfort in August 2014—one month after the birth of their second child, daughter Sophia—Bates began her own speech therapy practice, Encouraging Expression, which ranges from one-on-one, in-home appointments locally to virtual, online sessions with kids in school systems as far away as West Virginia. With a Bachelor's degree in communication disorders and a Master's in speech-language pathology, Bates has clinical experience with children and adults, in settings such as nursing homes and special needs classrooms.

Continuing with our interview series on impactful Benzie County characters, The Betsie Current caught up with Bates at her home office.

THE BETSIE CURRENT: When did you know that you wanted to work in speech?

NICOLE BATES: I decided to become a speech therapist after a career-day presentation that I attended as a senior in high school. I wanted to help people. I'm very interested in language and communication, and this sounded like a great career choice.

CURRENT: Tell us about the different places that you have worked, and how does that compare with the work that you are doing now?

BATES: After graduate school in 2002, I moved to Mississippi to be with Ben, who was in the Air Force pilot-training program. I worked in a skilled nursing facility in Alabama for a year and a half. We spent three months in Oklahoma, then moved to Kansas for Ben's first assignment. I worked as a speech therapist in an Early Childhood Center in Haysville, Kansas, for two and a half years. Next, we moved to Spokane, Washington, where I worked in a private practice that specialized in helping individuals on the autism spectrum. I worked there for about two years, with some time off to have our first child, our son, Colton [now eight years old]. After Spokane, we moved to Illinois. I took two years off to stay home with Colton and instead ran our organic family farm and wrote my first full-length novel. When Ben was done with his assignment in Illinois, he transferred to the Michigan Air National Guard. We had hoped to move to Frankfort at that time, four years ago, but there was not a job available for me in the local area at that time. So we moved to my hometown of Indian River, where we lived for two years. I worked as a speech therapist for Cheboygan-Otsego-Presque Isle Educational Service District as an early childhood and pre-school therapist covering three counties. I became pregnant with our second child, and at that point, we decided to make the move to Frankfort.

CURRENT: Why did you move to Benzie County?

BATES: We both love the area. Ben wanted to be near a bigger airport, in order to pursue his dream of becoming an airline pilot—and he just started a new job with United Airlines last month—and our son was about to start first grade; we felt that, if we were going to make the move, now would be the best time for all of us.

CURRENT: When did you start working in Benzie County? How is that working out?

Explain a little about the demographics of the people that you see in an average week. What does your weekly schedule look like?

BATES: I have always wanted to start my own private practice for speech therapy, and I finally did so in May of 2015. It's been steady over the last year, and I'm currently taking new patients. I feel there is a huge need in this area for speech therapy services—there are limited options for families in rural communities, unless you drive all the way to Traverse City or Manistee. I hope to fill that need. My first summer, I had some local clients, both residents and summer visitors. In the winter, with kids going back to school, referrals slowed down, so during the school



Nicole Bates. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

year, I contracted with an electronic therapy company that provides services to schools and private clients over the computer in a FaceTime-type setting; for instance, I worked with kids daily at a school in West Virginia. I also began contracting with Centra Wellness Network of Benzie and Manistee counties, and I currently make home visits for clients as far away as Lake Ann and Manistee, clients ranging in ages from two to 55 years old.

CURRENT: Is there a busy season for you or is it pretty constant year-round?

BATES: I haven't been in business long enough to have noticed specific patterns in referrals; I think a lot of it will depend on the ages of the clients. School-age children can receive services through the school during the school year, and adult residents of assisted-living facilities can typically access services through the hospital or rehab staff for a period of time. It will be the individuals seeking something extra, I think, that will make up the majority of my clientele in the coming years.

CURRENT: How have you seen your work grow and change? How do you hope it will continue to grow? What's next?

BATES: Over the course of my career, I've experienced numerous changes in location, setting, and service-delivery model. I think this has given me a unique background to draw from. The online therapy was a first for me, and it was a great experience. I prefer in-person, but it's a nice option for clients who can't otherwise access needed services. The online therapy means that I can work from my home a lot, and the personalized visits to the homes of my local clients mean that I have been able to somewhat set my own schedule for the past year—both of which have been a plus with my young family, but I hope to eventually have an office space so that clients have the option of coming to me. I would also like to provide a wider variety of services, such as group treatment sessions, maybe baby sign language classes, or have in-house materials that help facilitate communication but that I'm not able to take with me to clients' homes. I think this would also allow me to be more involved in community events.

CURRENT: What are the biggest challenges and rewards of working and living in Benzie County? What is the best or most rewarding part of your job? What is the toughest part?

BATES: The biggest challenges, so far, have been spreading the word about the availability of this service and the travel time that is involved in conducting home visits. The most rewarding part is always helping someone, whether it's helping them to engage with others non-verbally, improving their comprehension of language, or helping them to become a more accurate

or effective verbal communicator. I think that positive human interaction is vital for every person. When someone is not able to communicate with others, it impacts every part of his or her life and can be incredibly frustrating for that individual, as well as for that individual's family. Seeing someone be able to get needs met without a tantrum, be able to engage socially with peers, be able to have a conversation with friends, or be able to communicate confidently with strangers using an augmentative device or improved articulation—it's amazing.

CURRENT: What are some ways that you and your business give back to the community?

BATES: I have donated for the past two years to the Frankfort Elberta Athletic Association annual golf tournament

CURRENT: Tell us about your online speech work. How does it work? Is it gratifying? What's good about it? What's bad about it?

BATES: The online therapy is a contracted service through an e-therapy company. I meet with a client on a video-conferencing program that allows us to see and hear each other, as well as share a screen to participate in the same activity. It was exciting to learn a new service-delivery model. I think it's a great option for clients who can't otherwise access services. It's very fun for kids and students, and they tend to stay engaged simply because it's on the computer. It's more challenging for some diagnoses but works great for articulation and expressive language therapy. I miss the personal connection of being present with the client. I would like to focus on building my local clientele and perhaps, down the road when I have an office space, offer online services, as well.

CURRENT: What other things are you involved with? How did you get involved with them and why are you passionate about these causes?

BATES: At this point, mostly my kids.

CURRENT: What local races are your favorite to run?

BATES: Firecracker 5k on 4th of July, Frozen 5k, Port City run

CURRENT: How long have you been running? What is your favorite distance? How many days a week do you run? How many miles in a typical week?

BATES: I've been running since college. I took a PE jogging class, decided I loved it, and started running a lot on my own. I walked on to the NMU Cross-Country team in 1997. My favorite race distance is probably 10k or half-marathon. I run six days a week. Typically six miles for five days and then a longer run of nine to 12. I'm still working back up to the 12 after Baby #2. Probably about 38-40 miles per week right now.

CURRENT: How many times have you run the Beulah Firecracker 5k?

BATES: I started running this race when I started dating Ben in 1998. We've missed a couple over the years, but maybe 16 times?

CURRENT: At what age did you know that you liked running? What is it about running that you liked so much?

BATES: In high school I played basketball, volleyball, and softball. We had track but not cross-country so I didn't discover my love of running until college. Volleyball was my favorite sport, and I played on club teams through college, but as I got older and moved, it became harder to find teams and places to play. It's much easier to fit a run in around work or with kids. I like the time outdoors, I like pushing myself physically, and at this point running for me is like coffee for most people. Until I get my run in, I'm kind of tired and cranky.

CURRENT: What is your proudest achievement?

BATES: My proudest work-related achievement is starting my own business. I've always thought that's what I would want to do eventually, but it seemed kind of daunting. I think it's been great. I'm also pretty proud of climbing up—and making it back down—Pike's Peak in a single day by myself. Also completing a novel-length story.

Cousin Curtiss’s Rootstomp Through Benzie

One-man band creates energy of a full band

From staff reports

“Cousin Curtiss” O’Rorke Stedman’s heart-of-summer tour takes him through Benzie County and the Grand Traverse region, where he will play gigs at six different venues over the next month—beginning with a June 30 appearance at Stormcloud Brewing Company in Frankfort and ending with the Dunesville Music Festival in Lake Ann over the weekend of July 22-23.

Cousin Curtiss plays “rootstomp” Americana music, which he describes as “bluegrass, but without the twang.” In particular, he says that he plays a “high-energy, four-on-the-floor-rhythm, acoustically driven style of music.” And he does so with multiple different instruments simultaneously, sometimes hearing from concertgoers after the show that he creates the same amount of energy as a full band might.

Curtiss, now 28, grew up in Onekama and has played gigs around Manistee County since he was 17. More recently, he has expanded his musical act to Benzie County and Traverse City. (This is made easier by the fact that his longtime girlfriend, Kelly Tousley, is a Frankfort native.)

“The uniqueness of the shows in Benzie and Traverse City lies in that most audiences are filled with locals and transients,” Curtiss says. “Typically I can count on a dynamic blend of good friends, fans, and family who know who I am and tourists who have no idea who I am. If I can surprise both sides of the audience, I continue to build a better following.”

Among his influences, Curtiss counts the Earthwork musicians Seth Bernard, May Erlewine, and Joshua Davis, as well as other established and up-and-coming Michigan artists, such as the Ragbirds, The Accidentals, Billy Strings, The Crane Wives, Greensky Bluegrass, Zach Deputy, and Keller Williams.

“I look at those groups and artists and try to figure out what they’ve done, what steps they’ve taken to be where they are musically,” Curtiss says. “These guys are my teachers, even though they probably don’t know who I am.”

Curtiss sees Americana and roots music on the rise here in Northern Michigan—thanks in no small part to Earthwork, a music collective of more than 25 Michigan bands and solo performers that is less like a record label and

more like an opportunity to do meaningful work with a large group of like-minded people. Cooperation, collaboration, and serving the community are the three founding principles of the collective, where there is a conviction in the intrinsic and historical power of music to raise both community and self-awareness.

“What the Earthwork gang has done for music and arts, in general, in this state is tremendous,” Curtiss says. “I would jump at the opportunity to be involved with them at any level. Growing up in the area, I’ve had the opportunity to see Seth and May several times, and they instantly became role models—artists I could look up to and say, ‘See! It is possible to play music full time!’ I must have listened to *Mother Moon* [one of May’s



Cousin Curtiss will perform at six venues in Benzie County and Traverse City over the next month. Photo courtesy of Rachel Kaye.

albums] for an entire summer trying to learn how to really write songs. Songs that weren’t just entertaining but meant something. What Joshua Davis accomplished on [the NBC talent show in 2015] ‘The Voice’ was huge! And when [Season 8 winner] Sawyer Fredrick covered [May Erlewine’s song] ‘Shine On’ in the same season, I remember thinking, ‘Michigan Music is taking over the world!’ I hope that, as I become a better writer and performer, I can cross paths with Seth, May, and Joshua and let them know how many musicians they’ve inspired from this area.”

When Curtiss isn’t rootstomping on stage this summer, he hopes to be near the water, floating on the Platte River or playing volleyball on the Frankfort beach (poorly, he jokes).

Cousin Curtiss performs on June 30 at Stormcloud Brewing Company, July 1-2 at Kilkenny’s Irish Pub House in Traverse City, July 3 at The Cabbage Shed, July 13 at Lake Ann Brewing Co., July 15 at Kaleva Days, and July 22-23 at Dunesville Music Festival. See his full lineup of show dates at Cousin-Curtiss.com.

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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. © 2016, *The Betsie Current*, all rights reserved. www.BetsieCurrent.com

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONSTANTLY FLOWING

Mondays

Pilates with Anna at the Oliver Art Center in Frankfort. Email annamallien@gmail.com if interested. 9-10am.

Circle Time for infants and toddlers at the Benzie Shores District Library at 630 Main Street in Frankfort. Infants and toddlers (+ their parents/caregivers) will have fun rhyming and moving with Miss Char, as well as a focus on repetition. Each week, children build their repertoire of rhymes, both old and new. There is an informal playgroup following Circle Time. 10-11am.

Yoga class for seniors led at no charge by Michelle Leines at The Gathering Place Senior Center, 10579 Main Street in the Honor Plaza. 231-525-0601. 10-11am.

Cards at The Gathering Place. We have a dedicated group of card sharks who play Pinochle weekly during lunch, but we aren't limited to Pinochle: join us for euchre, cribbage, and rummy, too! 12-1pm.

Zumba at The Gathering Place. Your first class is free, and then it's only \$3! All ability levels are welcome. 2:30pm.

Grow Benzie Farmers' Market at 5885 Frankfort Highway (M-115) in Benzonia. 3-7pm.

Tuesdays

Stretch and tone with Jean at Oliver Art Center. 9-10am.

Honor Farmers' & Flea Market in Maley Park. Across from the shopping plaza and senior center with plenty of off-road parking. 9am-3pm.

Benzie Shores District Library offers technology assistance. Learn to download ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines to your personal devices. 10am-12pm.

Music by the Melody Makers at The Gathering Place. 10:30am-12pm.

Knitting Group at Benzonia Public Library. A "knit-along" project for those who want to work on the same project, or bring your own project if you prefer; we'd love your company! Need help? If you are having troubles with a current project, bring it along, and we'll help you get it straightened out. Call Michele at 231-383-5716 with any questions. 1-3pm.

Chair Yoga class for \$5 at The Gathering Place. 3:30-4:30pm.

Zumba at The Gathering Place. 6pm.

Yoga with Kari at Pleasant Valley Community Center in Arcadia. Call 231-383-1883 if interested. 6-7:30pm.

Wednesdays

Zumba at The Gathering Place. 8:30am.

Stay Fit with Doris at The Gathering Place. 10-11am.

Open art studio at the Oliver Art Center. Participants are strongly encouraged to become members and to contribute a donation of \$2 per visit. 10am-4pm.

Bingo at The Gathering Place. Cost is \$1.00 per card or bring a prize. 12:30-1:30pm.

Matter of Balance with the Benzie Council on Aging at Honor Township Hall. 1-3pm.

Local computer whiz Dustin Wolpoff will be on hand after lunch to help navigate your computer, tablet, or smartphone. He will meet with everyone individually for a 15-minute appointment, so sign up at The Gathering Place in advance. A donation of \$2 is appreciated. 1:15pm.

Yoga with Kari at the Oliver Art Center in Frankfort. 231-383-1883. 5:30-7pm.

Thursdays

Elberta Farmers' Market at the Elberta Pavilion Park. 8am-12:30pm.

Stretch and tone with Jean at Oliver Art Center. 9-10am.

Bible Study at The Gathering Place. 10-11am.

Bunco at The Gathering Place. 1-2pm.

Computers with Carol at the Darcy Library at 7238 Commercial Street in Beulah. Ask Carol computer-related questions. Read to Rosie, the cute little dog! 1-5pm.

Quilting at Darcy Library. 2:30-5:30pm.

Storytime for preschoolers at the Benzonia Public Library in the Children's Room. Miss Amanda will lead us through an informal time to socialize, make new friends, and hear great stories, followed by a craft or whimsical coloring sheets. 3-4pm.

Everyone is welcome to attend Open Clay Studio at the Oliver Art Center, including

families! Per 4-visit block (12 hours total, used how you like), \$60 fees cover one adult or one adult and child pair. It can be as fun or focused as a student prefers, and all skill levels should consider taking part. 3-6pm.

Yoga with Kari at the Ware Farm of Bear Lake. 231-383-1883. 3-4:30pm.

Storytime with Kris at Darcy Library. 4:30pm.

Coloring & Creativity Club for Adults at Darcy Library. 5:30-7pm.

Fridays

Bunco at The Gathering Place. 9:30-10:30am.

Fun Fridays at Benzie Shores District Library: Kids and their parents/caregivers are invited to join us! Programs are free and targeted at preschool children, though kids of all ages are welcome. For the parents, are you tired of technology? Coloring for Grown-ups is a stress-free hour of coloring while the kids play. Everyone welcome. All materials supplied by the library. 10-11am.

Fridays with Britt: Drop in for a garden tour, ask questions, and learn tips from Grow Benzie's greenhouse manager about soil health, seed starting, and garden planning. Free, donations accepted. 10am-12pm.

Wii Bowling at The Gathering Place. 1-2pm.

Family Storytime: Gather 'round for stories, rhymes, and songs with Ashley at the Darcy Library. Storytime is designed for children ages 2-5, but all are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and be sure to sign up for a library card so you can borrow our books to read at home! 3-3:45pm.

Crystal Mountain Farmers' Market in Thompsonville. 3-6pm.

Saturdays

Frankfort Farmers' Market at Open Space Park on Main Street, between 7th and 9th streets, along the waterfront. 9am-1pm.

Farmers' Market and Flea Market at the Interlochen Eagles #3503 at 20724 Honor Highway/US-131, three miles west of Interlochen. Consisting of Michigan-grown fruits and veggies, flea marketers, cottage-food vendors, artisans, arts & craft vendors, and independent reps. 12-4pm.

Sundays

Integrative Yoga with Jessica at the Oliver Art Center. Young or old, novice or seasoned practitioner, yoga is for everyone! Explore yoga on your own terms and discover all that it can do for you. Adult drop-in fee is \$15, student/senior drop-in fee is \$10. Call 231-620-3528 if interested. 10:30-11:30am.

ON DECK

Thursday-Saturday, June 23-25
Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear: Kraitz Cabin

volunteer preservation project. Help out at the oldest mainland structure in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The replacement of deteriorated logs will have been completed by our log-restoration contractor. In this project, volunteers will re-build the roof and the loft floor, as well as clean up around the cabin. Come for as many days or hours as you are able. Construction skills helpful. Wear closed-toed shoes, bring a lunch and water. Email phsb@leelanau.com with quesitons. M-22 to Bohemian Road South, on left. 9am-4pm.

Friday June 24

Star Party at the Betsie Valley District Library. Sponsored by the Grand Traverse Astronomical Society. Bob Moler will present a Twilight Talk on the planets. 9pm.

Friday-Saturday, June 24-25

Nightcrawler hunt on Friday, so you can catch your own bait. Annual Free Kids Fishing Day on Saturday. Free lunch and t-shirt + fishing rods to all kids! Mineral Springs Park in Frankfort. 231-352-7251

Friday-Sunday, June 24-26

Battle at the Betsie fishing tournament. Friday is Ladies Battle, with a \$100 entry fee and weigh your best five. Saturday and Sunday are Battle at the Betsie, with a \$300 entry fee and weigh your best five in two days. All captain’s meetings and weigh-ins take place at Big Bob’s Up North Outfitters in Frankfort. Prizes and bonuses, including \$600 cash. Visit BigBobsUpNorth.com for more information.

Saturday June 25

Take a guided hiking tour through the Michigan Legacy Art Park at Crystal Mountain learning about Michigan history, the environment, and sculpture as you go—a fun activity for adults and families. Riding tours are available to guests. 10-11am.

Saturday June 25

Birding tour at Michigan Legacy Art Park. with Keith Westphal, an active birder for 48 years, to identify birds by their song. Bring your binoculars to spot birds that make the 30-acre preserve home each spring. 8-10am.

Saturday June 25

Join renowned naturalist Carl Freeman on a dragonfly hike at Upper Herring Lake. Carl will discuss the various species of dragonflies and other insects at the preserve. Meet at the parking lot along M-22. 12:30pm

Saturday June 25

Solstice Festival: Musicians and entertainers, such as Jake Frysinger, Barefoot, Super 77, TC Knuckleheads, Lou Thunder, and Cousin Curtiss. Activities for kids, including face painting, games, horse rides, gross-food-eating contest, bounce house, and prizes. Adults can enjoy the beer garden, along with local wines and food from local restaurants and vendors. Fireworks. 12pm-1am.

Sunday, June 26

Nordic Notes with the Benzie Area Symphony Orchestra. Come and celebrate our new conductor and musical director, Tom Riccobono, as we begin our 36th season. Tom will be featured on *Concertino for Trombone* by Larsson. The brass sections will be featured at this concert. We have three Johann Strauss pieces, a Vaughan Williams piece, and we end

on *Stars and Stripes Forever* by Sousa. 7pm.

Wednesday, June 29

Bat facts! Bat Stories! Bat Crafts! Come and enjoy the Bat Story Hour at the Betsie Valley District Library. After the story hour, sign up for the summer reading program. Read and



earn prizes! 11am.

Friday-Sunday, July 1-3

Benzie County Community Chorus Sounds of Summer Concert. Upper level of the Mills Community House at 891 Michigan Avenue (US-31), Benzonia. 7:30pm.

Saturday, July 2

22nd Annual Lake Ann Homecoming is Sponsored by the Almira Historical Society Fun day in Lake Ann Opening Ceremony, bands, tractor & vintage car parade, luncheon, children’s events, food. 231-275-7557. 9am-3pm.

Monday, July 4th

Beulah Events:
8am: 5K Firecracker Run – Beulah Park
8am-11am: July 4th Pancake Breakfast Buffet at the Hungry Tummy Restaurant
9am (tbd check back on time): 1 mile family walk/run – It’s Free at Beulah Pavilion
10:30-Noon: Kids Games in the Beulah Park
11am: Face Painting in the Beulah Park
Noon: Food Concession in Beulah Park sponsored by the Boy Scouts
1:30pm: Independence Day Parade – downtown Beulah – Parade Entry Form
2:30pm: Kids Greased Pole Climb – Beulah Park
Daytime Music
3:30pm: Coin Hunt on Beulah Beach
4:30pm: Rubber Duck Race (Boy Scouts) duck rental available
10:30pm: Fireworks! (Alternate Rain Date July 5th) For info. call 231-882-5246

Monday, July 4th

Frankfort Events:
10am: Parade begins
10am: Art in the Park Mineral Springs Park
10am: Carnival Opens (open July 1-4)
Noon: Sand Castle Sculpture Contest at Frankfort Beach
Noon: Lion’s Club BBQ.
10:30ish: FIREWORKS on Frankfort Beach at dusk.



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Elberta Mercantile: Everything Old Is New Again

Very heavy weird old things

By Emily Votruba
Current Contributor

The old Gilmore Township Library on Elberta’s Frankfort Avenue will reopen to the public in mid-July as The Elberta Mercantile Company, a shop full of vintage items, antiques, and collectibles.

Mark and Carol Carlin of Ferndale and Frankfort are your hosts at this renovated and restored midcentury brick building, where one person’s old junk can become someone else’s new treasure (sometimes again and again).

Mark, 32 years an auditor, retired from the State of Michigan in 2010. Carol retired recently from a career in nursing, social work, and research at Wayne State to take care of her elderly parents and to enjoy every possible minute with the couple’s four grandchildren. The joyful integration of old and new—do you see a pattern here?

The Carlins have spent summers and some winters in Frankfort since 1990, when Carol says she first learned the “Frankfort shuffle” from her sister’s mother-in-law, Marge Grix, during an icy winter visit. Over the years, the Carlins have instigated annual events such as the Rough Art show, at Grix’s house (now occupied by Grix’s grandson, local artist Joe Cissell) during the Fourth of July parade and an annual Memorial Day weekend yard sale at their place on Corning Avenue; that sale has included many of the sorts of curiosities they will now be purveying at Elberta Mercantile.

Things like collectible and one-of-a-kind clothing, classic children’s toys (trains, entire year-runs of Matchbox cars, Fisher-Price *matériel*), sports and celebrity memorabilia, signage, furniture, fixtures—and very heavy weird old things.

On a sunny day in June, as renovation work continued on the building, Mark and Carol invited me to sit at a table on the Mercantile’s new coffee terrace, next to a planter from Odom’s Reuse with native flowers, a large green steel wheel from somewhere in Thompsonville, and a rotary reception desk phone from a Sheraton in Detroit. Soon we were talking about “party lines” and stretchable phone cords, and I could tell the conversation was going to flow as freely as the coffee.

The first order of business was to show me the antique chiropractor’s table and tell me its story. The chiropractor’s table looks, Mark aptly points out, like something out of *Young Frankenstein*, with geared adjustment wheels and various panels of cold steel on a huge cast-iron base. *It must weigh 300 pounds*, I think.

“I like anything really old and heavy and metal that looks like it’s going to run forever,” says Marks, who got started collecting just after college, when he bought a big old cash register. “Whiskey barrels. Tiger Stadium seats. Wheels. Just really old heavy stuff.”

“And you gotta understand,” adds Carol, laughing, “when it’s time to lift something huge and heavy, I’m always the one on the other end of it!”

When Mark showed up with the chiropractor’s table in the back of the couple’s van, Carol decided that this time she was not going to be the one on the other end—they would get help from some of their new next-door neighbors.

“So we broke up the Eco-Building Products staff meeting, and they helped us move the table,” she says.

A little while later, another neighbor, Nancy Gumm, came over and mentioned that she and her family were having an estate sale of her dad’s things and that the Carlins might want to check it out. She walked into the building, saw the chiropractor’s table, and said, “Wow, my dad has one just like that!”

As it turned out, Mark had already been to the sale. It was the same table.

Back when the couple first started coming up to Frankfort, Carol says, it was the Smokestack that really kicked Mark’s collecting into gear. “Because you could sell anything there,” she says.

“And after the Smokestack closed, we started accumulating things,” Mark says. He continued to scour resale shops and garage sales, and Frankfort Cleanup Day produced some scores. “We call it the Frankfort Furniture Exchange.”

They have sold things on consignment at the Emporium in Benzonia, as well as at those humongous Memorial Weekend yard sales, when some people would come three days in a row just to look and hang out.

“We’ve always been intrigued by Elberta,” Carol says. “My preferred beach is over here. I like how wild it is. We didn’t know many people over here before. But just since we’ve started this project, we’ve met more people than we’ve maybe met in the whole previous 20 years of coming up here.”

The Carlins recognize that they are taking over a building and a site with a lot of meaning to current and former Elberta “kids,” some of whom are now well into their golden years. Pulling out his copy of Blacklock’s *History of Elberta* and several pages of notes, Mark says he hopes that anyone with information and memories about the library or the Buckner garage or the blacksmiths shops—all there prior—or really, anything at all to share, will step forward.

Remediation, Restoration, and Renewal

The Carlins bought the building from the Village of Elberta for \$60,000 in April. The Village had decided to sell it as part of paring down its mid-six-figure general-fund-balance deficit. In addition to the proceeds from the sale, Elberta will now receive tax revenue from the property.

“I am thrilled to have a new business in Elberta,” says Diane Jenks, president of the Village Board of Trustees. “The library was a great asset, and I am thrilled they saved the building.”

The Carlins considered other locations for their shop, including the Frankfort Building Supply site, but Mark decided that might prove unwieldy, financially and size-wise.

“When you have a place that big, people start dropping stuff off, and you think you have unlimited space, but you don’t,” he says. “Next thing you know, you can’t move, and then the roof starts to leak. The fact that Elberta had already fixed the roof on the library was a big selling point.”

Still, there was much to be done. The Carlins received an extensive report on what remediation might be required.

“We knew there was no lead-based paint, but there was asbestos in the floor-tile mastic and around the windows,” Mark explains. “What was unexpected was the asbestos in

the drywall mudding, which was why all the drywall had to be removed and redone.”

Not to mention that the windowpanes, which they had wanted to save, had to be completely replaced within their original metal frames—they all were cracked or broken during asbestos remediation.

There is certainly heavy-metal contamination in the soil from the garage and the fire, but it is unclear how deep it goes, Mark says. Fortunately there are no underground storage tanks left over from the site’s time as a service station, and it does not seem to be impacting groundwater. Since the building is commercial, the Carlins are not required to get an environmental study or to remediate the ground.

“But we’d love to take care of the back area eventually,” Carol says. “We have an arbor with a swing we found at Frankfort Cleanup Day, and we’d like to set it up back there.”

The Carlins have not only saved the building, they have updated it and restored it to something like its former glory: a fresh coat of stain in a tasteful green with yellow trim, the aforementioned coffee terrace, and—perhaps most spectacularly—the uncovering and restoring of the large windows, long obscured by drywall and bookshelves. The drop ceiling is gone, and a new cool, airy feeling comes from the white-painted steel roof supports high above, the ceiling fans, and the natural light reflecting off the turquoise-colored block walls. With its openness and concrete floor, the Elberta Mercantile will echo the old service station; and in the center of the main room, on wheels so that it can be moved about seasonally, is the old library circulation desk, acting as checkout counter.

Breathe In, Breathe Out

“We don’t specifically buy to sell,” Carol says. “When something good comes along, we’ll have it in the house for a year or two. We’ll enjoy it. And then we’ll let it go... This has always been a dream—probably more so for me—to give Mark an outlet to display and sell. In our house right now, there are things that I’m ready to let go of.”

“Carol says it’s like your body: you’ve got to breathe in and breathe out,” Mark says of their buying and selling. “After we get all our junk in here, then we’ll know more about how much space we have for consignments. But that’s the hope, because people have some nice stuff. And we’ll also take requests, if there’s something you want us to keep our eyes peeled for.”

Both these ideas excite me personally. I, too, have a lot of junk other people might treasure and am addicted to the energy of old things. “Is there any type of thing you won’t consider taking?” I ask.

“I had a colleague at my auditing job who’d say, ‘If it’s not illegal or immoral or fattening, I’ll approve it.’ You just have to use common sense,” Mark says.

“It always bums us out, some of the things people throw away,” Carol adds. “But it means we’ll always have junk!” she says, grinning.

Elberta Mercantile Co., located at 704 Frankfort Avenue/M-22 in Elberta, will be open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. through October. Emily Votruba runs and reports for The Elberta Alert. Additional reporting contributed by Andrew Bolander.



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A Library Built by Kids, for Kids

Many Elbertians still recall Marguerite (Gudemoos) McManus and her library at the American House, on the corner of Frankfort Avenue and Sheridan Street. Aunt Maggie was not Elberta’s first librarian, but she probably deserves that honorary title. The American House hotel that she ran with her husband, George, closed when the lumbering days ended around 1910, and Aunt Maggie—then already a widow—opened the library in her home with the blessing of Gilmore Township in 1918. The American House served as a meeting hall, polling place, and official township library until 1941, when township schools took over the library and most of the better books were taken to the high school. McManus kept her portion of the inventory circulating among Elberta children for many more years, wishing and hoping for the completion of a new library building.

Janet (La Rue) Buck remembers her visits to Aunt Maggie vividly. “When I was a child attending the original Elberta School, I used to stop in to see Aunt

pennies each. The first opportunity to buy a brick was decided by lot and went to a kindergarten named Doris Gonyon; her brick came wrapped in gold foil, and she was promised that it would be displayed in the new building. At the groundbreaking ceremony in the spring of 1955, more than 300 people came to watch Aunt Maggie dig up the first shovelful of dirt. A picture from around that time shows the transfer of the deed from the Buckner property to members of the Village and Township boards as Aunt Maggie McManus looks on, surrounded by children who had been given the day off from school.

But Aunt Maggie and her kids would have to wait a while longer. An August 1957 *Traverse City Record-Eagle* story bemoans the stalling of the project after two years, with all the materials lying—bought and paid for—on the half-finished site. The town had run out of volunteers and had no money to pay professionals. At 83, McManus was still “keeping the books, working elections, and doing all her own housework” at the old American House, the reporter wrote, quoting Maggie: “I guess you could say the whole place is full of antiques, but I must be the antique-est...”

She would indeed live to see the new library doors open in April of 1960, but she never worked at its circulation desk; Aunt Maggie passed away in 1962 at 87. In 1963, the new library building was dedicated to Janet La Rue’s grandparents, Dr. Frank J. and nurse Ellen Bayer La Rue, for their many years of medical service to Elberta and Benzie County. Over the years, the new building would have several librarians, including Ruth Nanni and Lois Holmes.

Jeanne Edwards, an archivist of her grandfather Ray Edwards’s vast collection of Elberta photographs, was too young to remember Aunt Maggie’s place, but fondly recalls getting books on horses and Indians from Mrs. Holmes.

“I am very excited to hear the library building is going to be restored,” she wrote in an email, referring to the new Elberta Mercantile. Molly Van Brocklin Swander concurred: “One of my best childhood memories is going to the Elberta library... Lois Holmes was wonderful.”

In March 2001, the Gilmore Township Library Board and the Village of Elberta regretfully closed the library, lacking operating funds. Lois Holmes also retired at that time, after 30 years. The building continued to serve as the Gilmore Township Hall, polling place, and a location for Planning and Parks & Recreation commission meetings. But because of mold and a decaying roof, all meetings had moved to the Community Building on First Street by December 2015, when a new roof was put on the library building in preparation for its sale.

Bonnie Ness grew up in the Village and recalls Aunt Maggie, Lois Holmes, and the strong feelings that Elberta residents had about the library’s closure.

“I always wanted it to remain a library,” Ness says. “We worked so hard to get it, all through my childhood and early high school. We were so proud of it. I’m so happy to see that it’s going to become something again.”



Carol and Mark Carlin at The Elberta Mercantile Company, with Gordie Howe, June 2016 Trompe l’oeil door painted by Kathleen Baker. Photo by Emily Votruba.

Maggie nearly every day on my way home and revel in the collection of books she had stuffed in every nook and cranny of that rambling old building,” Buck says. “She didn’t use the Dewey decimal system, but she knew where everything was, and she always had wonderful suggestions. Certainly my lifelong love of reading germinated there with her.”

Pat Moyna recalls: “My sisters and I went to the American House every week for years. Aunt Maggie always had warm drinks for us in cold weather. She also read to us and told us stories, including fairy tales she had learned from her mother and other relatives.”

Moyna was away at college by the time the construction of the new library began.

“My personal experience with the [new library site] is limited to sitting with Leon Thomas on the curb in front W.R. Thomas’ Sons General Mercantile and watching Clarence & Al Buckner’s Sinclair Service Station & Garage burn to the ground,” Moyna says. “Water isn’t much good on petroleum fires.”

Out of the ashes of that fire rose the site for a new Gilmore Township library and hall. In 1951, the Buckners donated the property to the Village of Elberta. A modern, flat-roofed building was designed by Alan Blacklock’s son Charles for free; the facility would include adequate space for the library, township meetings, and two public restrooms. It would be built by volunteers and funded by the community; a Frankfort auto dealer donated the first \$100, and the Township board committed \$500 per year. The Village donated \$1,000 and promised the restrooms and furnace. The rest of the money would come from fundraising events, such as a Boston Bean Supper held in 1958.

But perhaps the most important contributors would be the smallest: the children who raised money by buying and selling bricks for



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Spotted Wing Drosophila

Not your average fruit fly

By Anne-Marie Oomen

Current Contributor

I am grossed out. On the video, a creature reminiscent of horror flicks, B-movies, an almost pornographic monster—except it’s not a made-up monster; except it’s real, and it is a monster. Sort of.

The winged thing trembles on a flesh-like surface. The film reveals in full detail the tail-end of the monster’s abdomen, where a serrated ovipositor descends, and a double row of “teeth” pierces the surface. Slowly, with mesmerizing tenacity, she saws into the thin-skinned softness, dipping ever deeper into the flesh. Then, and this is when I feel sick, out of that same organ she forces a single small white egg, deposits it firmly into the hole. The ovipositor closes, lifts like a machine, revealing a tiny filament still extending from the hole—the breathing tube of the egg. The egg’s breathing tube!?!

The creature turns; huge red eyes stare straight into the camera, and after all that, the darn thing starts the process all over. Hundreds of times. I am not kidding.

I am watching a fruit fly, and we could all heave a sigh of relief if it were a regular fruit fly, if it were one of many frequent summer populations: a nuisance, but something we recognize and can manage. But this one—called Spotted Wing Drosophila (*Drosophila suzuki*) because the males have a single dark spot near the tip of each wing—this invasive has the potential to destroy soft fruit harvests throughout Northern Michigan.

Spotted Wing Drosophila (SWD) showed up on the West Coast of the United States back in 2008 (probably carried on canister ships from Asia); in the South and the Northeast over the next two years; and in Michigan in 2010. Then, in 2012, it hit Northern Michigan in late summer.

Researchers hoped that it would be a late-summer pest—if it arrived late in the growing

season, summer’s soft fruits would be safe. Then our winters would kill it off. But each year, researchers and farmers discovered this fly earlier in both traps with lures and in fruit.

Last year, SWD showed up in traps on June 29. Such an early showing means that SWD’s presence now overlaps with cherry season. It loves cherries. And that means it is also here for blueberries, blackberries, and many other beloved soft-skinned fruits, including



Adult male spotted wing drosophila, *Drosophila suzukii* (Matsumura). Photo by Martin Hauser, California Department of Food and Agriculture.

a favorite of mine, raspberries.

That’s how I encountered it.

Last August, I was joyously picking raspberries in my sister’s patch in Oceana County, eating as many as I dropped into my basket. I noticed that some of the beauties tasted vaguely bitter, not as sweet as the first bearing in June, and some were soft in a peculiarly melty way. It didn’t stop me—I grabbed for the plump and ripe, noting smaller ones coming on for another picking.

Picking and eating sun-warmed fruit is happy summer work. Apparently, SWD thinks so, too. My beloved brother-in-law looked up from yard work and hollered over to the patch, “You might want to check those.” At my frown, he added, “Just open one and look inside.” When I did, I found a single white worm wiggling in a raspberry lobe. I picked another. Opened it. Three worms. Then I picked a soft one. Crawling with them. How many had I eaten? *Euuuww*.

That’s the way the SWD works. According to Michigan State Extension agent and specialist at Northwest Michigan Horticulture Research Center, Dr. Nikki Rothwell, they are about as insidious as insects come because “unlike other drosophila that like soft or over-ripened fruit, this one, because of the ovipositor, can infest unripe fruit. It can

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invade cherries in the straw-color phase of ripening.”

The straw-color phase is the yellow color that comes just after cherries lose the green. That early. SWD invades fruit before it is ripe, taking whole harvests without giving fruit a chance to be fruit.

Normally for insect management, commercial farmers use a carefully calibrated system called Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to make decisions about controlling insects and diseases. Farmers dislike using any more spray than they have to, because—besides the high cost of each application—they are no dummies about insect resistance. IPM allows them to identify appropriate treatment, to reduce and rotate the number and kinds of treatments, and to target application for specific pests at specific times in their lifecycle.

But this process could be complicated by climate change: our warmer and longer growing seasons—including the 50 additional above-50-degree days of the last summers—offer better reproductive opportunity for the SWD. Milder winters offer the “winter morphs” (still an unknown) a chance to live until spring and rebuild population.

What do farmers do in the face of this? “Farmers want to be good stewards,” Rothwell says. “They want to take care of land and maintain healthy farms. Most [Northern Michigan] growers seem especially thoughtful about this process and are responsive to good science. They try to be fully informed, use the research, and make smart decisions. But SWD, it’s a game-changer. We need to know more.” She looks thoughtful.

Good science is key. Research is moving quickly, as becomes evident when I visit the Research Center, where I am escorted into the lab. Research technician Karen Powers pulls a tray: dozens of carefully labeled vials from a growth chamber (refrigerator size, but warm), the beginnings of a test colony, which, when mature, will number 3,200—the number of flies necessary to conduct the research for 2016. She uses CO2 to gas one vial, then pours out a couple dozen tiny stunned flies, sorts the older generation from the younger, because “we get more consistent results if flies in a test colony are the same age.” She flicks them apart with a tiny fly brush, brushing the new ones into a fresh vial with a diet of cornmeal, yeast, water, and preservatives. She sets this vial on its side “...until the flies wake up—so they don’t drown in the diet at the bottom of the vial.” Close work.

That process does not even compare to work Powers and others do when the lures arrive, and they turn on the microscopes. It is painstaking, made more challenging by how hard it is to identify the sneaky females—they do not have the identifying wing spots but are distinguished by a subtle golden color and dark leg bands, harder to see.

The researchers match lab hours with long hours in the field. They identify sentinel fruit trees, hang lures, collect, and count. They will measure infestation speed, distance density, and reproductive cycles.

“We need to establish all these variables to make wise decisions about management,” Rothwell says.

Another researcher at MSU figured out how to spray SWD with atomized dye. Researchers could then track range by the

dyed flies—released at specified color/distance intervals—as they showed up in distant lures.

A year ago, Rothwell hypothesized that earlier sweet cherry orchards infest the adjacent but later ripening tart cherries. The team now knows that she was correct; previously infested fruit that remains on or under trees after early harvests may infest later harvests.

“Now we need to know how fast, how many?” Rothwell says. “Might there be a known level of SWD population which we can use to make informed decisions—as there is with the codling moth?”

Other questions: does this mean that farmers must spray after harvests? And a follow-up concern: to what degree does SWD rise from wild hosts—a particularly prickly question. If it does, what does that mean for wild berries?

Rothwell is reassuring and positive: “The more we know, the more likely we are to manage it.”

The Horticulture Station has more than 35 research projects going; many centered on SWD. They are trying to get the science right so that they can give Northern Michigan farmers real information to help them make informed management decisions and not give up on their harvest. Or their farms.

Which is how I end up walking a Leelanau orchard with Rothwell, Powers, and Emily Pochubay (fruit IPM educator) on a blustery morning in late April—with Sadie, Rothwell’s three-year-old daughter, toddling along. The team demonstrates how they do transect research. The Richter farm grows a tart cherry orchard right up against a sweet cherry orchard. Rothwell, Powers, Pochubay, and I walk long rows, tying orange tape on trees, counting off five, hanging a dummy lure (the real ones won’t be hung until the end of May, but they are establishing grids, learning territory). They also note orchard perimeter: what is there, what is wild. They have already asked farmers to remove potential wild hosts, but now they need examples to test—so they search for wild honeysuckle, mulberries, wild raspberries. They dedicate long hours to checking indicators, counting, collecting, communicating. They are observers of the best sort.

We come to the last tree in a long row. I look onto the rough meadow; I look back down the row, see lures set every sixth tree, and see hope that we will learn the solution quickly.

I ask Rothwell if there are bright spots in this dire situation. She says yes, that the greatest hope lies in “... how many people have come together around this threat. As an agricultural community, we are listening more deeply, learning more quickly, sharing more broadly, and making sure everyone is in the loop so we can find solutions that work.”

This story was originally produced for Nature Change, an online magazine that chronicles conversations about conservation and climate change in Northern Michigan. To watch a video featuring Dr. Nikki Rothwell and Anne-Marie Oomen discussing Spotted Wing Drosophila, visit NatureChange.org.

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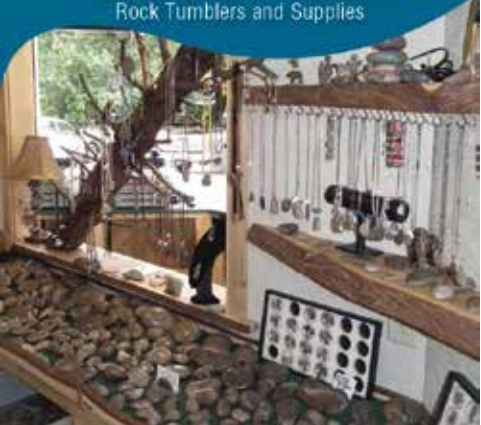
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Continued from page 1

well as Camp Arcadia. Crystal Mountain Resort uses Cream Cup products in all of its on-site restaurants, as well.

Miller conservatively estimates that he spends about 14 hours a day, six days a week, working dairy-related jobs, in addition to the other farm work there is to do on his 100 acres.

“Most farmers farm because they enjoy farming,” Miller says. “At least, hopefully that’s the case for most people.”

It certainly is the case for Miller. He likes how small and family oriented his farm is, though he admits there was a time when he had to make a tough decision about whether or not to increase the size of his herd.

But instead of giving in to the demands of the “big agriculture” system, Miller chose to go it alone—he would own the product, and the process, from one end to the other, from udder to table.

Small Farm, Big Philosophy

Cream Cup Dairy is one of only three small glass-bottling facilities in Northern Michigan, the other two being Hilhoff Organic Dairy in Hersey, Osceola County, and Shetler Family Dairy in Kalkaska. Cream Cup is also the only home-delivery supplier north of Lansing, according to Perry Philibeck, deputy director of the Food & Dairy Division within the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

“David Miller is a great example of what you can do with a small operation,” Philibeck says. “He does a great job.”

After buying his first cow in 1990, Miller began selling to a big milk distributor in 1995. For nearly a decade, Miller watched 500 gallons of milk leave his farm in a truck every few days to be mixed with milk from other farms and sold in supermarkets across the Midwest. But he also watched as the trucking expenses began to rise.

Since there were only a few other dairy farmers in Manistee County, Miller worried there would come a time when his small production would no longer be enough incentive for the distributor to continue to drive what would otherwise be an hour out of its way. Sooner or later, the distributor could decide to skip his small operation entirely.

Miller saw two viable options: significantly increase the size of his herd to make the drive worthwhile for the big distributor or stop working with the distributor entirely.

“I don’t have an interest in having a farm with 100 cows,” Miller says. “I stay small for the sake of my family. I’m not going to fit into the larger agricultural system.”

Miller says his family enjoys the farm because of its small size. There are 18 milk cows: Arby, Bette, Blue, Casey, Coho, Joan, Marlene, Marlow, Squito, Tiny, and Toggle are some of the names.

“Each cow has its own name and needs,” Miller says. “The kids love to help because it’s not that big—it wouldn’t be that way if we were bigger.”

Miller has three children still living at home.

The youngest is 20, and the oldest is 26. They all, unsurprisingly, work farm-related jobs.

“One of the big reasons that I wanted to farm was I wanted something I could do with my children as a basis to their education. Proper values take more than a lecture. It’s about building a relationship—a good wholesome atmosphere for a family,” Miller says. “Sure, it’s lots of work. But too many children these days wander the streets with nothing to do. With a farm, they learn about responsibility—there’s always something to do, and there’s variety of jobs to hold their attention: mechanical equipment, animals, fields, plants.”

Operations

Miller grew up milking goats on his parents’ farm, but he did not buy his first dairy cow until his 30s, after he was married. His wife, Cheryl, had grown up on a dairy farm, and she was instrumental in helping him through those first few years.

“There was a time when she knew more about this than I did,” Miller says of Cream Cup Dairy’s operation, which now includes a large barn, one separator, two pasteurizers, an on-site bottling facility, a huge walk-in cooler, and a delivery van. Cream Cup’s products include: whole, 2%, skim, and chocolate milk; four flavors of yogurt smoothies (cherry, blueberry, apple, raspberry, and orange); three flavors of ice cream (vanilla, chocolate, and black raspberry); heavy cream and half & half; salted and unsalted butter; cheese curds; maple syrup; and eggs.

The Millers have 100 acres, including 80 acres of cropland and pasture on which they grow their own grazing crops, also known as forage. They buy non-GMO corn and soybeans to supplement the herd’s diet. Miller says the cows need the fats that are found in the grains or else they get too thin. He explains that dairy cows should be thinner than the fattened beef cows that we are all used to seeing, but it is a delicate balance to keep fat off the cow’s internal organs, so he consults with a feed nutritionist out of Falmouth.

“You can’t see ribs on a beef cow. Its hips don’t stick out,” Miller says. “But dairy cows are supposed to be thin—not skin and bones, but thin. The real way to tell if a cow is healthy is to look at its coat.”

Every day, each Cream Cup cow eats about 15 pounds of grain and 50 to 80 pounds of forage. In return, she produces about five gallons of milk. The Millers prefer milking the cows in a stable instead of a parlor, which is more often used by big farms.

“This way, each cow has her own spot that she goes to every day,” Miller says. “They’re more comfortable when they get their own spot. You just open the doors, and they walk right in. They know where to go.”

The cows enter the barn at 5 a.m. for morning milking and 5 p.m. for evening milking. Miller buzzes around with a hand-held milk machine, while his son dumps feed from a wheelbarrow in front of each cow. It takes about an hour to an hour and a half to milk the herd, during which time a litter of kittens mills about on the barn’s concrete paths hoping for drops of spilled milk.

Meanwhile, the non-milking portion of the herd is fed outside the barn. The herd has about 25 calves per year, and the Millers keep

all of the female calves that are born. In addition to the 18 milkers, they have 16 young stock females that have not yet had offspring. Once a cow gives birth, the cow will milk for about 10 months. Each cow has about five to seven years of milking, though Miller explains that some are sturdier than others.

He orders bull semen from a catalogue, and each bull is rated for qualities like milk, cream content, udders, feet, so that farmers can continually improve their herds. The semen is delivered to the farm in a liquid nitrogen tank, and Miller inserts it straight into the uterus when the cow is in heat. He says it is a continual sorting process to keep the best milkers and rotate which is being milked and which is giving birth. The farm raises no beef cows.

The Miller’s white house is located just across the road—which is dirt—from the pasture and the barn. A small garden of sunflowers, squash, and other home vegetables is set alongside the dirt driveway, between the house and the bottling facility; the milk travels about 150 yards from the barn to the bottle.

Jason Hege, 35, can be found inside the bottling facility on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays. (On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, he delivers to local stores, restaurants, and schools.) Hege, who travels only one mile to work each day, has worked for Cream Cup Dairy for four years.

“I felt it was the Lord’s leading that brought me here,” Hege explains of how he met Miller’s son-in-law at a wedding in Ontario in early spring of 2012. At the time, Miller was looking to bring someone on full-time to help him with operations. Since Hege had two years of delivery experience and four years of working at a bottling plant—in addition to 25 years before that on his family’s dairy farm—he was the perfect candidate for Cream Cup. By June of that year, Hege had moved his family from his native Pennsylvania to Kaleva, Michigan.

On bottling days, the milk is separated and pasteurized in the mornings and the afternoons are spent bottling. Though it varies slightly with every batch, Miller and Hege make about 165 gallons of whole milk; 200 gallons of 2%; 70 gallons of skim; 115 gallons of chocolate milk, plus about 15 gallons of cream. They go through about 1,200 bottles per week.

“The glass makes it taste better,” Miller says. “And it’s minimally handled, so it’s fresher.”

Consistency and Quality

Miller has built quite a following since 2006, when he first began selling directly to customers instead of to a big distributor. He took people’s names and addresses at the Manistee and Elberta farmers’ markets and began home deliveries.

Every Thursday, Miller’s home-delivery route meanders from Arcadia to Herring Lake to Grace Road in Benzonia, down to Elberta and Frankfort via Airport Road, and then River Road back to Benzonia and through Beulah. A few years back, because of demand, Miller added a Wednesday route through Lake Ann, Interlochen, and Thompsonville.

Most people just leave their coolers set out with order forms filled in, but some come run-



Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

ning out with pen and order form in hand as Miller pulls into the driveway. While they are filling out the form, Miller quickly goes about his methodical system of picking up the empties, making change, and dropping the fresh products. In true Norman Rockwell-esque Americana, at least two dozen dogs greet Miller daily with a bark. He hears about new nephews that were just born and last night’s nail-biting “big game.” He does not distinguish between main roads and dirt roads, even two-track driveways.

“This is the best part of the whole business—delivery,” Miller says. “I like going to see people at their homes and talking with them. It’s a personal touch.”

About half a dozen households have been with Miller since the beginning. He pulls up to a small tan house on Cherry Grove Lane in Frankfort. A big squash sits in the middle of the garden, and a white cooler is set out next to the mailbox.

“She has ordered one quart of milk every week since the beginning,” Miller says. “I think she’s missed one week in 10 years. She never buys much, but she’s very steady.”

This regular repeat customer says a lot about the quality of his product. But it also says a lot about David Miller; every customer is important, even the ones who do not order a lot.

Moreover, if he knows that she has missed only one week in 10 years, that means he has not missed any.

A version of this story first appeared in the 2014 holiday issue of Edible Grande Traverse. To see if Cream Cup Dairy delivers in your area, call 231-889-4158.

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Music in the Park

Beulah

By Rhiannon Hildenbrandt
Current Contributor

There is no doubt that living in Benzie County has its perks. Not only do locals get to enjoy breathtaking scenery on a daily basis, but they also get to take part in a vast array of community activities that help to keep the area thriving year round.

Steve Loveless, a Beulah business owner and passionate artist, is one of the many people who works hard to plan great local events. Particularly, as a member of the Crystal Lake Community Business Association (CLCBA), he coordinates Music in the Park, a series of free concerts that takes place during the summertime in downtown Beulah.

The village, with a population of 342, is attractively situated on the eastern shore of Crystal Lake, just west of the hum of US-31. Known for its liveliness during the day, the downtown scene is not typically much after 5 p.m.—unless you come on a Thursday night, when Music in the Park is going on. The audience, young and old, is encouraged to bring chairs, blankets, snacks, and favorite beverages to the Beulah Village Park and to listen to music as the sun sets.

Loveless describes the event fondly. The atmosphere, he says, is family friendly and appropriate for both locals and visitors alike. Crystal Lake makes an undeniably gorgeous backdrop for the performers who spend an average of an hour to an hour and a half entertaining the audience. He describes the setting for Music in the Park as pleasant and intimate. Although the event is meant to keep the community alive and vibrant for locals, it is a special attraction for tourists, as well.

“It is really a nice, small-town charm that [tourists] get to enjoy that just really makes their visit to Northern Michigan a little bit more special. Then they come back,” he says, adding that some people know about the event ahead of time, while others are pleasantly surprised when they hear the sound of music echoing through the streets of Beulah.

Music in the Park is not a fundraising event. The CLCBA is able to pay the artists, thanks to the generosity of sponsors, as well as donations from audience members.

“We get sponsors to underwrite the majority of our expenses, and we make up the rest by passing the hat, which is actually a coffee can,” Loveless jokes. The donations help to cover the cost of promoting the concerts. The series is about bringing the community together, and the community itself is what keeps it going. He is proud to say that the CLCBA focuses on planning events for locals that keep the area vital throughout the year, including Beulah’s Winterfest. The dedication of its members is one of the many benefits of living in a close-knit community like Benzie County.

Music in the Park is made possible not only by Loveless and the CLCBA but by the talented musicians who come to perform. The concert series welcomes a variety of musical genres including blues, jazz, classic rock and more. Many of the artists—including Glenn Wolff with Robin Lee Berry and Eye Ham Wes—are local, while others travel to play here. Some are well-established musicians and others, like Rachel B, are budding artists. On some nights, the music is fast paced; on others, it is slower and more soulful. Loveless says that the musicians feed off of audience involvement, and they especially love it when children get up and dance.

The concerts kick off on June 30 with long-time blues singer Keith Scott, who is traveling here from Chicago. The second performance will be the following week, when Rachel B, a

Traverse City native, will captivate the audience with her mix of pop and soul music.

The next concert of the series takes place on July 14, when the popular young Traverse City band, The Accidentals, take the stage for the second year in a row. Rising stars Savannah Buist and Katie Larson have been playing and singing together since they were in high school, and their third member, Michael Dause, was added to the mix a few years later. When asked what genre they consider themselves, Buist says that they are “genre-bending” and that they like to try new things, rather than stick to one type of music. Their “try everything” motto remains the same when it comes to writing songs, which are about a variety of topics that are based on personal experiences and things that they are passionate about—clearly they put a lot of heart into their music.

Carrie Dunklow, a fan of The Accidentals, was quick to say that they “are superb role



The Accidentals.

models for other youth [and anyone else, for that matter] looking to reach their own goals.” She went on to say that our Northern Michigan community is very lucky to have them. The lyrics of their new hit, “Michigan and Again” make it apparent that they love their home just as much as their home state loves them.

Larson showed her enthusiasm for Music in the Park by saying, “It’s seriously so much fun; it’s like playing in a public backyard. It feels like our whole family is there, even if we’ve never met. We tell stories behind our songs, tales from the road, joke with each other and with the audience—I’m really looking forward to it.”

On July 28, Music in the Park features fantastic duo Todd Fulcher and Mernie Moore. Together they make up the rock’n’ roll band He Said She Said. Having played alongside legends, Fulcher has an impressive musical background, including the title of “Guitar Player of the Year” for Guitar Player Magazine twice. Moore also has an extensive history in the music industry; she has been singing since her childhood. Despite starting off as individual artists, the two came together to form He Said She Said, and they have had much success touring and creating CDs, as well as getting their music aired on the radio.

Another great bunch on the lineup is Eye Ham Wes, a group of several local men that together make exciting electric reggae beats. They are scheduled to play in the park on August 11. The series continues throughout the summer and will include several other great musicians: local folk group Glenn Wolff and Robin Lee Berry, piano jazz artist-Robin Connell, and the fun rockin’ blues group Fat Pocket.

The Music in the Park series is sure to be a fun set of concerts for the entire family. Anyone looking for a great time this summer need only a blanket or chair and to head over to Beulah Park on Thursday evenings.

Beginning June 30 and ending August 18, Music in The Park will take place every Thursday evening at 7 p.m. at the Beulah pavilion.

Opus

Continued from page 1

electric load... but we went ahead and did a full halftime show in the dark! That was kind of a hoot. We had not planned on doing anything like that. And we were down there on the sidelines, and the kids were crowded around me all saying, ‘Let’s go! Let’s go!’ And I asked, ‘You guys want to do this in the dark?’ ‘Well ,yeah!’ ‘There have been a lot of those moments over the years.’

The Man Leading the Notes

Eagan, who recently announced his retirement from the classroom and the auditorium, will be missed. His involvement in this community spanned many schools and grades within Benzie Central schools, including 6th grade beginning band at Platt River Elementary; 7th grade intermediate band and 8th grade concert band at Benzie Central Middle School; and senior high symphonic, marching, and jazz bands at Benzie Central High School.

“The relationship with the kids and the families are the best part of the job,” he says. “I mean, how lucky am I to be able to retire and actually be sad about not [being a part of the next school year]. I still get a shot of adrenaline when a kid gets it, when a kid finally figures out how to play, and the look that comes across their face.”

Eagan remembers when he first arrived in Northern Michigan from Atlanta, Georgia. His wife, Cindy—also a musician by trade—is a Michigan native, and they were married here during the summer of 1992, the same summer that Eagan first began meeting with band parents.

“I came from Atlanta, and I wondered how they would take to a southern accent,” Eagan jokes, a slight drawl still hanging on his vowels.

As the band grew in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Eagan transitioned from using the old stage—which was essentially an extension of the high school cafeteria—to holding all of the concerts in the gymnasium to accommodate the size of the band and the growing number of people who came to see their concerts.

Then in 2001, Eagan was instrumental in leading the charge for the school’s new auditorium, which was part of a construction program that also included an addition to the junior high wing and a brand new elementary school in Lake Ann.

During his tenure in Benzie County, Eagan has also served on the board of directors at the Mills Community House, and he was president of the State Music Education Association. But his students are his legacy.

“They always come in with something that makes me smile,” Eagan says. “They kept me going all these years. The personal relationship with the families is the highlight. The music comes and goes—people remember a few of the performances here and there, but what they really remember are the day-to-day interactions. That’s certainly what I remember.”

This transplant from the south wants to thank everyone in Benzie County who has made him feel so welcome here.

“I came up here really not knowing anyone besides my wife. I can’t thank the people enough,” he says. “To have been a part of this community—I never dreamed I would be accepted on this level.”

The Beulah Fourth of July parade will begin at 1:30 pm on Court Plaza road underneath the US-31 viaduct, with a parade line-up all the way to the Benzie County Government Center.



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Youthful Vigor on the Hill

Michigan Shores turns 25

By Susan Koenig
Current Contributor

John Vinkemulder (“Vink”) and his wife Lynn, the newest residents at Michigan Shores, recently experienced the neighborliness that has become a hallmark of the cooperative living facility, located less than a mile from downtown Frankfort—Vink found his *Traverse City Record-Eagle* delivered to his front door. Apparently many residents receive the daily paper, and someone gets up very early and has taken it upon himself to bring the papers, quietly, door to door.

The Vinkemulders moved to Michigan Shores from their Elberta home on Lake Michigan, Vink says, because Baby Boomers are starting to look at another lifestyle that is “more relaxed and less married to home maintenance,” for use as a *pied-a-terre* or with an eye towards the future.

“We thought we’d better get it while we can, now that the Recession is over and people are able to sell their homes,” Vink says. “There are so many well-liked and respected people who live at the Shores... all gentle people—that is—ladies and gentlemen of the old school, polite and welcoming.”

How It Works

Michigan Shores Cooperative is a self-governing, diverse community of engaged and congenial adults. Constructed in 1991, the facility celebrates its 25th anniversary on Saturday, June 25, with a gala for the residents and food provided by Jim Barnes’s Crystal Lake Catering Company.

You don’t have to be “old” to live here, nor is retirement a requisite. Several residents go to work each day, while many others are part-timers, using their unit as a “getaway.” Here, according to residents Joan Wolfe and Dan Remahl, you can “be whatever you want to be, participate in whatever interests you, socialize or not, but where privacy is cherished.”

The Shores offers independent living in a comfortable, safe, and affordable environment—this is not a place where people come to expect care, nor is it a typical retirement home. It is an independent, not-assisted-living establishment. However, should one need live-in or other medical care, it is quite acceptable to receive it and pay for it, just as you would in your own home.

The attractive three-story building on the hill is surrounded by 19 acres of woods, including hiking, biking, and ski trails, a pond, and splendid views of Lake Michigan.

Memberships are available to those aged 55 and older, and housing options include 54 one- or two-bedroom apartments, varying in size from 676 to 1,448 square feet. Membership begins with a one-time payment that purchases a “share” in the cooperative. The price of the share varies based on the apartment type and size. Also based on type and size is the monthly “carrying fee,” covering all expenses related to the co-op’s operation, including the mortgage, real estate taxes (deductible), heat, cable, trash removal, snowplowing, gardening, and other outdoor maintenance. In addition, there is a free shuttle service. All members have call buttons for emergencies, and the building is locked at all times.

The units are furnished with appliances, window treatments, and floor coverings, and each contains generous closet space and

either a private patio or a balcony. Members may remodel and decorate as they wish. You buy or sell a membership, as you would in any real estate transaction, and prices vary according to the unit’s size and the market—today probably between \$35,000 and \$60,000, with monthly fees varying, accordingly, between \$800 and \$1,600. Other amenities include indoor storage spaces, parking garages, lounges with fireplaces, a fitness center, overnight guest rooms, and a workshop.

The Residents of the Residence

The Betsie Current managed to interview several residents in this lively environment—not an easy task, since everyone seems to be on the go; the front doors, which are not revolving, should be. When you visit, you will feel as if you’re in a festive hotel atmosphere or a bustling apartment house. The

“Living here is a real bargain,” notes Jay Peregrine, who hails from Chicago and is the co-op’s present board president. “We are so well-situated, close to so much, yet we can’t even hear the traffic on M-22. The easy walk to and from town is a pleasure.”

Many far younger, less-in-shape folks might disagree with this fit sexagenarian, considering the steep slope of Heffron Hill on the route home from town.

Long-term Frankfort resident Alice Hollenbeck moved to the Shores after her husband died, and she knew that she couldn’t—or wouldn’t—manage winters alone in their big house outside of town.

“I think of my move as the first step in downsizing,” she remarks wryly. Still attractive and sharp in her nineties, Alice “wouldn’t live anywhere else,” nor would Jim Miner, recently retired, whose wife still works.

“This is an awesome place to live,” he says.

The Staff

The cooperative is governed by a seven-member board, elected by the residents, but at the heart of Michigan Shores is the symbiotic staff of two—one mostly in the office, the other on the grounds—who work independently yet in sync with each other, above and beyond their respective job descriptions. The duo knows everything about the co-op and shares a fondness and empathy with the residents, “the most energetic group of older people I’ve ever seen,” says Dave Baker.

Baker has been at Michigan Shores since the groundbreaking in September 1990, first as a construction worker, then as night watchman. When the previously hired maintenance man walked off the job (it was “too demanding”), Baker stepped in and has remained invaluable for 25 years. He is proud of Michigan Shores, and how it has grown and improved over the years. He loves to receive compliments about the surrounding beauty of the grounds, for which he is responsible. Jack-of-all-trades, grounds manager, handyman, shuttle driver, and person with the longest history at the Shores, Baker is a 1980s graduate of Frankfort High School and grandson of the inimitable Byron (“By”) Baker, founder of the iconic Baker’s Bar (now Dinghy’s).

Shirley Roberts, corporate manager and a long way from her roots, moved to this area from Zimbabwe 18 years ago. She began her career in this country in real estate administration, but eventually found her niche in Benzie County and has been at Michigan Shores for 11 years. She lives in Honor with her husband, Edgar, and runs the hospitable office at the Shores with grace and efficiency.

We recommend a visit to this spirited atmosphere, especially if you have an image of a so-called “nursing home.” Far from it! Enjoy a tour of the grounds and the building interior, and meet some of the residents—if you can find them at home.

Want to learn more? Visit Michigan Shores online at MichiganShores.net or call 231-352-7217.



The attractive three-story building on the hill is surrounded by 19 acres of woods, including hiking, biking, and ski trails, a pond, and splendid views of Lake Michigan. Photo courtesy of Michigan Shores.

walls throughout the building are beautifully decorated with artwork, either by residents or from their personal collections. People might be having coffee or enjoying Happy Hour, playing bridge or walking their dogs, going to exercise class or heading to or from work. These are not the “old people on the bluff” that some might envision.

We spoke with Al and Gerry Hyams, the longest residents at the Shores, who moved here in 1991 when, according to Al, “the doors weren’t on yet.” Sports enthusiasts and veterans of American Youth Hostels, the couple was intrigued by an article that they had read about the newly established co-op, and when they retired—he from teaching science, she from teaching and serving as a librarian—they came to Frankfort to investigate.

“The view really got us,” Gerry says. “And a certain kind of creative people [who were moving in.]”

Al notes that, at the time, many new residents needed help personalizing their apartments. He and his “crew” of other helpful denizens (mostly guys) got so busy that they dubbed themselves the “Beavers,” and, using the shop available, went to work.

“We formed a real camaraderie,” he muses.

Al now plays with a group called the “Betsie Bay Minstrels” (formerly the “Harmonica Hobos”) and is renowned for his beautiful photographs, while Gerry, owner of a mere three Kindles, raises orchids in their apartment and participates in countless activities. The Hyams know everyone at the Shores and offer a wealth of information and enthusiasm for residential life.

“This is a place where exciting, well-traveled people live and exchange their many interesting life experiences,” remarks Bob Istnik, one of the part-time residents.

History of Michigan Shores, from a Ruthven’s Point of View

Frankfort’s U-of-M, Maize-and-Blue connection

By Beatrice Nesbitt Ruthven

Current Contributor

Editor’s Note: The author passed away on May 20, 2016, two weeks after writing this story and just shy of her 99th birthday.

Dr. Alexander Grant Ruthven, former President of the University of Michigan (for a tenure of 22 years) and his family came to Frankfort from Ann Arbor in 1929 as guests of the Dean of the Dental School, who owned a cottage on Crystal Lake. While here, Dr. Ruthven fell in love with the area, as most people do. He purchased a piece of property from the railroad. At that time, the property was believed to be 24 acres.

The Ruthvens and other Ann Arbor friends were equestrians and brought their horses up from Ann Arbor via train—or actually rode them the entire 250 or so miles—every summer. The property was vacant and proved to be an excellent place to build stables, a bunkhouse, and adequate riding facilities with pasture land. (If you look at the aerial view in the photo in the north hallway, you can see what the property looked like back then.)

Soon it was determined that there was not sufficient pasture land, so Dr. Ruthven purchased the property to the north, on the other side of George Street. This property extended from M-22 to Lake Michigan. The Ruthvens built a small barn for their Morgan stallion, a barn which still stands today on the corner of George Street and Michigan Avenue. (It should be noted that Dr. Ruthven, an avid horseman, brought the first Morgan horses

from Vermont to Michigan.)

The Michigan Shores property was named The Rolling R Ranch. The main house was completed in 1932. Stables were built, and what is now called “the white house” was the bunkhouse for the stable boys.

The main house included five bedrooms, because Dr. Ruthven hosted the U of M regents in the summertime. As such, there were separate bathrooms, one for men and one for women.



Photo courtesy of Michigan Shores.

The Ruthvens had three children: Kathryn, Peter, and Bryant. I married the younger son, Bryant, in 1940, and we spent our honeymoon here.

When my mother-in-law, Mrs. Ruthven, passed away, the property passed on to us, and it was where we lived from 1972 to 1989. During this time period, we converted “the bunkhouse” or “white house” into a guest

cottage.

In 1985, Mook, Hook, Good, and Howe—a group from the First Congregational Church in Benzonia—approached us to ask if we would ever consider selling the property. We told them, ‘yes,’ but not right away. They said that they could wait, as they were just getting started on their imagined project which was to become Michigan Shores.

My husband, Bryant Ruthven, while not at all eager to sell, was very pleased with their

idea of a not-for-profit co-op for retirees, thinking that his parents would like this idea for the best use of their property.

These visionaries from the church were able to complete the purchase in three years, and groundbreaking took place on September 9, 1990. It opened for residents less than a year later.

We moved into Michigan Shores in the year 2000. Michigan Shores has provided a home for many people throughout its long life, so we are overjoyed to be celebrating 25 years of its existence.

“Go Blue” Avenue

Many Ann Arborites were charmed with the beauty of the area and built their own summer homes here, including Mrs. Ruthven’s sister. The pink art deco house next door to the Ruthvens was built by the Dean of the Medical School, Dr. Furstenberg. Mrs. Canfield, widow of a prominent medical doctor in Ann Arbor, built the house now known as the “King House” and the property where “The Bluffs” stands.

On that note, I have long wondered why in downtown Frankfort there is no consistency in the naming of the cross streets. For example, it doesn’t go 1st, 2nd, 3rd streets. Instead, what should be 1st street is actually called Michigan Avenue. I have been told that when all of the University of Michigan people moved up here, it was referred to as “Michigan Avenue,” and the name stuck.



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Food Trucks

Continued from page 1

will be great for the community at large,” says Sue Oseland, who runs the Elberta Farmers’ Market. “We can expand the market by having people who wouldn’t otherwise visit the market come and get good, local food. I think everyone will think, ‘This is cool.’”

Some officials are downright enthusiastic about the potential of food trucks in their municipality.

“I think I can speak for the commission when I say that we were all immediately excited by the idea of opening the farmers’ market up to food trucks this year,” says Emily Votruba, secretary of the Elberta Parks & Recreation Commission. “It was fun to discuss the logistics and to think about how food trucks will not

business, Peninsula Pops, which would run a popsicle stand with icy delights that are made in the Grow Benzie kitchens. For the last few years, kettle corn has also been made and sold at the market.

Additionally, the city approved non-profit food trucks—such as those from Grow Benzie, the Lions Club, Rotary—to be allowed in public spaces on special events.

Lastly, the DDA subcommittee also discussed two items related to Frankfort’s brick-and-mortar businesses, though these agenda items have not yet been addressed by the city commission. The subcommittee recommended that the city permit existing restaurants to deliver food on public property, and they mentioned in their report that Frankfort is considering a portable facility for renting water-sports items at the Lake Michigan beach. First priority would be given to current existing Frankfort businesses, such as Beach Nut Surf Shop and Crystal Lake



Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker

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only go along with but advance our market’s mission, which is to provide high-quality, locally produced food to our community and to create a healthy, welcoming, and profitable venue for local producers.”

Votruba added that this will be a trial basis for the Elberta program, which could potentially be expanded to more hours or locations in the future.

“We’ll learn a lot and see if we want to do it again next year,” she says. “It’s a really fantastic time to live and volunteer here in the village with so many visionaries like Sue around making cool new things happen!”

Meanwhile, in Frankfort, a subcommittee of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) took on a lengthy process of facilitating conversations between the business community and the public back in February and March.

Ultimately, the DDA recommended that Frankfort’s food truck ordinance remain mostly the same. Mobile vending, which includes food vendors and non-food vendors, is currently—and has been for more than two decades—permitted on private commercial property for a fee of \$50 per day. The subcommittee recommended that the City of Frankfort revisit this fee structure, potentially adding a seasonal rate that would give the vendor the security to make a commitment to a particular location all season long.

For instance, Traverse City’s seasonal rate on private commercial property is \$725, which is based on the taxes that brick-and-mortar businesses pay. There have been two mobile vending seasonal fees that have been individually approved by Frankfort’s city council, however no formal seasonal fee structure has been approved.

“As of now, anyone who wants a seasonal fee has to negotiate it directly with city council,” says Josh Mills, city superintendent for Frankfort.

The DDA recommended another change to the ordinance that would allow vendors at the Saturday farmers’ market to cook and sell the food that they grow. The city allowed the policy change this spring, and Bud Phillips is already taking advantage of this change. His business, Bud’s Pure Maple, features cotton candy and other delights, made from his own maple syrup. Ricky Hilliard of Frog Hollow Farms in Kaleva also wants to start a new side businesses, called Ricky’s Twisted Veggies, through which he will sell fried potatoes, but he will have to wait until fall when his crop comes in. There is talk of another local

Adventure Sports.

Frankz, a hot dog restaurant in downtown Frankfort, is the first brick-and-mortar to offer a “beach menu” that is specifically targeted at delivery: on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, you can call in your order from a limited list of items, and Joey Barcheski’s employees will ride their bikes down to meet you at the beach turn-around.

A History of Mobile Vending

Mobile vending is nothing new in Frankfort, which has seen many come and go over the years.

For instance, back in the 1990s, there was Dog Haus, a hot dog wagon that set up in the space that is currently occupied by Stormcloud Brewing Company. Dog Haus later moved to the Smokestack, which later became what is now known as Gateway Village.

Wingz & Thingz is a popular food truck in Northern Michigan and a frequent caterer for big concerts. The truck set up in the parking lot of Big Bob’s Up North Outfitters last spring, but left for Traverse City before the busy summer season began. The owner and the city negotiated a seasonal fee of \$250 per month for half of May and all of June. Amanda Rommell, co-owner of Big Bob’s, says that they did not charge the truck an additional fee to set up in their lot, but the truck’s owner did throw in a little to pay for the electricity that he was using.

“We were doing him a favor until he got rolling,” Rommell says of the Monday-through-Wednesday operation. She concedes that those hours are not super conducive for foot traffic on the east side of town during early spring, and she thinks that he would have done quite well if he had stuck around for the busier season.

In 2014, Fox & Fawn Vintage—an eclectic boutique of vintage home goods, furniture, and clothing for sale out of a shiny 1969 Airstream trailer—set up in the parking lot of Bayside Printing on a couple of occasions. Aubrey Ann Parker, owner of the shop, says that the \$50 daily fee was prohibitively expensive, so she negotiated a rate of \$725 for the season with city council. (Ultimately though, Parker was not able to take advantage of this, as family members had moved into the camper for the remainder of the summer.)

Also in 2014, Eric Haan set up a hot dog stand in the parking lot of the Frankfort Laundromat, owned by Eric’s father, Dick Haan. This was part of the overall business plan of the property, according to Mills, so the city did not impose a \$50 daily fee.

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“Basically this was the property owner being creative and taking advantage of business opportunities on his own property,” Mills explains. “We encourage mixed uses like this one. It would be great to see more.”

Meanwhile, Crystal Lake Adventure Sports, with a home base out of Beulah, has—for more than a decade—had a nonpermanent structure at the American Legion Hall for renting water-sports equipment near the Frankfort beach.

Crystal Lake Adventure Sports pays the American Legion a seasonal fee for their little rental shed. When this agreement first started, the city council waved the \$50-per-day fee so that all of the money collected could instead go to the American Legion. As a nonprofit organization, the Legion is able to use those dollars to give back to the community in the form of college scholarships.

“Crystal Lake Adventure Sports will be ‘grandfathered’ with this arrangement, but any new request for outdoor activity will be

truck will be making regular appearances at St. Ambrose Cellars of Beulah and the soon-to-be-open Iron Fish Distillery of Thompsonville. Grill Benzie is also booked for several local events and festivals—including Grow Benzie’s eighth annual Midsummer Night’s Garden Party on Tuesday, July 12, and second annual Bayou on the Bay on Saturday, August 13—but still has open dates available, in case the public wants to hire it for private events.

“Part of our mission is to increase access to healthful foods, jobs, life skills, and each other, so a food truck is a grand slam for Grow Benzie,” Stoltz says. “Our board had discussed ways to get what we grow here onto plates—including a food truck or a pop-up cafe in our kitchen—so when Brandon Seng from Goodwill offered a partnership through the MI Fresh Start job-training program, we jumped at the opportunity. Goodwill is training life and job skills to our newly hired employees, and Grow Benzie is connecting folks to tasty,



The Grill Benzie food truck will be serving up breakfast fare on Thursday mornings at the Elberta Farmers’ Market. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker

assessed a city fee that will be either \$50 per day or approved by the city council,” says Mills, who notes that Serkan Erginkara’s Frankfort Takeout did not pay a \$50 daily fee back in 2014, because it was located inside the Legion hall and thus not a deemed “mobile” vendor.

New Guys Around Town

Look for Josh Herren’s new “Tiki-licious” grill-and-party cart this summer in downtown Frankfort; he will also rent the cart out for parties, and you can hire him to run it. More than two decades ago, Herren started washing dishes at Harbor Shores and has since worked his way up the food-industry ladder at local favorites like Dinghy’s, Crystal Mountain’s Main Street Grill, the Frankfort Deli, Coho, Northern Naturals, Frankfort Takeout, and The Cabbage Shed. Herren’s latest venture is a Tiki-inspired food cart, equipped to grill kabobs, meats, and whatever your palette craves. Check out the Tiki cart online to find out where Herren is slinging kabobs today or how you can book him for your next backyard barbeque: Facebook.com/Tikilicious1.

Meanwhile, Mary’s Asian Cuisine—a bright yellow food truck—is once again parked on the site of the former Beulah Oil Company, between the Market Basket and Eden Brook Place, the former Brookside Inn. This is the food truck’s second season serving Asian fusion, fast food, and culturally diverse street food in Beulah. Mary Remey, a native of the Philippines who went to culinary school in Singapore, met and married Jim, a Benzie Central graduate, 11 years ago. She is the daughter of a chef, and her Asian cuisine, composed of all fresh ingredients, is a true fusion of Malay, Thai, and other delectable ethnic fares. Mary’s is open seven days a week from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. until the end of October. Her most popular items are the spring rolls (four for \$5) and the sesame chicken with bacon-fried rice (a basket costs \$8). She will also be selling the spring rolls at the Market Basket and other local restaurants after she closes for the winter. Check out more details here: bit.ly/28Lb1AZ.

Another new venture is Grill Benzie, a food truck operated by the local food and farming nonprofit Grow Benzie. The truck will be serving food every Monday afternoon from 3-7 p.m. during the Grow Benzie Farmers’ Market at 5885 Frankfort Highway (M-115); that same food truck will appear at the Elberta Farmers’ Market on Thursday mornings from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. According to Josh Stoltz, Grow Benzie’s executive director, the food

healthy food—all from a giant, fire-engine-red food truck that people gravitate to because food trucks are cool.”

The food truck’s menu will change throughout the growing season but, according to Stoltz, will always feature local ingredients, either that which is purchased from vendors at farmers’ markets or that which is grown in Grow Benzie’s own gardens. The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy recently donated 340 pounds of locally raised, grass-fed beef from Misty Acres Farms, a 600-acre preserved property that straddles the Benzie-Manistee county line. Much of this will find its way into tacos, pasties, kabobs, and sandwiches made by Grow Benzie and sold at the food truck. Delicious vegetarian options will be available, too.

Stoltz hopes to showcase products made in Grow Benzie’s incubator kitchen, including Granola Empire and Peninsula Pops frozen fruit bars.

“This is the same food that we grew while teaching people how to grow it for themselves and that we use for teaching classes on how to prepare and preserve in our commercial kitchen,” Stoltz adds.

Nourishment is one goal of Grow Benzie’s food truck; multimedia education is another.

“As a nonprofit, Grow Benzie is all about education and outreach, especially since we’ll have such a large audience this summer,” Stoltz says. “So we’ll be live-streaming demonstrations on Facebook and YouTube from inside the truck and also looping informational videos on a giant HDTV outside of the truck while people are waiting for their food. People love to learn about their food, so we’re going to have some fun showing them where it’s from and how we’re preparing it.”

The Elberta Farmers’ Market will also feature demos and prepared food for sale from Jim Barnes’s nearby Elberta’s Taqueria. Sue Oseland, who runs the Elberta Farmers’ Market, is thrilled to welcome Grill Benzie and Elberta’s, and she hopes, in the future, to see food trucks that introduce Indian and other ethnic foods, not otherwise common in Northern Michigan.

“This should benefit all of us by bringing more people into town,” Oseland says. “After they eat at a food truck, they’ll stay and go to the local brewery or go shopping. They’ll bike the trail, or kayak, or go to beach.”

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Chins Above the Counter

Bay Wear celebrates three generations and 25 years

By Sue Mabee Jameson
Current Contributor

The rule was that your chin had to reach above the counter before you could start working.

When I was a child, my dad and his brother, Richard, had 13 “Jumpin Jeans” stores north of Detroit. In 1975, when I was 16, my mom and dad (Jim and Sue Mabee) declaratively said, “We are moving Up North.” Dad sold the downstate stores to Uncle Richard, and we then opened a clothing store in Charlevoix. (I was excited to move, because I could have my horse at home.)

There are four of us siblings, and we worked as a family at the Clothing Company. Sometimes we got paid, sometimes we didn’t.

Customers were asking for sweatshirts and t-shirts for souvenirs. My sister, Judith, the artist in the family, came up with a design, and we had it printed on the sweatshirts and t-shirts—we would sell out in a weekend!

I remember when the building next to us came up for rent, and my dad and I checked it out. He asked me, “Do you think we can sell a whole store of sweatshirts and t-shirts?” That’s how Harbor Wear was born.

As my siblings and I grew up, and our families grew also, the business expanded. The expansion began with stores in Petoskey, Harbor Springs, Mackinaw City, and Florida. My ex-husband and I were the first to break

out on our own—we opened the Suttons Bay store and the Frankfort store 25 years ago. The Glen Arbor store followed. We called our stores Bay Wear, as opposed to Harbor Wear.

Now I have three kids. They all love living in this area. Rod Robertson, the oldest, runs the store in Frankfort now. He and his wife, Toni, spend their winters in Puerto Rico teaching surfing. (He also teaches surfing here in the summer on his days off from Bay Wear.)

My daughter, Elizabeth Angov, and her husband, Petar, bought the Suttons Bay store and are running that, along with the help of Greer Hauxwell. Elizabeth and Petar have two boys, my grandsons: Georgi, who is nine, and Emmet, who is three. Georgi is very interested in the stores, especially the marketing aspect. He is always making signs to bring to people in the stores or thinking of a new t-shirt design. His chin is above the counter now, so you may see him in the stores this summer. Meanwhile, Emmet loves to show different styles to customers. Their love for retail is in their blood. Even their puppy works at the Suttons Bay store.

Rich, my youngest, has finally taken over the Glen Arbor store. I haven’t quite talked his lovely wife into working yet. He is learning inventory control, housekeeping, ordering, and the rest that goes

on in running a store.

My new husband, Wayne, also works in Glen Arbor. He loves waiting on customers, but he is not so keen on folding shirts.

Today my sister, Jacq, and her husband



Photo courtesy of Baywear.

own the Clothing Company in Charlevoix, along with the Charlevoix Wear store. My other sister, Judith, has Harbor Wear in Petoskey and Harbor Springs. My brother, Jim, and his wife, Ryan, have Harbor Wear and Color Wear in Mackinaw City. Additionally, our cousin, Mark, and his wife, Jen, have three stores in Door County, Wisconsin...

And the list goes on and on with friends, old employees. I believe there are more than 20 stores altogether.

We pride ourselves on quality merchandise, and we stand behind our products. We work very hard to bring in the hottest colors, designs, and shirt styles—that’s where the young blood comes in handy. We keep our stores clean and organized with the help of our employees. We love receiving the Fudgies (tourists). We love talking to them and sharing our vacation mecca with them.

I feel very fortunate that I am able to provide for my family and live in “the most beautiful place in America.” In the summer, I try to squeeze in some paddleboard yoga. I love taking the grandkids to the beach or just hanging out at our Spoiled Rotten Ranch, riding or playing with the horses.

I also feel very fortunate that the businesses allow us to be able to give back—we donate 10 percent of the sales on our exclusive “Great Lakes” shirts and our “No Salt, No Sharks, No Worries” shirts to Buckets of Rain, a Leelanau County-based nonprofit that helps to build community gardens in inner-city Detroit.

Our idea is to “Spread the Fresh.” We sell our shirts to help people to remember their amazing vacation in this fresh, beautiful, bountiful area. Then we give 10 percent of the sales to Buckets of Rain to support their effort in helping people to have fresh water and fresh food. It’s a win-win.

Sue Mabee Jameson co-owns Bay Wear in Frankfort and Glen Arbor. Check out the community garden program at BucketsOfRain.org.

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HELP BACN RAISE \$100,000 THIS SUMMER!

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Every cash donation made now through August 31 will count toward the Summer Match.

What is the need here in Benzie County? It’s hard to imagine, but in this beautiful area with its alluring lakeshore, quaint shops, and excellent restaurants, more than 35% of year-round residents struggle to meet the basic needs of their families. These are hard-working people who are often working more than one job during “summer season.” Ours is an economy driven by tourism and agriculture, where the wage scale is low and our residents struggle during harsh winters.

If you are visiting our beautiful area this summer, welcome! We hope that you enjoy some wonderful times with family and friends, finding moments of peace and happiness in this beautiful area. We would be so grateful if you would consider sharing a gift with our year-round Neighbors, who are serving you in restaurants, cleaning your hotel rooms, and harvesting the fruit and vegetables that end up in your restaurant meal or glass of wine.

BACN

BENZIE AREA CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS

Neighbors Helping Neighbors
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Donations can be made online at www.benziebacn.org, through BACN’s Facebook page, or brought directly to BACN at 2804 Benzie Highway, Benzonia, Mondays through Thursdays 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. 231-882- 9544.