

The Betsie Current

Volume VII, Issue 3

A Touch of July

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Birch & Maple

New culinary option in Frankfort

Aubrey Ann Parker

Current Editor

Fried chicken and waffles, Monte Cristo French toast, short-ribs eggs benedict—Frankfort's new restaurant is offering up something different, something modern, something to break the mold. With a fun take on breakfast, sure, you can still find the old stand-bys, but there is also room for something a little more eclectic, too.

Natalie Niederhofer (31) and Nick Crawford (33) are the co-owners of Birch & Maple, a new restaurant in downtown Frankfort (previously the Bayview Grille, and before that, Cecilia's By The Bay).

Just like their menu items are shaking up the traditional, so are their job titles: in a refreshing departure from the male-dominated

world of chefs, Niederhofer runs the kitchen, while Crawford runs the front-of-the-house operations.

"Great service and ambiance shouldn't be limited to fine dining," Crawford says. "It shouldn't matter what time of day it is. We're trying to bring that 'fine dining' experience to breakfast and lunch, too."

Background

Crawford is originally from Dayton Ohio, and has a background in sales. Hoping to "get



Nick Crawford and Natalie Niederhofer spent the winter renovating the Bayview Grille into Birch & Maple, a tasty new restaurant in downtown Frankfort. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

away" from where everyone else that he knew was going after high school—cough, cough, Ohio State University, cough cough—Crawford instead opted for Eastern Michigan University, which was offering in-state tuition to kids like him from Dayton. He received an undergraduate degree in business, which got him a job selling electrical supplies to contractors at the age of 23.

"It was great money," Crawford reflects. "But I hated it."

Meanwhile, Niederhofer is originally from the Rochester area downstate. Her father grew up here in Frankfort—his family moved here from Chicago when he was 10 years old. Years later, he wanted to share the area with his family, and so Niederhofer spent her sum-

Please see Birch on page 8

Huh?

What? Say that again, please?

By Susan Koenig

Current Contributor

Did you know that more than half of the people with hearing loss are younger than age 65? Or that 15 percent of children between the ages of six and 19 have some degree of deficient auditory function? In truth, hearing loss is the third most common health problem (after heart disease and arthritis) in the United States.

There are four degrees of hearing loss—profound, severe, moderate, and mild—and people of any age can be afflicted. Causes range from pre-natal conditions to aging, with

a myriad of determinants in between, such as: combat disabilities (explosions, gunfire); meningitis or other infections; head and/or ear injuries; or even everyday noise, including lawnmowers and loud music. (Seriously, you might want to think about turning down those speakers!)

With limited hearing, children have a very difficult time with speech development, and adults can gradually lose their fluency of speech if they cannot hear themselves or others.

Fortunately for us, we have an expert player in the auditory game right here in Benzie County. Jeanne Strathman is a candid

Please see Huh? on page 9

Celebrate The Fourth

FRANKFORT EVENTS

Carnival Opens at 10am (open July 4-8) – Open Space Park
Parade begins at 10am - Main Street & Forest Avenue
Art in the Park begins at 10am – Mineral Springs Park
Sand Castle Sculpture Contest at 12pm – Frankfort Beach
FIREWORKS at dusk (about 10:30pm) – Frankfort Beach

BEULAH EVENTS

Pancake Breakfast Buffet from 8-11am – Hungry Tummy Restaurant
Firecracker 5k Run at 8am – Beulah Pavillion
1-Mile Family Walk/Run (free!) at 9am – Beulah Pavillion
Kids Games & Face-Painting from 10:30am-12pm – Beulah Park
Food Concessions, sponsored by the Boy Scouts at 12pm – Beulah Park
Parade begins at 1:30pm – S. Benzie Boulevard
Kids Greased Pole Climb at 2:30pm – Beulah Park
Coin Hunt at 3:30pm – Beulah Park
Rubber Duck Race (duck rental available) at 4:30pm – Beulah Park
FIREWORKS at dusk (about 10:30pm) – Beulah Beach
(Alternate rain date: July 5th)

James Mitchell Ashley: Statue-Worthy?

Historical perspective of the lasting impact of railroads on Benzie County

By Andy Bolander

Current Contributor

Benzie County needs a statue of James Mitchell Ashley.

Though most widely known for his work as an Ohio Congressman and as an abolitionist during the Civil War, in addition to spending a short time as the post-war territorial governor of Montana, it is Ashley's extraordinary efforts to connect Benzie County to the Ann Arbor Railroad that make him befitting of a Benzie County statue.

The railroad's impact on our county was significant, and many aspects of Benzie County that we enjoy today—more than 100 years later—are the results of Ashley's vision for the Ann Arbor Railroad.

For instance, the railroad advertised our area as a vacation hotspot; built the 250-room Royal Frontenac Hotel, which was located right on the beach in Frankfort; facilitated the growth of local agriculture and the fruit-processing industry; and connected Benzie County to the outside world. Moreover, the villages of Thompsonville and Beulah were created by the railroads. Furthermore, tourism



The Ann Arbor No. 1 in Elberta before the first trip across Lake Michigan to Kewaunee, Wisconsin. Photo courtesy of Benzie Area Historical Society.

is arguably the most important industry in Benzie County today, with hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, according to the Benzie County Visitor's Bureau, and tourism started here because of the railroad.

Preacher's Son, Journalist, Congressman

Ashley was born in 1824 in the Ohio River valley in southeastern Pennsylvania. His father was a preacher who evangelized as far south as Kentucky and West Virginia, and Ashley grew up with a value system that considered slavery a violation of Christian principles. Although his father wanted him to attend seminary and to continue the family tradition of becoming a Baptist minister,

Please see Statue on page 10

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JULY 4 - CLOSED
JULY 8
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JULY 2	KRISTIN KUIPER 7:00PM - 9:00PM THE TACO 'BOUT IT FOOD TRUCK FRESH MEXICAN
JULY 3	THE FERAL CATS 6:30-9:30PM THE TACO 'BOUT IT FOOD TRUCK FRESH MEXICAN
JULY 4	- CLOSED - OFF PLAYING ON THE WATER!
JULY 5	EVAN TAYLOR TRIO 7:00PM - 9:00PM THE STEELHEAD CAFE BROASTED CHICKEN & FRESH FISH
JULY 6	PETER MURPHY 7:00PM - 9:00PM THE STEELHEAD CAFE BROASTED CHICKEN & FRESH FISH
JULY 7	JEFF BIHLMAN 7:00PM - 9:00PM THE STEELHEAD CAFE BROASTED CHICKEN & FRESH FISH
JULY 8	CHERYL WOLFRAM 3:30PM - 5:30PM THE STEELHEAD CAFE BROASTED CHICKEN & FRESH FISH

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Updates: A Lot Can Happen in a Year

The Betsie Current has received several updates to stories that we published in our pages during the 2017 season, and we thought that our readers would find them interesting.

Benzie Bus, Magical History Tour

In Volume V Issue 2, published June 9, 2016, Mitch Kennis wrote about the launch of Benzie Bus's Magical History Tours, two 30-minute loops—intersecting in Beulah—that featured many of Benzie County's most famous historical landmarks. The Magical History Tours ran every Monday during the summer of 2016, and you can read Kennis's original story here: bit.ly/magicalhistory Then, Benzie Bus teamed up with the Benzie Area Historical Society to expand the routes and include new stories during the 2017 season, a fact which we updated you on last summer.

Well, the Magical History Tour is hitting the road again, sharing Benzie County's interesting, quirky history with local families, seasonal residents, and visitors alike. The Magical History Tours will enlighten your day with secret mysteries, wild history, and some classic tales. There are, once again, two separate tours that feature many of Benzie County's most famous historical landmarks, as well as those not-so-famous but incredibly interesting!

Docent Jerry Heiman will be back to lead the Betsie Bay route, which starts off with a tour of the Benzie Area Historical Museum in Benzonia. Museum guests will be treated to the photographic images of W.H. Sharp (1897-1944) and the "Summer Fun in the Benzie Sun" exhibit, highlighted by a 1904 Old Town sailing canoe. Guests will also take a nostalgic look at fading history at "Going, Going, Gone!" featuring photos of area high school buildings, most no longer standing, plus old yearbooks, sports trophies, and composite graduate photos. The bus then goes on to Elberta (ski jump, anyone?), before stopping for a walking tour of historic downtown



Magical History Tour. Shoddy Photoshop job by Jordan Bates.

Frankfort. The tour will be capped off with a visit to Beulah.

Meanwhile, the Heart of Benzie route is new to the tour this year and begins at the "Village within a Village" at the Almira Township Historical Museum in Lake Ann—after visiting here, you will see why many refer to this gem of a museum as the "Greenfield Village of Northern Michigan." From there, riders will head to Honor for a walking tour that explores the history of the lumber industry, and then they will take a step back in time at the Drake School, a one-room school house.

The Betsie Bay route is Fridays, beginning at 2 p.m. at the Benzie Area Historical Museum in Benzonia. The Heart of Benzie route is Saturdays, beginning at 1 p.m. at the Almira Township Historical Museum. Each bus tour is approximately two hours. Call 231-882-5539 for reservations or more information.

"Wooden Bike Guy" Continues His Ride

In Volume VI Issue 1, our Greta Bolger wrote a profile of Kurt Swanson, the woodworking artisan behind Always August Designs whose three wooden Schwinn bikes made it into the Top 20 of ArtPrize back in 2015. After 30 years in a 9-to-5 office job in the tool-and-dye industry in Grand Rapids, Swanson used his ArtPrize success as a launch point toward becoming a full-time woodworker in Benzie County—and then his shop on the north shore of Crystal Lake burned down, only four months into that dream. But, like a phoenix from the ashes, he rebuilt the studio/workshop, and his fine furniture business has really taken off. Read our original story online: bit.ly/KSwanson

Since that article ran last spring in our pages, Swanson is now in his second year as an established business, and he says that he has experienced steady growth, including having his work featured at the Oliver Art Center in Frankfort and at Iron Fish Distillery in Thompsonville. Also, Swanson made two tables and a menu board for the Stormcloud Brewing Company tap room at the new bottling facility in Frankfort's Industrial Park. Additionally, Swanson is using his busi-



One of two wooden coffee tables, made by local artist Kurt Swanson, that will be auctioned at the Bayou In The Barn event.

ness—and his skills—as a way to give back to the local community: find two wooden coffee tables and a bench in the auction at Grow Benzie's "Bayou In The Barn" music and fundraiser event at St. Ambrose Cellars on Friday, July 6. Plus, Swanson and his friend, Don Ruff, a minister at Benzie Area Church of Christ, are leading a class for local at-risk youth through the juvenile court system in which young adults are learning to make a canoe two days a week.

Interested in learning more? Contact Swanson by emailing kurt@alwayaugustdesigns.com.

What's In A Name?

In Volume VI Issue 3, our Nancy Bordine and Susan Koenig co-wrote a fun article about Nancy and Susan parties, respectively, as well as some information on parties for women named Linda and Barbara. In case you missed it, about 25 women with the name Nancy who reside in/near Benzie County have been meeting annually for a fun luncheon over the past 15 years; the same for about 40 women named Susan. Read our original story, with all of the details and a history of these names: bit.ly/nancysusan

This year, the 2018 Nancy gathering will take place on Tuesday, June 26, at The Hotel Frankfort. Mingling begins at 12:30 p.m. with a buffet-style lunch consisting of a hearty salad bar with bread, coffee, tea, soda pop, and dessert beginning at 1 p.m. The lunch costs \$21, including tax and gratuity. (If you know a Nancy who likes to have fun, share this information with her. If you are an inter-

ested Nancy, contact Nancy Waltz at njwaltz@yahoo.com to reserve a place at the party.)

Likewise, if Susan (or some derivative thereof, as Susie, Sue, Suzanne, etc.) is your appellation and you are reading this article but have not been included in this in-crowd, take heart! The big event for 2018 will take place Thursday, September 6, from 5-7 p.m. at Chez Susan King, 501 Michigan Avenue, Frankfort. (To RSVP, call Susan Koenig at 231-882-5722 or Sue Pyne at 231-882-5721.)

There was a party for women named Barbara on June 4, 2018. If you want to be included next year in the fun, email Barbara Alldredge at glenarborbarb@aol.com; although it is mostly women in Leelanau County, anyone named Barbara can join! Likewise, if you are interested in the next meeting of the Lindas, contact Linda Sommerville at lsommerville@cfsmail.org to learn more.

Help Design the Platte River Park

In Volume VI Issue 5, our Susan Koenig wrote a survey of a handful of new businesses in Honor, many of which are still in operation nearly a year later—Iron Horse Auto and Small Engine Repair shop; Jim's Joint BBQ; and A Love of Hair salon. Read the original article online: bit.ly/honorfishface Additionally, back in June 2014, we published a Q&A with Ingemar Johansson, president of Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP), in which he mentioned some of HARP's goals at that time, such as taking the "Question Mark" building down and the potential for a 52-acre park along the east/north bank of the Platte River. Read that Q&A online: bit.ly/HARPQnA

As we all know, the Question Mark building has since been demolished—check that one off HARP's to-do list—and you can read F. Josephine Arrowood's 2015 ode to the building's interesting/quirky history on our website: bit.ly/honorwonderland

Meanwhile, another box is close to being checked off HARP's list—the long-time dream of the 52-acre park is closer to becoming a reality and needs your input!

Thanks to a \$225,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund and additional financial contributions from various organizations and individuals, the 52-acre site is being acquired by Homestead Township. In addition to 1,550 feet of frontage on the Platte River, the site includes wetlands, wildlife habitat, and an abandoned blueberry farm.

"This site is a pristine area that would create access to the river and that could be

enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. The potential is unlimited—it could fit an accessible fishing dock, a picnic area, a gazebo, a small concert venue, a green space, a visitor center, etc.," Johansson told us back in 2014.

Recently, he says of the project: "From the very beginning, this project has been by, for, and about the residents and visitors of the community. This was identified as a priority more than 10 years ago, through a community planning effort. The project is about our quality of life, as well as our economic well-being. This will be an outstanding destination for those who love nature, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and more. It is now time to bring our friends and neighbors back together to celebrate the purchase of the property and to talk about how it should be designed, to encourage wise use in keeping with the fragile environment."

HARP will facilitate a design session for the park at the end of June, and the community is invited to join in envisioning what Platte River Park will become. Once the design is finished and approved by Homestead Township, more funding will be sought in 2019 to begin the development stage.

The public is invited to a community celebration and design session on Thursday, June 28, from 7-9 p.m. at The Gathering Place, located at 10579 Main Street, in the Honor Plaza. Tours of the property will be given prior to the meeting, between 4-6 p.m. Contact Honor Village president Bill Ward at billward-detroit@yahoo.com for more details.



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The Betsie Current

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CONSTANTLY FLOWING

Mondays

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. 231-525-0600. 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: grab your friends and join us for euchre, cribbage, and rummy, too! 12-1pm.

MIFiberShed at Grow Benzie is a place for fabric, fiber craft, and clothing to be recycled, remade, or exchanged. Clear out your closet or sewing/craft room and get inspired to make new stuff. We give fiber nine lives before the landfill. Come use a sewing machine, help to sort donations, and acquire clothing for \$1 per pound! Donations give you fibercredit to use in the shop. Workshops on the 2nd Monday of the month. MIFiberShed is open every Monday 12-7pm. Call/text Emily Votruba at 231-399-0098 with any questions, or email emilyvotruba@yahoo.com to join the email list.

Grow Benzie Farmers' Market: Beginning June 4, every Monday at 3:30pm and 5pm, there will be free cooking and nutrition-education classes. All are welcome! Fresh vegetables and fruits, baked goods, bread, jam, honey, maple syrup, artisan crafts, and more will be featured at each market! You can also tour our new edible trails and try out mini-golf! The Grill Benzie Food Truck will be there so bring the family for dinner! 5885 Frankfort Highway (M-115) between Benzonia and Frankfort. 3-7pm.

Qi Gong with Jessica at Oliver Art Center in Frankfort. 5:30pm.

Tuesdays

Sunrise Rotary Club's weekly meetings are over breakfast at the Cold Creek Inn of Beulah. Come join us! 7:30-9am.

Stretch and tone with Jean at Oliver Art Center. Email annamallien@gmail.com if interested. 9-10am.

Music by the Melody Makers at The Gathering Place. 10:30am-1:30pm.

Computers with Dustin: Stop in and let Dustin help you unlock the mysteries of the computer. You may bring your own or use one of our public computers. These sessions are FREE! Benzonia Public Library. 11am-1pm.

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.

Yoga with Kari at Pleasant Valley Community Center in Arcadia. Open to all levels; \$13 per session. 231-383-1883. 5:30-7pm.

Yoga flow with Lauren at Oliver Art Center. 6pm.

Yard Yoga with Jenn Ryan. \$10 per class, with some mats available, if you do not have one. St. Ambrose bee garden. Text 231-218-0655 to register. 6-8pm.

Wednesdays

Mat pilates with props with Anna at the Oliver Art Center. annamallien@gmail.com 9-10am.

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

Gentle yoga with Lauren at Oliver Art Center. 10:15am.

Open 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 per card or bring a prize. 12:30-1:30pm.

PLARN at the Gathering Place. Crochet plastic mats to donate for the homeless. For more info, call Dawn at 231-525-0601. 1:15pm.

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

The Storm Riders Cycling Club is rolling through beautiful Benzie County this summer. Join the rides every Wednesday, or just those that you can make! Explore rotating sections of rides around Frankfort and Elberta. Rides will begin and end at Stormcloud Brewing Company, and riders get a discount on their first beer after the ride. No registration; just show up! 6:30pm.

Chairlift Rides: Enjoy panoramic views of three counties and top-of-the-mountain attractions, such as live music and a cashbar. \$7 per person, but ages 8 and younger ride free with a paying adult; all house guests ride free. Crystal Mountain. 7pm.

Thursdays

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

Stretch and tone with Jean at Oliver Art Center. annamallien@gmail.com 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 Denny, the cute little dog! 12-5pm.

Board Game Day at the Darcy Library of Beulah. 2-5pm.

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. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times in the studio. Price includes: 25 pounds of clay, glaze, and firings. 3:30-6:30pm.

Yoga with Kari at the home of Linda & Dave Schwyer in Bear Lake. Open to all levels; \$13 per session. 231-383-1883. 4-5:30pm.

Samporna yoga with Anna at Oliver Art Center. annamallien@gmail.com 5:30pm.

Open Mic Night at St. Ambrose Cellars at 841

S Pioneer Road just outside Beulah/Honor. 231-383-4262. 6-9pm. 6pm.

Open Mic Night at The Cabbage Shed in Elberta. 8pm.

Fridays

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

Fun Dance time with Ms. Vickie at the Benzie Shores District Library at 10am.

Yoga flow with Lauren at Oliver Art Center. 10:15am.

Tech Support to help you navigate the tech world. Please call in advance to schedule your appointment with Robert. The Gathering Place. 1-2pm.

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

Saturdays

Body Sculpting on the ball with Deanne at Oliver Art Center. annamallien@gmail.com 9-10am.

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

MIFiberShed at Grow Benzie is open 9am-4pm.

Gentle yoga with Lauren at Oliver Art Center. 10:30am.

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.

Tours of Stormcloud's production brewery and tasting room, complete with an overview of the brewing process and guided tastings. All participants will take home a Stormcloud logo tasting glass or sticker. \$10 per adult or teen (ages 12-20), children under age 12 are free. Reservations required: stormcloudbrewing.com/brewery-tours/ Tours are each about 45 minutes long, and tours begin at 3pm, 4pm, 5pm, and 6pm.

Chairlift Rides: Enjoy panoramic views of three counties and top-of-the-mountain attractions, such as live music and a cashbar. \$7 per person, but ages 8 and younger ride free with a paying adult; all house guests ride free. Crystal Mountain. 7pm.

Dance Party at the Frankfort Beach with Vickie Slater. 231-620-1411. 7-8pm.

*Yoga classes at Discover YOU Yoga and Fitness in Frankfort every day of the week, except Saturday. For a complete schedule and more information on classes and rates, visit discoveryyogami.com.

Sundays

Ranger-led paddle of the Platte River. Bring your own kayak or rent one. Reservations required. Meet at the Platte River Picnic Area in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. We will paddle four miles of rivers over the course of about 2.5 hours. 10am-12:30pm.

ON DECK

Thursday, June 21

Summer Reading Program at the Benzonia Public Library: kick off summer with the first day of our summer program, going on every Thursday! "Sounds of Nature" is the theme of this first event. Join Dr. Fizz and the BPL Puppet Lab as we explore the wonderful sounds

of the wild and discover how nature “rocks.” Then, we will make our own rainsticks. 3pm.

Thursday, June 21

Summer Solstice Party at Iron Fish Distillery to showcase the upcoming Betsie Valley Community Center and how you can get involved! brotha James will per performing music to inspire, motivate, and push people to the next level to change their lives. He creates energy in the room that quickly helps people to feel more connected, bonded, and excited!

Thursday, June 21

The Dunes Brothers are sure to present a fun and frivelous evening at Lake Ann Brewing Company. 6:30-9:30pm.

Thursday-Saturday, June 21-23

Michigan Clean Energy Conference & Expo at various locations in Traverse City. Thursday is a kick-off Solstice Party at The Little Fleet; Friday is the conference at Hagerty; Saturday is a job-finding/deal-making at Northwestern Michigan College.

Thursday-Saturday, June 21-23

2nd annual Frankfort 48 Film Festival: asprig-ing filmmakers will have spent Thursday and Friday making a three- to five-minute film that celebrates the beauty of Northern Michigan. They will have 48 hours to conceive of their odeas, scout locations, film, edit, and present their masterpiece. The public screening will take place Saturday night at 7pm at The Garden Theater in downtown Frankfort. Prizes for the top three films.

Friday, June 22

Sandra Effert’s voice, talent, and smile will warm your heart and complete your day at The Cabbage Shed. 5-9pm.

Friday, June 22

Talantis & Jan perform at St. Ambrose. 6-9pm.

Friday, June 22

Clint Weaner is a solo musician who plays a variety of old and new music and some original music, as well. Iron Fish Distillery. 6-9pm.

Friday, June 22

Peaceful protest to the barricading of Elberta Beach’s public access road. Alfredo Improvisational Trio will play music; Josh Herren’s Tiki Cart will serve food. 7-11pm.

Friday, June 22

Niemisto, Skellenger, and Villoch: three of our favorite performers team up for a great night of music at Lake Ann Brewing Company. 7-10pm.

Friday, June 22

Jake Frysinger performs harmonious cover songs and originals on acoustic guitar at Stormcloud. 8-10pm.

Saturday, June 23

Take-A-Kid Fishing: free T-shirt, fishing rod, lunch, and treats. Meet in Frankfort’s Mineral Springs Park. 8am-12pm.

Saturday, June 23

5th annual Up North Pride parade on Front Street in downtown Traverse City, followed by a block party at The Little Fleet, co-sponsored by Thompsonville’s own Iron Fish Distillery. Parade begins at 5:30pm; block party at 7pm.

Saturday, June 23

Fishstik performs at St. Ambrose. 6-9pm.

Saturday, June 23

Clean Heels will play all of your favorite songs, plus a few that will no doubt become favorites. Iron Fish Distillery. 7-9pm.

Saturday, June 23

Rock With Teeth is American music, created by Eric Engblade, a songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who will be joined by bassist Justin Avdek, guitarist Justin Weirenga, cellist Max Morrison, and trumpeter Brad Fitcher. Lake Ann Brewing Company. 7-10pm.

Saturday, June 23

Barbarossa Brothers perform at Stormcloud.

8-10pm.

Saturday, June 23

Shake your groover thang at the Summer Solstice 70s Party, with costume contest, at The Cabbage Shed. Evan Burgess will be jamming on stage to keep the dance floor “staying alive.” 9pm.

Sunday, June 24

Vendor show at Infinite Beaute Salon in Benzonia: crafts, jewelry, Pampered Chef, LulaRoe, soaps, and more. 10am.

Monday, June 25

Beekeeping 101: workshop will cover basic bee biology, hive architecture, seasonal maintenance, and discussion of honeybee pest and disease management. This class is for anyone interested, including but not limited to: farmers, beginning producers, retiring/transitioning producers, organic producers, specialty crop producers, sustainable producers, value-added producers, and small business owners. The instructor is Janna Kostus, an apprentice in the local Beekeepress Program, run by Sharon Jones of Sleeping Bear Farms and BeeDazzled. \$10 per person, scholarships available. Please arrive early to ensure prompt start. 4-5:30pm in the Grow Benzie studio house.

Monday, June 25

Olivia Mainville performs at Stormcloud. 8-11pm.

Monday-Friday, June 25-29

Super Summer Camp to the Rescue: mind-blowing action for your kiddos this summer! We’ll explore some super powers int he world around us in adventurous ways, geared for ages 6-12. The theme is “The Amazing Human.” Creative, healthy snacks will be provided, but campers need to bring lunch. \$40 per day, or \$35 for COGNiTION members; 20% off for siblings; 10% off for full-week sign-up. Camp runs from 10am-4pm, but care is available before/after camp from 9am-6pm for an additional \$5 per hour.

Tuesday, June 26

Adrian + Meredith perform at Stormcloud. 7pm.

Wednesday, June 27

Ukelele Strum & Sing with Ben Hassenger at Stormcloud. Ben will lead a variety of songs, play a few of his own, and host this uke open mic. Bring your uke and join in the aloha spirit! 7-10pm.

Wednesday, July 4

Independance Day! Happy 4th of July!

Frankfort Events

- Parade begins at 10am: begins on Main Street, turns at 7th Street, then down Forest Avenue to Michigan Avenue, then back up Main Street to the Benzie Shores District Library.
- Art in the Park begins at 10am at Mineral Springs Park.
- Carnival opens at 10am (open July 4-8).
- Sand Castle Sculpture Contest at 12pm at the Frankfort Beach.
- FIREWORKS at dusk (about 10:30pm) on the Frankfort Beach.

Beulah Events

- Pancake Breakfast Buffet from 8-11am at the Hungry Tummy Restaurant.
- Firecracker 5k Run begins at 8am at the Beulah Pavillion.
- 1-mile Family Walk/Run (free!) begins at 9am at the Beulah Pavillion.
- Kids games & face-painting from 10:30am-12pm at the Beulah Park.
- Food concession, sponsored by the Boy Scouts, at 12pm in the Beulah Park.
- Parade begins at 1:30pm and runs down South Benzie Boulevard.
- Kids greased pole climb at 2:30pm at Beulah Park.
- Coin hunt at 3:30pm on the Beulah Beach.
- Rubber duck race at 4:30 pm at Beulah Beach. (Duck rental available.)
- Fireworks at dusk (around 10:30pm) at Beulah Beach. (Alternate rain date: July 5th.)

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Joe Cissell: Rough Art

Questions & Answers with community faces

Joe Cissell is an artist, but not the starving kind. Nor is he the reclusive type. Rather, Cissell is super friendly and outgoing, always with a smile on his face and a hug to give.

Art is not his full-time gig—yet. But, in his mind, it probably works better that way; creative juices flow better when they are allowed to breathe, like good red wine. His most recent work has been featured as: the 2017 official Earthwork Harvest Gathering logo and the upcoming Bayou In The Barn event, put on by Grow Benzie at St. Ambrose Cellars on July 6. Cissell also received 4th place in the 2010 “Let’s Save Michigan” poster campaign, put on by the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Additionally, Cissell has done logos/branding for several local businesses, as well as murals and commissioned works. Over the past year, he has really begun to market his work, with plans to sell T-shirts, stickers, and other merchandise at local farmers’ markets and at art and music festivals around the state.

Having graduated from Ferndale High School in 2002, Cissell spent one semester at Northern Michigan University before deciding to move to Frankfort to fix up the former home of his grandparents, now both deceased. Some friends may remember the first few years of Cissell living in the house and painting fantastical murals on the 1960s-style wood-paneled walls; that time has come and gone, and the three-story, old Victorian house is looking more and more like a home, with drywall, beautiful wood trim, and extensive plaster work on the support beams, which have been made to mimic trees.

The “trees” are just one way that art is still very much alive inside the house: Cissell has quarantined one bedroom off as his studio, and he has designated the front room as a gallery space—he even hosted an art auction last summer for a friend. Not to mention the “art nights” that he is known to host for friends and family throughout the year, and the ever-popular “rough art contest” on the morning of the 4th of July.

To supplement his artist income, Cissell has performed seemingly every job imaginable in Benzie County: carpentry and landscaping to bartending and pizza-making. These days, Cissell is also a delivery guy for us—every other week all summer long and once a month in the fall/winter, Cissell hops in his red Subaru and drives to Greenville (between Grand Rapids and Mt. Pleasant) to pick up freshly printed bundles of our newspaper from Stafford Media. He began delivering for *The Betsie Current* about mid-season in 2016; at that time, he was delivering 3,000 to 5,000 copies (depending on peak season) to about 200 businesses in Benzie County. Over the past two years, Cissell has expanded his deliveries to encompass an extra 75 or so business in the Lake Ann, Interlochen, and Thompsonville areas, and we are now able to distribute 3,500 to 7,000 copies of each issue, thanks to his efforts.

Continuing with our interview series on impactful Benzie County characters, *The Betsie Current* caught up with Cissell as he was making deliveries of our second issue of this season.

THE BETSIE CURRENT: Why did you move to Frankfort?

JOE CISSSELL: After taking a semester at Northern Michigan University, up in Marquette, I was grappling with the idea of how to pay off “Art School” debt with an art degree. Lucky for me, to dispel my angst, there was an old family house here in Frankfort. My grandparents, Marge and Francis Grix, moved here from Detroit back in the late ’60s or early ’70s, depending upon which relative you ask; nobody knows for sure. Anyway, with moving here, the idea was to resurrect the old haunt into the revived family homestead. Because the rest of my family was performing their own downstate exodus at the time, having a home base for everyone seemed responsible—like I was investing in something. And twist my arm, I could build an art studio five blocks from Lake Michigan and soak up that inescapable thrall of retirement culture; pretty tantalizing to a 20-year-old, ha. It seems crazy that was 14 years ago.



Artist/delivery guy Joe Cissell lives in a tree house, drives a red Subaru, and hosts a Rough Art competition on the 4th of July. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

CURRENT: How did this house come to be such a special fixture in your family? What was it like visiting the house when you were a kid compared to now?

CISSSELL: My grandmother was up visiting in Frankfort with a friend, not too long after the riots in Detroit, where my grandfather was a police officer at the time. She fell in love with the area and just happened across this house for sale. She found a phone to call my grandfather, and he told her, “Put an offer on it!” My grandfather passed back in the late ’70s. My sister Liz thinks he haunts the place nowadays, and she calls him Uncle Frank—and at least to her, he’s still hanging out, sort of a wily but charming and protecting fixture of the house. So that left my grandmother doing the best she could for the next 30+ years, but she loved it; to her, it was paradise. She was very involved with St. Ann’s, the Catholic church here in town, and she would often drive for hours in the winter to offer communion to people who were incapable of travel. You know, being an ex-nurse, I think she just really cared for people, unconditionally. The family called her “Grandma Pillows.” She was a lovely hug of a person, that’s where she got her nickname; always outgoing, always looking to celebrate. Her idea of a party was the whole family gathered around a table, filled with pizza and beer. And pizza was “healthy” to her, on account of it having all of the food groups! As a kid, the house and the whole area was magic. We’d have family reunions most summers, and it seemed like there were more than 40 of us staying there. I have a lot of cousins, and too many to count would just sleep on the living room floor. That said, Grandma Pillows made the house a home. There’s something almost tangible about the feelings attached to memories that resonate from those walls. There’s been a number of family members who’ve since bought houses in town, after falling in love with Frankfort while staying on her living room floor or in one of the spare bedrooms. She just loved having people around, and who’s to say? Maybe her butterfly effect helped nudge along this sweet little destination thing that we’ve got going today. Besides an aunt, uncle, and cousin on Crystal Lake, I’m the only year-round member of my family in the area—shout out to Andrea, John, Jake, and Riley over at Grixanadu! Although, there’s a thing we call “fictive kin,” which are “sort of” relatives through marriage that definitely have more and more of a presence, but that list goes pretty deep. When my grandparents bought the house, it was sight-unseen for my grandfather; I think the price-to-size ratio, plus the rose-colored glasses from my grandmother, sealed the deal. Let’s just say, from what I hear, it was a real piece of work. But that’s how they got here, and that’s why I’m here and why so many “fictive kin” are here.

CURRENT: What jobs do you have/have you had in Frankfort since being here?

CISSSELL: Well the first job was house work; my grandmother’s place was in pretty bad shape when I first moved here in 2004. With inches of water filling the basement during the spring-time rain and snow melt, digging up the entire

foundation was first on a long list to just get rid of the mold; I had no idea the rainbow colors of mold that exist, it’s kinda fantastic! But “job-jobs,” I’ve done everything from rough and fine carpentry to handy-man/odd-job type work. I spent a summer insulating houses, another summer landscape gardening, and I worked on a llama farm, helping to build a peace labyrinth. I’ve worked at a junkyard and at Frankfort Papano’s, slanging those ’zas! I’ve served beers at Stormcloud, hung shows and overseen events at the Oliver Art Center—by the way, check out the art center, it’s pretty amazing! I was even a bouncer at the old Cabbage Shed for a minute. I’ve done masonry and house-cleaning. Way back, I volunteered teaching second-graders to watercolor paint once a week, and I would take them out for recess, back when there was a Waldorf program; it was more fun than a job, really. But most recently, I’ve been delivering *The Betsie Current*—best job ever, ha! Seriously, though, I get to see and meet tons of people all over the county, and everyone loves it because it’s like I’m bringing them a gift! Not to mention my little red rocketship of a Subaru is a manual, so it’s super fun to drive while bumpin’ my most recent Habitat Restore score of ’80s cassette tapes. (That place is a treasure trove, if your car’s CD player ever goes out on you, like mine did.)

CURRENT: How old were you when you first started getting interested in art?

CISSSELL: Pretty young, like a lot of kids. I remember being around four or five years old and telling some wild story to go along with a crayoned giant caterpillar that was shooting laser beams from over mountain tops onto “army men” below, and my mom really liked it. But then, really, I got into art more seriously in high school, when I had the good fortune to be sort of illuminated by one of those bastions of a teacher, Mr. Jerry Lemenu, whose idea of grading “Art” was, “As long as you’re productive, you get an A.” He sincerely wanted us to pursue our own interests. That sort of allowance of exploration—where nothing was wrong—really turned something on inside of me.

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

CISSSELL: Hmm, well, I have a giant painting in my house that I’ve been working on for more than eight years, and I’ve got some really specific additions in mind for it, but part of the fun of that piece is not really knowing where it’s going entirely or what will feed into it along the way. The fun discovery, for me, was realizing that, when I try not to say “no” to whatever strange ideas that come up, and I actually curiously carry them through or follow their lead, there seems to be some kind of great insight and an incredible cohesion. Like, maybe the way a dream can deliver the same thing—a sort of message to yourself. I’ve also been learning to market my art over the last year or so: I’ve produced stickers, postcards, magnets, posters, pins, and pint glasses. I even purchased my own silkscreen press and flash dryer for inking up my own T-shirts and tote bags, and that’s been uber-gratifying. So, the next big initiative will be getting that stuff out on the internet to sell and maybe dipping my toe into wholesale. I’ve also been wrapping my head around different branding ideas, so I guess that’s a loose direction that sounds fun, too.

CURRENT: What local companies have you done art work for, companies that our readers might know?

CISSSELL: I guess a good handful, from logos to illustrations, artistic signage, and even a couple of murals. Nicole Bates is a local speech therapist, and I made a logo for her business, Encouraging Expression; Paul Gehart is a friend with a tree business, and I made him a logo with a hidden man in the tree with heart in mind; I made a logo for musician Hannah Ray Beale; the Benzie Community Water Council commissioned me to design the logo for the Benzie County Water Festival eight years ago, and that’s still being used; I also made the logo for the Benzie Solar Initiative; Wallin Farms/Up North

Emu had me design coupons for them; and Lou Anne over at Bay Port Lodging's "psychedelic" motel signs, that was fun! She wanted me to keep the mid-century gold "MOTEL" letters on both signs, but the rest of the design is all new. Jeryl Colby's Orchard House adult care facility on Grace Road: I did some illustrating for her. I made a sign with some maple syrup and eggs [painted on] for The May Farm on Adams Road; I also did a collaborative mural on their portable chicken coop with a bunch of SEEDS kids, and that was up at the Mays's Lobb Road location for a long time. I've done album art for Dede and the Dreamers; a logo for Keaton and Ashley Kidder with their Backyard Fest; as well as Grow Benzie's "Bayou In The Barn" design. One of my biggest projects, literally, was probably for Alex and Meryl Brydges on the barn of their Narrow Gauge Farm and Forge—that one was huge, like 14 by 36 feet, and totally fun to go so big. I also spent most of last summer with a booth at the Frankfort Farmers' Market selling T-shirts, totes, prints, stickers, magnets, and postcards, and I plan on getting back over there this summer ASAP—hope to see you there! Right now, I'm in the process of setting up an online Etsy shop (check out "PedestrianArt") to sell my wares, as well as a website to feature a lot of the art that I've done over the years (joecissell.com).

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

CISSELL: I love the air up here—whether that's the lake, being surrounded by forests, or just being out of the city—it just tastes better, almost like there's something nutritious about it. And 100% that's huge in the winters up here. If you've ever spent days without going outside, which can be easier certain weeks of the winter, then you might notice that first breath of fresh air when you finally get out. It can hit you like a ton of bricks, but in a good way, maybe like a ton of pillows or puppies or something. So, at first, getting through the winter up here was really tough, but once I figured out that I just needed to dress for it, get out in the beautiful nature, move around and talk to people, drink in the fresh air, it was a whole new sport. Like going from raw broccoli to lightly steamed broccoli that is smothered in salty butter and hot sauce, oh dang, what a difference! Other than that, coming from the Detroit area, at first, I missed the people—just the quantity and variety and all the stimulation therein. But what I eventually realized was that we've got quality here. It's a fair bit harder to burn your bridges up here and get away with it. That's not to say a good bridge burning isn't healthy or necessary; people are still people. It's just that, because we're much more reliant on each other here, it makes us stronger, kinder, a bit more sensitive, and all around a better community.

CURRENT: What kind of impact do you think that you have been able to have, as a young person, on the community?

CISSELL: Haha, good question, I don't know. I think that's a hard one to answer about yourself. I like to think that I've sort of nudged along in a not-too-aggressive manner toward making it feel more feasible for other young people to attempt a foothold here. To go back to your "challenges" question, not having many young/same-aged peers in the area may have been my biggest issue. Without my art studio and family house, I probably wouldn't have stayed, for lack of youthful vibrance, dating pool, and the systemic snowballing of life blood that comes along with that. I would like to think that particular change is happening, that more young people seem to be moving here—slowly. And that is healthy, at least for me. And maybe I have been a little drop in that bucket, too.

CURRENT: What could Northern Michigan do to attract more talented young people back to this area?

CISSELL: Well, of course, affordable childcare, housing, and jobs are the token. But I think, maybe as important and appealing to me, is expanding the year-round atmosphere with reasons to stick around [during the "off" season]. That could mean events like Empire's quirky Asparagus Fest [in late May] or Annual Polar Plunge [in February] through the fall, winter, and spring; a dining experience that stays open past 10 or 11 p.m. outside of the two-month bracket [July and August]. Here in Frankfort, I'd

like to see the further development of mountain biking trails, a real nurturing of our surf community, a Fourth Street trail access to Tank Hill's envisioned disc-golf course and hiking loop, with activity stops. Maybe finishing the pavement on the Rails to Trails along Crystal Lake to Beulah—I mean, I love to road bike, and that's a pretty great deterrent. Unfortunately, the decision not to pave that section was intentional, but it's those little things that could help tip the scales from a surviving community to a thriving one, I think. The novelty factor that comes along with large public sculptures or some wild murals that can still be done tastefully but also appeal to the cool factor that might get people saying, "Hey, did you see that thing in Frankfort!? You've gotta check it out!" To blanket it all under one idea: I think it's important, as a community, to at least be aware of our hesitancy to consider new ideas and that there are vastly beneficial ways to encourage growth, while maintaining our characteristic charm.

CURRENT: What are your favorite local events and activities? Any favorite dining, recreation, hiking spots?

CISSELL: I've been loving everything that Grow Benzie has been doing; they've got an amazing team of people over there, and they're really fostering the types of community development that I am into. Check out their Bayou In The Barn [coming up July 6 at St. Ambrose Cellars], it's a fundraiser for something awesome, and besides that, it's just a ton of fun. I love The Lighthouse Cafe in Elberta—"artist prices," but still really dang good! Their Early Bird Special is where it's at. Also Crescent Bakery's Huevos Panini: oh dang, you can get it without cheese, and it's still off the charts delish! My favorite hikes are Old Indian Trail, north of Crystal Lake, and Green Point, south of Elberta—both are fantastic for trail running, but there's a little poison ivy on Green Point, fair warning.

CURRENT: How have you seen Benzie County change since you moved here? What are your hopes for the area in the future?

CISSELL: In so many great ways, I think, though how much of that perspective is just getting beyond the angst of my early 20s is tricky to tell. But just seeing more 30-somethings move to the area—year-round even—and stick, that has given me a lot of enthusiasm. And I think a big part of that is due to our sweet little micro-brewery; Stormcloud has had a huge impact on giving Frankfort's downtown a middle-of-the-winter, mid-week pulse, not to mention Lake Ann Brewery and now Iron Fish [Distillery], too! They definitely up the artisan-craft cool factor. The resurrection of The Garden Theater, with its Frankfort Film Fest [in October], and the expansion of the Oliver Art Center into the old Coast Guard Station are both testament to our rad community support systems and personally excite my guilty-pleasure nodes. My hopes would be that Benzie just keeps doing what it's doing; I think a big part of what living here produces is an ability to adapt and a necessity to be creative, and with those, our options are pretty sweet and can encompass a lot. Beyond that, [my hopes include] always more art, pushing the limits and expanding the off-season livelihood—and not just economic but social, cultural, and communal.

CURRENT: What is this "Rough Art" thing?

CISSELL: It's a fantastically silly, no-holds-barred, anything-not-"fine art" Art Fair that lovingly hijacks Frankfort's 4th of July Parade as it rolls by my front yard [523 Forest Avenue, the house with the "tree" porch]. It's mostly a bunch of family and friends getting goofy, but were open to one-upmanship! If anyone wants to participate with their own Rough Art interpretations, please join us! We do coffee and doughnuts; try to explain the depth and gravity of our high-art concepts over the sirens blaring in the background; watch people scratch their heads as they walk past—it's hilarious! It's probably been going on for 10 or 12 years now, and there's been everything from improvisational music performance to interpretive dance; mobile sculptures to cairn (rock) sculpture; art made from garbage and "found object" pieces with punny titles; painted furniture; sandpaper paintings (literally rough); and the list goes on. There are no wrong answers, as long as you're not trying too hard—or try away, just keep it rough! But we definitely do it for the spectacle, so tell your friends, feel free to join in the creative revelry, or just come by and ogle away, haha!

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Birch

Continued from page 1

mers here as a “lakie.” When she graduated from high school, she then attended Oakland University, receiving a degree in business administration. After that, she moved up here and stayed in the family lake house while she attended the Great Lakes Culinary Institute, also earning an income and gaining valuable work experience at local restaurants, such as The Mayfair Tavern, Dinghy’s, and The Cabbage Shed. (Even back then, Niederhofer was dreaming of opening her own restaurant in Frankfort... but more on that later.)

Despite both being Midwesterners, the couple—who are getting married this September—met in Colorado, when both were working at the Stanley Hotel in Estes Park.

Crawford visited a friend in Colorado and fell in love with the mountains.

“I was like, ‘I will work at McDonalds, if that’s what it takes, I don’t care,’” he laughs now.

Fortunately, it did not come to that—Crawford had worked in restaurants throughout high school and college, so it was fairly easy for him to find work in that industry in Colorado.

After working at the Stanley Hotel, they helped to open Aurum Food and Wine in Steamboat Springs, a lunch and dinner venue, where she was sous chef and he was the assistant general manager. They also helped to open Table 79, which served dinner only and was very successful, receiving a write-up in *Ski Magazine* after being open for only three months.

But owning their own restaurant has been something that the couple has been talking about since their first month of dating, eight years ago.

“Our background [in Colorado] is more in fine dining—really fancy dinners,” Crawford says. “That’s our forte. So this [Birch & Maple] is something new for us. We’re constantly trying to challenge and push ourselves to get better, to try new things. And we think this is what Frankfort needs right now.”

The Renovation

The couple have been keeping their eyes on various restaurants in the area for a while now. The Bayview Grille was on the market for more than a year, and their deal was accepted last November.

“We were helping our previous employer to open another new restaurant,” Crawford explains. “So it took a bit for us to get here.”

The couple started from scratch with the layout, taking measurements with grid paper and breaking up the space, giving character to the separate “rooms”—the bar area, the diner, the back room for parties.

“We’re restaurant people, so we designed it to flow like a restaurant, to be versatile, so we could move tables together if we needed to,” Crawford explains.

The renovation—sans a professional interior designer—took place from February through May, and of course, their opening day had to be pushed back a few times, due to unforeseen weather conflicts this spring, just as happened at the other new restaurant in the area, Rocks Landing at Chimney Corners.

“Everything was practically done on the inside, so we were just waiting on the outside,” Crawford says. The restaurant has a new red paint job on the outside, and the lawn is super inviting with a fenced-in green area, a winding path to the front door, and shrubs along the path.

Once inside the screened-in porch/patio, there are two fireplaces: one at a lounge seating area with a coffee table, and the other at a high-top bar at a window that peeks into the actual bar inside. There are several tables in the screened-in area, for those who wish to see a view of the bay.

Inside the restaurant itself, there has been a complete make-over: the bar is a beautiful slab of spalted maple from Elberta, and glass liquor bottles gleam across the bar from their place

at a long mirror that runs the length of the room. The other seating areas are partitioned off, almost like different rooms in your favorite cabin. But more modern than that.

There are plays on the name seen everywhere in the design, but it is not heavy-handed—the table tops are made of maple from Petoskey, and the partition in the middle of the room features actual birch limbs running vertically from the ceiling to the bench seats in the booths, while the light sconces are faux-birch. Niederhofer’s parents helped greatly with the design: her father, Jim, is responsible for the patio, while her mother, Linda, hand-selected all of the artwork.

Inside, you could almost forget that you are in Northern Michigan, as the restaurant’s decor has a classier big-city (Chicago, maybe?) feel to it, yet it still feels small-town, too.

That same feeling is reflected in the menu items, as well.

The Food (and Drink)

The couple says that it is important to them to go the extra mile where they can, even if it means things might not be quite as profitable as they could be.

“It means a lot to us to know that we’re doing it right,” Crawford says. “We’re trying to do more than just pump out food. We want to create an experience; hopefully people understand that an experience is going to cost a little more.”

For instance, all of the eggs are pasture-raised, all of the meats are antibiotic- and hormone-free. The burger is local to Holland, Michigan, and apparently the cows are fed cherries and beer leftovers, Crawford says.

Additionally, they are trying to be conscious of waste—the restaurant uses cloth napkins (cute as a button, with red stripes) and non-plastic/biodegradable straws, plus their non-pork waste is all going to a pig farm on M-115.

A big sensation is their craft cocktails. If you want a classic, like a Manhattan, they are going to use only three ingredients, but they are using high-quality ingredients. Meanwhile, they have fun takes on the classics with modern twists, like the Coconut Dreaming, which is a take on the pina coloda: rum, Velvet Falernum, Orgeat, coconut cream, pineapple juice, and house-made almond syrup. All of the syrups are made in-house, and they fresh squeeze all of the lemon and lime juices.

“There is such a noticeable difference in taste,” Crawford says. “In a margarita, for instance, when you use fresh-squeezed vs. mixer, you can taste it! Even if you buy the organic mixer, it still isn’t the same.”

The Name

So, where did the name come from? Everybody asks them that.

“We had this great, late summer,” Crawford says. “We kept fighting over names, then we went on this hike to Green Point. We took a hammock, set it up where we’d have a view.”

They were sitting there for a few minutes before Niederhofer looked over and realized that they had tied up to a birch on one side and a maple on the other.

“That’s perfect,” she said at the time to Crawford. It was a perfect fit for an Up North restaurant “It’s us. If we’re not in the restaurant working, we’re spending our time outside.”

Crawford likes that things like this give their servers something to talk about with patrons. From the intentional use of reusable/biodegradable materials to the pasture-raised eggs to the various woods used for the tables, there are tons of mini-stories found within the restaurant.

“We’re all about creating an experience for our customers,” Crawford says. “The feedback that we have gotten so far has been incredible.”

Birch & Maple is open every day from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; on Wednesdays through Sundays, they also serve dinner from 5 to 9 p.m. Located at 727 Main Street in Frankfort, across from the Bayside/Farmers’ Market Park. Check out menu items at birchandmaplefrankfort.com or call Call 231-399-0399.

Huh?

Continued from page 1

and sagacious person whose passion for her profession will draw you in, either as a client in Benzie County or as a collaborator on her newest venture, to help people in Mexico.

Benzie Beginnings

Strathman has been testing hearing for 38 years, and the majority of that has been in Benzie County. Born in Des Moines, Iowa, she studied English at Drake University and subsequently, via a circuitous path of interesting travel, landed in 1976 in Traverse City, where she received a degree from Northwestern Michigan College and later found employment working for the Tri-County Health Department, servicing Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Benzie counties. Her job back then was to screen 10,000 children each year for hearing and vision. In time, she became more interested in the hearing side of testing rather than in the vision side, perhaps because hearing problems are insidious and less apparent, thus more difficult to detect and diagnose.

After 10 years, Strathman found employment with Michigan Hearing Aid Company, based out of Grand Rapids, that offered Strathman special auditory training.



A child in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, receives the gift of hearing. Photo courtesy of Jeanne Strathman.

"I worked for them, testing and fitting adults," Strathman says. "By this time, I had two teenagers—not an ideal situation for traveling all over the west coast of Michigan; I knew I needed to stay closer to home."

And so, in 1993, she relocated to Benzonia and started her own business, by testing people in their homes. Then she shared office space, equipment, and a secretary in the Benzie Center co-op building in downtown Beulah for two years. Finally, she was successful in building enough clientele to be able to move her business into the office next to Webber Insurance Agency in Benzonia, where she has remained for the past 22 years. (At one point, she had expanded to a second clinic in Traverse City, where she was nominated for "Best Business of the Year" in 2010 and 2011. But in 2012, she decided to focus on Benzie County only.)

All Ages and Stages

Strathman sees people of all ages and stages of hearing loss; in the past, she has seen children as young as four, however, she mostly sees adults now (102 has been the oldest).

Some children are misdiagnosed with learning difficulties, Strathman explains, when in fact, they have hearing difficulties. Meanwhile, younger adults with hearing loss but without hearing devices often look and act older than they really are, because they are struggling to follow the action around them, they are feeling left out, and they can become depressed.

Recently, one of Strathman's clients, a middle-aged man, came into the office to tell her that he has a new lease on life since his hearing aids were installed; he feels less isolated and better able to communicate with people.

"I feel like I'm 19 again," he told her.

Giving Back

Strathman works with various local outlets to promote hearing here in Benzie County: Benzie Area Christian Neighbors (BACN) and various local churches. And over the past six years, she has been doing what she can south of the border, too.

Strathman has vacationed at a resort in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, several times. Over the years, she has become friendly with the personnel of the resort, and during conversations, it became apparent that there was an immediate need for hearing help. So, following the lead of the philanthropic branch of Starkey Hearing Technologies, a national company whose products Strathman has used for many years, she began a small program to give hearing aids to people in Mexico; people who otherwise would never be able to afford the devices.

"I've lived a good life, have experienced kindness from many people, and now I need to give back," Strathman says.

It is not easy, because the language barrier can make it difficult to teach people how to use their hearing aids. (Fortunately, there are manuals in Spanish and English.) Furthermore, children need smaller devices than adults, as well as a method for attachment, so they do not lose them—Strathman provides children with a clip to attach the hearing aid to a barrette or their shirt, in order to keep it secure.

First, she showed an employee of the resort, named Hector, how to operate the devices for his father. Then, in later years, Hector's wife, Patricia, mentioned that she needed devices for her niece; fortuitously, both Hector and Patricia speak English, so they could follow her directions. Next, Maria, the concierge at the resort, told Strathman that she was being accused of "snobbism" by customers when, in fact, she could not hear them, especially when they were behind her. Maria was worried that she might lose her job; by fitting her for hearing devices, Maria was able to keep her employment.

Since 2012, Strathman has given 15 devices to people in Mexico when she visits ever year. It is a small beginning, but—so far—a successful one that is making a real difference in people's lives.

She is currently trying to develop a plan to recruit people who are headed to Mexico on vacation or on business who may wish to inject some philanthropy into their lives by delivering hearing aids to certain designated areas and people, in the hope of increasing her program to service more than just a few individuals.

Interested in helping with the Mexican hearing aid program? Think you or someone you know might have a hearing problem? Head to Advanced Hearing Center's office at 1450 US-31 in Benzonia. Call 231-882-5640.



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Statue?

Continued from page 1

14-year-old Ashley ran away to become a cabin boy, and later a clerk, on river boats on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. By the age of 15, Ashley had already begun helping slaves to escape.

At the age of 25, he became a journalist; a year later, he was admitted to the Ohio Bar, although he never practiced law. At 27, he married Emma Jane Smith (with whom he later had four children); that same year, the couple fled southern Ohio, on the border with West Virginia, for Toledo, in the north, on Lake Erie, to avoid prosecution for abolitionist activities. Ashley opened a drug store in Toledo, which burned down, and he became involved with the new Republican Party, in addition to continuing his work as a journalist. By age 34, Ashley was leading the Ohio Republican Party and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, serving five (1859-69) terms.

During the Civil War, Ashley took an active role in recruiting troops for the Union Army, and he introduced the first bill that later led to the 13th Amendment that abolished slavery in 1865. (Fun fact: he was recently depicted as a character in the award-winning 2012 film *Lincoln*; Ashley's character is first seen in the 53rd minute of the film and is played by David Costabile, also known for popular shows like *Billions* and *Breaking Bad*.)

After President Abraham Lincoln's assassination, Ashley was a big critic of President Andrew Johnson, whom he suspected of ties with southern oligarchs and complicity in the assassination. In 1867, Ashley led the impeachment process against Johnson, who is the only U.S. president besides Bill Clinton to have been impeached.

Ashley's views on topics like public education and race were seen as radical at the time, and he lost his 1868 re-election campaign; however, now age 44, Ashley was appointed by President Ulysses S. Grant as the territorial governor of the Montana Territory for a little over a year, after which, he returned to Toledo and became involved in the railroad business. Ashley served as president of the Ann Arbor Railroad from 1877 until 1893, when the railroad went bankrupt during a financial crisis; his sons, Jim Jr. and Henry, were very involved, as well.

Railroad Man & Sons

The Ann Arbor Railroad operated between Toledo, Ohio, and Elberta/Frankfort, Michigan, which was about 294 route miles, plus there were ferry services across Lake Michigan. The Ann Arbor Railroad was built to provide an alternative route to running freight through the rail yards in Chicago. At the time, railcars would take days or even weeks to travel through the busy Chicago yards, since a vast majority of East-West rail traffic was routed through Chicago.

There had to be a better way, right? Indeed.

Always an innovator, Ashley was inspired by the Michigan Central Railroad's use of ferries at the Straits of Mackinac, and he envisioned a railcar ferry crossing Lake

Michigan, instead of the slow way through Chicago. Additionally, he thought that shipping across the lake could be made more efficient and economical—Ashley projected that the cost of transporting a railcar of goods from Frankfort, Michigan, to Kewaunee, Wisconsin, would cost \$2 by ferry, compared to \$7 for the traditional broken bulk method, in which bags of freight were unloaded from railcars and then loaded onto boats to cross Lake Michigan, only to be reloaded onto a railcar on the other side.

Extending his railroad to Frankfort was first mentioned as a possibility in the 1883 Annual Report of the railroad—other possible



Is this man worthy of a statue in Benzie County? James Mitchell Ashley, pictured here in 1860, was president of the Ann Arbor Railroad and is the reason that the tracks came to Frankfort. Photo courtesy of the Benzie Area Historical Society.

destinations included Manistee, Traverse City, and Charlevoix. At the time of the report, the railroad reached as far as Owosso.

It is unclear why Ashley chose Frankfort; he seemed to just think that it was *the* place, with an undeveloped town and a deep-water harbor that geographically fit with where he wanted his railroad to go.

In November of 1885, the Frankfort & South Eastern Railroad (F&SE) was organized by Frankfort businessmen, and work began on the railroad in August of 1886. By November of 1889, trains started to run regularly between Frankfort and Copenish. The same month, Henry Ashley arranged for Ann Arbor Railroad freight traffic to run over the F&SE track to Frankfort.

In 1892, commodities like flour were shipped via the broken bulk method: loaded onto a railcar in Minnesota that was then unloaded in Kewaunee, Wisconsin, where it was loaded onto a package steamer that crossed Lake Michigan to Frankfort, where it was unloaded from the boat and then loaded back onto a railcar that shipped to a final destination of Detroit, where it was unloaded again. The package steamer *Osceola* was the first boat to carry flour from Wisconsin to the Woodward dock in Frankfort in January of 1892.

However, just 10 months later, the whole process had become much more efficient, via Ashley's idea: flour that was loaded onto a railcar in Minnesota was not unloaded until Detroit. The Ann Arbor Railroad purchased the F&SE Railroad in May of 1892, and the *Ann Arbor No. 1* left Elberta for Kewaunee in

November of 1892, becoming the first cross-lake car ferry.

Ashley and his sons, Jim Jr. and Henry, extended their railroad by raising money with local bond proposals. Jim Jr. labeled constructing a railroad with little money as building it "on wind." He also suggested that he should write a book titled, "How to Build 600 Miles of Railroad Without a Damned Cent."

When it was difficult to obtain right-of-way for construction of the railroad through conventional means, Jim Jr. had no qualms using unconventional means to achieve his goal. When building the railroad near Howell, Michigan, the Detroit, Lansing, and Northern Railroad (DL&N) opposed the Ann Arbor Railroad crossing its track. But the Ann Arbor needed to cross the track, or else it would forfeit a \$200,000 agreement. So, Jim Jr. instructed his men to tear up the existing track and tunnel underneath the DL&N line. When the track for his railroad was completed, Jim Jr. replaced the DL&N track. Funny enough, he was arrested for obstructing the U.S. mail and fined \$102.50, but he created an excellent example of his will to surpass any opposition to the progress of the Ann Arbor Railroad.

Ann Arbor Railroad's Influence

When the Ann Arbor Railroad connected with the Frankfort & South Eastern in 1889 for through-traffic and with an actual purchase agreement in May 1892, it was a catalyst for development. Not only could residents more readily travel the greater world, but more people from "the outside" were able to discover what Benzie County had to offer.

The most immediate impact was jobs—the trains and carferries of the Ann Arbor Railroad provided steady work and eventually introduced the working class to organized labor.

Also, the AARR heavily promoted tourism, including lobbying for the Congregational Assembly to locate at Crystal Lake in 1904. (The Congregational Summer Assembly, or CSA as it is now called, was first held in Frankfort in the summer of 1904, and it became a permanent fixture on Crystal Lake, in large part because the Ann Arbor Railroad donated 100 acres and \$10,000 cash to bring the assembly to Crystal Lake on a permanent basis. Previously, the Cleveland Congregational Conference had been held at: Bible College at Lakeside, Ohio, in August of 1902 and at Potawatomi Point, New Buffalo, Minnesota, in August of 1903.)

The AARR also provided a train in 1934 to carry 700 boosters from Northwest Michigan to Lansing so that they could lobby the State Highway Commissioner for the construction of M-115, a highway that now connects Clare and Frankfort, thus providing a popular route for vacationers to come to Benzie County from Southeast Michigan, then as now. These 700 boosters rode on 14 passenger coaches, and the participants unloaded and paraded down Michigan Avenue to Prudden Auditorium. The Clare-to-Frankfort diagonal (M-115) was completed in 1957.

Even the re-naming of Elberta (previously known as "South Frankfort") is indicative of another influence of the the railroad—Elberta was named for a peach which was grown in this area. The railroad allowed for companies like Armour Fruit Preservation and the Elberta Packing Company to preserve and ship the local crops. The orchards of this area thus experienced a boost when the railroad arrived.

A horticulturist with a national reputation named Paul Rose came soon after the railroad arrived, and he planted his orchard outside of Elberta. (There is now a Benzie County road named for Paul Rose, located between Grace Road and Herron Road, just southeast of Elberta.) Rose had revolutionary ideas toward the growth, storage, and shipment of fruit, and the proximity to the Ann Arbor Railroad was an important factor for his arrival to Benzie County in 1893. At the

1904 World Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, Rose was awarded the gold medal for both his cherries and his apples—yes, the gold medal for fruit-growing went to Benzie County. And a strong ingredient to that success was Rose's involvement in the packing and shipping of the submissions to the Exposition, via the Ann Arbor Railroad.

Additionally, the launching of *Ann Arbor No.1* and *Ann Arbor No.2* car ferries in the fall of 1892 were significant happenings at the time, earning mention in national newspapers like *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. Moreover, representatives from the British and Russian empires observed the operation of the car ferries, to see if the idea would work in their home countries.

The car ferries were an accomplishment, yet Ashley did not have time to savor the realization of his vision. The Ann Arbor Railroad went in the hands of a Receiver on April 28, 1893—Ashley was out as president of the Ann Arbor Railroad less than six months after the launch of the *Ann Arbor No.1* car ferry.

Recognition for Railroad Man

So, why is a statue of James Mitchell Ashley necessary in Benzie County? Are the current forms of recognition inadequate?

In Ann Arbor, Ashley Street is the street that leads to the railroad depot, a street named after the man who served as the AARR's president for more than a decade.

Here in Benzie County, there is currently a state historical marker on the hill above the railyard/Life Saving Station, which is the hill just after Bye Street/Trick Dog Cafe & Gallery. Additionally, there two propellers from the *Ann Arbor No.5* car ferry at the parking lot where the Elberta Municipal Marina was located (now the Elberta Farmers' Market).

Neither credit James Mitchell Ashley for his efforts. I believe that we can—and should—do better.

Andy Bolander is a volunteer with the Benzie Area Historical Society. There will be a presentation on Ann Arbor Railroad Car Ferries, focusing on the years from 1892-1912, at the Mills Community House on Thursday, August 9, at 7 p.m. It will be a slideshow of the origins of the car ferries of the AARR, the development of the waterfront of Frankfort/Elberta, the 1909 mishap of the Ann Arbor No.4 car ferry in Manistique, and the 1910 burning of the Ann Arbor No.1 car ferry. If you have any questions, call 231-882-5539 and visit the Benzie Area Historical Museum online at BenzieMuseum.org.



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ACROSS

- Owner of Han's debt
- Ruse
- "___ Is Spinal Tap"
- Contempt
- Modeled
- Freeway emotion
- Part of a Ken doll
- Famous cookie maker
- Sicilian Mount
- Outcome of vote on Bette Davis' best features?
- Pyroclastic flow component
- Squirt a turkey
- Rich dessert
- "My goodness!"
- Made sense of
- Director of "Lawrence of Arabia"
- Judge's exclamation
- "Rocky" theme as sung by a pirate?
- Half of a Southern capital
- Took advantage of
- Like a luchador
- Obey
- Machu Picchu people
- Flower sung about by Tiny Tim
- It might be marbled
- Swap that produced 20-Across, 34-Across, and 54-Across
- Elisabeth's role in "Leaving Las Vegas"
- Gone fishin'
- Empty ones often house couples
- Proverbially tough truck
- Tattle
- Dulls
- Some draughts
- Snow Queen of "Frozen"
- Queen's mate
- Mobile cell
- Moves as if in a breeze
- Vixen follower
- Emerged
- Intertwine
- Jon's "Daily Show" successor
- Athlete's naysayers
- Use a punk
- Like a couch potato
- Bending one is opposite of lending one
- Pong console
- Big name in dial-up Internet
- Citi Field predecessor
- Ludington-to-Cadillac direction
- MRI relative
- Baseball's Master Melvin
- Common symbol for density
- Sitcom dad's hangout, often party!
- Opposite of 30-Across
- Tomagotchi, among others
- Singapore contraband
- Central Perk fare
- Depend (on)
- Indigo, e.g.
- Putrid vapor
- Toughen, as to metal
- Hard to come by
- Crystal Lake craft
- Reds on scoreboards
- Warmed up the audience
- Locker room necessity
- Europe's eastern border
- Signature Clapton hit
- That told by tea leaves
- 525,600 minutes
- Number of sides on decagon
- Direction from Royal Oak to Detroit

DOWN

- Scribble (down)
- Fuss
- Beatles tune with lyric "We're going to a party, party!"
- 41 or 43

June 7, 2018 | Solution at dandecrosswords.com

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