

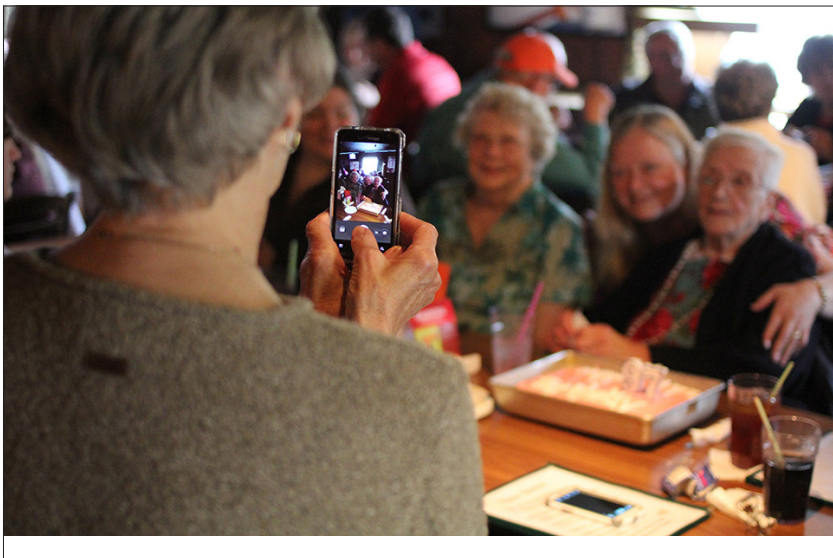
## History of Benzie Dive Bars—Part II

Bikers, strippers, and a walk on the wild side in Honor and Thompsonville

By Susan Koenig  
Current Contributor

In our Labor Day issue, we examined the idea of the “dive bar,” which Google describes as “anything from a comfortable, but basic neighborhood pub to the nastiest swill-slinging hole” or “an informal bar or pub, a neighborhood bar” or “something that requires a person to dive into a subculture.” We wanted to pay homage to the former “dive bars” of Benzie County, and this is Part II of our series. (See our website for Part I, if you missed it, which encompassed Elberta, Frankfort, and Beulah, closing with the collapse of The Ten Pin’s roof and the loss of interest in bowling alleys.)

When it comes to dive bars, you know the adjectives: sketchy, shady, dicey, dangerous,



Geno’s Sports Bar and Grill in Thompsonville is no dive. Rather, it is the perfect place for a 90th birthday with friends and family. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

disreputable. When it comes to Benzie County, I cannot think of any establishments that meet these descriptors—at least not nowadays.

“In the last 30 years, there has been a huge transition

from dive bars to good, solid, food-eating establishments,” muses Ken York, former owner of the Cold Creek Inn of Beulah.

Now that almost all bars offer some kind of nourishment—albeit some better than others—people mostly sit at tables and do not mix and mingle and chat as often as they would if traditionally seated in a stool at the bar, for instance. The trend is toward going “upscale,” that is, faddy or chic, possibly geared to the well-heeled, rather than a belly-up-to-the bar kind of establishment. (A real dive, by the way, does not serve food.)

Some are relatively peaceful family eateries, until the late-night crowd arrives and the pheromones fly, or the alcohol takes effect, or both; until fights break out (maybe), though usually it is simply, as Joyce Kirchoff (former

Please see Dives on page 2

## Lunch Dates Locally

The quest for the great grilled cheese

By Beau Vallance  
Current Contributor

A few years ago, when retirement freed up our noontimes, my husband and I started a tradition of occasional Lunch Dates. Lunch out was not itself a breakthrough, but Lunch Dates (upper-case) became a way to explore new locales. I usually order a grilled cheese sandwich, since these provide consistent comparison data and seem safe—it had seemed impossible to make a truly bad one, though I did find one last year!

For it to qualify as a real Lunch Date, we have to dine at an independent eatery that we have not visited before—no chain restaurants and it must be new to us. In other words, an adventure. Prior to writing this article, I had not been keeping a list, but now that I have reconstructed several years of Lunch

Dates, a partial list comes to at least 30 places, maybe 50. We return often to some, but count them only once, the first time that we visit—restaurants large and small, cafes, grills, grilles, taverns, bars, diners, bakeries, roadhouses, brew pubs, wine bars, coffee shops, food trucks.

The first Lunch Date logged as such was back home in Indiana, a place



Walls are festooned with fishing gear and snowshoes at the Crystal Cafe in Benzonia, which now has new new owners, as of July. Photo by Beau Vallance.

called Velma’s on the main street of a small town. Velma’s was one room, with a busy take-out counter. We sat. The décor consisted of kitchen implements on high shelves and strung along pine-paneled walls—flour sifters, egg beaters, and such. The place was crowded. The grilled cheese was acceptable. We have, since then, been in search of more places like Velma’s in various towns.

And we have found many Velma’s-like establishments here in the Benzie area, some with great grilled cheeses. (Note: I allow an occasional tuna melt, as well; there is an outstanding one in Elberta—read on!)

In my many decades of coming to

Please see Lunchin’ on page 6

## Still Counting, After 65 Lakes

And some tips on kayaking alone

By Beau Vallance  
Current Contributor

Two summers ago, this newspaper reported on my love of quirky mental lists—the states that my cats have visited (eight), great inventions (like cheese), and things not yet perfected (bike racks). Among my lists were the number of lakes that I had kayaked; it was 41 area lakes, as of September 2014. A friend suggested a goal of reaching 50 lakes by age 70—well, I made it a year early!

Long Lake near Traverse City was #50 last summer, and I made it to #55 (Narada Lake, near Empire) before heading home to real life in the fall of 2015. This summer, soon after turning 70, I reached #65 (Lake Skegemog, east of Traverse City). I plan on more, but this milestone will do for the update.

The quest began a few years ago, when



Tall reeds on the water in early morning, as captured by a septuagenarian who has kayaked 65 local lakes. Photo by Beau Vallance.

I counted up my life list of lakes that I had kayaked since acquiring my own boat, an anniversary gift from my husband. My pursuit has been guided by the few maps that identify most (never all) boat launch sites, through finding green Public Access signs and little brown signs with DNR boat icons and arrows on the side of the road, and with help from Jim

Stamm’s 2015 *A Guide to the Rivers and Lakes of Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties, Michigan*, companion to his earlier book on Benzie County’s waters which helped me to find and kayak almost all of the 32 lakes listed.

Some lakes that require four-wheel drive will be forever beyond reach—my 12-foot, lime-green kayak (or a new-to-me used, nine-foot, yellow kayak, which conquered #58-65) straps into my low-slung Honda Fit, which is not made for the burlier excursions. For instance, I once reached a spot where Stamm’s notes say, “from here on, four-wheel drive is highly recommended,” and when I saw the deep sand of the two-track, I agreed. Alas, I will never reach Bellows Lake, nor Rennie Lake.

But so many are doable. Delightful discoveries include Benzie’s Grass Lake; Narada’s

Please see Lakes on page 7



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# Dives

Continued from page 1

owner of the **Villa Marine Bar**) says, “just some pushing and shoving.”

**From Swing Dancing to Strippers**

World War II army veteran Louis “Louie” Gelakosky and his wife, Betty, loved to dance, so when they moved from Muskegon to Benzie County in 1949, they began to think about opening their own place. By the mid-1960s, they built the **B&L Bar**. The huge structure is still standing, a short way down Hoadley Road, just across from where M-115 meets US-31 on the south side of Benzonia. Louis actually did the work himself, including the construction of a 30x40 hardwood dance floor. According to their daughter, Catrina “Trina” Stachnik, the congenial pair wanted to include a bowling alley and a half-mile racetrack.

“They wanted to bring things to the county that the county didn’t have,” Stachnik says.

She recalls working for her parents, along with her siblings, in the bar/restaurant, but the clientele was there primarily to dance to the Big Band Sound, rather than for drinking or dining. There was no problem having kids around—so far so good, not at all a dive bar. But after a while, the Gelakoskys felt that they were getting a bit old for the business, especially since they also owned Serval Body Shop (now called Beulah Auto Parts and owned by “Little Louis”) and B&L Corners, a restaurant on the southeast corner at M-115 and US-31. Hence, they sold the B&L Bar on a land contract.

Bar life went a bit awry when the strippers came in, followed by a different, rowdier clientele. As one former patron reminisces: “Things got a bit rough—especially when my brother-in-law was intentionally run over in the parking lot.” Perhaps predictably, the new owner was not making payments, so the Gelakoskys got the bar back and re-opened it as a Country Western place with food, drink, and line-dancing lessons. That was a big hit for several years, but Louis and Betty decided to retire, turning the bar into a reception venue.

“Many people made happy memories there,” Stachnik reflects.

The B&L Bar sold again, with the same results: bad debts and failure to make repairs. Overwhelmed by damage and neglect, the bar came back to the family, and the building remains unused today. Louis and Betty Gelakosky died a month apart in 2007.

“Theirs was a ‘true love,’” Stachnik says.

**Blues and New York Pizza in Honor**

**LumberJack’s Bar & Grill** in Honor, once a dive bar called the **Sleepy Bear Lounge**, went through a metamorphosis after the smoking ban was instituted in 2010. At one time, it was just a bar with pizza, owned by Rich McCarty, who sold to the eccentric, charismatic Norm Gibney, a former investment banker from Brooklyn with a Master’s degree in flute!

Gibney and his wife, Debbie, turned the business into a “live blues” bar—no cover, great music every weekend, with New York cuisine (well, deep-dish pizza). They introduced pita wraps, calzones, and homemade, “Jewish mother” chicken noodle soup. Sadly, Debbie passed away, and not long after a musical tribute to her—accompanied by the John Ufer Band—the devastated Norm disappeared and reportedly died somewhere in Florida. Rich M. (McCarty) got the bar back, then sold to the new Rich L. (Lewis) in 2009, who did a major cleanup, including the removal of some particularly rowdy patrons.

The bathrooms are unrecognizable from the old days—I recently walked into the wrong one, as they have been switched, with an enlarged ladies’ room. Rich L. now offers a regular dinner menu that is above and beyond “bar food,” with karaoke and a DJ on weekends.

“I’ve been really lucky with help, they’re wonderful,” he says of his staff. “And for every one who stayed away during the smoking ban, two more came in because of it.”

There used to be a fight every weekend, but

no more. The patrons—fishermen, locals, and tourists—interact peacefully with only one pool table. (Numerous pool tables are often a characteristic of dive bars.)

Just east of Honor, where the event venue **Fallen Timbers** is now located, there used to be a popular bar known as the **FoxDen**, which had an excellent dance floor and good bands. And a bit further along US-31, at the intersection with 669 (called Maple City Highway to the south and Thompsonville Highway to the north), there are three log cabins located next to what is now **Jodi’s Tangled Antler**, which years ago was the infamous **Log Cabin Bar** (with the unfortunate nickname, “The Dead Dog Bar”). How did the nickname come to be? As reported in the *Traverse City Record-Eagle*, a dog wound up dead, following an altercation between two bar patrons of the Log Cabin: one man left but soon returned with his shotgun, intending to shoot his enemy. Fortunately for the bar patron—not so for the dog—he missed and shot (and killed) his dog. That bar did not last too much longer, though it had definitely been a colorful dive.

I remember that it did serve food, because—prior to the dog episode—in 1980, we would stop in after Lamaze classes for a beer and a burger... imagine that! The space later became the eponymous **Danny’s Bar**, which was owned by Danny Anderson, who then sold it to Jodi Dilts in May 2006.

Located almost halfway between Beulah and Traverse City, Jod’s has a great location, and you would not recognize the place—Jodi eventually evicted the rough and tumbles that she inherited. A bit of trouble could be had in the bar back in the day: I once witnessed a Euchre-playing trio engaged in a little dispute during one of my visits. A love triangle, it appeared to be, two women and a man, one gal with a very long ponytail, easy for the other to grasp and pull, thus tipping over her chair, crash, bang. She got up, rearranged herself, and the two resumed their argument. We departed shortly thereafter. (*The Betsie Current’s* co-editor Jordan Bates wrote an article about Jodi’s fun, no-nonsense atmosphere earlier this season in Volume 5 Issue VI from early August; you can read it in our online archives at [bit.ly/2dk9RPY](http://bit.ly/2dk9RPY).)

**Changings Hands in Thompsonville**

To me, Thompsonville used to be scarier than any of the above, so when I began writing this series, I thought it was time to revisit that neck of the woods.

First, a note: what I have observed is that, in our small county, there is a kind of trading around of ownership when it comes to bars—a person buys a bar in one town, sells it, and turns up in another nearby village, buying a different bar. It can be a little hard to follow, to say the least... Stay with me, as things in Thompsonville get a little complicated.

A few years ago, I took an excursion to the **Laughing Horse Saloon**, where my vegetarian partner and I found edamame on the menu. Shock. (Dive bars do not have edamame.) During my research for this piece, I located Bruce Kraus, the first owner from long ago of the Horse—which was affectionately also known then as the “Starving Stud”—on Lindy Road in downtown Thompsonville. He sold it, and a couple who owned it later tried to make the Horse more upscale, hence the edamame, but do not let that fool you; despite the edamame, it was still something of a dive bar back then.

Nearly three years ago, it was then sold to a young woman named Kelly Spencer. She stumbled—or rather, snowmobiled—upon the building, saw that it was for sale, and thought: “I could do something with this place.” This charming (“charm” is not a characteristic of dive bars) mother of two young sons, Dylan and Nathan, had worked in the bar business for years but wanted a place of her own. Similar to Jodi’s story with the Tangled Antler, Spencer thought that the place had potential; these two ladies are brave to take on such endeavors, but both are making a go of it and have converted the former dives into family-friendly restaurants with bands and music. Spencer’s Laughing Horse serves up daily specials (try the \$2 burgers

on Thursdays, with karaoke) and boasts a big space for the monthly bands.

Going back to Kraus, he also owned a dive called the **Golden Nugget**, which was called P.J.’s before that, when he bought it in 1976.

“This was a ‘slum bar,’” Kraus says. It was also in foreclosure with seven days left. Years later, in 2000, he gutted it, threw everything out, and renamed it again, this time as the **Crystal Palace Lounge**. The deck went on in 2002. (Most true dive bars do not have decks; you stay indoors).

On the day that I met with him, Kraus was nursing a hangover from his farewell party the night before, having just sold the Crystal Palace to Mary Strang, former owner of **The Thompsonville Bar**, which is now **Geno’s Sports Bar and Grill**.

Strang owned The Thompsonville Bar for 30 years, until 2004, when she sold to Geno Allen. She is no stranger to the bar/restaurant business; if you have been around the area long enough, you will know her as the owner of **Mary’s Café** in Kingsley, **Bullwinkle’s Bar** in the Upper Peninsula, and **Chumley’s** at Chum’s Corners, which is where she got her start. This hard-working lady cannot seem to retire. As new owner of the Palace, she now offers a full-service, expanding menu from noon until midnight, and she has bands on Fridays and Saturdays. (On October 23 and October 30, the Palace will host the band *Flatbroke*, and on October 2, *Falling Down Stairs* Productions, a comedy act out of Traverse City, will perform.)

Around the corner, on Front and Thompsonville avenues, is Geno’s, probably the most popular eatery in the southeast corner of our county. Now a far cry from a dive bar—the only rowdiness that I heard about was a “streaker” episode. Family friendly with outdoor dining, the bar closes at 11 p.m. Geno Allen, a Benzie County native, says the place is so busy that he is removing the bar’s shuffleboard, the same one that he played on as a kid, in order to make way for more tables. (Head over to the Crystal Palace for that activity.) He hosts pool and Euchre leagues, even a beanbag-toss league, and the occasional band. Get there early on Thursday if you want to sample his ribs, and you had better like sports on TV, because he has eight screens going at once. (*The Betsie Current* published an article about Geno’s in Volume III Issue 2 back in May 2014; read it online at [bit.ly/2cKWcjR](http://bit.ly/2cKWcjR))

The last real dive in this part of Benzie County, the **Copemish Tavern**, closed down a few years ago. That was a little wild, and the dancing to live bands was great fun.

So there you have it. I am sure to have omitted some places, and rumor has it that you can still find a few dives in Manistee County. The bottom line is that you never know whom you might meet in a bar, which makes it a bit more interesting than going to a conventional restaurant just to dine. We once visited a dive in Savannah, recommended for its—well—divey-ness and famous visitors (very local, springs popping up from the seats, no food whatsoever, nary an olive). I looked around at photos all over the walls, and whose face popped out at me? None other than Ronald Reagan. What in the world had he been doing there?

And yes, upscale bars can be fun, but you will not find \$2 burgers or \$4 glasses of wine, (hopefully not warm chardonnay, as in one stop that I made).

I have visited dives all over the world, and what might be the single best characteristic? You can always meet some interesting character, if you are so inclined—just try not to get into an argument with him or her.

*Look for Part I of this series in our last issue and in the online archives: “The evolution, and sometimes demise, of beloved local establishments in Elberta, Frankfort, and Beulah.” The author would like to thank all of the various people interviewed, as well as those not specifically noted, for their time and invaluable insights on county life, even though most of it had to be ‘off the record.’*



# Fibershed: Locavore Movement

Northern Michigan’s clothing revolution

By Sarah Bearup-Neal

Current Contributor

A studio artist (that would be me) walks into a Traverse City Goodwill store looking for used clothing to repurpose (I cut up T-shirts into a knittable yarn). And as I stand there, rifling through the 25-foot-long floor rack full of T-shirts, I think, and not for the first time, “There are enough T-shirts in this one store that no one needs to make or buy a new T-shirt ever again.” It seemed as though there were thousands.

Last year, Goodwill Industries of Northern Michigan diverted more than

cally, socially, holistically—for a system of disposable fashion?

That question will be explored at a panel discussion and screening of *The True Cost* on Friday, October 14, at Interlochen Center for the Arts, as part of the third annual Fiber Arts Weekend. How this film got to Northern Michigan is a story of interwoven connections, bound by an idea that was born in a Maple City barn.

Carol Laughing Waters lives on 20 acres outside the village of Maple City. In 2013, this handweaver and natural plants-dyer was hosting regular meetings in her studio barn with a loose-knit

it comes from, by whom and how their clothing is made.

### The Fibershed Concept

Burgess is a Northern California resident who has been credited with initiating the fibershed movement. A fibershed is a geographical designation. At the center of this land-based idea is the core belief that keeping things as local as possible—from growth, to production, to distribution of fiber goods—is key to creating sustainable communities.

*Fibershed*, the website, covers all aspects of Burgess’s groundbreaking idea, including its origin story:

*“The project began in 2010 with a commitment by its founder, Rebecca Burgess, to develop and wear a prototype wardrobe whose dyes, fibers, and labor were sourced from a region no larger than 150 miles from the project’s headquarters. Burgess had no expected outcomes from the personal challenge other than to reduce her own ecological footprint and maybe inspire a few others. Burgess teamed up with a talented group of framers and artisans to build the wardrobe by hand, as manufacturing equipment had all been lost... more than 20 years ago. The goal was to illuminate that regionally grown fibers, natural dyes, and local talent was still in great enough existence to provide this most basic human necessity—our clothes.”*

Burgess’s undertaking might be dismissed as some airy-fairy, whole-grain goofiness straight out of Northern California. But from her initial experiment, Burgess was able to draw up some criteria for measuring the positive impacts of her prototype wardrobe. *Fibershed* enumerates. The prototype process:

- Produced zero toxic dye effluent.
- Used zero pesticides or herbicides, genetically modified organisms, or synthetic biology.
- Sustained a regional community of artisans and farmers who continue to collaborate and grow in number.
- Reduced CO2 impact in the cases by [six times] that of conventional equivalents, proving to Burgess that clothing can be made in a climate-sensitive manner.

Rebecca Burgess’s research and practice-laden story was the backdrop

Please see Locavore on page 6



Carol Laughing Water and her infamous barn in Maple City, where the local fibershed movement began. Photo by Sarah Bearup-Neal.

3.8 million pounds of material goods—from computers to plastics, including 2,618,341 pounds of textiles and clothing—from the landfill through recycling and its Fresh Starts Furnishings program. According to Kristin Talaga, marketing and communications manager for Goodwill Northern Michigan, Fresh Starts receives “100 pounds of T-shirts that don’t make it to the retail floor every two weeks, to repurpose into (throw) pillows. The pillows are then sold in our stores.”

Goodwill’s operative philosophy is, “Goodwill, not landfill,” Talaga says. And yet, a lot of U.S. clothing elsewhere in the country gets landfilled. Once-groovy threads are displaced by the newest, cheapest, must-have-iest clothing, available in abundance. It is called “fast fashion.”

According to the producers of the documentary film *The True Cost*, almost 80 billion pieces of new clothing are purchased each year around the globe, and about 82 pounds-per-person of that ends up in the landfill. Released in 2015, *The True Cost* asks what is the price—ecologi-

group of artists, small farmers, and other makers to discuss a range of ideas, from building and living in tiny homes to beekeeping to organic farming.

“A few of us had begun to hear of Rebecca Burgess’s thinking about the concept of fibersheds,” Laughing Waters says. Burgess’s fibershed concept got a group of 21 people (“mainly women”) thinking about what they wear, where

## The Betsie Current

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**Sundays**  
Church services all around Benzie County.

ON DECK

**Saturday, October 1**  
Fall Fest in Beulah, events include: Cookie Bake Sale, Complimentary Food & Wine Samplings, Fall Soup contest, Children’s Art Activity, Pat Harrison “Lord of Gourd” Carvings, Sidewalk Art contest, Climbing Wall, Pumpkin Decorating, Bounce House, Classic Vehicle & Motorcycle “Park & Shine” Show, Benzonia Public Library children’s stories & activities, Explore the Benzie Area Historical Museum, Historical Walking Tour of Benzonia with guide, Climbing Wall, Horse Drawn wagon rides, Hula Hoop Contest Face Painting, and much more!

**Saturday, October 1**  
Public sculpture celebrating eighty years of migrant contributions. U.S.31 and Norconk Road, Manistee. Fiesta and decation. Free taco fiesta followingg .Mariachi Music. Festival 3:00-5:00. Dedication 4:00 p.m. Recognizing the Culture and Contributions of Manistee County Migrant Labor. allartsmanistee.com

**Sunday, October 2**  
Dr. Michael Coonrod, from the Interlochen Arts Academy will be featured on this concert and he will be playing Rhapsody in Blue by Gershwin. Come and enjoy a spectacular piano showcase with the Benzie Area Symphony Orchestra. Benzie Central Auditorium. 4-5:30pm.

**Monday-Saturday October 3-8**  
Frankfort Beer Week! Celebrate all that is great about Craft Beer in Michigan and do it in the cool, scenic, foodie town of Frankfort. Those who appreciate Craft Beer and delicious food know that the best things come from small-batch attention and creativity from people who care about the total experience. Celebrate beer. Celebrate life. Celebrate Frankfort. Now in its third year, Frankfort Beer Week is a weeklong series of events, including Beer Dinners, Beer-pairing menus, a Homebrew contest, Beer-Infused Creations, Concerts and Cookouts, Special Beer Releases, and Tap Takeovers. There are a wide variety of experiences to sample. Stormcloud Brewing Company, Dinghy’s Restaurant & Bar, Coho, Cru Cellars, The Hotel Frankfort, Petals & Perks, Crescent Bakery, FrankZ, Port City Smokehouse, The Mayfair Tavern, Oliver Art Center and more. frankfortbeerweek.com

**Wednesday, October 5**  
Cooking Up A Storm During Frankfort’s Beer Week class at the Oliver Art Center. Join the Stormcloud Culinary Team to learn recipes and techniques for using Stormcloud’s locally brewed, award-winning beer to create richer and more delicious flavors at home. A variety of dishes will be demonstrated and served, and students will go home with new insights and recipes for incorporating

beer into and pairing it with their home cooking. Instructor: Chef Joe Meyers of Stormcloud. More events and registration online: oliverartcenterfrankfort.org 12-2pm.

**Wednesday, October 8**  
Fall fest in Frankfort! Hay wagon rides, Pie Eating Contest, Fall Baking Contest, Face Painting, Kids Fishing Contest - poles provided, Annual Silent Auction, Giant Pumpkin Weight Contest, Great Pumpkin Drop - on a car!, Giant Pumpkin Weigh In & Carving, allfest Parade featuring Scottville Clown band, more of the band after the parade also, Mutt March & Mutt Coral, Scavenger Hunt, Ed Moody’s famous Pumpkin Carvings Helicopter Rides, Point Betsie Lighthouse Tours, Kids Halloween Maze, Win A Bike - Guess the weight of the giant pumpkin, Lots of Kids Activities & Games, Free Movie - “It’s the Great Pumpkin Charlie Brown” at the Garden Theater, Masters of Mayhem - Trebuchet, Beer Tent, and much more!

**Thursday-Sunday, October 20-23**  
Save the date for the 8th Annual Frankfort Film Festival! The 2015 Frankfort Film Festival screened 17 award-winning films from around the globe. Plus, four short films produced by students of Interlochen Arts Academy’s Motion Picture Arts program were shown preceding each daily feature film. frankfortgardentheater.com/film-festival/

**Tuesday, October 25**  
Lizzie Borden...Did She Do It? Al Bryant, a distant relative to Borden, has plumbed resources to offer this gruesome introduction to family management. Benzonia Public Library. 7pm.

**Wednesday, October 26**  
Benzie County Sheriff’s Office K-9 Spaghetti Dinner. Silent Auction (accepting items). Greystone Mansion, Honor. \$10 Adults. Carry out available. 231-645-4021. 4-7pm.

**Thursday, November 3**  
Benzie Audubon Annual Meeting, Potluck Dinner, and Members Photo Night. Bring a dish to share and table service for the annual get-together, featuring a potluck meal, followed by a brief business meeting and our Fourth Members Photo Show. Note the early starting time! Programs are held at the Tribal Outpost at 7282 Hoadley Road in Benzonia (see map). All field trips and programs are open to the public without charge; everyone is welcome! 6pm.

**Friday, November 4**  
Infant Massage Class for pre-crawling infants

at Interlochen Public Library Led by Jody Olsen, RN, LMT. Enjoy one on one time with your baby while learning gentle infant massage techniques to promote bonding and relaxation. The class is free and registration is required by calling the Library at 231-276-6767. Bring a blanket & your favorite lotion or oil.10 am at the Library.

**Saturday, November 5**  
Benzie Audubon presents Fall Birding: Lake Michigan. Meet at Pt. Betsie, and Carl Freeman (231-352-4739) will lead this trip to the Lake Michigan shore to look for migrating waterfowl. 9:30am.

**Saturday, November 5**  
Crystal Mountain Resort & Spa  
This new event, sponsored by the POMH Auxiliary, is entertaining and interactive! Piano Wars is a nationally touring entertainment company which delivers a high energy performance that’s packed with participation. Piano Wars utilizes costumes and props throughout the show, but it’s David Caruso’s comic timing and audience rapport that make him a standout among dueling piano entertainers. As the “Man of a Thousand Songs,” Caruso amazes audiences everywhere by this ability to play just about any song he’s heard. For more information, contact Kristin Marinoff at 231-932-8630. Proceeds go to POMH.

**Saturday, November 12**  
Holiday Book Sale & Craft Preview at Benzonia Public Library. Proceeds benefit BPL Programs. 10am-3pm

**Saturday, December 10**  
Benzie Audubon presents Waterfowl: Lower Herring Lake. Meet at the Lower Herring Lake public access, where Carl Freeman (231-352-4739) will lead you on a look for ducks and other birds at Lower Herring Lake and Arcadia Lake/Marsh. If there is interest, we also can go to Portage Lake. 9:30am.

**Sunday, December 18**  
Benzie Audubon presents the Christmas Bird Count. Contact Carl Freeman (231-352-4739) to sign up with a group to count birds in a defined territory or John Ester (231-325-2445) to count birds at your feeder (and yard) at home. At the end of the birding day join us for a potluck supper at the Benzonia Township Hall to share birding stories and tally our results. 8am.

Q. Who is Harry (aka Tim) Bannister?

A. I’m a Frankfort resident, business owner and co-founder of Advocates for Benzie County running for county commissioner for Frankfort and Crystal Lake Township. My platform is simple: If we think outside the box, we can use county government to **grow our local economy** and improve our quality of life. Some initiatives that I support:

- Revise the existing tourist tax to **expand countywide broadband service**.
- Partner with non-profits and businesses to establish a **24/7 daycare program**.
- **Attract more food processors** to reach the more than 50 percent of the U.S. and Canadian population living within 500 miles of us.
- Partner with businesses to expand utilities coverage and **provide accessible rental housing for our workforce**.

It's time for a change. I may not have all the answers, but I will find them. I will listen to you and work to improve our quality of life. I will take responsibility for my decisions and be held accountable to you.

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# Lunchin’

Continued from page 1

Benzie, I had never managed to eat at the Crystal Café in Benzonia. We went there last summer and were charmed. Colorful, mismatched vinyl tablecloths. Walls festooned with fishing gear and snowshoes. The whole back wall was a chalkboard of menu items. The three-cheese grilled cheese—with tomato, on sourdough—went straight to my list of Best Grilled Cheeses. Jack had soup. Since this July, there are now *new new* owners, and it is a Summer Breeze Grilled Cheese

tomato and *grilled onions*! Jack had chicken noodle soup. A couple of weeks earlier, on a day trip to Walloon Lake, we happened upon Shirley’s Café in an old stone gas station just south of Mancelona. The décor featured antique dinner plates, arranged in various ways on old doors that had been hung on the walls, plus old-timey photos of the area. Other customers, in this middle of nowhere, included a group talking about graduate students and (different table) a lean, young, tattooed man in a black muscle shirt with “REPS FOR JESUS” on it. Shirley bakes her own bread. Her grilled cheese on sourdough was excellent. Jack had soup.



Conundrum Cafe is home of the Sportsman’s Delight, a tuna melt that is to die for, according to The Tuna Lady. Photo by Beau Vallance.

with two cheeses and bread from Crescent Bakery; it stayed on my “best of” list. Out by Crystal Mountain, near Thompsonville, Rosie’s Country Café is apparently a legendary roadhouse, but we are rarely out that way, so we made it an excursion. Flowerboxes outside and a flower motif on the wood-paneled inside. Crowded. There, I had a tuna melt—a pretty good one, hot and drippy. Jack had soup. Closer to home, Blue Caribou Café in Beulah had a good tuna melt, and it is still on the menu with the recent name change to Ursa Major Bistro. I recall a great tuna melt at Bayview Grille in Frankfort. Crescent Bakery’s inventive sandwiches include an Ultimate Grilled Cheese that I have not tried (crowded! good for them!), but I finally discovered, though not on a Lunch Date, the Two Cheese Grill at Dinghy’s—amazing choice! My standard at L’Chayim is the Sea of Galilee—not exactly a tuna melt since it is not hot, but it is tuna with cheese, and it is dependably good. I have it on pita bread. Jack does a bagel.

Venturing abroad, beyond Benzie, we have also found some memorable grilled cheeses. Joe’s Friendly Tavern in Empire has a fabulous Grilled Cheese Ala Bohica, with apple slices and honey (maybe chutney sometimes?); it went straight to my list. The grilled cheese at Bay Bread Co. (downtown Traverse City, near West Bay) on homemade sourdough did the same. At the Bad Dog Deli on the Old Mission Peninsula, you can build your own sandwich, hot or cold; I ordered hot—cheese, mushrooms, tomato, pesto, onions, black olives, grilled peppers, on sourdough. Outstanding! Jack had mushroom soup. The day before that, on a day trip to the town of Central Lake, I found a very terrific grilled cheese at a downtown bakery called Touch of Class: on sourdough, with

But my favorite sandwich is back in Benzie County, at Conundrum Café in Elberta, where I am known as The Tuna Lady—I get the tuna melt, which they call Sportsman’s Delight. Michelle and Rob’s white bread *is* sourdough. I make the Sportsman’s Delight a weekly treat when I can, often on a lunch date (lower-case) with my friend Louise. If the timing is right, when I head home to real life at summer’s end, I stop at Conundrum and order TWO tuna melts to get me through the eight-hour drive; previous cats were tuna addicts and demanded samples, but the current two just let me drive. Some of these places have become regulars in our summer lives, graduating from Lunch Date spots to reliable lunch venues. But I treasure the genuine Lunch Dates, food adventures to places that are new to us. Our Lunch Dates get farther away in location as we use up the local choices, but the sometimes-astounding décor alone (worth another article—the M-22 Grill in Onkama features license plates and hubcaps) can make the trip worthwhile. Just last year, however, we learned that a truly awful grilled cheese sandwich does exist. It was memorable. Somewhere on M-22—remaining unnamed here, in case it was just a bad day—I was presented with a sandwich consisting of *three slices of barely-toasted white bread* with two limp slices of American cheese inserted between. Terrible service, too! It was refreshing, after all those great grilled cheeses, to know the other extreme. Jack had some kind of soup. You gradually refine your standards on Lunch Dates, if your data are comparable; grilled cheese works pretty well. *Disclaimer: Menus may have changed since the experiences reported here.*

# Locavore

Continued from page 3

for that August 2013 meeting at Carol Laughing Waters’s barn. It drew 21 people from the region, many of which were “already deeply involved in some sort of fiber pursuit,” she says. “We had Angora rabbit people, [as well as] people raising sheep and alpaca who were already involved with production. There is no fiber processing facility in this immediate area... so we began to have a discussion about how to create a fibershed here.” Jandy Sprouse, one of those 21 people, raises alpaca and Tibetan yak on a 200-plus-acre Maple City ranch. The fiber she culls from each of these animals is shipped to Tennessee for processing, to a mill that handles these specific fibers. Even though there are fiber mills in Michigan—one as close as East Jordan—alpaca fleece, for instance, cannot be processed in machines that are used for sheep wool, because of the greasy lanolin, Sprouse says, adding, “I would love not to have to send my stuff to other places. I would love for [all the processing] to be done in Leelanau County.” What rippled out from Laughing Waters’s Maple City barn was a series of discussions and further meetings, which attracted like-minded residents from Boyne City to Empire. What they shared was a desire to transform the fibershed concept—a big idea—into a living, breathing practice; but first they needed a map. Mapping It Out Crosshatch Center for Art & Ecology (formerly known as ISLAND) in Bellaire took on the project of facilitating development of a fibershed map. It is a project that dovetails with Crosshatch’s mission to help build community “through the intersections of art, farming, ecology, and economy.” Jen Schaap, Crosshatch’s coordinator of Food and Farming Programs, is the fibershed-map point person. Schaap, who was also in Carol Laughing Waters’s barn in August 2013, says that there are many “pieces of a puzzle” to identify and put into place as the map is developed: Who are the sellers and purchasers? Where is the mill to process raw materials? Who is farming dye plants and animals—sheep, alpaca, angora, yak, llama, goat—from which the clothing fibers come? Are there artists/makers whose work focuses on garment production? And, critically, how does one bring all these moving parts together to discover “how and if Northern Michigan can support a full-loop textile system and become an economically viable industry that uses local sources,” Schaap writes in a recent email. The tenets on which a fibershed is built were woven into workshops offered at the inaugural Interlochen Fiber Arts Weekend in 2014. That theme continues to be an organizing principle—people who have been involved with fibershed mapping have also helped to shape the Fiber Arts Weekend, says Leslie Donaldson of Interlochen’s College of Creative Arts. Yet, despite its central role in the Fiber Arts Weekend, held at such an august institution, there are still hurdles to the widespread public embrace of the fibershed concept. “It’s something that isn’t in people’s minds,” Schaap says. “The mainstream isn’t thinking about how their clothing is made and how that connects to the



natural world. It’s so easy to go to the store and buy new things. *The True Cost* talks about the mindset that’s concerned with needing the latest and greatest new thing.”

Identifying the infrastructure that supports fast fashion—the sartorial equivalent to fast food—is helpful if one wishes to analyze the perceived need for new clothes all the time. The system is built on human labor, often played out-of-sight in the developing world where safety is Job 999. An example, Jen Schaap says, is the Rana Plaza collapse in Bangladesh. More than 3,600 people were employed there, producing clothing for U.S., Canadian, and European clothing retailers. On April 24, 2013, the building collapsed, killing 1,130 people. The cause? There were cracks in the factory walls, which were disregarded by the building’s owners, despite warnings. It is considered one of the deadliest garment-factory accidents in history.

In a 2007 article, the National Institutes of Health wrote about fast fashion’s “pollution footprint” and zeroed in on the fabric that launched 1,000 leisure suits:

*“Polyester, the most widely used manufactured fiber, is made from petroleum. With the rise in production in the fashion industry, demand for man-made fibers, especially polyester, has nearly doubled in the last 15 years... The manufacture of polyester and other synthetic fabrics is an energy-intensive process requiring large amounts of crude oil and releasing emissions including volatile organic compounds [VOCs], particulate matter, and acid gases such as hydrogen chloride, all of which can cause or aggravate respiratory disease.”*

*The True Cost* looks not only at fast fashion’s ecologic impacts but sheds light on the persuasive, insidious nature of modern, American media and its uncanny ability to affect the human desire—especially the teenage human desire—to consume.

Jen Schaap has not bought any new duds in a long time.

“I don’t like to shop,” she says. So, Schaap refreshes her wardrobe at clothing swaps, which is a low-tech ritual in which “six or eight of us clean out our closets, get together, dump those clothes on the floor and swap.”

Another kind of swap took place at Carol Laughing Water’s barn gathering back in August 2013. It was an idea exchange that prompted an action: the creation of a regional fiber guild. This was then followed by another action: a fiber-shed mapping project. And yet another action: the screening of a documentary that asks us to seriously consider what really went into the making of that coveted Little Black Dress. Three years ago, 21 creative thinkers walked into a backwoods barn and—no joke—started a little movement. In Leelanau County. I kid you not.

*The October 14 screening of **The True Cost** begins at 6:30 p.m. at Interlochen, with a panel discussion to follow. There is a \$5 charge for this showing if you are not enrolled in the weekend’s events. For more information about Interlochen’s Fiber Arts Weekend, visit [CollegeInterlochen.Org/FiberArtsWeekend](http://CollegeInterlochen.Org/FiberArtsWeekend). For more information about the Crosshatch Fiber Guild and fibershed project, contact Jen Schaap at 231-622-5252 or email [info@crosshatch.org](mailto:info@crosshatch.org).*

# Lakes

*Continued from page 1*

flooded tree stumps; the eerily remote, small, beautiful Kehl Lake, north of Northport; and North Bar Lake, north of Empire where there were woodsy dunes, swans, and two guys in the morning fog at the outlet to Lake Michigan who were photographing huge bubbles, made with sticks.

Grass Lake had looked daunting; I had been putting it off. Access is only by water—via a river and a creek—upstream from a dam at a campground that is deep in Benzie County at the end of a two-track and off a gravel road. It seemed terribly remote. Alerting my husband to my destination, I took off. Once on the river, I followed Stamm’s directions to the left fork (ignoring opposite advice from returning canoers) and made it. The river, creek, and lake are edged only with tall lake grasses, no solid land anywhere; the lake is small enough to paddle around (105 acres)—wild, open, with one grass island, no cottages. The downstream return was easy, with no danger of overshooting my car, parked at the dam. I had found the gravel road, the two-track, the campground, the river, the creek, and beautiful Grass Lake! So satisfying!

Thirty-three of Benzie County’s 58 lakes are publicly accessible; in Leelanau and Grand Traverse counties combined, 65 of the 145 lakes with names are reachable. I have kayaked big and small ones, and I prefer the small ones, explorable by paddling clear around. Crystal Lake, though gorgeous, is just too big for this approach. Bass and Otter lakes, in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, are lovely small treasures, and five-acre Deer Lake, which almost connects to Bass, is a tiny gem. Other small goodies with few or no cottages include Cook Lake (four acres), Mary’s Lake (seven), Round Lake (15), Herendeen, and its connecting Fuller. Stevens, Brooks, Turtle, and others offer an interesting mix of wild shoreline and funky cottages. Our Long Lake (328 acres, not to be confused with the one between Lake Ann and Traverse City) is a reliable one-hour paddle.

On these jaunts, I carry a net for snaring trash—*what is it about Bud Light drinkers?* I do not kayak every day, but kayaking is what I miss when I return to “real life” in September. Indiana has few if any natural lakes, and while the lake nearest my “real life” home is as big as Crystal (about 10,000 acres), it is a muddy reservoir, not at all the same!

Though I can strap two kayaks into my Honda Fit, a passenger rides scrunched in the back and has to sit backwards. It is simpler to load one kayak and be gone, but it is always risky, sometimes foolish.

Jim Stamm’s recommendation for people kayaking alone is “Don’t”; he has excellent safety tips at [bit.ly/2dA5uko](http://bit.ly/2dA5uko). Since I do kayak alone, I suggest these rules for those who go it solo:

- ALWAYS tell someone exactly where you will be, and keep your first-responders team posted. When I was hauled from deep mud in Mary’s Lake by friendly fishermen three years ago, my husband had known only that I would be exploring “lakes somewhere near Lake Ann”; luckily, the strangers were friendly heroes.
- Wear water shoes that will stay on (you can find yourself standing in deep mud) and that are comfortable for walking, on river trips or in emergencies. You can do some river rides without shuttle help, but they involve long-ish walks back to the put-in after chaining the kayak to a tree.
- It is pretty spooky to be out in the middle of a lake alone. Stick near shore, close enough to swim to it but not so close as to encounter sunken trees that could flip your boat. At launch sites, find an unmovable landmark to guide your

- return—note the funky red cottage rather than the colorful row of beach chairs. Try to park where you can see your car from the water.
- Put stuff in waterproof cases that are tethered to the kayak or to you, and keep your phone (with location feature “on”) available, not stashed in a hatch. Wear your life vest.
  - Be alert and change plans if things look dicey. One time, I wanted to portage the short, muddy path from School Lake to Bass Lake, but a hulking guy drifted by on a paddleboard beyond the portage, asking if I was alone. I immediately backtracked to the boat launch, staying in view of a friendly fisherman. (That memory keeps getting creepier!)
  - Get kayak wheels: what a difference! North Bar Lake is a long walk from the parking lot, and gorgeous, small Bronson Lake is down a long gravel road that is dangerously steep for normal cars; carrying my kayak back up was awful.
  - To find launch sites, Google “boat launches” and the county name. You will find the Michigan DNR sites, township recreation-site listings, and detailed maps. But Jim Stamm’s books do it all for three counties, with directions, maps, cool data like acreage, depth, and GPS points.
  - When it comes to kayaking rivers alone, “Just don’t,” Stamm says. I have been lucky with some calm ones (Lower Platte, early morning), but fallen trees can be dangerous and very scary, if you are alone. Dumping is frightening. I kayak sometimes with a Tuesday morning group, and I am grateful for its team efforts in small crises.

Though the unexplored lakes are getting farther away, the quest continues. My new rolling goal, suggested by my sister, is to reach my age (70) and then just keep up with it. It could happen. So far, my lakes are still in their mid-60s.

*Pick up a copy of Jimm Stamm’s **A Guide to Benzie County Michigan Rivers, Lakes, and Creeks** and **A Guide to the Rivers and Lakes of Grand Traverse and Leelanau Counties, Michigan** at The Bookstore in Frankfort, Condrum Café in Elberta, Backcast Fly Shop in Benzonia, Riverside Canoes along M-22, and elsewhere, including Amazon.*

*In “real life,” Beau Vallance is a retired museum-studies professor, currently serving as a hospice volunteer and a tour guide who introduces astonished visitors to tigers and lions at the Exotic Feline Rescue. None of these requires a boat, so she leaves both kayaks in Benzie.*

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