

Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree

Apples, cherries, and grapes at Evans Brothers Orchards?

By Aubrey Ann Parker
Current Contributor

If moving home after college to work for Dad in the family business sounds like playing it safe, you don't know Mark Evans. At 28, Mark is one of three men – the others being his father, Mike, and his uncle, Mark – in charge of operations at Evans Brothers Orchards, among the largest fruit producers in Benzie County.

Raised on just under 1,000 acres in Benzie's southwest corner, Mark is a fifthgeneration farmer. Innovation is hard-wired into his genetic code. It's a learned behavior, having watched generations of risk takers and forward thinkers that came before him. And now it's helping Mark to find his place in the family business as Evans Brothers Orchards pushes for greater efficiency, higher yields, and new products.

Though his family's politics may lean



Mark Evans is a fifth-generation Benzie County orchardist. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

conservative, their business model is anything but.

Back in 1993, at the age of seven, Mark watched as his father and uncle were the first in Northern Michigan to plant the then-littleknown Honeycrisp, a variety of apple that had been developed by the University of Minnesota. That gamble certainly paid off, literally, given that Honeycrisp are now running at about double the price of other apple varieties.

Then in 2004, Evans Brothers Orchards became one of only five farms in Northern Michigan to begin growing SweeTango[®], a spin-off of the Honeycrisp variety, also developed by the University of Minnesota but this time with more regulation and oversight to ensure quality control. The developers handpicked farms that were growing high-quality Honeycrisp and required a \$10,000 down payment for the rights to grow SweeTango[®]. "We were under contract not to talk about

Please see Evans on page 6

Frankfort Film Festival

Complete Program page 4

Frankfort Beer Week

Details on page 2



Benzie Girl's Global Mission to Teach Environmental Education

On the road to Borneo

By Susan Koenig Current Contributor

Amalia Fernand has travelled. A lot, by anyone's standards. In her relatively short life, she has visited and taught in 17 countries, including Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Mexico, Thailand, and Uganda, to name a few, not to mention Florida, New Mexico and other states here at home.

Fernand founded Nature Explorers International (NEI), which teaches environmental education in communities around the world via interactive stories, plays, songs, art projects, and outdoor explorations. Her goal is to foster in children a deeper understanding and appreciation of their environment.

"Every child everywhere is attracted to learning about his or her environment, no



Fernand outfits a Columbian child with a spider monkey mask in 2011. Photo courtesy of Amalia Fernand.

matter how poor they are, or what language they speak," she observes.

Wherever she goes, Fernand brings art supplies, magnifying glasses, binoculars, bubbles, wildlife books, and hole punchers (which, she says, children find especially fascinating). She uses art projects as a tool to spread awareness of the physical world that surrounds them. (For instance, "Don't eat the monkeys; save them.") Her hope is that adults will then listen to the children tell what they have learned in classes, and they may actually be persuaded

to protect species and plants, too. Fernand says this is particularly important in developing countries, where the majority of the populations are unaware of the endangerment of species, degradation of environments, and the threat that these problems pose to their lifestyles.

Most of her students have never had much of their own, so they cherish their artwork. "You can keep it," Fernand tells them about the project. "But you must tell people what you learned when you made it."

In November, Fernand heads to Kalimantan, the Indonesian side of Borneo which is the largest island in Indonesia's vast chain and home to more endemic species than anywhere in the world. She will work as an intern for Orangutan Foundation International (OFI)

Please see Borneo on page 7











Interview with Charla Burgess

Head of Beer Education, Stormcloud Brewing Company

By Emily Votruba

Elberta Alert Editor

This story was originally published by *The Elberta Alert*. You can find *The Alert* online at Elberta-Alert.org.

The Alert Facebook-buttonholed Charla Burgess in between bouts of tasting beers and peaches to ask her about her new job and Frankfort's upcoming Beer Week, October 6-11.

ELBERTA ALERT: You accepted the mission of Special Events and Beer Education Coordinator at Stormcloud. What does this entail?

CHARLA BURGESS: My mission is to develop an appreciation for craft beer—as a drink and an industry-in the community. I hope to help people learn about the history and process of brewing, but even more so the diversity of taste in beer offerings, particularly, for Stormcloud, in Belgians. Wine and food pairings have long been mainstream and respected. It's time beer got its due. People are really now coming to understand and respect that craft beer also offers similar Jordan Bates.

creativity, that it's an art form.

There's discipline and science and innovation that goes into these craft beers. Some brewers really push the envelope. Those of us who really like to be surprised by different flavor combinations can appreciate that. I think Brian [Confer]'s beers are sophisticated, with lots of layers. There's life and complexity from the Belgian yeasts. Brian is always thinking about and working with the chef [John Snyder] on how the beers pair with our food, because he's a foodie. He understands that it's all about the total experience.

ELBERTA ALERT: You're a farmer. How does this knowledge help you in your new, exalted Beer Priestess position?

CHARLA BURGESS: As a farmer, in order to sell the vegetables, I had to SELL THE VEGETABLES. In my subscription CSA model, I often had to teach customers about new vegetables. How to eat them. What flavors they combined well with. I sent people recipes. If I didn't somehow dangle a carrot of approachability to some vegetables, some people would never try them. We get a lot of customers new to the craft beer scene or who say they don't like Belgians. They've been drinking their Bud Light for years, it's what they know, and it's what they are comfortable with. At the bar we help them to identify the tastes they like, match that with our offerings, and they often come away learning that light beers don't have to be one-dimensional and

watery. That they can be just as smooth, but also be fresh, twangy, yeasty, and they might like them even more. Wine drinkers (i.e. "I'm not a beer drinker") discover they like our traditional Belgian dubbel for its rich, raisiny depth balanced by the caramel malt tones. I'm a teacher, too, so I get a thrill in seeing people discover new things. I also know, as a farmer, that it makes economic and environmental sense to use fresh, local ingredients as much as possible. Things just taste better the fresher they are. Our 24:30 Harvest Pale Ale (hops harvested 30 miles away and used within 24



ELBERTA ALERT: Why is craft brewing taking off in Michigan?

CHARLA BURGESS: The success of craft beer in MI right now? Brian or Rick could likely speak best to this, but I would say a combination of things: Traditional markets for cherries and other fruits were declining in profitability. Growers saw how well vineyards produced in our climate, how similar our climate was to other areas having success in growing

hops, and with the increase in breweries, perhaps due to the loosening of regulation, hops were in high demand. About 10 years ago I went to a hop growing workshop in TC. A good number of traditional farmers were there, looking to shift gears. I think that breweries may also be thriving here for the same reason that small farms are increasing in number. Collaboration. Cooperation. Sharing of knowledge freely. You love something this much, this good beer, you want to share your passion for it. We have really skilled brewers in Michigan, along with talented chefs, and beautiful local farm/food offerings. In Frankfort, we are blessed with a brilliant microcosm



Charla Burgess, head of Beer Education, and Stormcloud co-owner Brian Confer make their pretty faces. Photo and terrible Lightroom effects by Jordan Bates.

hours of harvest) is a testament to this.

I often say that Stormcloud has offered me the chance to combine all the elements of my farm business that I loved—I truly get a thrill in watching the chef and helping him come up with new food offerings to pair with the different beers, and with my farm or the new Stormcloud kitchen garden, to grow some of the items. I get to grow, create, taste, share and it's all organically centered around and growing out from the beer.

ELBERTA ALERT: Beyond the food and beverages, it seems like a lot of people have really appreciated Stormcloud's activities—Trivia Night and Game Night, and the spelling bee last year. The brewery has become a kind of community center, especially in the winter.

CHARLA BURGESS: As a farmer I also learned that success comes from the value-added products. I think at Stormcloud the owners are always asking how we can add value to the total experience—for the customer, the community. And most ideas around here begin with Confer or Schmitty [Stormcloud co-owner Rick Schmitt] saying "We should..." 99% of the time, we really should. Storm-

of these. Synergy works to fuel the industry. In these transitional days from traditional manufacturing to tourism and service and entertainment, the businesses that are going to grow are the ones that innovate and work together. I think that's also what we hope Frankfort Beer Week will generate—synergy among Frankfort's businesses and a sharing of our passion. With Beer Week, we hope to involve as many local businesses as possible.

ELBERTA ALERT: What have you been doing to get ready for Beer Week?

CHARLA BURGESS: We've been taste-testing beer with ice cream, chocolate, and other food items all this week, in preparation for our beer pairing workshops, and it's astounding how food can really complement or dramatically CHANGE the taste of the beer on your palate. And vice versa. Harvest Pale Ale and a fresh white peach? Brilliant! I'm looking forward to celebrating some of the most alluring things about Frankfort and Michigan, draw in locals and visitors, with state-wide promotion. AND...Frankfort ? October? Always breathtaking.





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Mondays

Grow Benzie presents Cooking Matters, a six-week session of classes, where you'll learn the secrets of the pros. October 6 through November 10. (231)882-9510. 6-8pm.

Circle Time with Miss Char at the Benzie Shores District Library includes rhymes and movement for infants and toddlers. (231)352-4671. 10am.

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

Tuesdays

Technology Tuesdays at the Benzie Shores District Library. A library staff member will be available to help with your technology issues. (231)352-4671. 10am-12pm.

Dance Benzie: Improvisational partner dancing at the Mills Community House in Benzonia. Free, donations welcome. 8-10pm.

Wednesdays

Trivia Night at Stormcloud resumes on October 8. 8–10pm.

Thursdays

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

Open Mic Night at The Cabbage Shed in Elberta. (231)352-9843. 8pm.

Saturdays

Frankfort Farmers' Market at Open Space Park on Main Street. 9am-1pm.

ON THE DOCK

Sunday - October 5

Crystal Mountain and the Friends of the Betsie Valley District Library invite you to participate in the 9th Annual Betsie Valley Run. Half-Marathon, 10K Run/Walk, 5K Run/ Walk, and Child's Mile. Professionally timed,. The race begins at Crystal Mountain and includes some of the most beautiful trails in Benzie County. Registration, race info, results and photo gallery at BetsieValleyRun. com. 9am.

Monday, October 6

Movie Mondays at Darcy Library in Beulah features Heartbreaker (L'Arnacoeur). Alex

and his sister run a business that is designed to break up relationships. They are hired by a rich man to break up the wedding of his daughter. The only problem is that they only have one week to do so. (231)882-4037. 6:30-8pm.

Mon - Sat, October 6 - 11

The new Frankfort Craft Beer Week will be held in Frankfort. See page 2 for more information, or online at stormcloudbrewing.com.

Tuesday, October 7

Join the Oliver Art Center for a chartered field trip to ArtPrize, led by Durette Upton. \$75 for an all-day, round-trip excursion with lunch and tours. (231)352-4151.

Wednesday, October 8

Join The Current's photographer Aubrey Ann Parker and co-editor Jordan Bates for Water's Future: Around the Globe with Circle of Blue at the InsideOut Gallery in Traverse City. Info at http://goo.gl/XHKS5f. 7-9:30pm.

Thursday, October 9

Benzonia Academy Lecture Series at the Mills Community House presents From Copper to Casinos: Native Peoples in Economic History by John Bailey. Will include early trade, trade routes, and goods of the Native Peoples from earliest times to the present, as well as interactions of this economic activity with the various governments and laws. 7pm.

Friday, October 10

"Friendship and Light" opening reception at the Oliver Art Center featuring Marianna Defer-Pfeifer, Barbara Reich, Vianna Szabo, Sharon Will. Free and open to everyone. (231)352-4151. 5-7pm.

Saturday, October 11

Frankfort Fall Festival. Parade features face painting, free wagon rides through town, The Scottville Clown Band, local pups dressed up in costume for the Mutt March, GIANT pumpkins, and locally built floats. Starting at noon, the Masters of Mayhem will be back with their incredible metal trebuchet to launch pumpkins into Betsie Bay. (231)352-7251.11am-5pm.

Thurs - Sun, October 16 – 19

Frankfort Film Festival. See pages 4 & 5 for complete lineup. (231)352-7561.

Thursday, October 16

Chamber Music North Concert presents Around The World, a program of fun and resplendence with a potpourri of music by composers from Astor Piazzolla to Francis Poulenc. Detroit Symphony Orchestra flutist Jeffery Zook teams up with guitar soloist Bret Hoag in a musical affair with flair at the Oliver Art Center. (231)352-4151. 7:30pm.

Saturday, October 18

Endoman Promotions and Crystal Mountain Resort are pleased to present the 9th Annual Peak2Peak Mountain Bike Classic. This epic event is held in and around the beautiful and gently rolling terrain which surrounds Crystal Mountain and will start and finish right at the resort. The event will feature a 10.5-mile loop with beginner (1 lap), intermediate (2 laps), and expert (3 laps) divisions with a staggered start, allowing racers of all abilities to enjoy the course simultaneously. www.crystalmountain.com (888)968-7686 ext.7500.

Tuesday, October 28

Spanish Conversation Group at the Benzie Shores District Library. Practice your language skills and meet other Spanish speakers. (231)352-4671. 7-8pm.

Saturday, November 1

"Borneo Bash" fundraiser at The Cabbage Shed for Amalia Fernand's trip to Borneo. NatureExplorersInternational.com. 4pm.

Thursday, November 6

Benzie Audubon Club's annual meeting and members' photo show. Join the Audubon Club at the Tribal Outpost for a potluck meal (bring a dish, plus table service), a brief business meeting, and photo show. 7282 Hoadley Road, Benzonia. (231)871-0503. benzieaudubon.org. 6pm.

Thursday, November 13

Benzonia Academy Lecture Series at the Benzie Area Historical Museum presents:Serpents in Pre-Columbian Art of the Americas. 4pm.

Friday, November 14

Opening reception at the Oliver Art Center featuring Ann and Steve Loveless and Member Exhibition. (231)352-4151. 5pm - 7pm

Saturday, November 8

Benzie Audubon Club presents Fall Birding: Lake Michigan. Dress warmly and meet at Point Betsie, where Carl Freeman will lead a search for migrating waterfowl and other birds. Field trips are open to the public without charge. benzieaudubon.org. (231)352-4739. 9:30am.



Closed Tuesdays thru October 20. Closed Monday-Wednesday until late November. Early Bird from 4:30-6:00 pm 231-882-4761

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THURSDAY FRIDAY

CHILD'S POSE DRAMA | NR | 112m

THURSDAY 1:00pm LANGUAGE Romanian w/ Eng Subs **DIRECTOR** Calin Peter Netzer

CAST Vlad Ivanov, Luminita Gheorghiu SYNOPSIS A contemporary drama focusing on the relationship between a mother and her 32-yearold son. After the accidental killing of a boy in a car crash, the mother tries to prevent her son from being charged and refuses to accept her son is a grown-up. AWARDS Berlin International Film Festival 2013 -Golden Bear | Stockholm International Film Festival 2013 - Telia Film Award.



THE GREAT BEAUTY

DRAMA/COMEDY | NR | 142m THURSDAY 3:30pm

LANGUAGE Italian w/ Eng Subs **DIRECTOR** Paolo Sorrentino

CAST Toni Servillo, Carlo Verdone, Sabrina Ferilli SYNOPSIS Jep Gambardella has seduced his way through the lavish nightlife of Rome for decades, but after his 65th birthday and a shock from the past, Jep looks past the nightclubs and parties to find a timeless landscape of absurd, exquisite beauty. AWARDS Academy Awards 2014 - Best Foreign Language Film | Golden Globe 2014 - Best Foreign Language Film.



WE ARE THE BEST

COM/DRAMA | NR | 102m THURSDAY 8:00pm LANGUAGE Swedish w/ Eng Subs

DIRECTOR Lukas Moodysson

CAST Mira Barkhammar, Mira Grosin SYNOPSIS Based on a graphic novel, WE ARE THE BEST! revolves around three girls in 1980's Stockholm who decide to form a punk band, despite not having any instruments and being told by everyone that punk is dead. A paean to DIY culture and the power of rebellion. AWARDS Venice Film Festival 2013 - Nominated for Best Film | Philadelphia Film Festival 2013 - Honorable Mention Best Ensemble.



INTERLOCHEN MOTION **PICTURE ARTS**

FOUR INTERLOCHEN **MPA** SHORT FILMS WILL BE SHOWN PRECEDING FEATURE FILMS DURING THE FRANKFORT FILM FESTIVAL.



GLORIA DRAMA/COMEDY | R | 110m FRIDAY NOON LANGUAGE Spanish w/ Eng Subs

DIRECTOR Sebastián Lelio CAST Paulina García, Sergio Hernández

SYNOPSIS A story set in Santiago, Chile, and centered on Gloria, a free-spirited older woman, and the realities of her whirlwind relationship with a former naval officer whom she meets out in the clubs. AWARDS Berlin International Film Festival 2013 -Best Actress | Telluride Internation Film Festival -Official Selection



DIRECTOR Nadav Schirman CAST Nadav Schirman, Mosab Hassan Yousef

SYNOPSIS This extraordinary documentary recounts the true story of the son of a Hamas leader who emerged as one of Israel's prized informants, and the Shin Bet agent who protected him. AWARDS Moscow International Film Festival 2014 - Audience Award I Sundance Film Festival 2014 - Audience Award Best Documentary, World Cinema.

Pie Lady of Pie T§wr **PIE LADY OF PIE TOWN** STOP DOCUMENTARY | GA | 34m FRIDAY 4:00pm LANGUAGE English

DIRECTOR Jane Rosemont CAST Kathy Knapp, Wes Studi - Narrator 2 SYNOPSIS Kathy Knapp left her charmed life to bake pie in a town with no traffic light. The film FOF illustrates Kathy's resolve, heartache, healing, and how pie is a vehicle for love and peace. AWARDS Dances With Films 2014 - Best Short Documentary | Barcelona Film Festival 2014 -Best Short Documentary.

THE COLD AND THE QUIET DRAMA/THRILL | PG13 | 73m LANGUAGE English

DIRECTOR Colleen Griffen **ON SITE** CAST Katie Oellerich **ON SITE**

SYNOPSIS Isolated over the Christmas by her anxiety, a college student finds herself responsible for a stranger's troubled children as she struggles with the unsettling connection between her own mental stability and the cold, quiet dark of their broken home. AWARDS Women's Independent Film Festival 2014 - Official Selection I Santa Monica Film Festival - Honorable Mention.



DIRECTOR Joon-ho Bong CAST Chris Evans, Jamie Bell, Tilda Swinton SYNOPSIS In the future, a failed climate-change experiment kills all life on the planet except for a lucky few who board the SNOWPIERCER, a train that travels around the globe. AWARDS Sydney Film Festival 2014 - Nominted Best Film | Asian Film Awards 2014 - Nominated Best Film, Best Director.

SATURDAY SUNDAY



OUR NIXON DOCUMENTARY | NR | 84m SATURDAY 12:30pm LANGUAGE English **DIRECTOR** Penny Lane

CAST Richard Nixon, H.R. Haldeman SYNOPSIS Never before seen home movies filmed by Richard Nixon's closest aides, and convicted Watergate conspirators, offer a surprising and intimate new look into his Presidency. AWARDS Ann Arbor Film Festival 2013 - Best Film | Seattle International Film Festival 2013 - Best Documentary.



LANGUAGE Chinese, English **DIRECTOR** Anthony Chen

CAST Yeo Yann Yann, Chen Tianwen SYNOPSIS ILO ILO chronicles the Lim family and maid Teresa, a Filipino immigrant. An outsider in both the family and Singapore, Teresa struggles to find her footing. As Teresa becomes a part of the family, circumstances in an uncertain economy will challenge the new normal. AWARDS Cannes Film Festival 2013 - Camera d'Or I Philadelphia Film Festival 2013 - Best Narrative Feature Film.

MEDORA DOCUMENTARY | GA | 100m SATURDAY 4:30pm M LANGUAGE English

DIRECTORS Andrew Cohn & David



CAST Dylan McSoley, Rusty Rogers **ON SITE** SYNOPSIS MEDORA follows the Medora Hornets basketball team over the 2011 season. An in-depth look at small-town life, an underdog basketball story, and tale of a community refusing to give up hope despite the odds stacked against them. AWARDS Sarasota Film Festival 2013 - Official Selection | Woodstock Film Festival 2013 - Official Selection I Hoosier Award.

HYPOTHETICALLY DOC/SHORT | NR | 7m SATURDAY 8:00pm

LANGUAGE English DIRECTOR Peter Zinn **CAST** Vincent Pastore, Joe Forbrich

SYNOPSIS Two mob-types meet to discuss 2 "business," and it becomes a verbal joust with FOR comedic turns and rhyme schemes that keep the audience guessing: "Are these guys for real?" **AWARDS** Sarasota Film Festival 2014 - Official Selection | Brooklyn Film Festival Shorts 2014 -Official Selection.



DIRECTOR John Michael McDonaugh CAST Brendan Gleeson, Chris O'Dowd, Kelly Reilly SYNOPSIS Father James is a priest faced with troubling circumstances brought about by a member of his parish. He continues to comfort his daughter and his church, but a sinister force is closing in. Will Father James have the courage to face his own personal Calvary? AWARDS Irish Film and Television Awards 2014 - Best Lead Actor, Best Film, Best Director | Berlin International Film Festival 2014 - Ecumenical Jury Prize.



DIRECTORS Sam Cullman & Jennifer Grausman **CO-DIRECTOR** Mark Becker

CAST Mark Landis, Matthew Leininger SYNOPSIS Mark Landisis one of the most prolific art forgers in US history. His body of work spans 30 years, and includes 15th Century Icons, Picasso, and Walt Disney. But, Landis isn't in it for money. Posing as a philanthropic donor, a grieving executor, and a Jesuit priest. Landis has given away works across the US. But after duping Matthew Leininger, a tenacious registrar who sets out to expose his escapades to the art world, Landis must confront his legacy and museum professionals clamoring for him to stop. AWARDS Tribeca Film Festival 2014 -Official Selection | San Francisco International Film Festival 2014 - Official Selection.



SUNDAY 2:00pm LANGUAGE French w/ Eng Subs

DIRECTOR Arnaud des Pallières CAST Mads Mikkelsen, Mélusine Mayance SYNOPSIS Respected, well-to-do horse merchant Michael Kohlhaas is a loving husband and family man leading a peaceful existence, until a ruthless nobleman steals his horses, setting off a chain of irreversible events which sends him on a rampage through the countryside in his quest for justice. AWARDS Cannes Film Festival 2013 - Official Selection I Brussels European Film Festival 2013 - Golden Iris.



DRAMA | PG13 | 80m SUNDAY 4:30pm

LANGUAGE Polish w/ Eng Subs **DIRECTOR** Pawel Pawlikowski

CAST Agata Kulesza, Agata Trzebuchowska SYNOPSIS Anna is preparing to become a nun when the Mother Superior insists she visit her sole living relative, Wanda, a Communist Party insider, who tells her that her real name is Ida and her Jewish parents were murdered during Nazi occupation. This triggers a heart-wrenching journey into the past, the haunting legacy of the Holocaust and postwar Communism. AWARDS Toronto International Film Festival - Critics Prize | London Film Festival 2013 - Best Film | Polish Film Festival 2013 - Best Film.



LANGUAGE French w/ Eng Subs **DIRECTOR** Ruben Alves

CAST Rita Blanco, Joaquim de Almeida SYNOPSIS For 30 years Maria and José Ribeiro have been living in one of the most exclusive districts of Paris. Everybody loves this nice couple of Portuguese immigrants but when they announce their wish to return to Portugal, everybody is crushed. No, they can't let them that ... ! AWARDS European Film Awards 2013 - Audience Award I CinEuphoria Awards 2014 - Best Ensemble.



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Continued from page 1

the apple at all," Mark recalls. "It was called 1914 before it was called SweeTango®; it was only a number."

Once again, the gamble seems to be paying off - SweeTango®, which ripens about two weeks before Honeycrisp, is quickly climbing the apple ladder of popularity after its official release to the public in 2009.

The same year that they planted SweeTango®, Mark's dad planted the farm's - and the county's - first few acres of marketable can't make much money growing grapes. There's too much labor, and the amount that you get for your fruit isn't enough. So the money is in the winery."

Making that leap and starting a winery is a half-million-dollar project though, Mark says, if you want to jump into it heavy.

But as he looks fondly at the vines that he has helped to cultivate, he says, "I really like grapes... I mean, look at that. That's beautiful. I like the uniform shape of the vine and how neat everything can be and just the growing habit of vines. They'll just grow - they'll grow 14 feet in a season!"

Despite his upbringing with cherries and apples, Mark is self-admittedly more than a little biased toward grapes. Remember col-



The Evanses grows 170 acres of cherries, 130 acres of apples, and 5 acres of grapes. They also lease 15 acres to neighboring farmers - other Benzie County legacy names like the Gillisons and the Putneys among them - to grow corn. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

grapes, despite that Northern Michigan's wine industry really hadn't taken off yet. At the time, there were 60 farms growing about 700 acres of grapes in both Leelanau and Grand Traverse Counties. Now there are 1,400 acres of grapes being grown on close to 100 farms in both counties. Meanwhile, less than 100 acres of grapes are now being grown in the other six counties that make up the Northwest Agricultural District: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, and Manistee. But experts in the industry say that we need 500 additional acres to satisfy local demand.

"I think the big boom is going to come... into Antrim and Benzie and down to Manistee and Oceana counties, along the coast," Bryan Ulbrich, owner of Traverse City's Left Foot Charley, told The Ticker last year.

Here in Benzie County, we're only just beginning to see the first few vineyards and wineries crop up. The Grand Opening Party for St. Ambrose Cellars - a new venture by long-time beekeeping entrepreneur Kirk Jones - took place on September 13. Along with mead from Jones' Sleeping Bear Honey line, St. Ambrose is serving wines, including pinot noir (made with a mixture of grapes from Evans Brothers Orchards and other growers) and Riesling (made exclusively with Evans Brothers grapes).

When asked if there are plans to plant

lege? Mark spent three years at Washington State University earning a Bachelor's degree in viticulture - that's right, the cultivation of grape vines. But he didn't forget his roots; during college, Mark pruned trees. Hobby farmers would call the horticulture department and ask about a pruner, and the school would recommend Mark's small side business.

"The biggest thing that I learned from being out West [was the diversity that I saw] out in the fields in Washington," Mark says. "That's how my education [in grapes] set me up to understand apples and cherries a bit more, just from being out there and seeing it. I'm a very visual learner."

He's also a trial-by-fire learner. Though Evans Brothers Orchards sells most of their grapes to Jones and St. Ambrose Cellars, Mark has been saving some to experiment. He produces a few small batches of wine for his own consumption.

Following the unfortunate loss of Northern Naturals Winery from their Benzonia location to downtown Traverse City, as well as the staggering success of Stormcloud Brewing Company in Frankfort, The Betsie Current was eager to know if there are plans to expand Mark's wine- and cider-making efforts out on the Joyfield-Blaine Township line.

"We've all been talking about it a little bit," he admits. "We haven't really said, 'OK let's



The Betsie Current

Borneo Continued from page 1

under the tutelage of Dr. Birute Galdikas, a Canadian primatologist of Lithuanian heritage who is now an Indonesian citizen. Dr. Galdikas met Dr. Louis Leakey, the celebrated paleonanthropologist and archaeologist, in 1972. Recognizing her abilities, he sent her to Borneo to study the orangutan and considered her one of his "trimates." (Completing the trio are Dr. Jane Goodall, the noted chimpanzee expert, and Dr. Dian Fosse, the gorilla advocate who died at the hands of poachers. The three women were also known as "Dr. Leakey's angels" for their tireless research and efforts to save species

and habitats.)

Dr. Galdikas founded OFI in 1986 with a mission of education, conservation, and reforestation, but her passion was, and continues to be, the care center, established specifically to rescue orphaned baby orangutans whose mothers have died at the hands of palm oil harvesters or because of fires that were set by the timberestate developers. Hunters and poachers in the illegal animal trade also threaten the apes. And because orang-

utans have the longest inter-birth interval of any animal — 6 to 10 years — they are more susceptible to extinction.

OFI currently houses about 330 of these large apes. (An orangutan can weigh more than 300 pounds.) The center hires only local people, who work one on one with the orphans. They take the babies into the forest, acclimatize them to their habitat, and aim to release them into the wild when they are mature. The most serious threat to the species is the destruction of the tropical rain forest, which is the oldest in the world and essential to their survival.

To be chosen for this highly competitive position, Fernand submitted to an intense application process over nine months, including three Skype interviews, two long phone conversations with Dr. Galdikas, and several writing assignments. In addition to Fernand's job as "communications volunteer," there are two animal-husbandry volunteers at the center and two personal intern/assistants to Dr. Galdikas. Fernand will live in a village with a local family, who will supply her meals for which she will pay a small stipend.

Fernand hails from a traveling family. Between her birth in Florida and her three-month birthday, she traveled with her parents to St. Thomas, VI, Massachusetts, and Michigan and all states in between. Both her father, Steven (known to us as the former "Shoe Man" of Benzonia), and her mother, Diana, are adventurous souls who have managed frequent traveling all their lives, even while raising children. Both father and mother are artsy types, and you can guess where the leather for Amalia's jewelry comes from. settled in Benzie County, but not for long. Fernand later moved to Colorado with her sister and mother. In her second year of high school, she raised money to travel to Hawaii with a school group. She spent her 14th and 17th birthdays in Australia — one visit was a family trip, and she was an exchange student for the second. Fernand helped to finance those trips by making jewelry, and subsequently established her business, Amalia Fernand Leather Designs.

She graduated from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, in 2003 with a major in Environmental Studies with minors in Anthropology and Marine Science, including a lot of courses in Primatology.

"You always liked monkeys," says her father, wryly. Eckerd required a three-week



Fernand accompanies a Guatemalan kindergarten class in 2012. Photo courtesy of Amalia Fernand.

independent study during the winter term, and Fernand took advantage of that to begin traveling and testing her teaching skills overseas. She also attended a work/study program at Boyd Hill, a nature reserve in St. Petersburg where she still teaches (when not traveling) in the winters. She traveled to Thailand for a month studying gibbons, and to Madagascar, where she was teaching about lemurs (and learning about malaria, first-hand).

From 2008 to 2010, she earned a Master's Degree from Leslie University, which required 225 days of living outdoors over three semesters throughout the United States and Mexico, plus a three-month internship in Costa Rica.

Fernand learned that she prefers to teach younger children, who have "more absorbent minds" and are "more fun," specifically children from ages three to six. The "basic understanding of concepts" program that she teaches includes: plants and seeds; invertebrates; fish and sharks; reptiles and amphibians; birds and mammals. She works for Montessori in Traverse City, and occasionally holds classes here in Benzie County. After she completes her internship in Borneo, she hopes to travel around the world, teaching classes and writing a book about her adventures.

Borneo Bash

There's no such thing as a free lunch, even when one is doing good work, so Fernand is looking for help to fund her trip. She will host a "Borneo Bash" on November 1 at 4 p.m. which will include live music, a potluck dinner, and a "repurposed" leather sale of hand-made goods. See The Current's calendar of events for details, and visit her website at NatureExplorersInternational.com.





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