By Mitch Kennis
Current Contributor

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

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

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

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

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

Finalizing her move to Frankfort in August 2014—one month after the birth of their second child, daughter Sophia—Bates began her own speech therapy practice, Encouraging Expression, which ranges from one-on-one, in-home appointments locally to virtual, online sessions with kids in school systems as far away as West Virginia. “We’re a Rachael Ray– leveled commu- nication disorders and a Master’s in speech-language pathology; Bates has clinical experience working with children in settings such as nursing homes and special needs classrooms.

Continuing with our interview series on island entrepreneurs, Bates, a well-known character. The Betsie Current caught up with Bates at her home office.

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

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

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

BATES: After graduate school in 2002, I moved to Mississippi to be with Ben, who was in the Air Force pilot-training program. I worked in a school in Oregon for a year and a half. I spent three months in Oklahoma, the state Ben grew up in. After a two-year assignment, I worked as a speech therapist in an Early Childhood Center in Hayesville, Kansas, for two years. I was married to Ben and moved to Washington, where I worked in a private prac- tice that specialized in helping individuals on the autism spectrum. I worked there for about two years, with some time off to have our first child, our son, Colton (now eight years old). After Spokane, we moved to Illinois, where I started a private practice in Peoria. We had hoped to move to Frankfort at that time, four years ago, but there was not a job available for me in the local area at that time. So we moved to my hometown of Indian River, where I played volleyball, as I got older and moved, it became harder to push myself physics, as I got older and moved, it became harder to keep up with the competition. I started running this race when I was dating Ben in 1998. We’ve missed a couple over the years, but maybe 16 times!

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

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

CURRENT: How long have you been running? What is your favorite distance? How many races have you run?

BATES: I’ve been running since college. I took a 10k race class, decided I loved it, and started running a lot on my own. I ran the Boston Marathon in 1997. My favorite distance is the half-marathon. I’ve run it six times. It’s my goal to run marathons. I run six days a week. Typically six miles for five days and then another run of nine to 12. I’m still working back up from the 2:12 after the Boston. Probably around 38-40 miles per week right now.

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

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

CURRENT: What is your proudest achievement?

BATES: I’m also pretty proud of climbing up—and making it to the top of Pike’s Peak in a single day by myself. Also completing a novel-length story.

CURRENT: What are the biggest challenges you faced in starting up your own business, and how did you overcome them?

BATES: The biggest challenges, so far, have been spreading the word about the availability of this service and the travel time that is involved in conducting home visits. The most rewarding part is always helping someone, whether it’s helping them to communicate socially with strangers using an augmentative device or improving their language skills, or helping them to become a more accurate

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

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CURRENT: Why did you move to Benzie County?

BATES: We both love the area. Ben wanted to be near a bigger airport, in order to pursue his dream of traveling. I wanted to stay close to family, so being able to make the move, now will be the best time for all of us.

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

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Cousin Curtiss’s Rootstomp Through Benzie

One-man band creates energy of a full band

From staff reports

“Cousin Curtiss” O’Rourke Stedman’s heart-of-summer tour takes him through Benzie County and the Grand Traverse region, where he will play gigs at six different venues over the next month—beginning with a June 30 appearance at Stormcloud Brewing Company in Frankfort and ending with the Dunesville Music Festival in Lake Ann over the weekend of July 16.

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

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

“The uniqueness of the shows in Benzie and Traverse City lies in that most audiences are filled with locals and transients,” says Curtiss. “I try to connect with all of them by being personable. I can surprise both sides of the audience, I continue to build a better following.”

Among his influences, Curtiss counts the Earthwork musicians Seth Bernard, May Erlewine, and Joshua Davis, as well as other established and up-and-coming Michigan artists, such as the Bagridges, The Accidentals, Billy Strings, The Crane Wives, Greensky Bluegrass, Zach Deputy, and Keller Williams. “I look at those groups and artists and try to figure out what they’ve done, what steps they’ve taken to be where they are musically.” Curtiss says. “These guys are my teachers, even though they probably don’t know who I am.”

Curtiss sees Americana and roots music on the rise here in Northern Michigan—thanks in no small part to Earthwork, a music collective of more than 25 Michigan bands and solo performers that is less like a record label and albums for an entire summer trying to learn how to really write songs. Songs that weren’t just entertaining but meant something. What Joshua Davis accomplished on [the NBC talent show in 2015] ‘The Voice’ was huge! And when [Season 8 winner] Sawyer Fredericks covered [May Erlewine’s song] ‘Shine On’ in the same season, I remember thinking, ‘Michigan Music is taking over the world!’ I hope that, as I become a better writer and performer, I can cross paths with Seth, May, and Joshua and let them know how many musicians they’ve inspired from this area.”

When Curtiss isn’t rootstomping on stage this summer, he hopes to be near the water, floating on the Platte River or playing volleyball on the Frankfort beach (poorly, he jokes). “I hope that I can be surprised every day, sometimes, and they instantly became role models—artists I could look up to and say, ‘See! It is possible to play music full time!’ I must have listened to Mother Moon [one of May’s songs] for an entire summer trying to learn how to really write songs. Songs that weren’t just entertaining but meant something. What Joshua Davis accomplished on [the NBC talent show in 2015] ‘The Voice’ was huge! And when [Season 8 winner] Sawyer Fredericks covered [May Erlewine’s song] ‘Shine On’ in the same season, I remember thinking, ‘Michigan Music is taking over the world!’ I hope that, as I become a better writer and performer, I can cross paths with Seth, May, and Joshua and let them know how many musicians they’ve inspired from this area.”

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**CONSTANTLY FLOWING**

**Mondays**
- Pilates with Anna at the Oliver Art Center in Frankfort. Email annamallien@gmail.com if interested. 9-10am.
- Circle Time for infants and toddlers at the Benzieshoresonorad Library at 830 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 by Michelle Lenex at The Gathering Place Senior Center, 10579 Main Street in the Honor Plaza. 231-525-0601. 10-11am.
- Cards at The Gathering Place. We have a dedicated group of card sharks who play Pinochle weekly during lunch, but we aren’t limited to Pinochle: join us for euchre, cribbage, and rummy, too! 12-1pm.
- Zumba at The Gathering Place. Your first class is free, and then it’s only $3! All ability levels are welcome. 2:30pm.
- Grow Benzie Farmers’ Market at 5885 Frankfort Highway (M-115) in Benzie. 3-7pm.

**Tuesdays**
- Stretch and tone with Jean at Oliver Art Center. 9-10am.
- Honor Farmers’ & Flea Market in Maley Park. Across from the shopping plaza and senior center with plenty of off-road parking. 9am-3pm.
- Benzieshores Library is offering technology assistance. Learn to download ebooks, audiobooks, and magazines to your personal devices. 10am-12pm.
- Music by the Melody Makers at The Gathering Place. 10:30am-12pm.

**Wednesdays**
- Yoga with Kari at Pleasant Valley Community Center in Arcadia. Call 231-383-1883 if interested. 6-7:30pm.
- Zumba at The Gathering Place. 6pm.
- Yoga with Kari at The Gathering Place. 3:30-4:30pm.

**Thursdays**
- Elberta Farmers’ Market at the Elberta Pavilion Park. 8am-12:30pm.
- Stretch and tone with Jean at Oliver Art Center. 9-10am.
- Bible Study at The Gathering Place. 10-11am.
- Computers at the Darcy Library at 7238 Commercial Street in Beulah. Ask Carol computer-related questions. Read to Rosie, the cute little dog! 1-5pm.
- Yoga with Kari at The Gathering Place. 3:30-4:30pm.

**Fridays**
- Bunco at The Gathering Place. 9:30-10:30am.
- Fun Fridays at Benzie Shores District Library: Kids and their parents/caregivers are invited to join us! Programs are free and target at preschool children, though kids of all ages are welcome. For the parents, are you tired of technology? Coloring for Grown-ups is a stress-free hour of coloring while the kids play. Everyone welcome. All materials supplied by the library. 10-11am.
- Fridays with Britt: Drop in for a garden tour, ask questions, and learn tips from Grow Benzie’s greenhouse manager about soil health, seed starting, and garden planning. Free, donations accepted. 10am-12pm.
- Wii Bowling at The Gathering Place. 1-2pm.
- Family Storytime: Gather ‘round for stories, rhymes, and songs with Ashley at the Darcy Library. Storytime is designed for children ages 2-5, but all are welcome. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and be sure to sign up for a library card so you can borrow our books to read at home! 3-4:30pm.
- Crystal Mountain Farmers’ Market in Thompsonville. 3-6pm.

**Saturdays**
- Franklin Farmers’ Market at Open Space Park on Main Street, between 7th and 9th streets, along the waterfront. 9am-1pm.
- Farmers’ Market and Flea Market at the Interlochen Eagles #3503 at 20724 Honor Highway/US-131, three miles west of Interlochen. Consisting of Michigan-grown fruits and veggies, flea marketers, cottage-food vendors, artisans, arts & craft vendors, and independent reps. 12-4pm.
- Integrative Yoga with Jessica at the Oliver Art Center. Young or old, novice or seasoned practitioner, yoga is for everyone! Explore yoga on your own terms and discover all that it can do for you. Adult drop-in fee is $15. Student/senior drop-in fee is $10. Call 231-620-3528 if interested. 10:30-11:30am.
volunteer preservation project. Help out at the oldest mainland structure in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The replacement of deteriorated logs will have been completed by our log restoration contractor. In this project, volunteers will re-build the roof and the loft floor, as well as clean up around the cabin. Come for as many days or hours as you are able. Construction skills helpful. Wear closed-toed shoes, bring a lunch and water. Email phsb@leelanau.com with questions. M-22 to Bohemian Road South, on left. 9am-4pm.

Friday, June 24
Star Party at the Betsie Valley District Library. Sponsored by the Grand Traverse Astronomical Society. Bob Moler will present a Twilight Talk on the planets. 9pm.

Friday-Saturday, June 24-25
Nightcrawler hunt on Friday, so you can catch your own bait. Annual Free Kids Fishing Day on Saturday. Free lunch and t-shirt + fishing rods to all kids! Mineral Springs Park in Frankfort. Prizes and bonuses, including $600 cash. Visit BigBobsUpNorth.com for more information.

Saturday, June 25
Take a guided hiking tour through the Michigan Legacy Art Park at Crystal Mountain learning about Michigan history, the environment, and sculpture as you go—a fun activity for adults and families. Riding tours are available to guests. 10-11am.

Saturday, June 25
Birding tour at Michigan Legacy Art Park. Join renowned naturalist Carl Freeman on a dragonfly hike at Upper Herring Lake. Carl will discuss the various species of dragonflies and other insects at the preserve. Meet at the parking lot along M-22. 10-11am.

Saturday, June 25
Solstice Festival. Musicians and entertainers, such as Jake Frysinger, Barefoot, Super 77, TC Knuckleheads, Lou Thunder, and other insects at the preserve. Meet at the parking lot along M-22. 10:30am.

Saturday, June 25
Solvec Festival. Musicians and entertainers, such as Jake Frysinger, Barefoot, Super 77, TC Knuckleheads, Lou Thunder, and Cousin Curtiss. Activities for kids, including face painting, games, horse rides, gross-food-eating contest, bounce house, and prizes. Adults can enjoy the beer garden, along with local wines and food from local restaurants and vendors. Fireworks. 12pm-1am.

Sunday, June 26
Nordic Notes with the Benzie Area Symphony Orchestra. Come and celebrate our new conductor and musical director, Tom Riccobono, as we begin our 36th season. Tom will be featured on Concertino for Trombone by Larsson. The brass sections will be featured at this concert. We have three Johann Strauss pieces, a Vaughan Williams piece, and we end on Stars and Stripes Forever by Sousa. 7pm.

Wednesday, June 29
Bat facts! Bat Stories! Bat Crafts! Come and enjoy the Bat Story Hour at the Betsie Valley District Library. After the story hour, sign up for the summer reading program. Read and earn prizes! 11am.

Friday-Sunday, June 24-26
Battle at the Betsie fishing tournament. Friday is Ladies Battle, with a $1000 entry fee and weigh your best five. Saturday and Sunday are Battle at the Betsie, with a $300 entry fee and weigh your best five in two days. All captain’s meetings and weigh-ins take place at Big Bob’s Up North Outfitters in Frankfort. Prizes and bonuses, including $600 cash. Visit BigBobsUpNorth.com for more information.

Saturday, June 25
22nd Annual Lake Ann Homecoming is sponsored by the Almira Historical Society Fun day in Lake Ann Opening Ceremony, bands, tractor & vintage car parade, luncheon, children’s events, food. 231-275-7557. 9am-3pm.

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

Monday, July 4th
Frankfort Events:
10am: Parade begins 10am: Art in the Park Mineral Springs Park 10am: Carnival Opens (open July 1-4) Noon: Sand Castle Sculpture Contest at Frankfort Beach Noon: Lions Club BBQ 10:30pm: FIREWORKS on Frankfort Beach at dusk.
Elberta Mercantile: Everything Old Is New Again

By Emily Varouba
Current Contributor

The old Gilmore Township Library on Elberta’s Frankfort Avenue will reopen to the public in mid-July as the Elberta Mercantile Company, a shop full of vintage items, antiques, and collectibles. Mark and Carol Carlin of Ferndale and Frankfort are your hosts at this renovated and restored midcentury brick building, where one person’s old junk can become someone else’s new treasure (sometimes again and again).

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

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

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

On a sunny day in June, as renovation work continued on the building, Mark and Carol invited me to sit at a table on the Mercantile’s new coffee terrace, next to a planter from Odom’s Reuse with native flowers, a large green steel wheel from somewhere in Thompsonville, and a rotary reception desk phone from a Sheraton in Detroit. Soon we were talking about “party lines” and stretch phones from Odom’s Reuse with native flowers, a huge and heavy, I’m always the one on the seats. Wheels. Just really old heavy stuff.

“Next thing you know, you can’t move, and you start dropping stuff off, and you think you prove unwieldy, financially and size-wise. Supply site, but Mark decided that might not be a lead-based paint, but something else. I, with geared adjustment wheels. Frankenstein its story. The chiropractor’s table looks, Mark explains. “When you have a place that big, people start dropping stuff off, and you think you have unlimited space, but you don’t; he says. “Next thing you know, you can’t move, and then the roof starts to leak. The fact that Elberta had already fixed the roof on the library was a big selling point.”

“I am thrilled to have a new business in Elberta,” says Diane Jenks, president of the Village Board of Trustees. “The library was a great asset, and I am thrilled they saved the Village of Elberta for $60,000 in April. The Village had decided to sell it as part of paring its deficit. In addition to the proceeds from the sale, Elberta will now receive tax revenue from the property, and our new cool, airy feeling comes high above, the ceiling fans, and the natural light reflecting off the turquesco-colored brick walls. With its openness and concrete floor, the Elberta Mercantile will echo the old service station; and in the center of the main room, on wheels so that it can be moved about seasonally, is the old library circulation desk, acting as checkout counter.

Breathe In, Breathe Out
"We don’t specifically buy to sell," Carol says. "When something good comes along, Hell, we’ll have it in the house for a year or two. We’ll know it’s going to be good, and we’ll let it go. This has always been a dream—probably more so for me—to give Mark an outlet to display and sell. In our house right now, there are things that I’m ready to let up back there.

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

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

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

"We don’t want to sell out, some of the things people throw away;" Carol adds. “But it means we’ll always have junk!” she says, grinning.

Benevolent Old House
In a row just to look and hang out. The Carlins have not only saved the building, saw the chiropractor’s table, and perhaps, most spectacularly—the uncovering and restoration of the old library’s grand staircase by drywall and bookshelves. The drop ceiling is gone, and a new cool, airy feeling comes over the site. We’re talking about the light reflecting off the turquoise-colored brick walls. With its openness and concrete floor, the Elberta Mercantile will echo the old service station; and in the center of the main room, on wheels so that it can be moved about seasonally, is the old library circulation desk, acting as checkout counter.

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

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

Janet (La Rue) Buck remembers her visits to Aunt Maggie vividly. “When I was a child attending the original Elberta School, I used to stop in to see Aunt Maggie nearly every day on my way home and revel in the collection of books she had stuffed in every nook and cranny of that rambling old building,” Buck says. “She didn’t use the Dewey decimal system, but she knew where the books, working elections, and doing all her own housework” at the old American House, the reporter wrote, quoting Maggie. “I guess you could say the whole place is full of books, but I must be the antique!”

She would indeed live to see the new library doors open in April of 1990, but she never worked at its circulation desk. Aunt Maggie passed away in 1962 at 87. In 1963, the new library building was dedicated to Janet La Rue’s grandmother, Dr. Frank J. and nurse Ellen Baver La Rue, for their many years of medical service in Elberta and Benzie County. Over the years, the new building would have several librarians, including Ruth Namn and Lois Holmes.

Jeanne Edwards, an archivist of her grand- father Ray Edwards’s vast collection of Elberta photographs, was too young to remember Aunt Maggie’s place, but fondly recalls getting books on horses and Indians from Mrs. Holmes. “I am very excited to hear the library building is going to be restored,” she wrote in an email, referring to the new Elberta Mercantile.

Molly Van Brocklin Swander concurred: “One of my best childhood memories is going to the Elberta library... Lois Holmes was wonderful.”

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

Bonnie Ness grew up in the Village and recalls Aunt Maggie, Lois Holmes, and the better books were taken to the high school. In 1963, the new library building was dedicated to Janet La Rue’s grandmother, Dr. Frank J. and nurse Ellen Baver La Rue, for their many years of medical service in Elberta and Benzie County. Over the years, the new building would have several librarians, including Ruth Namn and Lois Holmes.

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Bonnie Ness grew up in the Village and recalls Aunt Maggie, Lois Holmes, and the strong feelings that Elberta residents had about the library’s closure. “I always wanted it to remain a library,” Ness says. “We worked so hard to get it, all through my childhood and early high school. We were so proud of it. I’m so happy to see that it’s going to become something again.”

Carol and Mark Carlos at The Elberta Mercantile Company, with Gordie Howe, June 2016 Trompe l’oeil door painted by Kathleen Baker. Photo by Emily Vetik.
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very large inland lake and the creation of a long sandy beach. human nature and consequences of bold venture: the dramatic lowering of a canal from Crystal Lake to Lake Michigan in 1873 has elements of tragedy. The real-life story of the attempt by Archibald Jones to build a slack-water divers characters and sundry locales &c, &c. Co., Northwest Lower Michigan, together with myriad viewpoints of its summary chronicle with many more sidelights, of a tale written in two parts, A sequel to the classic booklet, /T_h  e Tragedy of Crystal Lake/ (1922), being a /T_h  e Last August, I was joyously picking raspberries in my sister's patch in Oceana County, eating as many as I dropped into my basket. I noticed that some of the berries tasted vaguely bitter, not as sweet as the first berry in June, and some were soft in a peculiarly melty way. It didn't stop me—I grabbed for the plump and ripe, noting smaller ones coming on for another picking. Picking and eating sun-warmed fruit is happy summer work. Apparently, SWD thinks so, too. My beloved brother-in-law low looked up from yard work and hollered over to the patch, "You might want to check those. ". At my frown, he added, "Just open one and look inside. " When I did, I found a single white worm wiggling in a raspberry lobe. I picked another. Opened it. Three worms. Then I picked a soft one. Crawling with them. How many had I eaten? Eewwww. That's the way the SWD works. According to Michigan State Extension agent and specialist at Northwest Michigan Horticulture Research Center, Dr. Nikki Rothwell, they are not a made-up monster; except it's real, and almost pornographic monster—except it's real, and...
invade cherries in the straw-color phase of ripening."

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

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

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

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

"Good science is key. Research is moving quickly, as becomes evident when I visit the Rothwell lab, where I am escorted into the lab. Research technician Karen Powers pulls a tray: dozens of carefully labeled vials from a growth chamber (refrigerator size, but warm), the beginnings of a test colony, which, when mature, will number 3,200—the number of flies—released at specified color/distance intervals—as they showed up in distant lures."

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

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

"Other questions: does this mean that farmers must spray after harvests? And a follow-up concern: to what degree does SWD rise from wild hosts—a particularly prickly problem?"

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

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

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

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

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

"This story was originally produced for Nature Change, an online magazine that chronicles conversations about conservation and climate change in Northern Michigan. To watch a video featuring Dr. Nikki Rothwell and Anne-Marie Oomen discussing Spotted Wing Drosophila, visit NatureChange.org"
well as Camp Arcadia. Crystal Mountain Resort uses Cream Cup products in all of its on-site restaurants, as well.

Miller conservatively estimates that he spends about 12 to 14 hours a day, five days a week, working dairy-related jobs, in addition to the other farm work there is to do on his 100 acres. “Most farmers pick up the job they enjoy farming,” Miller says. “At least, hopefully that’s the case for most people.”

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

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

Small Farm, Big Philosophy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Operations

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

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

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

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

Every day, each Cream Cup cow eats about 13 pounds of grain and 50 to 80 pounds of forage. In return, she produces about five gallons of milk. The Milers prefer milking the cows in a stable instead of a parlor, which is more often used by big farms.

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

In return, the herd is fed outside the barn. The herd has about 25 calves per year, and the Milers keep

Miller has built quite a following since 2006, and the “moo” has become a household name in Manistee.

“Most people just leave their coolers set out for a week or two,” he says. “But in my case, it’s about the personal delivery experience and four years of working at a bottling plant—in addition to 25 years before that on his family’s dairy farm—he was the perfect candidate for Cream Cup. By June of that year, Hege had moved his family from his native Pennsylvania to Kaleda, Michigan.

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

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

This regular repeat customer says a lot about the quality of his product. But it also says a lot about Miller. Every customer is important, even the ones who do not order a lot. Moreover, if he knows that he has missed out one week in 10 years, that means he has not missed any.

A version of this story first appeared in the 2014 holiday issue of Edible Grande Traverse. To see if Cream Cup Dairy delivers in your area, call 231-889-4159.

Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker.

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Music in the Park

Beulah

By Rhannon Hildenbrand

Current Contributor

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

Wayne & Sue Jameson, a Michigan business owner and passionate artist, is one of the many people who works hard to plan great local events. Wayne is the Coordinator of the Crystal Lake Community Business Association (CLCBA), he coordinates Music in the Park, a series of concerts that take place during the summertime in Beulah.

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

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

"It is really a nice, small-town charm that [tourists] get to enjoy that just really makes their visit to Northern Michigan a little bit more special. They come here to see the sound of music echoing through the streets of Beulah.

Music in the Park is not a fundraising event in that it only by Loveless and the CLCBA but by the dedication of its members is one of the many local events that together make exciting electric reggae beats. They are scheduled to play in the park on August 11. The series continues through the summer and will include several other great musicians: local folk group Glenwood and Robin Lee Berry, piano jazz artist Robin Connell, and the fun rockin’ blues group Fat Pocket.

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

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

The Accidental.

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

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

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

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

On July 28, Music in the Park features fantastic duo Todd Fulcher and Merrin Moore. Together they make up the rock’n’ roll band He Said She Said. Having played many of the high school cafeteria—to holding all of the concerts in the gymnasium to accommodate the size of the band and the great engagement of people who came to see their concerts.

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

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

"The relationship with the kids and the families is the best part of the job," he says. "They kept me going all these years. The personal relationship with the families is the highlight. The music comes and goes—you remember a few of the performances and here, but what they, really remember are the day-to-day interactions. That's certainly what I remember."

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

"I came up here really not knowing anyone—besides my wife, I can't thank the people enough. They have been a part of this community—I never dreamed I would be accepted on this level.

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

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Youthful Vigor on the Hill

Michigan Shores turns 25

By Suzy Vitale
Current Contributor

John Vinkemulder ("Vink") and his wife Lynn, the newest residents at Michigan Shores, recently experienced the neighborly-ness that has become a hallmark of the co-op's living life, located less than a mile from downtown Frankfort—Vink found his Traverse City Round Eagle delivered to his front door. Apparently many residents receive the daily paper, and someone gets up very early and has taken it upon himself to bring the paper to the front door.

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

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

How It Works

Michigan Shores Co-operative is a self-governing, diverse community of engaged and congenial adults. Constructed in 1981, the facility celebrates its 25th anniversary on Saturday, June 25, with a gala for the residents and food provided by Jim Barnes’s Crystal Lake Catering Company. You don't have to be “old” to live here, nor is retirement a requisite. Several residents go to work each day, while many others are part-timers, using their unit as a “getaway.” Here, according to residents Joan Wolfe and Dan Remahl, you can “be whatever you want to be, participate in whatever interests you, socialize or not, where privacy is cherished.”

The Shores offer independent living in a comfortable, safe, and affordable environment—this is not a place where people come to “retire,” but rather it is a typical retirement home. It is an independent, not-assisted-living establishment. However, should one need live-in or other medical care, it is quite acceptable to receive it and pay for it, just as you would in your own home.

The attractive three-story building on the hill is surrounded by 19 acres of woods, including biking, hiking, and ski trails, a pond, and splendid views of Lake Michigan. People throughout the building are beautifully decorated with artwork, either by residents or from their personal collections. People might be having coffee or enjoying Happy Hour, playing bridge or walking their dogs, going to exercise class or heading to or from work. These are not the “old people on the bluff” that some might envision.

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

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

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

“We formed a real camaraderie,” he muses. Al now plays with a group called the “Betise Bay Minstrels” (formerly the “Harmonica Hobos”) and is renowned for his beautiful photographs, while Gerry, owner of a mere three Kindles, raises orchids in their apartment and participates in countless activities. The Hyams know everyone at the Shores and offer a wealth of information and enthusiasm about the co-op and shares a fondness for the community of engaged and congenial people—that is—ladies and gentlemen of the old school, polite and welcoming.

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

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

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

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

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

The co-operative is governed by a seven-member board, elected by the residents, but at the heart of Michigan Shores is the symbiotic stuff of two—one mostly in the office, the other on the grounds—who work independent-ly et in synch with each other, above and beyond their respective job descriptions. The duo knows everything about the co-op and shares a fondness for the community of engaged and congenial people—that is—ladies and gentlemen of the old school, polite and welcoming.

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

The co-operative is governed by a seven-member board, elected by the residents, but at the heart of Michigan Shores is the symbiotic stuff of two—one mostly in the office, the other on the grounds—who work independent-ly et in synch with each other, above and beyond their respective job descriptions. The duo knows everything about the co-op and shares a fondness for the community of engaged and congenial people—that is—ladies and gentlemen of the old school, polite and welcoming.

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

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

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History of Michigan Shores, from a Ruthven’s Point of View
Frankfort’s U-of-M, Maize-and-Blue connection

By Beatrice Noblit Ruthven
Current Contributor

Editor’s Note: The author passed away on May 20, 2016, two weeks after writing this story and just shy of her 95th birthday.

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

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

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

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

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

Photo courtesy of Michigan Shores.

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

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

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

My husband, Bryant Ruthven, while not at all eager to sell, was very pleased with their idea of a not-for-profit co-op for retirees, thinking that his parents would like this idea for the best use of their property. These visionaries from the church were able to complete the purchase in three years, and groundbreaking took place on September 9, 1990. It opened for residents less than a year later.

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

“Go Blue” Avenue

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

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

Steve & Nick Radionoff
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Food Trucks

Continued from page 1

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

Some officials are outright enthusiasts about the potential of food trucks in their municipality.

“I think I can speak for the commission when I say that we were all immediately excited by the idea of opening the farmers’ market up to food trucks this year,” says Emily Votruba, secretary of the Elberta Parks & Recreation Commission. “It was fun to discuss the logistics and to think about how food trucks will not only go along with but advance our market’s mission, which is to provide high-quality, locally produced food to our community and to create a healthy, welcoming, and profitable venue for local producers.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A History of Mobile Vending

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

For instance, in the 1960s, there was Dog Haus, a hot dog wagon that set up in the space that is currently occupied by Stormcloud Brewing Company. Dog Haus later moved to the Smokestack, which later became what is now known as Gateway Village.

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

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

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

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

2016 Annual Open House

Sunday, June 26
Noon - 4:00 pm

Join us as a guest speaker, hands on activities/demos and the dedication of the NEW Multi-purpose classroom in Memory of Robert Fisher.
Grow Benzie's executive director, the food truck will be making regular appearances at Stoltz. "We have wildlife, not wild people." Mills explains. "We encouraged mixed-use like this, one it would be great to see more." The Betsie Current

Northern Michigan University's Crystal Lake Adventure-Sports, with a home base out of Beulah, has—for more than a decade—a nonpermanent structure at the American Legion Hall for renting water sports equipment near the Frankfort beach. "The Grill Benzie food truck pays the American Legion a seasonal fee for their little rental shed. When this agreement first started, the city council waived the 10-day-per-day fee so that all of the money collected could instead go to the American Legion. As a nonprofit organization, the Legion is able to use those dollars to give back to the community in the form of college scholarships."

"The Grill Benzie food truck will be "grandfathered" with this arrangement, but any new request for outdoor activity will be assessed a city fee that will be either $50 per day or approved by the city council," says Mills, who noted that the American Legion's Frankfort location does not pay a $50 daily fee back in 2014, because it was located inside the Legion hall and thus not a deemed "mobile" vendor.

"New Guys Around Town"

Lynn Herren, a Benzie Central graduate, 11 years ago. She is also be selling the spring rolls at the Market from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. until the end of October. Herren's most popular items are the spring rolls (four for $5) and the sesame chicken with rice, a fusion of Malay, Thai, and other delectable ethnic fares. Mary's is open seven days a week, from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. until the end of October. Herren is slinging kabobs today or to beach. "This is the same food that we grew while teaching people how to grow it for themselves—" Part of our mission is to increase access to healthful foods, jobs, life skills, and each other, so a food truck is a grand slam for Grow Benzie," Stoltz says. "Our board had discussed ways to get what we grow here onto plates—incorporating a food truck or a pop-up cafe in our kitchen—so when Brandon Seng from Goodwill offered a program that would open for the Fresh Start job-training program, we jumped at the opportunity. Goodwill is training life and job skills to our newly hired employees, and Grow Benzie is connecting folks to tasty, healthy food—all from a giant, fire-engine-red food truck that people gravitate to because it's from and how we're preparing it. "This is the same food that we grew while teaching people how to grow it for themselves and that we use for teaching classes on how to prepare and preserve in our commercial kitchen," Stoltz adds. Nourishment is one goal of Grow Benzie's food truck; multimedia education is another.

"As a nonprofit, Grow Benzie is all about education and outreach. People love to learn about their food, so we're going to have some fun showing them where it's from and how we're preparing it."

The Elberta Farmers' Market, is thrilled to welcome Grill Benzie as a new vendor at the Market, which is open every Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Stoltz, Grow Benzie's executive director, the food truck will be serving up breakfast fare on Thursday mornings at the Elberta Farmers' Market. Photo by Aubrey Ann Parker

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

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On Beautiful Glen Lake
TRAVEL • SPORTS • EVENTS • NEWS
June 23, 2016 \ 15
The Betsie Current
My ex-husband and I were the first to break Harbor Springs, Mackinaw City, and Florida. The expansion began with stores in Petoskey, families grew also, the business expanded. That’s how Harbor Wear was born.

It out. He asked me, “Do you think we can came up for rent, and my dad and I checked t-shirts—we would sell out in a weekend! and we had it printed on the sweatshirts and

Sometimes we got paid, sometimes we didn’t.

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

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

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

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

HELP BACN RAISE $100,000 THIS SUMMER!

$50,000 Match provided by the John L. Mulvaney Foundation and a Private Donor

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

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

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

Benzie Neighbors Helping Neighbors Nonprofit helping low-income residents in Benzie County

Food pantry • Clothing closet • Assistance paying for utilities, transportation, and medical needs. Education programs: GED, adult learning, job-readiness training, women-specific programs

Donations can be made online at www.benziebanc.org, through BACN’s Facebook page, or brought directly to BACN at 2804 Benzie Highway, Benzonia, Mondays through Thursdays 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. 231-862-9544.