



Moroccan cycles solo through Northern Michigan, finds kindness along the way

By Cameryn Cass
Sun contributor

At the end of July, a 24-year-old woman solo bike packed from Mackinaw City to Grand Rapids, tracing the Lake Michigan shoreline in what she remembers as “an amazing 11 days.”

Not only was it Yasmina Ahlmaris’s first time outside her home country of Morocco, it was also her first time camping.

“My last name means ‘People from Mars,’” she laughed. “That’s probably why I’m so crazy.”

On her journey, Ahlmaris pedaled through Petoskey, Traverse City, the Sleeping Bear Dunes, Manistee and other towns, developing the itinerary with a little help from her friends.

“My original plan was to go from Mackinaw City to Detroit, through the middle of the state,” she said. “But a friend stopped me and said I should

cycle around Lake Michigan instead.”

Last April, two women from Northern Michigan named Bethany Betzler and Julie Schwalm spearheaded a weeklong wellness retreat in Morocco, where they befriended their local guide, Ahlmaris.

“They kept saying how beautiful Michigan is, so I booked a flight for myself on the 31st of May, my 24th birthday,” said Ahlmaris. “I’m so glad I met them back in Morocco. I was their guide there, and here, they were mine.”

“I’ve run trips like this the past 10 years,” said Betzler, the founder of Hinoki Travels, a sustainable travel company who offered that fateful trip to Morocco.

“I always meet wonderful people and tell them that I’ll host them if they ever get to America, but it’s never happened until now, with Yasmina,” she said.

Schwalm, a yoga instructor and

owner of Thai Yoga Bodywork, LLC in Leland, helped source gear locally to make Ahlmaris’s packing a bit lighter.

“She found me a bike, a tent,” she said. “I didn’t have to bring any gear.”

Though Ahlmaris had eight days in Traverse City before the cycling began to “scout out some roads” and familiarize herself with the area, she couldn’t prepare herself for the wildfire smoke that clouded the once blue skies.

“The first day combined all the challenges I faced,” she said. “I had a mask on while I cycled, I was

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Windy’s Landing horse rescue, a sanctuary for the “least chosen”



By Bronwyn Jones
Sun contributor

When I walk up the grassy drive toward the barn at Windy’s Landing, it’s the miniature horses Doc, Roxy, and Toby that catch my attention first. They graze contentedly in their small pasture but also startle a bit if you approach them on their blind side. They are three of five 1-eyed miniatures all sent to auction by their previous owners due to deformities and blinding infections or cancer in one of their eyes. They’ve been recently rescued from a Michigan kill pen by Nancy Parshall, founder of Windy’s Landing, a newly incorporated 501(c)(3) horse rescue and animal sanctuary in Lake Leelanau.

“After I bailed each one out from the kill pen, I took them directly to a highly recommended Grand Rapids veterinarian, Dr. Bunn, to have their painfully infected eyes treated or removed,” Nancy explained. “It was clear they felt so much better after the surgery. All of them were malnourished as well.”

We watch Doc, the tiniest of the group, mischievously maneuver his head under fencing so he can reach the greener grass beckoning from the other side. Nancy tells me his tiny size categorizes him as a dwarf horse. He’s become the mascot. Black and white, and

no bigger than a golden retriever, he is friendly, calm, inquisitive, perfect for visiting elders in nursing care facilities, she thinks.

Doc, Roxy and Toby all have beautifully rounded bellies now. As I lift my gaze from their enclosure to take in the bucolic surroundings, I see all the larger horses in their pastures and feel a sense of deep peace in the presence of these rescued, physically and emotionally rehabilitated beings, each with their own dramatic, often harrowing backstory, their individual personality and presence.

Undergirding that peace, however, is a tremendous amount of work, determination, expertise, and devoted care on the part of Nancy, her husband, Dave Bedford, and the expert equine veterinarian, Dr. Tanja Wittrock, who donates her time to Windy’s Landing. It’s not for the faint of heart bringing special needs horses back to health from the lip of the void.

When I ask Nancy about the origins of her drive to rescue animals, she responds, “If you haven’t experienced being the little kid chosen last for the baseball team, you might not understand how deep the impulse can be to rescue

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Meeting Young Journalists through videos

From staff reports

Every Friday during the summer, Music in the Park brings Northport together for an evening of live music, dancing and community. Meridian Parsons, a rising senior at Leland High, is there to document the crowds, the dancing, the food, and the joy at the Kent Holton Pavilion.

Glen Lake senior Nora Ciolek’s video postcard taken on Glen Lake shows the joys of life on a boat during the beautiful month of July.

Maya Truog’s video features the tranquility of Empire, its eclectic downtown shops, Lake Michigan waterfront, and trails protected by the Leelanau Conservancy.

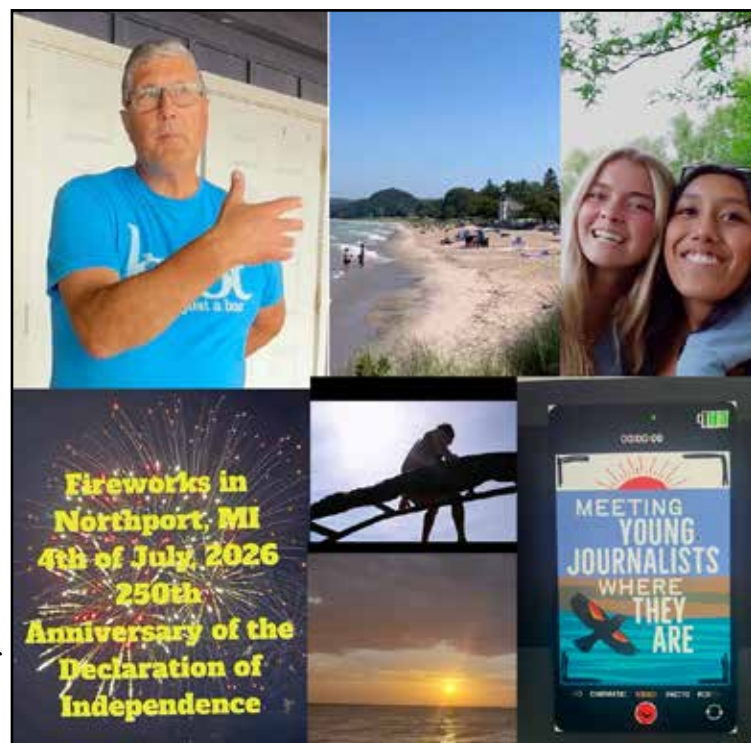
Freshman Hazel Wetherbee’s montage of photos were taken at Peterson Park beach in Northport. For the video’s accompanying audio she chose

the poem, “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” inspired by *The Outsiders*, one of her favorite movies.

And 12-year-old Tanner Brown interviewed the fire department hands behind Northport’s Fourth of July fireworks, to learn about the safety steps, and how it all goes pop! Brown also interviewed officials and business owners around town to learn how the intense wildfire smoke of mid-July affected their business and visitors.

Parsons, Ciolek, Truog, Wetherbee and Brown are all enthusiastic contributors to the “Meeting Young Journalists Where They Are” video storytelling project, which is spearheaded and co-published on Instagram by the *Glen Arbor Sun* and our Benzie County-based sister publication, *The Betsie Current*—thanks to a grant from Press Forward Northern Michigan.

“Meeting Young Journalists” is a collaboration between local media and middle- and high school-aged Northern Michiganders, to explore what kinds of stories interest them and their peers, and which mediums resonate with them. Through this project we hope to inspire the next generation of young journalists, and better understand how news can reach them.



Clockwise, l-r: stills from videos by Brown, Truog, Parsons, Ciolek and Wetherbee.



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Leelanau baking star Sorge debuts cookbook

From staff reports

Martin Sorge didn't used to like cherry pie. Then the northern Indiana native spent a summer during college building sets at Interlochen Arts Academy's theater department. He tasted the Grand Traverse region's culinary pride and has been hooked ever since. "I get it now," Sorge said.

Sorge, who won the *Great American Baking Show* in 2023 and splits his time between Chicago and Leelanau County, debuts his first cookbook, *Great Bakes: Modern Classic Recipes from the Midwest*, at a National Writers Series event on Friday, Aug. 21, at 4 pm at Artemis Books & Goods in Traverse City's warehouse district. The event is part of the Traverse City Food and Wine Festival, which runs Aug. 19-23. Visit NationalWritersSeries.org for tickets and information.

In *Great Bakes*, Sorge shares more than 100 recipes for sweet and savory bakes that celebrate the bounty of the Midwest, from modern classics to innovative show-stoppers. These breads, cookies, crisps, cakes, pies, pastries, and—yes—biscuits sneak surprising ingredients into the classics: Super-Soft Malted Cinnamon Rolls that elevate the childhood staple, Glazed Lemon Verbena Shortbread that gets a bit of zing from the window-box herb, and Sweet Corn Milk Bread that highlights the perfection of an ear of summer sweet corn. From the Midwestern flavors of Chicago Dog Focaccia and

Michigan Forest Cake to traditional Christmas Stollen and Swabian Soft Pretzels rooted in Sorge's German heritage, *Great Bakes* welcomes bakers of every level with recipes they'll reach for again and again.

"It's a book, not just a collection of recipes," Sorge told the *Sun*. "It's full of stories that explain how I approach baking. I hope someone can curl up with the book and read it cover to cover."

Sorge has nearly 30 events lined up throughout the Midwest and on both U.S. coasts for *Great Bakes*, which published on Aug. 4. The book was named among the best new cookbooks of summer 2026 by *Bon Appétit* and *Forbes*.

Matthew Rodbard, founding editor of *Taste*, will join Sorge in conversation at the National Writers Series event.

"Matt is a great conversationalist, he asks great questions," said Sorge. "I'm excited to be part of the TC Food and Wine Festival and to hear from locals who are celebrating our community and our region."

Sorge, who lives with his husband near Shady Lane, revels in the beautiful scenery and four seasons of Leelanau.

"The food scene is so great—with great bakeries, farms, and restaurants. I'll hit up an orchard or roadside stand once or twice a day just to get a snack or something for dinner.

"I also love being here in the winter. That's when the creativity and fun stuff happens."

Asked what excited him about this summer in Leelanau, Sorge raved



about Farm Club's new bakery, from which he has bought wholegrain flour to bake with at home. And he delights in "perfect" fresh strawberries from Bardenhagen berries.

At the Food and Wine Festival, Sorge will demonstrate baking with whole and stone-ground grains on Thursday, Aug. 20, and join a panel of other local cookbook writers, including Abra Berens, on the morning of Aug. 21 at the Traverse City Open Space.

Upcoming August Events in Leelanau County

- Thursday, August 13:** Old Art Building Leland hosts Music in the Air free concert, A.S. Lutes, 6 pm
- Friday, August 14:** Bay Theatre Suttons Bay hosts horror film series, *Get Out*, 10:30 pm
- Saturday, August 15:** Northport Arts Association holds Harbor of Creativity opening reception, 5 pm
- Wednesday, August 19:** The Homestead Music on the Mountain series hosts guitarist Joe Taylor
- Thursday, August 20:** Old Art Building Leland hosts Music in the Air free concert, A to Z, 6 pm
- Friday, August 21:** National Writers Series features author Martin Sorge, winner of the *Great American Baking Show*, 4 pm at TC Food & Wine Tent
- Saturday, August 22:** Glen Lake Library in Empire hosts children's book author Gretchen Rose, 3 pm
- Wednesday, August 26:** Leelanau County Historic Preservation Society hosts picnic concert at Poor Farm Barn featuring Go North! 6-8 pm
- Thursday, August 27:** Old Art Building Leland hosts Music in the Air free concert, 1000 Watt Prophets, 6 pm
- Friday, August 28:** Bay Theatre Suttons Bay hosts horror film series, *Bodies, Bodies, Bodies*, 10:30 pm
- Saturday, August 29:** Bay Theatre Suttons Bay hosts horror film series, *Us*, 10:30 pm
- August 27-30:** Cedar Polka Festival
- Live Music and Performance**
Visit GlenArbor.com for venues.

- Summer Farmers Markets**
Visit GlenArborSun.com/calendar for a list of vendors at each market.
- Glen Arbor's** market, located behind the Township Hall, runs Tuesdays until Sept. 15.
- Leland's** market, located in the Blue Bird parking lot, Thursdays until Sept. 3.
- Northport's** market, located across from the marina, runs Fridays until Sept. 18.
- Suttons Bay's** market, located on St. Joseph St., at the north end of the village, runs Saturdays until Oct. 17.
- Empire's** market, located next to the post office, runs Saturdays until Aug. 29.
- Recycling located at 9 locations throughout Leelanau County, including at the ball fields in Empire, at the Leelanau School and at Glen Lake School.*

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Beach Bards Bonfire is *Here All Along*

From staff reports

In his new memoir, *Here All Along: Finding my way to Cherry Republic, Bob Sutherland, the founder of Glen Arbor's iconic company, wrote about the Beach Bards Bonfire and his role leading children's hour during the 1990s. The Beach Bards holds its final summer evening of by-heart storytelling, poetry, and music on Friday, Aug. 21, at 8 pm near The Leelanau School beach, one mile northeast of Glen Arbor.*

Here's an excerpt from *Here All Along*:

"On a summer Friday evening in 1989, Norm Wheeler, then a high school teacher at The Leelanau School in Glen Arbor, started a small perfor-

to the moon, told tall tales, and sang rousing camp songs. Humanity has been telling stories around a fire for millennia, and it felt grounding to connect with that ancient spirit.

This was the same summer I started Cherry Republic, peddling my T-shirts out of the trunk of my old Toyota Tercell. But while driving that car to various sales destinations, I was passionately memorizing lines from *Little Orphan Annie* or writing a story in my mind about waking up the Sleeping Bear. I brought books of literature to study while I ran the Glen Lake Yacht Club's sailing races. I was awash in a poem's nuances riding my bike to pickup basketball games.

Here I was, a young man more at home alone deep in the north woods



mance-sharing activity called Beach Bards Bonfire. It was just up the beach from the hundred-year-old private school. The previous summer, Norm and I had frequented another storytelling bonfire called the Stone Circle. We studied. We recited. We brought ideas back. And here, a year later, we were on our first night with 30 people on the shores of Sleeping Bear Bay, eager to participate either by listening or telling.

Visit our website, GlenArbor.com, to watch a video, filmed by Ray Deremo, of Bob Sutherland performing during Beach Bards children's hour in August 1992.

It was a humble start to an iconic cultural program that continues today. One by one, those who were prepared would stand up near the fire with the flames roaring and the shadows and wind swirling, and tell or act out a story or poem. Surrounded by windswept white pines and juniper bushes, Norm and I took turns telling tall tales and reciting epic poems from memory. He blew horns and conch shells. I howled

or playing an intense game of "winner stays" basketball with fifteen players waiting, venturing into a new interest. I was devouring Carl Sandburg—*there is a wolf in me*—and William Blake—*to see the world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wild flower*. This immersion in art and literature, it just felt so good.

Each week, new tellers joined us at the fire: writers, professors from Interlochen Arts Academy, professors from Northwestern Michigan College. It was an honor for me, a jock and by then five-time college dropout, to be surrounded by these really wonderful well-read and well-spoken people. I felt the best was coming out of me with them, while listening to them tell, while sharing stories together. There's a song in the movie *The Greatest Showman* called "This Is Me." Well, I wasn't there yet. I wasn't anywhere near the level of storyteller I wanted to be. But I could hold an audience in awe, and in that space more than anywhere else, I felt *this is me*.

Over the course of the summer,



more people came to listen. I started running into people all over town who would pat me on the back and ask me what I was going to tell on Friday. I had felt this kind of attention before as a basketball star a decade ago. For a drifting T-shirt peddler, this was seismic stuff.

Every Friday night, I would come in a pair of worn-out jeans and bare feet and I'd share a new story or poem that I had memorized that week. Slowly, over the weeks, more people came until we had hundreds of regular families.

There was this special moment every Friday after we let a few kids share their stories: Norm would tell a classic like Dr. Seuss's *The Sneetches*, then local writer and poet Anne-Marie Oomen would share the ancient story "Legend of the Sleeping Bear." Just as it became fully dark, when the electric energy was at its best, I would step up and tell a big, funny tall tale. Then I would close out the circle with, "You didn't see it on TV or catch it on the radio. Nope. This is heart-to-heart, face-to-face sharing around a fire. Humankind has been doing this since we invented fire tens of thousands of years ago; it is in our blood so deep. We lean in closer and put the dark, cold, and shadows at our backs."

And then I would put on a wolf's mask and dash and dart in the shadows, growling and acting out a short tale that finished with a big howl at the moon."



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A BURST OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT WRAPPED IN THE AROMA OF FRESH, LOCAL FARE

Looking up the coast for clues to solve the housing riddle

By Ross Boissoneau
Sun contributor

The region’s need for housing has been well documented. That’s particularly true for homes priced for sale between \$150,000 and \$300,000, as well as long-term rentals commensurate with that price. In Leelanau County, with a median price of \$640,000 and an average price of \$937,506, the challenge is acute.

The reasons are many, from the influx during and after COVID to the area’s decades-long appeal as a vacation haven, but when demand outstrips supply, prices increase. For several years, Realtors have bemoaned the low number of homes for sale. The result: Michigan’s Senate Fiscal Agency has shown Leelanau County to be the most unaffordable county in the state for housing for the past decade and a half.

Perhaps part of the answer lies in looking north. Emmet County’s housing market mirrors that of Leelanau in many ways. It is a popular resort and vacation area with a number of high-end second and vacation homes. Petoskey’s location on Lake Michigan with nearby attractions including golf, shopping, restaurants and recreation certainly sounds familiar. And that average sale price in Leelanau County of \$937,506? Petoskey was named to the Realtor.com March 2026 Pure Luxury List, with more than half its property listings priced at \$1 million or more.

Such prices are far above a price point for those who work in retail, hospitality, law enforcement, education or any of the myriad other roles that make up the core of a community. That’s as true in

Leelanau as it is in Petoskey. “Leelanau and Emmet have a lot in common,” says Nikki DeVitt, executive director of the Petoskey Area Chamber of Commerce.

In the last three years, Emmet has added nearly 500 housing units, thanks to a number of different efforts. So just copy what has been done there, right, and Leelanau’s problem has been solved, just as Emmet County’s has been. Right?

Not so fast. DeVitt says the problem there is far from solved, as Emmet remains 3,000 units short of its need. “We are not addressing the future. We are trying to catch up,” explains DeVitt.

So, too, is Leelanau. In trying to get arms around the problem, the Leelanau Peninsula Economic Foundation undertook a survey of county businesses, which concluded the number one barrier to doing business is the lack of workforce housing. Now the Leelanau County Housing Collaborative, an arm of the LPEF, is asking workers, employers, and other community members to take part in the Leelanau County Attainable Housing Survey. The survey is designed to gather public input on housing needs and community priorities to help inform future housing solutions across the county.

The survey takes about five minutes to fill out. Visit LeelanauHousingCollaborative.org.

Of course, as Emmet County showed, it will take more than surveys to combat the problem. In fact, it will take many things, because as DeVitt says, “Housing is not one thing.” It includes not only building new homes, but finding financial resources, modifying zoning, constructing infrastructure such as roads,

sewers, water, and broadband. “There are land-use decisions. In rural northwest Michigan we have to look at zoning.”

Peter Fisher agrees. The longtime Leelanau County resident is a realtor with Coldwell Banker Schmidt in Glen Arbor. He says many zoning ordinances were written in the ’60s and ’70s, and desperately need to be revised. That won’t be easy, and the problem is exacerbated by the fact the county has more than a dozen governmental units, each with their own zoning rules, some mandating a five-acre minimum for residential construction, others upping that to ten.

“We can’t get more affordable housing unless we allow greater zoning density,” says Fisher. “It comes down to a certain amount of political will.”

“I’m no smarter than Yarrow Brown or Larry Mawby,” he continues, referencing the former head of Housing North and the founder of Peninsula Housing, a non-profit community land trust committed to providing affordable housing in Leelanau County. But as someone on the front lines of buying and selling homes, he has an eagle-eye view of the challenges. He knows that working exclusively with high-end homes doesn’t serve his clients looking for their first home or those looking to move to the area after securing a job here.

He’s not the only one. Jamie Jewell, a realtor with Schaub Team Premier Real Estate in Suttons Bay and a member of the board of directors at Leelanau Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, is the administrative coordinator at Leelanau Peninsula Economic Foundation. She also points to zoning

as a key consideration in tackling the challenge. “Zoning is a problem. There is no blanket ordinance that you can or can’t do this in a certain area,” she says.

She says previous surveys have shown firefighters driving as much as 65 miles each way to work. Another troubling development is the number of teachers expected to retire within the next few years. “How can we fill (those roles) when young people can’t afford to live here?” she asks.

Among those working on solutions is the Sleeping Bear Gateways Council. The non-profit volunteer-driven organization raises private funds to purchase land suitable for building attainable workforce housing. Once acquired, the land is placed into a Community Land Trust (CLT) for 99 years, ensuring long-term affordability. By removing the land cost from the equation, homes become more attainable.

The challenge is finding and purchasing such land. Jon Lanphier, the incoming president of the board of directors, says the challenge is exacerbated by misinterpretation of the need for attainable housing as a need for indigent housing—which is also a need, but not what the Gateways Council is attempting to address. “This is attainable housing. If a family can’t afford to live in a community, they find someplace else,” he says. As a result, local schools lose potential students, stores lose potential customers, and the community suffers.

Lanphier cites zoning as an area that must be addressed as well. Part of the council’s approach includes multi-

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School superintendents face enrollment challenges

By Minnie Bardenhagen
Sun contributor

According to MI School Data, the Michigan state government’s official education data source, all public schools in Leelanau County have a lower K-12 student body count than they did 23 years ago. though to varying degrees.

In the 2002-2003 school year—which is how far back the available data goes—Glen Lake and Suttons Bay had similar numbers: 931 and 1050, respectively. In the 2025-2026 school year, Glen Lake had the highest student body count in the County at 779. While this is 16% less than 2002-2003, Glen Lake School has experienced rising enrollment for the past several years.

Glen Lake’s increasing enrollment is an anomaly in Leelanau County, where school-age children are increasingly harder to come by.

Northport Public School sat at 114 in the 2025-2026 school year, down 58% from the 2002-2003 school year.

“Our rate of decline, I would say, is currently less deep than the county average,” Northport superintendent Neil Wetherbee said, “But when you have a small number of kids, it’s more noticeable.”

Leland’s student count remains relatively stagnant when compared to 2002-2003, with only a 3.3% decrease since then.

Suttons Bay Schools had 321 students in this past school year, 69% less than 23 years ago. Its superintendent, Casey Petz, attributed enrollment decline to several issues, such as lack of affordable housing in the county, high cost of living, families in the district choosing other schools, and a declining birth rate.

“65, 68-year-olds and up are not having kids,” said Petz. “But they are buying houses here.”

Wetherbee felt similarly.

“It’s pretty hard for families who are working at local service industry jobs and taking care of the farms,” said Wetherbee, “Most of our decline currently is families that are leaving the county.”

So, Why Does It Matter?

Northport and Suttons Bay are both out-of-formula school districts, meaning that there is enough tax revenue from high property values to exceed the per-pupil allowance allocated by the state.

Therefore, the incentive to increase enrollment is not financial, but centered around curricular and extracurricular opportunities for students.



Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed the state’s new education budget inside Suttons Bay High School on July 20, 2023.

ricular opportunities for students.

“We want enough kids in our classrooms to have variety in our course catalog and have those classes be full,” Petz said.

“If you have opportunities for kids that include high-quality programs and instruction, the families are going to choose you.”

He also argued that classes that have more students are easier to teach. With low numbers, “It’s hard to do group work, it’s hard to have that diversity of thought, it’s hard to have collaboration, calibration, and cooperation.”

Wetherbee said that extracurricular opportunities such as athletics play a large role as well. Northport’s athletics programs are largely partnerships with other schools, such as Suttons Bay. He says that reliance on co-op sports teams will likely rise for most county schools.

Besides opportunities for students, Wetherbee said that the decline in students in Leelanau County will affect the quality of life for residents and tourists.

“Every student that we lose in the county... that’s a summer employee.”

Solutions

On some level, the factors contributing to the decline in student numbers are beyond schools’ control.

“You can’t make people move here,” Wetherbee said.

However, both Suttons Bay and Northport see opportunities to help students and families stay in the county.

“One of the things that we recognize in our district is that in order for us to exist as a school, our young people need to be able to afford to have kids,” said Petz.

Petz emphasized the importance

of offering affordable childcare, as well as free lunch and breakfast. He also stressed making sure staff have fair wages and access to good insurance.

Petz outlined ways to incentivize families to choose Suttons Bay Schools: establish clear value sets, offer high-quality programs and instruction, and connect and engage with the community.

“If somebody is here, we want them to feel that sense of belonging,” Petz said. He also emphasized the importance of establishing trust in the community: “If families don’t know you, they’re not coming here.”

Wetherbee believes it is important to focus on the students that they already have at Northport, and take steps to provide them with the best education possible.

“I love when students graduate and go off and see the world, and then want to come back to the county,” said Wetherbee, “That to me is the ultimate win... when you’ve had the chance to explore and realize this is where you want to be and not just where you default to.”

Wetherbee cited the Traverse City Northwest Ed Career Tech Center as an important partner in preparing students for the workforce and connecting students to local opportunities.

While neither superintendent predicted an overall rise in enrollment in the near future, Petz expressed optimism that enrollment at Suttons Bay will stabilize and maybe increase in some areas.

“Many of the families in our district were choosing other districts. If we were to just slowly chip away at that, we actually have the opportunity to grow as opposed to looking at our district and going, ‘oh, we’re just going to shrink forever.’”



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Attainable housing: another view from Leelanau’s porch

By Jon Lanphier
Op-ed contributor

Jon Lanphier is president-elect of Sleeping Bear Gateways Council

In the July 30 issue of the *Glen Arbor Sun*, Cameron Krepps wrote a thoughtful and heartfelt lament about the lack of affordable housing for hard-working young trades people like him who grew up locally (Empire), work here to support themselves and their families, but who cannot afford to rent or own a home in Leelanau County. His op-ed pointed out many reasons for this problem, virtually all market driven, and it carried some bitterness towards the reality of a market that because of its beauty, location, size and history has become a haven for retirement homes, second homes and seasonal rentals while excluding affordable year-round rental properties or attainable homes for people in the local workforce. Cameron identified the problem, but he failed to suggest a solution. The local volunteers that makeup the Sleeping Bear Gateways Council (SBGC) believe that solutions do exist and that working together as a community we can provide local housing for people like Cameron. Cameron’s frustrations are not unique to Leelanau County and those in its workforce who cannot find housing in the community where they work. The problem exists in many communities nationwide that have developed a tourist-based economy in areas where geography or other constraints make land for attainable housing scarce. What sets Leelanau County apart, to some

degree, is the fact that the county is a peninsula, surrounded by water on three sides, and that it has a significant portion of its land in a National Park. That means this problem, which is very real, must be addressed by the creative use of the land within the borders of the County. The lack of attainable housing is a nation-wide problem, caused by growth in demand that far exceeds the growth in supply over the past 20 years. This market imbalance has caused inflation in housing prices that greatly exceed the growth in real wages. This problem is particularly acute in Leelanau County because of the various factors that Cameron points out. However, SBGC, along with the Leelanau Housing Collaborative and its eight member organizations, do not believe this problem to be without a solution. We believe that housing can be built in Leelanau County, both in the rental and ownership markets, that can provide the type of stability and community that Cameron and others in the local workforce deserve. The keys in today’s world for the creation of attainable housing are efficient land use, smaller lots, smaller housing units and a reduction in the cost of land on which the housing is built. Market forces alone have not and will not address these issues. Nationwide many communities have addressed the problem through governmental intervention or subsidies. That is not what SBGC or the Leelanau Housing Collaborative are proposing. While Collaborative members in a number of local communities in Leelanau County have begun to address this housing shortage by purchasing and/or redeveloping small parcels for

single- or two-family homes, the need for attainable ownership units over the next five years far exceeds what these initiatives can achieve. SBGC believes that while these initiatives are important, a bolder approach is also needed to close the attainable housing gap. Peninsula Housing in Suttons Bay, a member of the Housing Collaborative, is launching such a project to ultimately build 6 single family three-bedroom homes, 12 duplex units containing 1-2 bedrooms while also working with Homestretch, another Housing Collaborative member, to develop 8 townhouse rental apartments on adjacent properties in Suttons Bay. That is 38 new units being built specifically to be rented or purchased based upon current local criteria measuring affordability. Important to this project is that the land is owned by a Community Land Trust (CLT) which purchased the property without the use of public funds. Since the CLT owns the land on which the housing is being built, it can control how the housing is used: restricting seasonal rentals; requiring usage as a primary residence; denying purchase as a second home; placing restrictions upon resale pricing to maintain attainable housing values; ensuring these rules are enforced for a period of 99 years, the term of CLT ownership as permitted by law. CLT ownership of the land both reduces the cost of initial home ownership and ensures that housing remains attainable for future owners when sold. SBGC is proposing a similar approach in southwest Leelanau County. It has raised funds through private donations to purchase land through a CLT. Since land costs and infrastructure development constitute a substantial cost of providing housing, eliminating these costs through CLT ownership will reduce the cost to the homeowner or renter. The CLT will then work with developers who specialize in building attainable housing, to design and build communities that include single family, duplex and rental units to most efficiently use the land, carefully prioritizing land usage for both housing and open space on the property. This approach further reduces costs by increasing the efficiency of infrastructure requirements (roads, wells and septic fields) while also creating a community setting that people will find desirable. SBGC believes this approach presents the best option for both building and maintaining attainable workforce housing for generations to come. What does it take to achieve this solution?



Money: SBGC has raised \$650,000 to purchase the land for its initial projects through donations from both year-round and seasonal residents, local people who care about this problem and are willing provide resources to achieve solutions. **Land:** For a project to be affordable and achieve our goals, the land must be both affordable and large enough to achieve the scale that combines single family, duplex and other rental units while also providing open space for community activities. This will require sellers who recognize the problem, share our vision and want to work with SBGC towards the creation of truly unique housing communities that are consistent with the character of the community in which it is built. **Zoning Modifications:** The townships of Leelanau County need to recognize that current zoning laws are not protecting the agricultural nature of Leelanau County. Instead, they are ensuring that agricultural land zoned in 3- or 5-acre plots will continue to attract only to people with money who can afford to build a \$700,000 retirement home, second home or seasonal rental property on land that sells for \$25,000+ per acre. Local zoning laws need to reflect the need for higher density in certain areas of our communities so that CLTs can purchase or lease sufficient property for the development of attainable housing communities. This is how we begin to respond to the lament that Cameron, and so many other people upon whom our community depend, are expressing. While what SBGC and other Housing Collaborative members are suggesting may not be the total answer to the attainable housing crisis, this approach will go along way towards ensuring that the teachers, first responders, healthcare workers, hospitality workers, tradespeople, and all others we rely upon to keep our community functioning in the manner we have come to enjoy, can also be our neighbors and a truly integral part of our community. If you have opinions about this issue, please take the Housing Matters in Leelanau Survey at LeelanauHousingCollaborative.org

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“You cannot step into the same river twice”

By Paul Sutherland
Op-ed contributor

As a 13-year-old boy, it took a while to save up to buy the \$59.97 canoe kit advertised in Boys Life. I sold Petoskey stones under the name Petoskey Pete in front of our home down towards the lake, from what is now Boons, babysat for my brothers and sister and Mrs. Bach’s kids and scraped together birthday money from Aunts and Grandma to get the \$59.97. I rounded up to \$60 as I worried the coins would rip the envelope, filled in the form with my best handwriting, recounted the stack of mostly “ones,” and mailed it with two stamps to the address in the magazine. I didn’t tell my siblings, friends, or parents because I thought they would try to talk me out of it. A few weeks later, a package came with some boards, canvas, nails, and a “How to” manual. The last step was painting the canoe, which sealed the canvas. Paint was not included; thankfully, Mom and Dad let me use some white house paint that was in the shed.

I loved that canoe. It was only 11 feet long and was a one-person masterpiece. A bit lopsided, as the frame’s board did not bend evenly. But it floated. Grandpa Tom, who had taught me to canoe in his slick aluminum canoe, gave me a paddle, and I was soon down at the Crystal River. My cousin Tommy would sometimes walk the bank as I would dodge fallen trees and spikes from the mills’ dams that had been abandoned many years earlier. Mostly I would just paddle up and down the river from where it bends in Glen Arbor to what is now The Mill. I would fish sometimes, but I do not remember ever catching a fish. I do remember sitting in awe as a mother duck would paddle by with six ducklings lined up behind her. I would stick my paddle out, and they would jump over it like it was a piece of driftwood. Tommy would sometimes call out to tell me he found beaver signs, or we would find claw marks and imagine that it was a black bear bigger than either of our dads. Both Dad and Grandpa would have me listen hard to the river so I could know how to navigate its currents and shallows. My Grandpa taught me how to paddle without switching from side to side, to watch the currents, stick to the side of the river going upstream to stay in the soft water, and stay in the middle to catch the big flow downstream, al-



Crystal River painting by Ted Peterson

ways making sure I was going faster than the current so I could navigate. I learned to listen to the currents, watch the critters, and listen to the sounds. Grandpa, along with my dad, taught me to listen to the birds and identify them by their song. Dad and I would practice whistling to make the bird sounds. The quiet along the river was only there between the slap of a beaver tail, a squirrel looking for acorns, or the birds’ calling to keep me from disturbing their nests.

I rarely saw a person back then; no plastic kayaks were to be found, and few people thought the Crystal was worth the bumps, shallow spots, and logs completely across the river requiring carry. For me, it was magic.

The Crystal was not easy on my cloth-covered canoe or my feet. Rocks, downed trees, pointy sticks, and old nails sticking out of posts that used to be dams caused my canoe to die by 1,000 cuts, and bloodied my feet from the canoe carries. Mom took me to Empire after one bloody episode for a tetanus shot and skin repair. Unlike me, my canoe would not make it through the winter. I did not have the heart to give it a proper burial. I put it in the back of the house and let its white paint slowly turn grey from mold, as nails bled rust and the chipmunks nested under the piece of plywood I placed there for my feet. Plywood that was not included in the kit either.

Today, after living with my family in Suttons Bay, Traverse City, Hawaii, Uganda, Nicaragua, and South Africa, I once again live in Glen Arbor but this time on the Crystal. I love the Crystal River. But it is not the river of my childhood. Heraclitus says, “You cannot step into the same river twice.” Now the river I used to step into is enjoyed many days by hundreds of people in kayaks, canoes, and paddle boards. I enjoy watching them paddle in front of our home. I love hearing the

chatter, and the tired kids saying, “Are we done yet?” Most respect the river. But some don’t. On my end of the river near Glen Arbor, I no longer see beaver or even the occasional otter anymore. I have only seen one duck and cranes this year on our end, where even a few years ago ducks and even loons were in abundance. But no more. I had an inkling of why, but science and a sign placed often in National Parks in South Africa brought the reason into my sight: noise.

Today, noise from evening live music blasted at 90 decibels, is sometimes able to be heard nearly one mile upriver. Noise from power washers, leaf blowers, and piped-in music has replaced bird songs and beaver tail slaps with country western music and ballads about relationships and nostalgia. Hundreds of years ago, the animals were displaced by loggers, hunting, and the noise of mills; thankfully, the critters came back. Through community activism, laws, or local ordinances, the quiet will be here once again, and the beaver will be sighted at dawn or dusk; They will come back. I know this because change is the only constant and people are good. I am on the river nearly every day. Today, I put on my black water shoes, climb in my yellow plastic kayak, listen, and push into the river I love. I have been looking at canoe plans, not to make a fancy canoe for show, but one I can slide into and paddle down the river that is not the same river of my 13-year-old self.

Paul Sutherland lives with his family on the Crystal River and in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape, South Africa, where he is an education professor at Nelson Mandela University. He loves to listen to the quiet, write books, kayak, hike, explore, read, bike, and be on, in, or by water. Paul also enjoys telling stories that inspire and are mostly truthful.

State Savings Bank celebrates 130 years

From staff reports

This year, State Savings Bank is celebrating its 130-year anniversary. This milestone marks more than a century of helping northern Michigan families and businesses reach their financial goals, while remaining a locally owned, independent community bank.

The anniversary also comes with an unexpected twist. For many years, State Savings Bank was thought to have been founded in 1901. However, recently uncovered historical documents showed that the bank first opened its doors in Frankfort in 1896, making this year its 130th anniversary. The bank’s original name was Benzie County State Bank.

“While banking has changed dramatically over the years, our commitment to our customers has not,” said Blake Brooks, executive vice president and CEO. “For 130 years, our success has been built on relationships. Generations of families, businesses and communities have placed their trust in us, and we’re honored to continue serving northern Michigan with the same local decision-making and personalized service that have defined us from the beginning.”

Throughout the summer, State Savings Bank will host customer appreciation events at each of its offices to thank customers and communities for their trust and support over the past 130 years. Details can be found on the bank’s website, ssbankmi.com/130.

Since opening in Frankfort in 1896, State Savings Bank has expanded its footprint across northern Michigan with full-service offices in Traverse City, Empire, Suttons Bay, Frankfort, Beulah and Gaylord, and loan centers in Big Rapids, Caro and Houghton Lake.

Today, the bank continues to provide personal and business banking services, mortgages, treasury management, and investment and trust services while maintaining its signature “Yes, I can!” approach to taking care of customers.

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Even Gangsters Need a Vacation

By Rebecca G. Carlson
Sun contributor

Al Capone in Leelanau County?! According to local historian, journalist, and storyteller Larry Wakefield, “Even gangsters, it seems, have to take vacations” (*Ernest Hemingway Fished Here 41*).

In the mid-1990s, my friends and I were given the opportunity to walk with a property owner in the area along Lake Michigan, south of Duck Lake, to the ‘rumored’ cottages of gangster Al Capone, AKA Scarface. While there was heavy tree growth, we walked a two-track until coming upon a run-down, two-story cottage looking like it was going to fall into Lake Michigan. The front porch of the cottage sat precariously on the edge of a bluff overlooking the lake.

We saw a partial structure that we were told was once a gun-tower. There were several other run-down outbuildings. The whole area was remote.

A couple of us walked the main floor of the larger cottage. The house had empty beer cans and broken liquor bottles, broken windows, and a few stained mattresses. It was in sad shape, but so cool to see. Our friend explained the cottage’s name was Heartsease. Thus, began my journey down the rabbit hole of local lore and colorful stories that surround Leelanau’s connection to Al Capone.

At the time, our group had no reason to question the information, especially as we walked the grounds of Heartsease. Although authentic facts seem non-existent, the local myths of Leelanau’s connection to Capone survives through multiple generations.

During Wakefield’s research into Al Capone in Leelanau County, he shared in an interview that several local residents remember Scarface. Lake Leelanau Dew Drop Inn bartender, Fred Bromwell, recalled when “Al and the boys came into the bar and set up for drinks.” Karl Detzer “recalls seeing Capone go by in his armor-plated Cadillac...” as well as listening into “gangster conversations between Capone and his men” over party-line phone calls with friend Charlie Blume (MyNorth.com). Wakefield further explores the story of Heartsease and connections to Al Capone in his book *Ernest Hemingway Fished Here*. In this “true North country tale,” he explains ‘the how’ of the connection to Heartsease.

The widow of the original owner of Heartsease married Frank J. Prince, a newspaperman with potential connections to the Chicago underworld. “It was with Prince’s permission that Capone used the [Lake Michigan cottage] in the late 1920s” (Wakefield 44). True? Is there genuine proof? Did Capone engrave his name somewhere on the property: ‘Al was here’?

In addition to the Wakefield documents, I spoke with several tavern owners in Leelanau County and Sleder’s in Traverse City about the connections to Al Capone and bootlegging in the area. The rabbit hole got deeper.

Recently, I interviewed Sleder’s Marketing Manager, Chrissine Cairns. Her brother and sister-in-law took over ownership of Sleder’s from Chrissine’s parents in 2019. A Slabtown marvel, Sleder’s is Michigan’s oldest, continu-

ously operating restaurant since 1882.

When asking Chrissine if she believed Sleder’s had any connections to Al Capone during Prohibition, her response was simple. The connections between Chicago (Al Capone’s base of operations) and Sleder’s as well as the Leelanau Peninsula and Traverse City areas during prohibition are too numerous to discount. And yes, there is a rumored connection to Capone.

According to Chrissine, Sleder’s strong connections to Chicago exist through the first three-generation of owners: Vencil, Louis, and Louie Sleder. The bar, tables, chairs, and booths were sourced from Chicago. The mahogany bar was crafted in Chicago and delivered in a single 21-foot piece that is still intact in 2026 and a well-loved fixture of the Sleder’s.

Furthermore, she added that there was a rumor that Al Capone personally guaranteed Louis Sleder (son of Vencil) alcohol for his “Soda Shack” during Prohibition. I did ask Chrissine if there was any wall graffiti from Capone or other gangsters in the basement at Sleder’s. Sadly, no dice.

In an era prior to Air Tags, iPhones, and other electronic tracking devices, it would have been easy to travel and work under the radar. During Prohibition, secrecy and illegal activities created a symbiotic relationship between suppliers and buyers: loose lips sinks ships. Otherwise, everyone would have been in jail.

I understand, once again, there is no written contract that confirms this Al Capone – Sleder’s rumor, but how can all these tales be falsehoods? Based on the people I have interviewed and their accounts, I would suggest there is zero proof Capone WASN’T in Leelanau and Traverse Counties.

What is known? There was a lot of steamer traffic over Lake Michigan between Chicago and Leelanau and



Al Capone

Traverse Counties. Overland from Detroit, while not impossible, seems improbable for the movement of large quantities of liquor. From most of my research, alcohol was moved over water in and around Northern Michigan (our Canadian neighbors were very helpful that way) to supply this area.

In one article, the smugglers, or “Rum Fleet,” came up with an ingenious method for moving alcohol over water. As the *Lake County Star* newspaper explained in 1925, “Rum Smugglers use Traffic Light Code” to move hooch. “State police...discovered...smugglers...along the Canadian Border...have copied the system of lights employed to direct traffic” in protecting their vessels and people. Red, police in the area. Yellow, proceed with caution. Green, all clear! Adaptation as its finest!

1920s Chicago, Illinois = Al Capone and his crime syndicate. Capone = organized crime, illegal liquor sales and transportation to neighboring states like Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana. So, while Capone was not hand delivering every bottle of bathtub gin, he was controlling the network that manufactured, sold, and transported the illegal goods to many areas of Michigan: Mackinaw, Petoskey, Charlevoix, Au Sable, Saugatuck, Lansing, etc. He oversaw and visited these

See GANGSTERS on page 15

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Versatile guitarist returns to Homestead’s Music on the Mountain

By Ross Boissoneau
Sun contributor

They say you can’t go home again, but guitarist Joe Taylor would beg to differ. The South Carolina native returned to the Palmetto State after decades in New York City and hasn’t missed a beat. Now he feels like he’s coming home again, with a date: Aug. 19 at Music On The Mountain at The Homestead. “The fellas and I are really looking forward to it,” he says of himself and his bandmates. “We love the place.” Taylor’s performance last year was one of the season’s most popular shows of the summer series, which was revived after going dark during the pandemic. For his part, Taylor hadn’t set foot in the Great Lakes State prior to his shows at last year’s Music On The Mountain. He and his three NYC bandmates were floored at the beauty of the area, including the venue at the top of the resort’s ski area. He says playing while the sun set over Lake Michigan behind him was magical.



“We had the best time playing there.” His upcoming show features the same cast as last year: drummer Ray Marchica, bassist Paul Adamy and Jeff Franzel

on keyboards, backing Taylor’s soulful guitar. It’s the same group who recorded last year’s *Last Boat Home*, and they’ve been back in the studio again. Taylor promises some new music from their recent sessions. “We’ll bring a handful of new tunes from the upcoming album, plus a few new covers,” he says. Last year’s show saw Taylor and the group concentrating on music from his albums *West Side Chill* and *Last Boat Home*, which was officially released the day after his performance. But he threw in a few surprises as well, opening with Duke Ellington’s “Caravan” and including the rockabilly favorite “Rumble” by Link Wray. Taylor’s jazz ranges from smoothly melodic to the occasionally twangy, no doubt influenced by his favorite guitarist, Chet Atkins. He has been compared to both Atkins and Jeff Beck, which he considers high praise. As neither was a vocalist, Taylor says they approached their guitar playing as their voice, an approach he emulates. He also became part of Atkins’s Saturday morning breakfast club late in the acclaimed guitarist’s life. During Taylor’s decades-long tenure in New York, he became a prominent first-call session guitarist, working with industry legends like Ahmet Ertegun. He played on Broadway, serving as first-chair guitarist for major productions such as *Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats*, and *Starlight Express*. He also held a residency at The Living Room, the legendary music venue that helped launch the careers of singer-songwriters like Norah Jones, Colbie Caillat, and The Lumineers.

Tiring of the pace and seeing studios closing and opportunities drying up, he moved back to South Carolina, building a home there in 2003 and a recording studio in 2010. He works as a producer for numerous acts at the studio, while he and his wife Stacey welcome their friends for recording, performing and camaraderie. Taylor says his upcoming performance at The Homestead will include a handful of tunes that he’s written for others, including some vocal numbers. He says he wasn’t born with the pipes of someone like Michael Bublé, but in a typical performance he will throw in a couple vocal features. “I know how to sing,” he says. “I try to stay within my limited range.” He says the show features songs people will know, such as “Wichita Lineman”—which he says is his favorite song—or a tune by the Beatles. “It’s a fun evening.” He says the upcoming album is along the same lines as *Last Boat Home*. “Maybe a little funkier. Like the Crusaders with Larry Carlton,” Taylor says, referencing the legendary ’70s and ’80s crossover outfit. That portends good news for Taylor and his audience. As the British music

magazine Melody Maker said, “Joe Taylor has built a successful career as a guitarist, composer, and producer whose work consistently bridges the worlds of jazz, blues, and instrumental music with effortless sophistication. *Last Boat Home* showcases exactly why Taylor continues to be regarded as one of the most versatile voices in contemporary instrumental music.” Tickets for the show are \$22 and include a ride to the top of Bay Mountain on the ski lift. Golf carts are available to transport attendees, who are welcome to bring a blanket or lawn chair or sit in the provided seating. Refreshments will also be available. For tickets or additional information, go to tinyurl.com/Tickets-MOTM.

GL Library unveils August programs

From staff reports

The Glen Lake Community Library in Empire will host the following programs this month:

Aug. 20, Eagles with Dr. Carl Palazzolo

The Glen Lake Library will host wildlife veterinarian Dr. Carl Palazzolo on Thursday, Aug. 20 at 7 pm. Dr. Palazzolo will discuss his new book *The Comeback of our National Symbol in Michigan*. He’ll share his stunning photographs of bald eagles, and discuss their biology, along with the unique challenges in providing their medical care. Proceeds of book sales will support eagle rehabilitation efforts. Dr. Palazzolo will be joined by Francie Krawcke of Michigan Avian Experience, and a special guest, a magnificent rehabilitated eagle.

Aug. 22, Children’s author Gretchen Rose

Local author Gretchen Rose will present her two newly-published children’s book at the Glen Lake Library on Saturday, Aug. 22 at 3 pm. She’ll read from *The Jingu Magical Garden* and *Dune Dragons and the Fairies of the Lake*. Both are middle-grade fantasy stories, inspired by nature, friendship and the resilience of the human heart. Copies of the books will be available to purchase courtesy of the Cottage Book Shop. For more information about the author, visit GretchenRoseAuthor.com. *The Jingu Magical Garden* follows Eizo and Miyoshi Jingu and their eight children, who, from the 1920s to 1942,

lived in and operated the concession of the San Antonio Japanese Garden. The youngest daughter, Lillian, and her baby brother, Kimi, are the main protagonists and when they discover a strange egg on the bank of the koi pond, they keep it warm in hopes that it will hatch into a puppy. But when a baby dragon emerges, it is love at first sight for the Jingu siblings. They name him Kokoro and the three have many adventures. But when in 1941, Japan bombs Pearl Harbor, their lives take a dramatic turn, and they are evicted from their beloved garden. The book continues through their struggles to survive, readjust to their reduced circumstances, and ultimately thrive.

Dune Dragons and the Fairies of the Lake, the second book in the Dune Dragons series, continues the adventures of Alitta, the plucky Anishinaabe girl, the dragon protagonists, Chryllis and Jilly, and their woodland pals. When Zuzu—now an irrepressible teenager—competes in a cherry-pit-spitting contest, she breathes fire breath and expels a molten pit. Only later does she realize that the fiery projectile pierced a fairy’s wing. This unfortunate event sets the Dras and company on one of the most fantastic voyages of all time—a journey that takes them from Lake Michigan’s magnificent Sleeping Bear Dunes to the fabled mound city of Cahokia on the Midwestern plains to the heart of the tropics.

For more information about these and other library events, visit GlenLakeLibrary.net.

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Bear Man sues Leland Township in federal court over youth ministry dispute

By Jacob Wheeler
Sun editor

Lawyers backing Youth for Christ in Leland and Bear Man Jim VanSteenhouse announced in a press release on Aug. 11 that they had filed suit against Leland Township in the federal district court for the Western District of Michigan as part of their bid for a youth ministry in a building VanSteenhouse owns in the heart of Leland’s commercially-zoned business district.

The Leland Planning Commission in April rejected Apollos Properties’ bid for a special use permit following months of deliberation, legal analysis, and passionate public debate. Apollos and VanSteenhouse almost immediately appealed to the township’s Zoning Board of Appeals. That case before the ZBA was pending, as the township took steps to appoint new members and alternates to the ZBA who had not already voted on the Planning Commission or expressed bias in their public views on Youth for Christ.

But Bear Man’s attorneys didn’t wait for the ZBA decision. The five

plaintiffs listed on the 169-page lawsuit (which you can view on our website, GlenArbor.com) include Apollos Properties, Apollos owners James and Elizabeth VanSteenhouse, and Micah and Kya Cramer, the missionaries who sought to recruit Leland youth to their ministry. The VanSteenhouses are Micah Cramer’s uncle and aunt.

Leelanau Lighthouse is the Cramer couple’s chapter of the multinational Youth for Christ organization. Micah and Kya began using the space for a ministry in February 2025. They drew scrutiny in the community for allegedly recruiting students at Leland public school to their ministry while they served as volunteers during lunchtime and recess. Micah was barred last fall from volunteering inside the school.

Then Youth for Christ and VanSteenhouse escalated the already heated debate in March when their lawyers sent letters questioning Fishtown’s tax-exempt status.

The battle playing out in this small Leelanau County town has potential implications far beyond Northern Michigan. The debate over the role of

religion in public schools and in the public square represents a microcosm of an explosive reckoning on the national stage.

The lead attorney behind the lawsuit is part-time Leland resident Thor Hearne, a founding partner of the St. Louis-based True North Law Group. Hearne has long represented and litigated conservative causes. His press release states that he served on George W. Bush’s national election counsel. He also represented Donald Trump in several federal cases, including an effort to overturn the 2020 election results in Michigan, which Trump lost to Joe Biden.

In a Nov. 21, 2025, letter Hearne sent to Leland School and the Planning Commission on behalf of Youth for Christ USA, he explicitly mentioned Trump and telegraphed future threats.

“Your opposition to the ministry Micah, Kya and Youth for Christ are engaging in Leelanau County is a disturbing demonstration of anti-Christian bias,” wrote Hearne. “President Trump signed two Executive Orders establishing a task force to eliminate anti-Christian bias. . . . Trump’s declaration stated his administration, including the Department of Justice, would ‘uphold religious liberty and the right to engage in religious speech.’ This extends to ‘faith-based organizations’ such as Youth for Christ.”

Hearne ended that letter nine months ago with a shot across the bow.

“You are embarking upon an extremely risky endeavor. The effort to prevent Youth for Christ from exercising its constitutional right to free speech, to assemble and to worship violates the U.S. Constitution, numerous federal statutes, and Michigan law. Youth for Christ does not seek controversy. But Youth for Christ will stand firm in defense of its right to assemble, worship and declare the Gospel.”

Hearne, whose family has political connections in Washington, D.C.,



previously sent a letter to the federal Department of Justice on behalf of the Youth for Christ’s push for a ministry in downtown Leland.

The Traverse City firm Parker and Harvey are co-counsel in the federal case; Robert Parker has represented VanSteenhouse’s company Apollos Properties in the zoning matters before Leland Township.

Leland Township supervisor Clint Mitchell confirmed receipt of the lawsuit the day the press release was issued.

According to the True North Law Group’s press release, “The lawsuit asks the federal court to find Leland Township violated the First, Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, the Michigan Constitution and numerous federal civil rights laws and Michigan state law. The federal lawsuit asks the court to declare that Leland Township’s zoning ordinance is facially unconstitutional and unconstitutional as applied to persons assembling for prayer and Bible study at the private property on North Lake Street.”

VanSteenhouse said in the press release that the matter went beyond matters of zoning.

“This case is much more than a zoning dispute,” he said. “Leland Township’s denial of the constitutional rights and First Amendment freedoms guaranteed by our National and State Constitutions cannot stand.”

VanSteenhouse, known as the “Bear Man” for surviving a grizzly attack in the Canadian wilderness a decade ago—which he credited to divine intervention—retired from a lucrative banking career and launched Bear Man Ministries. He built a luxury home in Leland in 2018.

Apollos Properties applied to Leland Township in Fall 2025 for a land use application to convert the north side of the downtown building, which VanSteenhouse acquired for \$1.2 million, into a religious youth activity “clubhouse.”

“Leland Township could have allowed Youth for Christ Club to meet at our property on North Lake Street and there would be no drama,” VanSteenhouse said in the Aug. 11 press release that announced the federal litigation. “We don’t want a lawsuit. All we desire is the opportunity for Leelanau County youth to meet for prayer, Bible study, Christian fellowship, and mentoring on private property.”

Visit GlenArbor.com to view the lawsuit and track our ongoing coverage of the Youth for Christ saga in Leland.

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Conservancy announces \$75 million “Leelanau, Protected” campaign

From staff reports

The Leelanau Conservancy last month announced the public phase of its most ambitious campaign in the organization’s history—a \$75 million effort to protect the lands, waters, and wildlife that define life in Leelanau County. With \$9 million left to raise, the Conservancy invites the broader community to help complete this transformative initiative. The Conservancy announced campaign with \$66 million already raised and only \$9 million left to go

The campaign—titled Leelanau, Protected: A Campaign for Today and Tomorrow—focuses on three top priorities: protecting natural lands and working farmland; restoring ecological health and resilience across conserved habitats; and expanding meaningful access to nature for all people.

“This campaign is about land protection and the endless benefits that come with it,” said Tom Nelson, executive director of the Leelanau Conservancy. “It’s about the promise we make to this place and to each other. Our clean wa-

ters, our wildlife, our farms and forests, we are responsible for passing them on. The extraordinary generosity we’ve already seen from our community tells me that people understand what’s at stake and are ready to act. We’re asking everyone who loves Leelanau to be part of protecting its future.”

The campaign supports the Conservancy’s long-term vision of safeguarding clean waters, securing critical wildlife habitats, mitigating climate change through land conservation, and preserving the agricultural and scenic character that make Leelanau one of

Michigan’s most cherished places. Campaign Priorities include:

- Land Protection: Permanently protect natural lands and farmland across the peninsula.- Ecological Restoration: Actively manage conserved habitats for maximum health, biodiversity, and resilience.
- Access to Nature: Expand and enhance trails and outdoor experiences so everyone can connect with nature.

Through the generosity of the community, this campaign has already protected Sugar Loaf, expanded Kehl Lake Natural Area, reduced invasive

species, and more. Current initiatives within the campaign include protecting Suttons Bay Forest, and farmland. The Leelanau Conservancy has protected more than 20,000 acres across the peninsula since its founding in 1988, working in partnership with landowners and supporters to conserve the lands that sustain both the natural environment and the regional economy.

For more information about the campaign or to make a gift, visit leelanauconservancy.org/leelanauprotected.



Park defends mowing Port Oneida wildflower fields

From staff reports

Several Glen Arbor residents who frequently run or paint in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District, which is part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore northeast of Glen Arbor, expressed chagrin at the National Park’s decision in late July to mow down wildflower fields at the Olsen and Dechow farmsteads. The concerned locals claimed the fields were mowed at the height of pollinator season, with monarch butterfly migration—and the Port Oneida Fair—just weeks away.

“These fields aren’t just ‘beautiful’. They are critical habitat. Bees, butterflies, and countless other pollinators depend on them,” one resident wrote to the Park. “In a time when climate change is very real and biodiversity is under threat, this kind of practice is unacceptable.”

Merrith Baughman, director of interpretation & visitor services at Sleeping Bear Dunes, offered the following written response to the Sun on Aug. 6.

“The Park appreciates the opportunity to discuss its mowing program in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District and explain how this work supports both the historic character of the landscape and the ecological communities that depend on it.

woody species and losing their historic setting.

At the same time, the National Park Service (NPS) has a responsibility to protect natural resources, including the pollinators that rely on these open fields. The Park has received funding to inventory pollinator habitat across Port Oneida and other mowed field areas, along with broader bee, reptile, and amphibian surveys. These efforts will help us better understand species presence—including sensitive species like the American Bumble Bee—and ensure that our management practices support their conservation.

Because NPS management involves balancing cultural and natural resource protection, our mowing program incorporates several mitigation measures to reduce impacts on pollinators, including: adjusting mowing timing and frequency to avoid peak pollinator activity where feasible; evaluating fields for sensitive species based on ongoing inventory results; coordinating closely between cultural landscape managers and natural resource specialists to align preservation needs with ecological stewardship.



While mowing can temporarily change how the fields look, it is part of a long term, thoughtful approach to caring for both the historic landscape and the natural communities that make Port Oneida such a special place.”

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YASMINA

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chased by bugs *and* I had to find a place to stay that night.”

Though she was too shy to put out a thumb and hitch a ride, a woman driving by circled back and offered to take Ahlmaris to the next town.

“I accepted, then cycled all the way to Petoskey. She said I was crazy to do this in these conditions,” she laughed.

When she arrived in Petoskey, the campground Ahlmaris originally planned to stay at was fully booked and for RVs only.

“I was walking around a neighborhood, thinking how in Morocco, you could knock on the door and people will take you in—but not here,” she started. “Then, I thought, there’s good people everywhere.”

So, she decided to try.

The first knock went unanswered. At the second door, an angry dog scared her off. In true Brothers Grimm fashion, at the third house, “the sweetest old man answered the door.”

He let Ahlmaris pitch a tent in the yard. He brought out an extension cord for electricity, offered his bathroom and checked in on her, making sure all was well.

“The next morning he asked, ‘Do you want breakfast?’”

“I said yes.”

Betzler underscored how, in other parts of the world—namely Morocco—this sort of interdependence is the norm.

“As Americans, we’re so independent. We see it as a burden to go somewhere and need help,” she said. “But in her culture, it’s normal to ask for help.”

On the second day, “here comes the rain,” said Ahlmaris. “Plus, the smoke.”

After waiting out the rain in a hospitable woman’s van and “exchanging life stories” with her, Ahlmaris felt glad to get back on the road.

That night, she camped at a farm in Torch Lake and hardly slept, the thin nylon walls of her tent acting as scant separation from the thunder, lightning and rain roaring outside.

“It was scary, alone in the tent,” she said. “But in the morning, another day comes and all I want to do is cycle again.”

That third day, she biked a whopping 50 miles, the longest trek of all the days.

“I was excited to get to Traverse City and sleep inside, no smoke or mask,” she said.

The next was a layover day, spent resting and with friends.

When she got back on the bike, Ahlmaris headed to Frankfort and then Manistee.

“People say Michigan is so flat,” she said. “Not here!”

Michelle Karadsheh, another friend



from the wellness retreat last April, joined Ahlmaris in Manistee and camped with her for a few nights.

“She brought her big tent with plenty of room for both of us, food, fire,” she said. “I wasn’t alone!”

Though, after the trip, Ahlmaris acknowledged how, “Even though I was solo cycling, I was never alone.”

Perhaps the most memorable encounter she had was with an older couple she met on an app called Warm Shower, which is a platform for bike packers like herself to host or be hosted.

“It was like a museum, their house,” she said. “She (the host) was an artist, and so was her mom.”

There were paintings all over, decorating the walls of the room Ahlmaris stayed in.

“Oh, and the stories—she grew up in the house, and she was married there.”

“The house was owned by her father,” she went on. “We looked through the wedding album and I realized the young couple smiling back at me was in front of me now.”

Ahlmaris was sort of stricken by the realization, and paused to read from her journal.

“Time waits for no one,” she read.

“We have to live while we are here, and we better live to the fullest. I spent the night thinking of what I want to do with life and the dreams inside of me.”

The next morning, her 70-year-old host cycled with her 10 miles before they parted ways.

Her final stop in Grand Rapids was yet another Warm Shower host, who kindly drove her to the bus station where she got a ride to Chicago, where her brother lives.

“Otherwise, I would have suffered. It’s like, you have to get a bus to a bus,” she laughed. “People are all walking in Morocco; I saw all cars when I got here. I thought, ‘Where are all the people?’”

When it was all said and done, Ahlmaris reflected on the experience with gratitude, and spoke excitedly of her very first international adventure, challenges and all.

“I had never left Morocco before, but I wasn’t scared or shy. Probably because I was doing the thing I love

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YASMINA

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the most,” she said. “Growing up, I always felt trapped. I always wanted to go beyond the ocean because the world has so much to offer.”

And now that she has been beyond the ocean, she realized that “People are the same. The same kindness I experience in Morocco, I felt in America.”

As far as people go, Ahlmaris said that “In all of my trips, the highlight is always the people: Telling stories, learning, reflecting on your own life.”

Schwalm shared that sentiment and said she has realized a lot of those same truths in her own travels, and talked about “interconnectedness” as humans.

Like on the trip to Morocco last spring, when they visited local people in Imlil, a town nestled in the High Atlas Mountains, North Africa’s highest range.

“We had tea with locals in their homes,” said Schwalm.

Even though they had a translator with them, a significant language barrier remained. Yet, they still met with families and asked the kids what they had learned in school that day.

“We shared smiles and communicated through our eyes, our energy,” she said. “Everybody was so warm. They embraced us, they overfed us.”

“I just... I wish there was no borders,” said Ahlmaris. “We learn so much when we cross borders. We are all the same, just beautiful differences. We have more in common than not.”

Ahlmaris documented her trip through Northern Michigan and is working on a documentary now. She’s already made an hour-long film, which is available to watch on YouTube, that tells the story of her very first bike pack adventure, the 517-mile journey from Asilah to Marrakech.

“All I know is I want to come back to America,” she said. “I want to go cross country on my bike and take the Northern route. To start in Seattle or California and end up in New York. Now I’m more confident to do that. People are kind.”

“This is especially beautiful because of the community effort,” said Betzler. “I’m really happy to see the Northern Michigan community step up and help her.”

Next March, “We’ll be going back to Morocco with Yasmina as our guide,” said Betzler. They’re still ironing out all the details, but if you’re interested, check out HinokiTravels.com in the coming months for more information.

“Travel gets us out of our own social constructs, our loops that we’ve established for ourselves,” Schwalm said. “It’s a chance to see broader perspectives, a broader potential: We can do or be anything we like.”

“My family thinks I’m a crazy nomad,” said Ahlmaris. “All I want to do is travel and document. I don’t want a traditional 9 to 5; I’m most me when I do these things. It keeps me dreaming and gives me faith in the world and myself.”

“Even though sometimes I feel like a fool, I just keep doing it,” she said.



Supporting immigrants, supporting our neighbors

By Barb Schneider and
BJ Christensen
Op-ed contributors

We decided to visit a detainee at GEO Group’s North Lake Detention Center (in Baldwin, 80 minutes from Leelanau County) because it was the right thing to do. There are approximately 1,500 detainees housed there. North Lake is ICE’s largest detention center in the Midwest. We learned about 82 percent had committed no crime and have not had visitors for months.

We learned about the need for visitations from a group called Immigrant Action Coalition who matches detainees with visitors.

We were paired with a 26-year old male from Venezuela named Edwin. His reason for coming to the United States is because of severe economic collapse and widespread shortages of food and medicine in Venezuela. Edwin came four years ago and for the last three years he worked making car seats for the auto industry. Four months ago, he was picked up by ICE. He has no criminal record, not even a parking ticket. He is the sole provider for his family: his wife, newborn, and mother are here in the U.S. He sends money for food to Venezuela for his father and grandfather. The only reason we could discern for his detention was the ICE quota of 3,000 daily arrests and the color of his skin.

What could we do to help? We

wrote letters to the editors of local newspapers sharing our visitation experience. We spoke to groups and friends. The second time we tried to visit Edwin, he had disappeared and we have no idea what happened to him. Detainees desperately need immigration lawyers to provide a legal habeas corpus petition allowing for due process.

Upon researching we found the Libertarian thinktank Cato Institute, founded by Charles Koch, states that “Immigrants reduced deficits by \$14.5 trillion since 1994. Immigrants pay more in taxes and receive fewer benefits barred from applying for Social Security and Medicare.”

Most immigrants come here as adults so immigrants, cost the U.S. education system about half as much as the U.S. born population. According to the Cato report, immigrants are “subsidizing the US government.” These detainees are not criminals they are not the worst of the worst. They are our neighbors just trying to survive like the rest of us. Detaining Edwin does not make me feel safe, it makes me feel ashamed and asking where our humanity is for allowing our grandparents a chance to immigrate and denying the same to others.

If you are interested in visiting, some detainees speak English but predominantly speak Spanish. For more information on how to help, check out the Immigrant Action Coalition on Facebook or e-mail Resist2Assist@gmail.com.

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HORSES

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these least chosen horses. When I was a little kid, my mom used to tell me not to feed the neighborhood strays because then they'd stay. Well, of course I fed them so they would stay. Then came my love of horses. And much more recently, I've learned too much about what happens to all the neglected horses out there. Once in the kill pen, their time running out, they are the last of the least chosen."

If you're not familiar, kill pens are holding areas for horses that fail to find a new owner through a horse dealer or subsequent auction, and instead are bought by livestock traders to be sold as meat. The U.S. stopped slaughtering horses in 2007, so the kill pens are the last stop before a hellacious truck ride (no stalls) to either Mexico or Canada for slaughter.

In a last attempt to find a home for these horses, video posted on social media by kill pen staff gives prospective rescuers a limited time opportunity to connect and "bail out" a horse. ("Bail" is more than the per pound price the horse would fetch as meat.)

"The owners are sometimes unaware," Nancy explains. "They can't keep the horse for one reason or another—maybe they've had a drop in income—horses are expensive to keep, and so they send the horse off with the intention of finding a new home. But if the dealer can't sell the horse for whatever reason, the horse goes to auction. If a private buyer doesn't get them, then the meat buyers do."

Lottie was her first bail out. Her husband, Dave, had grown up caring for horses and livestock on a farm and had always wanted a draft horse.

Nancy told me the story: "Lottie is part Percheron. She came from a stable that gave rides to the public. But she had developed an open, oozing spot at the top of her neck. We thought there was a foreign object in there, and so took her to Grand Rapids for surgery. But there was no foreign object. Instead, the problem was with a damaged bursa that produced a fluid-filled lump, D-cup size, on each side of the neck brought on by overwork and strain. It could be cleaned out, but it would come back and it did. So, Tanja suggested and prescribed four straight rounds of antibiotics. After that treatment, it didn't come back."

Nancy happened to see Windy, the namesake of Windy's Landing, when she was at the kill pen to pick up a different horse. "He was a registered quarter horse going downhill fast; he was skeletal, his eyes sunken and his nostrils were hugely dilated from heaves, a condition where the struggle to breathe leads to a shudder with each effort to draw breath. I turned to Dave and said that we couldn't leave without him."

On the drive home, Nancy called Tanja, and on arrival Tanja did an urgent assessment. His body score (a scale from 0-10) was zero—he had no muscle, just skin and bones. His terrible case of heaves derived from allergies to things like hay dust.

Tanja was pretty sure he wouldn't make it, but she gave him an injection of steroids. Three hours later he showed no benefit. She injected him again. That time, there was a response. He had to be kept under an open shelter in the pasture to avoid triggers from hay dust and fed special soaked hay pellets.

It required months of vigilance and care, but bit by bit his episodes of

heaves were further apart. Now, a year later, ("knock on wood," Tanja says) he has gained over 250 pounds and has not had a reoccurrence. His dark coat gleams, and when Nancy and I walk into his pasture, he moves close to her and nuzzles her side.

There is a longer backstory, of course, to the evolution of what would become Windy's Landing. Lottie, Windy, the miniature horses and other recent rescues had precursors. The experience and skill necessary to run a successful horse rescue as a dedicated forever home for animals with complex special needs grows and deepens slowly over time.

Back in Leelanau County after 16 years living abroad, the last nine teaching English in Japan, recently married and dreading the long, northern Michigan winter of 2002-2003, Nancy happened upon an organization that had posted thumbnail photos of Premarin foals. These foals were the offspring of mares that were kept in continuous pregnancy to extract estrogen from their urine. The resulting Premarin was then sold as an estrogen replacement drug for women. While this process has a bad rap now, back then it resulted in tens of thousands of horses considered "surplus" and frequently sold at auction, or sent to slaughter. Nancy wanted to adopt at least one of these foals.

Dave was all in and they wound up committing to four. The foals were born in the spring of 2003 and would be ready for transport that following September. During that time they built the huge, beautiful barn on their acreage outside of Lake Leelanau. They paid for the transport from Canada, and when the foals arrived, they were completely unhandled (except for the halters on



them), wild as mustangs and full of all the worms their bodies could hold.

Nancy and Dave sat for hours in the newly fenced small pastures with hay piled on their laps, keeping one hand holding a lead rope and clip under the hay. While a colt was eating, they gently clipped the lead rope to the halter. Each day, they would periodically grab a rope and try to walk a bit closer to a colt, working to build trust and ease. It took weeks, and for one, months, before Nancy or Dave could walk close enough to unclip the lead and actually touch them.

In the spring of 2004, they were ready to be released for the first time into a very large pasture. By then, Nancy was a full-time faculty member in the English department at Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) and a colleague of mine. She invited 40 people to the farm, a mixture of family, friends and colleagues, to watch the "running of the yearlings" as they entered their new pasture for the very first time.

When she opened the gate, they moved tentatively at first into the wide-open space. Nancy had tied bits of cloth to the new fence so they would see it. Suddenly, one started to run, and in a flash they all burst into a run. We all gasped and could feel the earth thundering at our feet with the force of their collective full-tilt gallop. Then they would wheel around and stop for a moment to rest before they took off again. It was a joy to witness the grace and power of their movement as they claimed the new pasture.

Before the colts arrived, Nancy had contacted Tanja as the only experienced equine veterinarian in the county with a full-time practice. When they first spoke, Nancy said she was planning to adopt out two of the colts, but Tanja could tell she really wanted to keep all four. The second time they met it was to spend a day castrating the colts, Nancy and Dave working under Tanja's guidance. And they have worked together ever since.

Most recently, Tanja stepped back from her full-time practice to become a full-time faculty member in the Science Department at NMC and donate all her equine veterinary expertise and experience to the rescued horses and animals at Windy's Landing.

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HORSES
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The current census is nine horses, six miniature horses, five large dogs, six cats, 18 chickens, and a number of new chicks. And that’s close to full capacity for now.

Key to a successful horse rescue and animal sanctuary is striking the right balance between the drive to rescue as many as possible, and making sure that each rescued animal has everything he or she needs to flourish over time. In the face of the overwhelming number of horses neglected and frequently abandoned to a dreadful fate out in the world, that balance can require a thoughtful restraint.

The intent behind incorporating as a nonprofit is to expand fundraising capacity, allowing for the leasing of land and thereby enabling the rescue of more horses. Medical treatment, medicines, special foods are all costly. Tanja emphasizes that Nancy and Dave’s diligence when taking on horses in the direst conditions and giving them all the love, care, resources and knowledge they need to heal and thrive has been inspiring to her. The three of them are the working heart of the sanctuary, and they have developed a powerful horse healing synergy that gives them all a keen sense of satisfaction.

NMC Visual Communications students developed the Windy’s Landing logo and NMC Business Technology students built the website, all as part of their coursework, which involves the practice of experiential learning across the curriculum. In a beautiful loop of reciprocity, the inspired work of teaching college students has also helped to create an animal rescue that in turn invites the sustained contribution and support of an entire community.

If you’re an experienced horse person, you’ll find an opportunity to volunteer your time. If you’re simply interested in learning more, you’ll find an opportunity to help sustain the lives of these remarkable horses, and in so doing enliven your own heart energy.

To learn more about Windy’s Landing, visit WindysLanding.org.

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GANGSTERS
concludes from page 8

locations (per several other sources).

What sense does it make that Capone would exclude covering and potentially visiting the territory of Leelanau and Traverse Counties? While there is no verifiable evidence either way, it seems a reasonable leap of logic.

However, according to Professor of Ancient Roman History at the University of Berkeley, Robert Knapp, it never happened. Cue the Debbie Downer music.

As clearly stated in his book, *Gangsters Up North*: “Al Capone never set foot in Leelanau County’s Heartsease...” (Knapp 28). The author is emphatic that the Leelanau County rumors only take a more precise shape after local writer Larry Wakefield shared the story of Al Capone and his connections to Heartsease in several newspaper articles.

Knapp explains, “The background Wakefield provides as evidence is completely lacking in any proof that Capone

was present” (27). He almost takes a dismissive tone about Wakefield’s work in his book even though Wakefield was a respected local historian and journalist. He repeats over and over, “I have not been able to find any evidence for this...” (Knapp 224), as if the gangsters would leave calling cards and written proof of their illegal activities. “I have benefited greatly from the authors who do cite their sources” (Knapp 8). This suggests that because Larry didn’t cite sources, as if offering the names of actual locals was not enough, everything he wrote was false?

In a *Northern Express* interview referencing gangster activity in the area, Knapp states, “I was very frustrated with Traverse City. I was sure there had to be at least stories...” Isn’t that what Wakefield was providing?

So, are all the Al Capone stories that have been handed down for the last century in both Leelanau and Traverse counties false? Did all those people

make up colorful accounts about Scarface? Sure, they make for wonderful narratives, but to what end?

I would argue the sheer volume of Al Capone tales can’t all be false. Even Knapp points out that “the Purple Gang and Capone set up shop on Mackinaw Island and set up shipments” (224). So, the Up North area wasn’t unknown to Capone and the Purple Gang. Doesn’t it seem illogical that these two criminal groups would only visit the areas surrounding us avoiding transporting and selling smuggled liquor into the Traverse City and the Little Finger areas?

As I was sharing some ideas for this article with another local, their response: “We know how to keep secrets, keeping cards close to the vest and not blab.” Right! So, perhaps the reason there seems to be zero concrete evidence of Capone in the Leelanau Peninsula and Traverse City is because we, the locals, appreciate keeping the secrets secret.

I’ll let the reader decide.

HOUSING
concludes from page 4

family housing. “Multi-family housing builds a community,” he says.

Emmet’s approach was multifaceted. It included a 60-unit apartment complex in the city of Petoskey developed by a local housing non-profit; a private housing development of manufactured homes developed by an affiliate of Manthei Construction and

Manthei Veneer on a former quarry owned by Manthei; a mixed-use development led by the Economic Development Arm of the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians on tribal land; and The Meadowlands, a project by Northwest Michigan Habitat For Humanity, located just south of Alanson.

So perhaps the biggest lessons that can be taken from Petoskey’s work are the fact there is no one solution—it will take a concerted effort from all man-

ner of public, private and non-profit institutions to address the situation. Addressing zoning and local concerns, as well as securing financing, are all part of the package.

One more sobering fact: As DeVitt pointed out, the challenge will be ongoing. Catching up will take years, and even if there is a time when the supply of housing catches up with the need, that need will only continue to grow. There won’t be a time when people can stop and say “It’s solved.” As long as people want to work, live and/or vacation in Leelanau County, it will be a battle to meet those housing needs.

Boyd's thank community for Larry's Dunes & Dogs fundraiser

From staff reports

The Boyd family would like to extend their appreciation to the many people who assisted in making the Larry’s Dunes & Dogs inaugural event on July 2 a success. The fundraiser was held in honor of Lawrence Boyd IV, a Traverse City parking services employee who last November was shot and killed on the job.

“Our family feels very blessed by the outpouring of kindness and support received from the community and Larry’s close friends and family,” said Larry Boyd, Sr. “We are looking forward to next year’s event in early June ... God Bless.”

Those who contributed include: Sheriff Mike Borkovich; Animal Control Deputy Eric Van Thomme; Great Lakes Humane Society; Cherry Republic in Glen Arbor; Cottonseed Apparel; Boonedocks; Northwoods Hardware; Glen Craft Marina; Martha’s Leelanau

Table; Dick’s Pour House; Art’s Tavern; Anderson’s Market; Momentum; M-22 Traverse City; River Club Glen Arbor; Pet’s Naturally and the Dog Bakery; Pine Cone Ice Cream; Jentee’s in Traverse City, and Lautner Table and Chair Rental

Larry's
Dunes & Dogs 2026

Memorial Fundraiser in
Honor of Lawrence Boyd IV

Glen Arbor Township Park • Glen Arbor, Michigan
Thursday, July 2, 2026

Join us for a day of remembrance, community, and giving back

11:00 AM - Memorial Bike Ride
Donation: \$30 - Includes a commemorative t-shirt

1:00 PM - Dog Walk & Costume Contest
Donation: \$20 - Includes a commemorative t-shirt.
Dress up your pup and join the fun!

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM - Silent Auction
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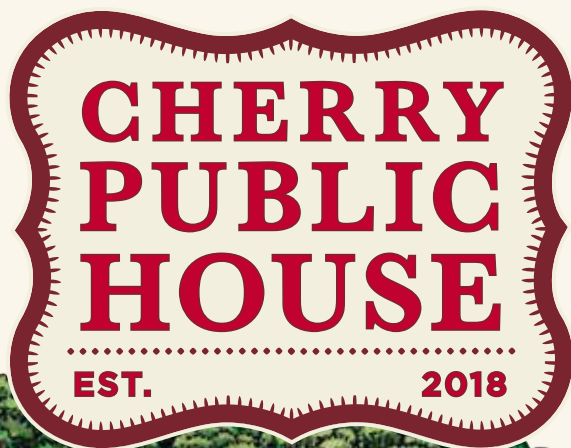
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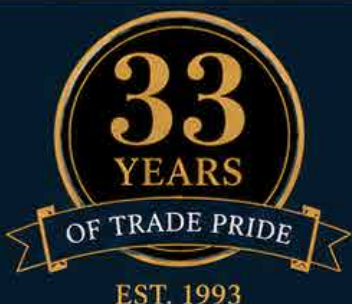
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