



Exploring sacred Crystal River

By Julie Zapoli
Sun contributor

The first time Michael Brennan stepped into the river in January 2022 it was 10 degrees and snowing, but he'd made a promise to himself at the first of the year to visit the Crystal River at least once a month.

"I've been coming to the Leelanau Peninsula for 30 years. This is my spiritual home, but that year I made a commitment to the river. I wanted to learn more about it."

River Sacred—Uncovering the Crystal is the self-published booklet that was created from Michael's year in the Crystal River. It's part photography, part poetry, part scrapbook, but it reads more like a Sundance short documentary.

"I had no idea where this journey

would take me," Michael said. "I just followed my curiosity. The first time I stood in the river that cold morning all I could think was: *What is your name? Where does this water come from? Where does it go? Who lives here?*"

The project began while talking with his daughter, Meg, about doing something to strengthen his photography skills. She suggested he spend time photographing something he loved from childhood. He'd spent most of the summers of his youth exploring nature and the Rouge River near his home in Metro Detroit. Those experiences enhanced his love of natural beauty. "So the idea to spend time learning and photographing the Crystal River began with what I didn't know about it," Michael said. "I had no idea what would come of standing in the

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Michael Brennan's self-published booklet, *River Sacred—Uncovering the Crystal River*, reads like a Sundance short documentary.



Brooke Baker of Traverse City danced for joy during her first snowshoe hike at Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore on Feb. 26—a beautiful, blue sky day with fresh, sparkly snow on the ground.

Manitou Music poster reminiscent of Van Gogh's "Starry Night"

By Katie Dunn
Sun contributor

The Manitou Music series is one of the most enduring and significant programs of the Glen Arbor Arts Center (GAAC). Each year, to commemorate the music series, the GAAC selects a painting representative of Leelanau County and the surrounding area for its annual poster. This year the honor has been bestowed upon Randi Ford, a landscape artist based in Grand Rapids.

Ford's painting, entitled *Path Through Time* (2021), is a vibrant and lyrical rendition of the Arcadia Dunes and its surrounding azure waters. Ford's love of nature—northern Michigan and Lake Michigan, in particular—is abundantly clear from her acrylic works. Ford exclusively paints landscapes. The outdoors provides deep and endless inspiration. Her intention is to capture the energy and spirit of nature, and share it with her audience.

"I think Michigan is one of the most

beautiful places in the world with our fresh bodies of water, beautiful woods and wildflowers, immaculate rivers, stunning and diverse shorelines," Ford explains.

Ford is an authentic Michigander. She was raised in Sturgis, Michigan, growing up in a barn that her father converted into their family home, and attended local public schools. Ford credits Sturgis High School with spurring and nurturing her inner artistic bent. There, the trades were very much emphasized, as well as the arts. "They had a great art program, and I took as many art classes as I could," says Ford. She continued her studies at Grand Valley State University, receiving a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. While there, she experimented with, and immersed herself in, a plethora of media. Ultimately, Ford gravitated toward painting.

Since graduating in 2012, Ford has embarked on a career as a full-time artist. She shows her work at fine art

See RANDI FORD on page 6

Corey Smith prepares to manage The Mill, opening this spring

By Jacob Wheeler
Sun editor

The much anticipated reopening of the historic Brammer gristmill on the Crystal River is near, though owner Turner Booth and the Fernhaus hospitality group have yet to name a date.

On March 1 they introduced The Mill's general manager Corey Smith on social media. Smith, a native of South Haven, returned to the mitten state and joined The Mill team last May after working in real estate in New York City and hospitality in Hudson, a town in upstate New York near the Catskills. Smith was general manager for three and a half years at Wm. Farmer & Sons, a 15-room hotel and farm-to-table restaurant serving southern-inspired cuisine near the Hudson River.

"That was where I absorbed the culture of hospitality," said Smith. "I felt at home surrounded by a combination of thoughtful service and design."

At age 30, he felt the pull to leave New York and return to Michigan to live closer to family, though he didn't know what job awaited him. A mutual friend whose family had stayed at Wm. Farmer & Sons introduced Smith to Fernhaus designer Kelsey Duda.

"My search was short-lived once I met Turner and Kelsey," he said. "I met them at Art's Tavern in February 2022, they showed me around and drew me into this little community. This is a special project to which they've dedicated so much time and energy. Joining the team was a very easy decision once I met them and toured the space."

Smith currently lives in one of the farmhouses on The Mill property so

he can meet contractors, tradesmen and vendors—everyone involved in the renovation.

The Mill is close to hiring an executive chef for a 47-seat all-day café and fine-dining restaurant—a position it posted in early January. Coffee and pastries will soon be served in the one-time flour mill which was built in the 1800s and used as a recording studio in the 1970s. The restaurant may also open this spring.

According to Smith, the establishment will include a flour mill on site, where the team will mill their own grains and make breads, pastas and pastries. "We hope our bakery production takes off and we can supply baked goods to people around the County," he said. "We'll also have flour on sale on site."

In addition to the café and restaurant, The Mill eventually plans to offer



lodging, a gallery and museum, and health and wellness classes.

Parallel 45 Theatre brings “Smokefall” to GA Arts Center

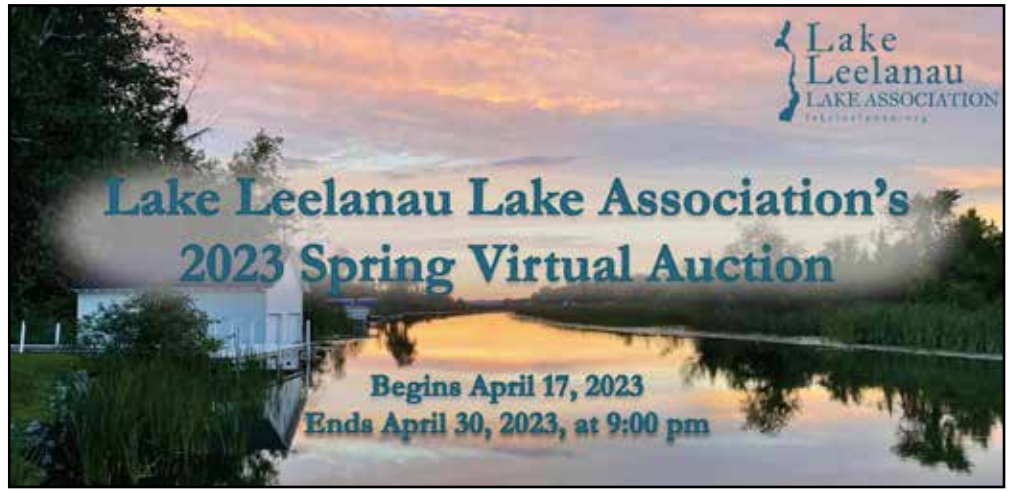
From staff reports

Parallel 45 Theatre returns to the Glen Arbor Arts Center (GAAC) with a dose of magical realism. A performance of “Smokefall” takes place on March 22 at 6

pm in the GAAC main gallery. Tickets are \$10. Seating is by reservation and limited.

Written by Noah Haidle, “Smokefall” combines magical realism with manic vaudeville to create an unexpected family drama. From tenderness to profound humor and back again, “Smokefall” explores the lives of a family in a lyrical treatise on the fragility of life and the power of love. Sarah Bielman directs Parallel 45’s reading theater production of “Smokefall.” The cast is Kat Bodie, Tom Emmot, Dane Moeggennberg, Brett Nichols, and Miishen Willis.

To reserve seats, visit GlenArborArt.org/EVENTS. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Doors open at 5 pm. The GAAC is located at 6031 S. Lake St., Glen Arbor. Parallel 45 is based in Traverse City, and has presented professional theater productions since 2013.



Lake Leelanau Lake Association holds spring fundraiser

From staff reports

The Lake Leelanau Lake Association (LLA) seeks donors and sponsors for its annual spring auction, dedicated to raising funds to protect and enhance the quality and beauty of Lake Leelanau. The virtual auction, which runs from April 17-30, is the primary fundraiser for the non-profit association, which focuses its work on the stewardship of the lake.

Proceeds from last year’s auction helped finance the installation of a boat-cleaning station at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) boat launch on the Lake Leelanau Narrows. Additionally, the funds allowed the LLA to place and maintain navigational buoys, plan educational outreach events, support Kids Fishing Day, provide information to lakefront homeowners on how to protect their shorelines and perform other activities to help keep the waters of the lake clean and pure.

Proceeds from this spring’s auction will go toward: installing a third high-pressure water boat-cleaning station at the DNR West boat launch, along with

staffing for maintenance; purchasing improved water quality monitoring technology; and installing educational signs at all public lake access points, outlining the need to wash boats and protect the lake’s fragile ecosystem.

“The majestic beauty of Lake Leelanau, and the recreational and economic opportunities it provides, benefit everyone who is fortunate to live or work in this area,” said Diane Pelak, auction committee co-chair. “The spring auction is a great way to help preserve and protect this 89,000-acre watershed. We invite individuals and businesses to consider being a sponsor, making a cash contribution, donating goods or services, or by bidding on some fantastic auction items.”

Sponsorships are available for businesses or individuals at the Gold (\$2,500), Silver (\$1,000) and Bronze (\$250) levels. Sponsors receive recognition in print, email, and social media communications related to the auction. Cash contributions will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$25,000. To become a sponsor or to donate cash or an auction item, please visit the auction website at bit.ly/LLLA2023.

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Stan Brubaker dies; John DePuy takes over Glen Arbor Fourth of July Parade duties

From staff reports

Stan Brubaker, the unofficial organizer and grand marshal selector for Glen Arbor's "anything goes" Fourth of July parade, died on March 6 at age 95 at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City.

According to his daughter Kristi, longtime family friend and former Glen Lake fire chief John DePuy will take over parade duties. This will be the 60th year of the parade, following a hiatus in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Brubaker, a native of Cleveland, grew up in Detroit, studied at Indiana University where he met his beloved wife Jo (who passed away in 2016), and ran an "Export Management" business which took him all over the world.

The family started renting a cottage in Glen Haven on Sleeping Bear Bay in 1961, and Jo launched Glen Arbor's first Fourth of July parade in 1963. The Brubakers later bought the cottage and moved there fulltime in 1972.

Our 2015 feature story on Brubaker clarified this important fact: Under no circumstances is Stan Brubaker the boss of the Glen Arbor July 4th parade. "No-



body has a title," he said. "Nobody's in charge." Brubaker will cop to one other thing: "I'm the person who gets people lined up in Glen Haven"—the parade's point of departure.

What might well be the least hierarchically-inclined holiday terra flotilla was an idea that traveled north with the Brubakers in 1963 when they started spending summers in Glen Haven. The

Brubaker kids made some noise about having a parade like the one back home in Birmingham — from where they moved in 1972. And so, it came to pass.

Parade participation is restriction-free. "Simply get yourself decorated up and come to Glen Haven. A lot of (participants) don't do any decorating until they get here," Brubaker said.

The parade leaves at noon and moves east along M-109 toward the gas station at M-22 and Egeler Street. In a nod to practicality and foresight, the Leelanau County Sheriff and fire trucks lead the parade in the unlikely event they need to address a rent in the social fabric. Vintage cars are also placed in the front of the line. "They'll overheat if they don't keep moving," Brubaker said. After that, it's first-come, first placed.

"You get in line according to when you show up," he said.

A memorial service honoring Brubaker took place on March 13 at the Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home in Traverse City. Memorial contributions may be sent to Glen Lake Fire Department, Glen Lake Library or to the Glen Arbor Arts Center.

Black Star Farms celebrates silver anniversary with wine, horses and memories

By Sandra Serra Bradshaw
Sun contributor

Nestled in the wooded hills just south of Suttons Bay, Black Star Farms has become an iconic and unique part of Leelanau County's most memorable landscape. The lovely paddocks with horses quietly grazing in their pastures reminds one of blue-blooded horse country in Kentucky right here in northern Michigan. It is a splendid sight even when just passing by on M-22 at Shady Lane.

Turning into Black Star Farms' long and inviting drive with wide-open wrought iron gates you will pass the farm's hillside vineyards—a foreground to the thickly wooded hills in back—and the well-kept, immaculate stables in front. This 160-acre winery and farm-to-table café has become a year-round place of welcome not only for visitors to the Leelanau Peninsula but a special place to visit for the community, too.

"Creating interesting local experiences, that is what we want it to be all about," said Sherri Campbell Fenton, managing owner of Black Star Farms. "This year marks our silver anniversary and to honor this milestone we plan to celebrate with special offers throughout the year.

"In 1998, our co-founding partners, Kerm Campbell and Don Coe, along with head winemaker, Lee Lutes, had the vision to create a word-class wine-country destination. Today, that goal has been far exceeded, and our business now includes our highly-acclaimed inn, plus extensive culinary and special events programs," Fenton said. This to go along with Black Star Farms' now award-winning winery, a tasting room and distillery. The estate has so much to offer, whether you come for just a few hours, or for a night or more, there are unique event venues and much more to discover year 'round to peruse and enjoy.

Near the end of the main drive and just up on the right is the property's crowned jewel—the stunning Black Star Inn. It was originally the home of the late Barry Boone (of local Boone restaurants fame), and his first wife Marla. It was built by Boone, along with help from Easling Construction of Leland. "Barry took over four years to build this place and did much of the work by himself," said Fenton. That with a sound of a reverent acknowl-



edgment towards the late Barry, for the home is truly to this day magnificent. Step inside and you will note the original large black star Barry had engraved in the foyer's entrance's floor.

Campbell was the partner who came up with the name Black Star Farms—based upon the iconic star which was built into the original marble foyer.

See BLACK STAR FARMS on page 4




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BLACK STAR FARMS

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“Barry was very creative,” said Marla Hokewater Boone. Barry and Marla remodeled the old existing cow barn in 1984. Marla ran a dressage facility there. They named the farm “Boone’s Sport Valley Equestrian Farm.” Many of their horses were European Warmbloods, including some of those they boarded.

The inn features five fireplaces, 10 sumptuous guest rooms, and other drop-dead gorgeous spaces that host weddings, special events (such as an anniversary or milestone birthday celebration), and special corporate retreats. Back outdoors and just past the inn is the Hearth & Vine Café (open seasonally). It is here where guests have the opportunity to enjoy some of the finest wines and culinary delights in an elegantly unique equestrian setting. Black Star Farms is in company with only a few other spots pairing horses and wines in the same setting. These include the famous Biltmore

Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, and Shadybrook Estates in Napa Valley, Calif. Here in Michigan it is the only facility of its kind. “Guests are welcome to bring their horses here when they stay,” Fenton said. “They are as welcome as their owners!”

Here in Leelanau County we have the opportunity to savor Black Star Farms right at our doorstep. Now that says something, and in fact, according to *Wine Enthusiast* magazine, “From the medieval monks who used draft horses to clear vineyards in Burgundy, to the horse culture of Spain’s *Jerez de la Frontera* (where the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art is located) they celebrated annually during *Feria del Caballo* (the annual horse fair held in that Spanish city), horses and wine have long held a deep connection.”

The winery proudly keeps a personal hand-crafted approach to their wine-making. Black Star Farms produces more than 50 classic varietal wines and fruit brandies. They have received

awards in state, national, and international wine competitions—proof the wine industry across northern Michigan is growing and thriving—and being recognized worldwide. Black Star Farms has become a unique way for wine lovers to retreat and enjoy the heart of Leelanau County in a growing part of northern Michigan’s very own wine country. “Our region is fast becoming recognized for the tremendous opportunities for growing grapes,” said Fenton. “The lake-effect climate enables the growth of classic vinifera grape varieties, including Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir, and others.”

“Thanks to our skilled and passionate wine-making team, we are thrilled to announce that a number of our wines have recently received awards at two prestigious wine competitions, the 2023 American Fine Wine Competition and the 2023 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition,” Fenton said. Black Star Farms offers an expansive range of varietal wines and fruit brandies that showcase their vineyard-to-bottle philosophy. The inviting tasting room features a wine club membership-only barrel room and an inviting outside terrace where their friendly and knowledgeable staff await your visit.

Michigan is regarded as being the nation’s second most agriculturally diverse state after California, and this region is at the center of the state’s farm-to-table revolution. In line with this, Black Star Farms offers Progressive Wine & Food Tastings, something Fenton is especially pleased with. “Ignite your senses with this exclusive experience that travels through our winery estate,” said Fenton. “Your private tasting journey begins with a sparkling wine toast and a featured white wine while learning about the history of our unique wine region. Next, your journey continues to our wine cave. You will enjoy some of our signature red wines while getting behind the scenes of the wine-making and aging process. Your journey will culminate in our VIP Barrel Room while indulging in some dessert wines. A carefully selected small bite prepared by our culinary team will accompany each wine along this tasting trip to showcase the magic of food and wine pairing.



“We celebrate our winery’s vineyard-to-table practices where we grow our grapes locally, then harvest, process and bottle them at our two area wineries (the other is on Old Mission Peninsula which opened in 2007),” said Fenton. “We embrace our seasonal harvest bounties, a farm-to-fork practice our culinary team takes to heart by growing, raising, and sourcing from our own and regional farms.” The evening begins with a welcome reception featuring a specialty-themed craft cocktail followed by dinner at a large feasting table where conversations and new friendships are said to abound. The Chef will share the inspiration behind the evening’s menu, and in addition, a winery representative will discuss the wine pairings and share updates on new releases and vintages.

“In appreciation of our silver anniversary, Black Star Farms is offering new sparkling wine releases, our own unique wine-tasting options, along with delicious and creative dining experiences, our special inn promotions, and (looking ahead to summer) cocktail parties in the vineyard and patio.” These are just some of the exciting things they have in store. “Our brunches, aimed at local community members, began on Easter Sunday in 2018,” said Fenton. They are held in honor of the late Sallie Campbell, Sherri Fenton’s mother. “Please join us for Easter Brunch on Sunday, April 9. Gather

BLACK STAR concludes on page 5



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“I’m proud to say I live in Leelanau County.”

From staff reports

“I’m proud to say I live in Leelanau County, where people live in houses they built with their hands,” crooned singer-songwriter and former Leelanau resident Louan Lechler, who passed away on March 4 at age 77. According to her obituary, Lechler “died of a worn-out heart from caring too much.”

For over 50 years the singer-songwriter and poet was a major presence in the local music scene. Lechler was a regular at area folk festivals, Song Writers in the Round, and a giant voice for 39 years at the Stone Circle gathering for poetry, music and storytelling—an inspiration and predecessor to the Beach Bards Bonfire in Glen Arbor.

“Louan Lechler was the real deal. A real folkie. A real poet. A real friend,” said fellow songwriter Michael Camp. “She gave it any time she had the chance, and she never once asked anything for it. She didn’t try to be famous. She never showed off. She just sang and smiled and told her wonderful stories, right to



the end, because that’s who she really was. I will remember and love her for that until it’s my turn to leave the planet.

“Farewell, girl,” Camp continued. “We love you Louan. Thank you for gracing our stages and camps and lives!”



Steve Webb took this photo on Jan. 31 of an ice disc spinning in the Crystal River. It seems that a small particle of ice got caught in an eddy, spun around and around, and the ice disc grew.

BLACK STAR concludes from page 4

your friends and family for a memorable event provided by our inspired culinary and events team. The strolling brunch will include many savory and sweet options, sure to delight everyone. An outdoor Easter Egg Hunt for the little ones will follow your meal. Easter is the only time when it is perfectly safe to put all your eggs in one basket,” she added with a smile.

“When you visit, it’s not just for the wine, though it plays a part in every aspect of the farm,” she said. Fenton wants guests to experience what she

terms as “beyond the scene, to get to what is happening.” That includes the entire farm experience—in the tasting room casually sipping wines or brandies, taking a leisurely stroll, an invigorating snow ski, snowshoe hike, or a ride on your bike, or on your horse through the lovely woods surrounding the property. “All are welcome,” Fenton warmly said. “We look forward to celebrating our 25 years with you.”

Read the *Glen Arbor Sun* this spring and summer for our series about Leelanau food and those impacting the local culinary scene—from Eric Nittolo, to Abra Berens, to Nic Theisen, to Diane Conners, to Guillaume Hazael-Massieux, to Kat Palms, and others who bring us joy through food.

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RANDI FORD

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festivals across Michigan, and several galleries have displayed Ford's work. Presently, Ford's paintings are on exhibit at Somebody's Gallery in Petoskey and Synchronicity Gallery right here in Glen Arbor. Additionally, in 2015, Ford was chosen as one of several artists to display her work in a series of solo exhibitions at Lake Street Studios Center Gallery.

Ford characterizes her genre of painting as "Flow Painting," meaning that her work is flowing from the heart—resulting in a spirit-filled, harmonic painting. There is dynamism to her paintings, as well as to the process itself. Ford often listens to music while creating her work, and its influence is readily apparent. Ford's exaggerated, swirling, rhythmical brushstrokes bring her paintings to life. There is a palpable movement and vitality to her work as visible in *Path Through Time*. It is as though the painting is pulsating with nature's spirit.

"I love music, and I paint to music so that puts me into the flow state. It's almost like I'm creating a dance with my waves, flowing lines, and circular patterns," says Ford.

Ford further expounds that there is a second, equally significant, component to her Flow Paintings: "When I create, I have a heart full of gratitude—being able to create paintings from the heart. My paintings are meant to be meditative scenes that connect you to the peace and beauty of nature. I hope that they can be healing to others, and bring beauty to their lives."

That she couples her artistry with music makes the selection of *Path Through Time* for the 2023 Manitou Music poster that much more fitting. Essentially, Manitou Music demonstrates how the visual arts and music relate to, and sustain, one another—precisely what Ford's work embodies.

Ford's fluid brushwork is reminiscent of Vincent Van Gogh, the Dutch post-Impressionist painter. The execution of *Path Through Time* harkens to that of Van Gogh's "*Starry Night*." Both paintings are rendered in bold,



MANITOU MUSIC 2023 GLEN ARBOR ARTS CENTER

unrestrained brushstrokes that perfectly capture the spirit and essence of nature. Like Van Gogh, Ford's work is exceptionally expressive. Additionally, Ford shares with Van Gogh an abiding connection with, and respect for, nature.

Van Gogh believed that a power existed within the natural, and he aimed to capture that sense of nature's power in his landscapes: "If you truly love Nature, you will find beauty everywhere," Van Gogh extolled.

Moreover, the act of painting is a meditative one for Ford, and likewise, with Van Gogh: "If you look closely, all of Nature has its beauty... I lose myself in it. And then, as if it's a dream, the scene just paints itself for me," shared Van Gogh.

The history of Manitou Music (formerly the Manitou Music Festival) is a long and prominent one for the Glen Arbor community. It truly is one of the highlights of summer in Leelanau County. First started in the early 1990s, it primarily featured chamber music. Small ensembles would play classical music at a variety of venues throughout the summer. While it drew a substantial audience, after careful deliberation, the GAAC Board of Directors decided to expand its appeal.

"There was an epiphany that there was a limited audience for chamber music. Diversify was the driving idea," according to Sarah Bearup-Neal, GAAC Gallery Manager and Chairperson of the Manitou Music Poster Competition Committee (the Committee).

Through the 1990s, the Manitou Music Festival evolved, and ultimately was rebranded the Manitou Music series. The music represented in the decades thereafter has been quite varied: everything from Americana to Delta Blues to jazz, as well as performances by well-known local musicians, like Claudia Schmidt.

The idea of the accompanying Manitou Music with a poster featuring a painting of an iconic scene from the locality began percolating in the early 1990s. That idea was very much borne out of the need for funding to sustain the annual music festival. "The poster was a fundraising tool," explains Bearup-Neal.

The first year that a painting was selected to promote the event was in 1994. Suzanne Wilson, an historic and venerated local artist—also a Glen Arbor Art Association founder—was the first to have her work enshrined in the annual Manitou Music poster. (As an aside, my mother, Kathleen Dunn, was the fourth artist to hold that same honor, back in 1997.)

Since 1994, the GAAC has held the Manitou Music poster competition. (While there was no music programming in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the tradition of the Manitou Music poster competition continued, featuring a beach scene by gouache and watercolor painter, Salle Wille.) Artwork for each year's poster is selected by the Committee after a month-long call-for-entry process. The winning poster art is traditionally announced in late winter.

Bearup-Neal shared why Ford's painting resonated so much with the Committee that it warranted its place in the pantheon of Manitou Music posters: "Randi Ford's painting was selected because it is a glorious, stylized depiction of the Lake Michigan shoreline and dunes country. She saw a scene that is quintessentially Northern Michigan, and made it her own—through her color choices, her line and brushwork. What comes out of Randi's brain isn't usual. The scene

may be familiar, but Randi is somehow able to make the familiar feel new, fresh, and entirely original."

Ultimately, Ford plans to move closer to the Glen Arbor area. She and her partner, Benjamin Ripley, recently purchased a barn in the Beulah area. With the support of Ford's parents, they intend to renovate and repurpose the barn into a dual use facility: part home, part gallery. Ford will display her paintings, while Ripley will offer his work (he is a hand-engraver and jeweler). Until then, Ford will continue to make the journey from Grand Rapids to the Leelanau County area to gain further inspiration.

This year's Manitou Music poster is available for purchase at the GAAC and at local stores around Glen Arbor.

Manitou Music Series announces 2023 lineup

A much-anticipated northern Michigan tradition, the Manitou Music Series, is about to embark on its 2023 season. A project of the Glen Arbor Arts Center, the Manitou Music Series offers a diverse program of open air concerts and performances. The 2023 lineup brings everything from drums to ballet to taiko and more. All concerts except the Traverse City Dance Project performance are free.

Saturday, April 29: Raion Taiko

Feel the heartbeat of the drums pulsing with the moving spirit of the Midwest Taiko arts ensemble Raion Taiko's "sound of thunder drummers," embracing the rhythms of rain and energy of light to create a song on the soundscapes of Japanese Taiko Drumming. 7 pm in the Glen Lake School Auditorium.

June 12-25: Manitou Music Musicians-in-Residence The PULSE Saxophone Quartet

As Manitou Music's 2023 Musicians-in-residence, PULSE will be performing in Glen Arbor in off-stage places creating intimate experiences that close the gap between audiences and classical musicians. Free performances: June 12-25 (various off-stage locations). First concert: Friday, June 16, 7 pm at the Glen Arbor Arts Center front porch. Final concert: Thursday, June 22, 7 pm at the Leelanau School Beach.

Friday, July 7: B-side Growlers

The B-Side Growlers are an acoustic trio from Grand Rapids who focus on what's become their tagline: "Tradition inspired, toe-tapping fired, vintage

See MANITOU MUSIC on page 7

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RIVER SACRED

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water and where it would end up taking me.”

The Crystal River begins in Glen Lake, passes through Fisher Lake, bends and pauses for a moment to feed Tucker Lake, then winds and crosses Dunn’s Farm Road and M-22 so many times it looks like the loops of a child learning to write cursive. It parallels the Old Homestead Road where it finally ends in Lake Michigan, 6.3 miles later, dumping almost 30 million gallons of water a day.

“The Great Lakes Watershed is one of the most important ecosystems on the planet,” said Michael. “The Lakes represent 20% of the freshwater on planet Earth. The quality of the Crystal River’s water is a direct influence on 20% of the freshwater in the world. How we care for the river is how we care for each other.”

Wanting to learn more about the river, Michael contacted Brett Fessel, the Crystal River Ecologist for the Grand Traverse Ottawa Chippewa Tribe, who encouraged him to swim it. “He said to fully understand the river you need to get in it. There are contours along the bottom, it’s faster in some places, there is gravel and then there’s sand. At the dam there are more stones because the water speed washes away the sand. And then there’s the question...who lives here?”

The Crystal River abounds with wildlife. It is home to 31 species of fish, including bass, chubs, sunfish, and even a lake run salmon species that returns each year to lay and fertilize eggs in the same place each was spawned. There are crayfish, spiders, and dragonflies, frogs, beavers, turtles, ducks, herons, and swans that live on



Photos courtesy of Michael Brennan

the Crystal River, and there is numerous wildlife that depend on this river like bears, coyotes, muskrats, and deer. Birds like the cedar waxwing, red-winged blackbirds, eagles, as well as a host of native plants including Purple-fringed orchid, ferns, red cardinal flowers, and water lilies, all live in delicate harmony with the river and their surroundings.

The intent of Michael’s booklet, *River Sacred—Uncovering the Crystal*, is to bring awareness to this fragile ecosystem and appreciate it. “This zine represents what I can offer. We take from the river without even thinking of it,” said Michael. “We take water. We take fish. We take pictures and recreation. A river is a complicated thing.” Or as Brett Fessel said, “I think of the river like a relative. Reciprocal care is given. If I had a relative sick I would help that relative. I feel the same way about the river.”

There is a lot of connection out of

something quite so fragile. “Really good work is being done every day by the organizations listed in the back of the book, and there are so many supportive people I’ve met on this project, even people I’ve met while walking around Glen Arbor in waders in the middle of winter who want to help. Each of us has an individual responsibility to learn more. We can volunteer and help protect, and we can contribute and appreciate.”

As individuals, there are many things we can do. Listed in the back of *River Sacred* are some of the organizations, partnerships, and individuals dedicated to helping steward the Crystal River, and the book encourages reaching out to them to explore how each one interacts with its conservation.

“I don’t want this book to be about me,” said Michael. “The river has been a far bigger giver to me than I could ever give back, but this is one thing I could do. This book is my way of sharing my observations and what I’ve learned over the past year. This was something I could offer.” Or as Brett Fessel said, “The next time you go to the Crystal River ask what you can offer. At the very least we ought to greet the river and say ‘Hi’ when we arrive.”

River Sacred—Uncovering the Crystal, by Michael Brennan is a limited release of 200 hand-bound booklets containing Michael’s black and white photos, poems, and what he discovered on his year-long journey on the Crystal River. It can be found at The Inn and Trail Gourmet in Glen Arbor and at Grocer’s Daughter Chocolate in Empire. There is no charge, but a donation to one of the organizations named in the booklet is encouraged.

MANITOU MUSIC

continues from page 6

acoustic blues, jazz, and country.” This allows them to create a musical experience with a rich history, a festive atmosphere, and a wide variety of song styles. 5 pm on the Glen Arbor Arts Center front porch. Free.

Saturday, July 29: The Traverse City Dance Project returns to Glen Arbor as part of their 2023 summer tour. This outdoor performance features original choreography, live music, and professional dancers from around the country. 7 pm at Nash Road Red Barn, 9805 Nash Road, Maple City. \$35 GAAC members, \$40 non-members.

Saturday, August 19: Drummunity

Percussionist Lori Fithian brings her collection of hand drums and percussion instruments to the Glen Arbor Arts Center. 1-3 pm.

Thursday, August 24: New Music Detroit

New Music Detroit (NMD) is a collective of musicians dedicated to performing groundbreaking musical works from the late 20th century to the present day. NMD performs new and adventurous classical music in various settings for various people. 7 pm in the Glen Lake School Auditorium.

For more information and to reserve tickets for these concerts, visit GlenArborArt.org/Events.

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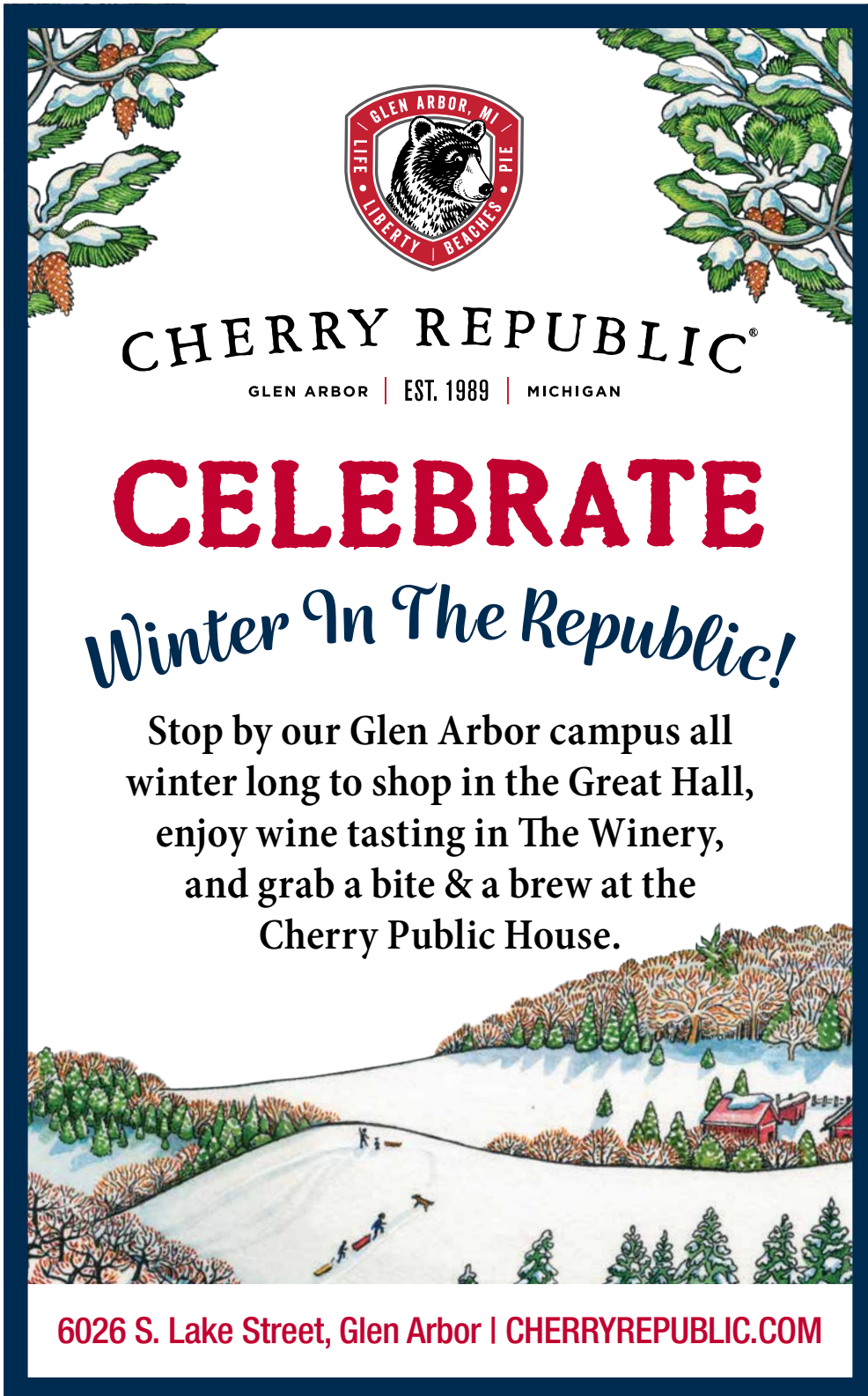
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