



## Habitat for Humanity makes waves for new homeowners

By Ross Boissoneau  
Sun contributor

Two new families are moving into the New Waves neighborhood in southeastern Leelanau County. The Habitat for Humanity project welcomes Misty VanderMeulen and Jedidiah Spiers and their three children, and Khan and Razma Totakhil and their five kids, with a dedication ceremony Oct. 10.

It's been a challenge for both families. Misty and Jedidiah—Jedi for short—met while working at Bill Marsh. At the time, Jedi and his young daughter were living in the basement of a rented home with several other roommates. At the same time, Misty was leaving a toxic relationship. She ended up packing up some clothing and essentials for herself and her two children, then moved into a shelter.



Khan Totakhil

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Their relationship grew while they lived in separate apartments in the same low-income facility. After two years they decided to search for a home with enough room for their blended family of five;



Photo credit Focal Flame Photography

Cam Land, a 23-year-old from Port Huron (wearing the "Run or Die" shirt) led the pack of 5K runners out of the starting gate at the Sleeping Bear Marathon on Oct. 4. Land would place second with a time of 18 minutes, 48 seconds. The full marathon course led harriers from Empire to the Dune Climb, through Glen Arbor and around the Glen Lakes and back to Empire. The race has been held since 2012.

## Odawa artist extends deceased animals' purpose "in a good way"

By Tim Mulherin  
Sun contributor

On a wall in Hank Bailey's bedroom is a can't-miss photographic print on a large canvas. Bailey, an Odawa (Ottawa) elder of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, is the unmistakable subject. He's in his powwow dancing regalia in a "bending of the knees" pose, as the Anishinaabe word for powwow—*Jingtamok*—translates.

The picture's stark blue background, in a shade of early twilight, is a perfect contrast against Bailey's decoratively attired, side-viewed body, his face illuminated. The fan of raptor feathers in his right hand, the roach headdress made from porcupine guard hairs and deer hair, and the top of the immature bald eagle bustle on his back all practically shimmer in the photographically arranged lighting. His regalia is trimmed in red and black, the colors representing the Black Wolf Clan, his own. Bailey's appearance is the embodiment of the

drum-and-song-accompanied dancing celebration of Anishinaabe identity, culture, and tradition.

In an article Bailey contributed to the *Glen Arbor Sun* in 2017, he wrote, "I can say without being ashamed that I have been brought to tears during dances. I have felt so good while

dancing it seemed like my feet were not even touching the ground."

Bailey, 75, began dancing in the 1990s as a Traditional dancer. (Other dance styles include Fancy Dance, Grass Dance, Woodland Dance, and women's Jingle Dress Dance.) His dancing has been reduced due to "just getting old

and slowing down." Nonetheless, he and his wife, Amy, "still try to go" to every Grand Traverse Band powwow.

After a three-and-a-half-year wait, Bailey received his deceased bald eagle from the National Eagle Repository in Commerce City, Colo. (Through the repository, golden and bald eagle feathers, body parts, or whole birds are made available only to Native Americans.) He "broke the bird down" himself, a skill acquired during his career with the GTB's Natural Resources Department as an inland fish and wildlife technician. Then he entrusted the eagle's remains to Odawa artist Fred Raphael, sometime in 2005. Raphael, known nationally among Native American dancers for his regalia designs, assembled Bailey's roach and bustle.

On a late August afternoon in 2024, Bailey served as my guide on an impromptu field trip. It turned out to be a surprise visit with Raphael at his art studio and home in Peshawbestown, which

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## Father-son baseball pilgrimage resumes as Tigers stalk October

By Jacob Wheeler  
Sun editor

Some traditions and rituals return season after season, some wither away, and some are reborn after years of hibernation.

Last month, my dad and I resumed our annual father-son baseball pilgrimage—this time to watch two games at Comerica Park in Detroit, where the Tigers were trying to stave off the rival Cleveland Guardians and gain a spot in the playoffs. Their roaring, red-hot start to the season had earned them the best record in baseball until July before they collapsed like a dozing cat and squandered a seemingly insurmountable 15.5-game lead over the team from Lake Erie.

A decade had lapsed since we last saw a Major League game together—a dramatic 11-inning Cubs' victory over Cincinnati in June 2015 at Wrigley Field in Chicago. We've been busy

since then—I as a father of two young children; Norm playing music or reciting poetry nearly every single night of the week during the summer months in Leelanau County. After all, it's difficult to justify leaving northern Michigan in the heart of our glorious summer.

But we scored tickets for a mid-week night game followed by a day game and found a downtown apartment within walking distance of the ballpark. Our first stop in the Motor City was lunch at Baobob Fare, an East-African restaurant founded by Burundi refugees on the northside where we met our Palestinian Detroit friend Lujine. Though shaped around baseball, our pilgrimages through the years have transcended sporting events; they've also been cultural immersions, which was particularly important back in the day before Leelanau and Traverse City hosted

See TIGERS on page 8



Jacob (left) and Norm watch the Tigers host Cleveland on Sept. 18





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# Gov. shutdown closes Sleeping Bear visitors center, programs. Campgrounds, destinations remain open

By Jacob Wheeler  
Sun editor

The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore's visitors center in Empire is closed due to the federal government shutdown that started Oct. 1.

Buses full of schoolchildren visiting from throughout Michigan will not have access to Park Ranger-led educational programing as they do most years. School trips to Sleeping Bear Dunes are particularly popular during the months of September and October.

Nevertheless, the Park is open to all. Visitors can still enjoy the Sleeping Bear Dune Climb, Pierce Stocking Scenic Drive, popular hiking trails and beaches, and the D.H. Day and Platte River campgrounds, which continue to operate with fee dollars.

According to former deputy superintendent Tom Ulrich, who retired from the National Park Service two years ago, the Park determined during previous government shutdowns that spending fee money to keep campgrounds open does not violate federal law. That's because the money comes from fees collected at Parks and is not allocated by Congress.

Sleeping Bear's two campgrounds



will remain open, with custodial services provided, until they close on schedule later in October. The Park's seven law enforcement rangers and a plumber will also remain on duty to ensure visitor safety. According to Ulrich, the Park has determined "they are necessary to protect life, health, safety and property."

While the Dune Climb and other popular destinations will remain open through the shutdown, bathrooms and trash receptacles will not be emptied or cleaned.

The shutdown will also hamper nonprofit partners that work with the Park, including the Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes, which maintains the Sleeping Bear Heritage Trail, a popular 22-mile multiuse trail which runs through the Lakeshore.

"Unfortunately, because our volunteers are supervised by Park staff and many of those staff members are currently furloughed, Friends volunteers are not able to serve at this time," wrote Friends executive director Laura Ann Johnson on Oct. 1.

"We remain hopeful that a budget will be passed soon. In the meantime, Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes is here, continuing our mission to support our extraordinary National Lakeshore."



Photo by Jeff Smith / Groundwork Center  
Drilling for renewables at the solar array on M-72 near Traverse City.

## Leelanau County October events

**October 10-12:** Northern Michigan Dance Festival at Dennos Museum in Traverse City.

**Saturday, Oct. 11:** Empire Heritage Day, 1-4 pm

• Birthday Open House at Glen Lake Community Library, 2-4 pm

• Rock the Light Trail run in Northport

• 10th annual Lake Leelanau Street Harvest Festival

**Sunday, Oct. 12:** Glen Lake Schools Fall Flannel Festival, 11 am-2 pm

• Lord of the Gourd pumpkin carving at Cherry Republic, 1-3 pm

**Wednesday, Oct. 15:** Glen Lake Community Library hosts Ginger Langdon, *Empire After Dark*, 7 pm

**October 15-19:** Frankfort Film Festival

**Friday, Oct. 17:** Suttons Bay Fall Finale Walk, 5-8 pm

**Saturday, Oct. 18:** GhouL-Friends and Guy-Goyles Day in Glen Arbor

**Saturday, Oct. 25:** Folded Leaf in Cedar hosts "Snuggery Festival," 12-9 pm

• Leland Fall Frenzy

**Sunday, Oct. 26:** Glen Arbor hosts Trick or Treating, 12-2 pm

### Live Music

**Bel Lago Winery,** Saturday & Sunday, 3:30-5:30 pm, Tuesday & Friday, 5:30-7:30 pm

**Cherry Republic,** Tuesday & Thursday, 5-8 pm

**Dune Bird Winery,** Wednesday & Sunday, 3-6 pm

**Folded Leaf (Cedar),** Wednesdays 6-8:30 pm, Saturdays, 5-7:30 pm

**French Valley Vineyard,** Monday & Thursday, 4-7 pm

**Glen Arbor Wines,** Fridays & Saturdays, 7-9 pm, Sundays, 5-7 pm

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# Empire Museum Celebrates Heritage Day on October 11

From staff reports

The Empire Area Museum celebrates Heritage Day this year on Saturday, Oct. 11, from 1-4 pm with old-time music and old-fashioned arts and crafts and tricks and treats. Treats include Moomers ice cream, free popcorn and samples of homemade maple sugar candy, sauerkraut cake, apple cider and butter made on site. Exhibits include demonstrations of yarn spinning, hand quilting, rug hooking, chair caning, corn shelling, washboard laundering, sauerkraut making and log cutting.

The entire Empire Area Museum complex will be open on Heritage

Day, including the main museum and store, the one-room schoolhouse, the fire-hose house, and the Billy Beeman Barn. Must-see exhibits include the turn-of-the-century Empire saloon and kitchen, the blacksmith and woodworking shops, the railroad and lumbering exhibits, and several old-time vehicles, including horse-drawn wagons and sleighs, early motor cars, and an authentic 1956 Sleeping Bear Dunesmobile. The museum's newest acquisition—the original butcher-block table from the old Deering grocery store—is on display in the Billy Beeman Barn.

Admission to the Empire Area Museum and Heritage Day celebration is



free. Local history books, children's stories and other merchandise may be purchased to help support the museum, and donations are appreciated. Note that the Fire Department next door will also be open for tours on Heritage Day.

# Fishtown Preservation lands headquarters in Leland's Van Raalte House

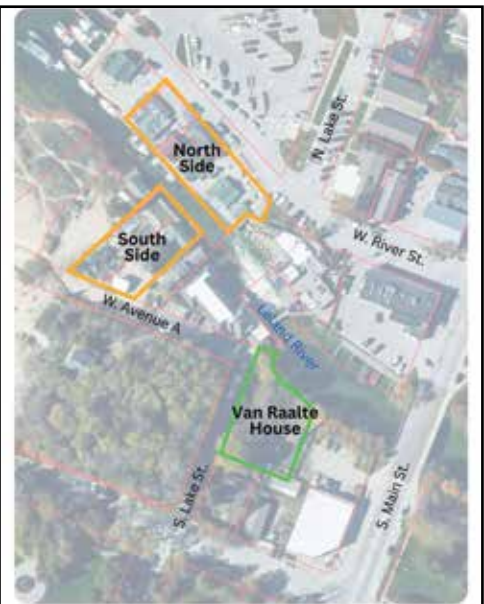
From staff reports

The Fishtown Preservation Society (FPS) announces the successful purchase of the John and Janice Van Raalte House and surrounding property at 101 South Lake Street, adjacent to Historic Fishtown. This landmark addition preserves a vital piece of the Leland riverfront and provides FPS with its long-sought permanent home to sustain and grow its preservation mission.

The two-story house, built by John and Janice Van Raalte in 1960, is located unobtrusively next to Fishtown's south side, on Lake Leelanau above the Leland Dam. Its strong original construction will serve as the foundation for Fishtown's operational center and allow FPS to grow beyond the confines of the small space that it has rented from the Leelanau Historical Society since 2007. The structure and appearance of the house will change little, and given the significance of the family in Leland's past and present, FPS will continue to acknowledge its origin as the Van Raalte House.

Moving to the Van Raalte House will bring FPS staff into physical proximity to Fishtown to simplify and clarify the role of Fishtown Preservation in overseeing the work of saving and caring for the historic working waterfront. The additional space and support will allow FPS to expand programming that supports the larger community, including by using Great Lakes commercial fishing as a lens through which to understand the past, present, and future of the Great Lakes environment and economy.

FPS plans to enhance interpretation, displays, and educational programming within Fishtown, while retaining the vibrant retail spaces that have drawn visitors to Fishtown since the 1950s.



FPS owns the fishing vessels Joy and Janice Sue along with their commercial fishing licenses, and the support of commercial fishing remains central to the organization's mission. The new location will include space for research, volunteer, internship, and apprenticeship components. Having dock space on the Leland River above the dam also opens possibilities for environmental programming on Lake Leelanau.

The Van Raalte family approached FPS in 2024, after the generational transfer of the house, because they preferred that a not-for-profit acquire the property rather than a commercial developer. The land is currently zoned commercial, allowing multiple structures up to 35 feet in height. By purchasing the property, FPS forestalls development and preserves the existing river viewshed from the M-22 bridge, helping to sustain the current look and feel of both Fishtown and Leland.

Thanks to support from generous donors, FPS has completed raising the \$2.2

million to purchase the property, and is now engaged in fundraising for the substantial modifications to convert a private home into the FPS operations center, as well as to meet modern code and ADA requirements. The estimated cost for the renovation and site work is \$1,067,000. FPS has raised approximately two-thirds of this total, with \$420,000 remaining.

Fishtown Preservation invites everyone who treasures Fishtown to join in support of this project and to share in this encompassing vision for Fishtown's future. The goal is to complete fundraising by the end of October and begin renovation work before the end of this year, and for FPS to move into its new home by late in 2026.



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# Greg Miesch looks back, forward at The Homestead

By Ross Boissoneau  
Sun contributor

Chef Greg Miesch knew he had a lot to learn. Despite decades in the hospitality industry, taking the reins of the culinary department as Senior Manager - Food & Beverage at The Homestead was different than anything he'd done before. It was a challenge he was eager to take on, but he wanted to make sure he understood what worked and what didn't before he made any big changes. "I didn't know how a resort of this size truly functioned," he says. "I didn't think it was a good to go in (and make changes) when I didn't know what worked."

Now, after a summer spent studying the ins and outs of the resort, he's looking ahead. That look ahead actually started last month, when he was able to open Nonna's Ristorante, which features classically-inspired contemporary Italian cuisine.

Miesch's background includes work in both the front and back of the house. Following studies at Art Institute of Chicago's School of Culinary he worked with both a corporate sommelier and The International Sommeliers Guild. He went on to head Fion Wine & Spirits in Chicago, 25-seat bar featuring small production wine and spirits, as well as monthly coursed-pairing dinners which he planned and executed.

In 2017, he moved to Bloomington, Ill., to work at Epiphany Farms Hospitality Group, where he oversaw larger programs and groups of employees. It was also there that he had his first chance to open a restaurant. He followed that with a move to Lexington, Ill., to start a new destination restaurant, Lexington Social, a 50-seat French-inspired bistro located inside a renovated train depot. He split his time between the kitchen, bar, and managing the restaurant.

In 2021, Miesch moved back to his home state of Michigan, where he cooked in several restaurants as well as a few event companies dedicated to small, high-end private dining experiences.

All of this prepared him for The Homestead. Sort of. He'd never worked at a property the size of The Homestead, with what amounts to seven affiliated eateries, including three at the beach, Manitou Passage Golf Club, Whiskers, Cavanaugh's and the resort's flagship restaurant, Nonna's. He's also ostensibly in charge of the resort's banquet service, though he says he relied completely on the staff already in place to prepare food for the various weddings, receptions and other special events the resort hosts.

His first big challenge was Cavanaugh's, which demanded more of his energy and attention than he'd anticipated. "I'd never built out a grocerant," he says. Part grocery, part deli, part pizzeria, it sells ready-made sandwiches, snacks,

and whatever guests need in a pinch, Miesch says. That included everything from insect repellent and shaving cream to playing cards and handy groceries.

At the same time, he had to ready the other outlets for the summer, including hiring staff. He was able to get Whiskers, the resort's indoor-outdoor pub-type restaurant, going without too much trouble. He left things mostly in place at Manitou Passage.

Rather than immediately take on revamping and staffing Nonna's, he made sure service was restored at the beachside outlets. While he didn't open the window at poolside, he was able to hire staff and opened both the bar and Café Manitou.

As with virtually every other business in the region, finding enough quality staff has been a challenge. "Hiring has proven to be a bit more difficult than I originally imagined, but we've managed to get our hands on a core group of year-round people that share the same ideals as far as quality of service and food are concerned." Miesch also makes sure to praise the temporary workers at the resort for their skill and dedication. "The Jamaican workers are some of the most amazing people you will ever meet. They're kind-hearted, hardworking, and ... always in a good mood."

To his surprise, Miesch also found himself heavily involved in the resurrected Music on the Mountain, the outdoor concert series at the top of the resort's ski hill. He was dealing with contracts with the artists and securing and promoting food and beverages for sale adjacent to the venue atop Bay Mountain.

It was a lot.

With the post-Labor Day closure of the beachside bar and Café Manitou, Miesch was finally able to turn his attention and staff to Nonna's. Its Sept. 18 reopening coincided with the last Music on the Mountain concert. Both were well attended, resulting in one of those problems that are good to have: the nearby parking lots were all full. The restaurant, known for its intimate dining experience and classic fare, is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, and Miesch is experimenting with Sunday service as well.

Miesch is already planning for next year. "There are so many different possibilities," he says. At Café Manitou, he will be revamping the bistro menu and leaning more into seafood. That's one of the more obvious examples, but he says, "All the menus will be modified."

He wants to both modernize the offerings while remaining true to what The Homestead has been known for. It's a delicate balancing act, and he says he is taking into consideration the comments from both customers and those who work at the resort and the restaurant, many of whom have been there 20 years or more. "There's a lot of nostalgia at



The Homestead. I want to make sure it makes sense to the guests and staff."

While summer is over, ski season is on the horizon. Miesch says he will be looking at revving up CQ's, the buffet restaurant that is adjacent to and part of Cavanaugh's.

It's all part of a process, learning about the resort, its culture, and what he can bring to the table, literally and figuratively. "I didn't want to make any rash decisions. A huge priority for me from the start has been to establish the foundation for an excellent restaurant and service culture, both with the staff and guests," says Miesch.

Overall, he's pleased with what he and the staff accomplished in his first summer, and he's looking forward to more. "This first few months for me has all about watching, listening and learning. We've made a few small changes, tweaks here and there, but nothing major," he says. "I never really foresaw much of that happening until next season, after I have a more thorough understanding of what's worked in the past, what hasn't, and why."

## Stephanie Mills examines home

From staff reports

The Glen Lake Library will host author and environmentalist Stephanie Mills on Wednesday, Oct. 22, from 6-8 pm. She'll lead a participatory workshop to depict your knowledge of and raise questions about the nature of your home territory. Using Peter Berg's classic workbook, Mills will facilitate graphic descriptions and revelations of our whereabouts. Space for the workshop is limited, so please contact the library to register in advance.

Now semi-retired, Mills is the author of seven books, including *In Service of the Wild* and *Epicurean Simplicity*. Over her 50 years in the ecology movement, she has taught, organized, and lectured around the U.S. and abroad. She has lived in Leelanau County since 1984. For more information, call the library at 231-326-5361, or visit [GlenLakeLibrary.net](http://GlenLakeLibrary.net).



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# Belko Peace Lecture features Segal on immigration

By Linda Engelhard  
Sun contributor

If you take a leisurely drive along Leelanau roads and read the names on street signs and mailboxes, the immigrant nature of our peninsula is obvious: Carlson, Kalchik, Fredrickson, Pleva, Putnam, Fleis. The Native Americans of Leelanau likely worried about what these newcomers would mean for their way of life. More recently, the list has expanded to include names like Moreno, Perez, and Martinez. And now the descendants of early European immigrants are wondering how these newer immigrants will affect their lives.

On Oct. 11, Karen Puschel Segal will speak at Trinity Church in Northport for the 2025 Belko Peace Lecture. Her topic is “The Immigration Challenge in America Today.” Karen had a 20-year career in the Department of State, first as an intelligence analyst of Soviet Affairs and then as a diplomat in Russia. Upon moving to Traverse City, she became Co-Chair and Director of NMC’s International Affairs Forum. Now, Karen leads a local team resettling families from Afghanistan and Ukraine. She knows first-hand how our nation has been dealing with immigrants, including right here in northern Michigan.

The Belko Peace Lecture began 20 years ago when the Rev. Bill Belko challenged the Trinity Church Education and Outreach Committee to present a lecture for the public on the subject of peace. With no precedent, the committee began with local speakers but soon expanded to national speakers like Dr. Gustav Niebuhr and Rabbi Brad Hirschfield. This year, on Oct. 11, they return to local expertise to tackle the question of immigration, one of today’s most controversial issues.

As the granddaughter of immigrants, my perspective is deeply rooted in observing my grandparents’ lives. They worked so diligently to contribute to this country, laboring for long days on their farm and raising nine children, some who served in the military or built homes, and some who became nurses or artists. But as challenging as their lives were, no one ever added to their burdens by stopping them or detaining them, demanding to see their immigration documents. In fact, they were likely too hard at work to investigate what their immigration status was.

In recent years, the immigration messages coming from Washington have become increasingly demeaning



Karen Puschel Segal

and cruel. Yet, the behavior and character of the immigrants I know are very much like those of my grandparents, except that fear has now been added to their daily experience. For 20 years, I had the privilege of teaching English to language learners in Michigan and Texas. One of my favorite memories is teaching a class of 12 students, each of whom spoke a different language. What they shared was the inability to tell me about their experiences and traumas until they learned enough English to begin describing their journeys.

Some of the students, like Thet, had escaped by hiding in the tree limbs of Southeast Asian jungles during the day, absolutely silent, and traveling only at night. Nabil escaped Iran with his family after his grandfather had been murdered for his Bahai faith. When Alexandra was targeted by local gangs, her mother insisted they cross the Rio Grande to safety, but the current was too strong, and her mother was washed away downstream when she lost her grip on Alexandra’s arm. Qian’s parents carefully followed every immigration law when they were offered jobs in the United States. Not certain that they would like their new positions, they left Qian with his grandparents in Shanghai, and after a year of enjoying the work, they applied for Qian’s visa. Ten years later, as an awkward teenager, he was finally granted a visa to join his parents and try to learn English quickly enough to pass his high school exams. Telling immigrants to self deport and follow the rules is an unkind cliché, not a realistic solution.

Unless we are Native American, we are all the descendants of immigrants. Much of our country’s infrastructure was built by immigrant labor, including major railroads and bridges. Our amazing restaurant choices include recipes from the immigrant community. I remember when a friend from California introduced me, in 1972, to a food that I had never experienced - a taco! Our lives are enriched by music, from classical to salsa, another gift from immigrants. Our country is a rich tapestry of cultures. We have the ability to develop a system that works for citizens and immigrants alike, and at this fragile time

in history, we do not have the luxury of sitting on the sidelines.

One step toward moving forward is learning more about the issue. Karen Segal will speak in Northport on Oct. 11 at 7 p.m., and again in Traverse City at the Grand Traverse Humanist meeting on Monday, Oct. 13, at 6 p.m. Both events are free and open to the public.

John Foster Dulles, President Eisenhower’s Secretary of State, said this about solving problems: “The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year.” By that standard, we have certainly not achieved success, but learning more about the problem can help us move closer to a just and humane solution.

## GL Library hosts open house and authors

From staff reports

The Glen Lake Library invites community members to an open house on Saturday, Oct. 11, from 2-4 pm to celebrate the fifth birthday of its new facility. The open house will feature refreshments (cider and donuts), live music, library tours and demos, a family scavenger hunt, and outdoor games. Information about the library’s solar power installation, currently under development, will also be available. The solar project has been made possible thanks to a generous gift from the Friends of the Glen Lake Community Library. For more information, contact the library at 231-326-5361, or visit [GlenLakeLibrary.net](http://GlenLakeLibrary.net).

The Library is hosting upcoming readings by two local authors. On Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 7 pm, Empire resident Ginger Langdon will present her new book, *Empire After Dark*. The collection of essays recount her many magical encounters with the varied animal residents of the village. This is the first book written by Langdon, who retired to Empire after a long corporate career.

On Friday, Oct. 17 at 6 pm, the library will host Glover Davis. He’ll share selections of his poetry from various collections including *Academy of Dreams*. Davis is Professor Emeritus of Creative Writing at San Diego State University, where he taught for almost 40 years. His work has been featured in many journals, including *Ploughshares*, *Shenandoah Review* and *The New England Review*. Davis splits his time between Empire and Mason, Texas.

Both authors will have copies of their books available for signing and purchase.

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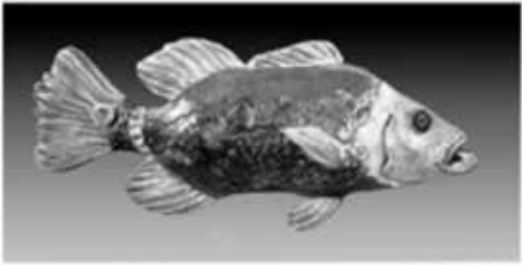
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# Vintage Views series offers connection to local history

By Rebecca G. Carlson  
Sun contributor

From the first *Gazetteer of the State of Michigan*, 1838, author John T. Blois explains his goal of “disabusing the public mind... of the gross misconceptions” about the state of Michigan, “[A] State, as fair and rich by nature, as her population are high-minded, enterprising, and intelligent” (viii). After sitting down for a second interview (because one was not enough) with M. Christine Byron and her husband Thomas R. Wilson, creators and authors of the Vintage Views series of books, they picked up Blois’ baton continuing his endeavors in sharing the stories, histories, and culture that make Michigan the “Peninsulam Amoenam.” As we settled in over coffee and donuts in a charming 1950s cabin, our circuitous conversation highlighted the reasons why each Byron and Wilson work offers a fascinating journey through Michi-

gan’s tourism history and more. The rich, collaborative partnership of Chris and Tom is the catalyst in creating the success of their Vintage Views series. This collection of books moves beyond the typical coffee table offering. As Chris pointed out during the interview, the goal for each book is “to feel like time travel.” Cultural and historical treasures are located within each Vintage Views book. According to a review on Leelanau.com, these books are “[A] marvelous mix of vintage fun and facts of a time you’ll cherish.” Another review from the *Michigan Historical Review* (MHR) claims each work, “successfully blend[s] words and images to reveal... interesting [and] illustrated tale[s]” (Federspiel). Furthermore, each book “is filled with carefully chosen images and examples of ephemera and text that both explain and illustrate th[e] delightful bit[s]... [of Michigan] history.”

Defined simply, ephemera is “something of no lasting importance” (*Webster’s Dictionary*). Ephemera can be everyday items, not meant to be saved, such as meal receipts, travel tickets and brochures, letters and postcards, and pictures. And yet, how many of us hold onto these ‘ephemeral objects’ as a connection to a cherished memory? I have old postcards from my grandparents sent from their trips, old birthday cards, and my personal favorite, handwritten recipe cards – all keepsakes to me that seemingly serve no purpose but as a lovely reminder of my family.

Chris Byron even dedicates her latest work, “*Perfect Omena Day*” *Diaries of Rebecca L. Richmond*, to those collectors of ephemera. “This book is dedicated to those people who have saved various historical documents, including photographs, letters, and diaries and donated them to historical archives, libraries, museums, and other history collections, so that they are preserved for future generations.” Ephemeral objects such as diaries, letters, a pair of opera glasses, or a pressed flower within the pages of a book can provide direct access to experiences and perspectives of an individual who is no longer living. Without the ‘collectors’ and ‘savers’ of everyday items, we wouldn’t have the opportunity of uncovering the surprising little kernels of information that turn into bigger historical and cultural discoveries.

Collecting historical postcards of

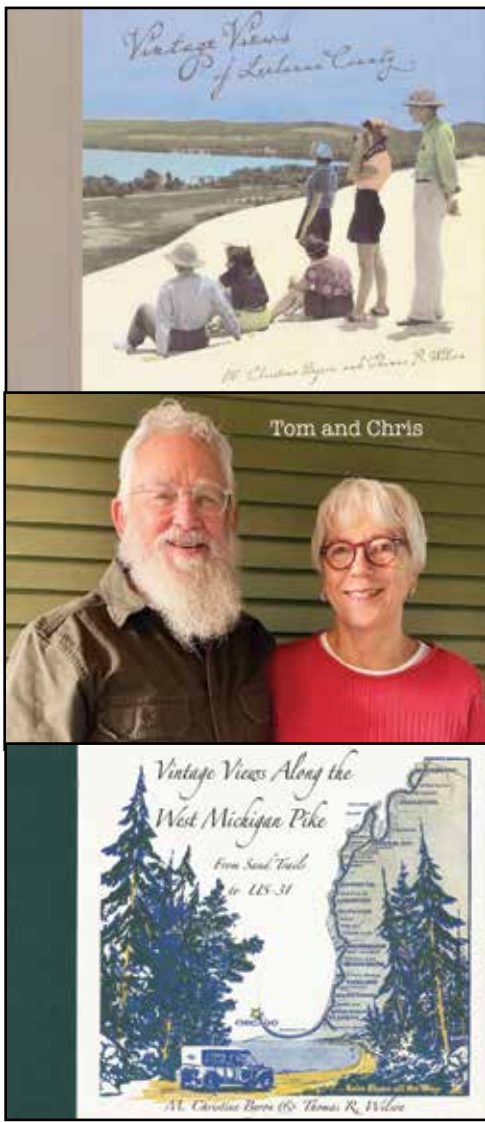
Michigan railroad depots laid the path for the future of Vintage Views. Then, Chris and Tom grew their postcard collection concentrating on postcards of West Michigan and Glen Arbor. Finally, this focus expanded to include historical postcards, tourist brochures, and maps encompassing all of Michigan. In 2025, their collection of vintage Michigan postcards has reached 35,000, and they consider themselves a smaller collection. In their postcard collector’s group, there is one member who has around 250,000 postcards. As Tom offered, once history “gets its tentacles in you” there is no going back.

The spark for researching Michigan transportation and cultural history began as Chris and Tom made more “connections” through tangible ephemera such as diaries, receipts, and pictures they came across at various antique and postcard shows. What is the attraction for this research into Michigan travel history? According to Chris, it’s “finding something you didn’t know you were looking for.” Truth. In the early years of research, Chris and Tom wanted to know “how [Michigan] was portrayed” and “what drew people to the area?”

As the research treasure hunt heated up and rabbit holes were traveled, Tom commented that, maybe surprisingly, contemporary “ads offer[ed]” as much “context to history as a photograph,” and there were “treasures buried in some vintage advertisements.” As an example, a 1920s Glen Arbor resort brochure claims, “There are no sneezes in Glen Arbor breezes” pointing out that tourists with allergy concerns wanting to breathe healthy, cool air versus the hot, congested summer air of big cities like Chicago would be attracted to the area.

In asking about any surprises discovered during their many research sessions, Chris and Tom offered two examples. One surprise was finding out about Camp Davis located around Glen Arbor from 1902 – 1908. This camp served as an engineering and surveying camp for University of Michigan students. The other surprise finding led to Chris’ latest book on Rebecca L. Richmond, an early 1900s Omena summer resident. A forgotten box of papers from the early 1900s were tucked away in an Omena cottage connected to Richmond. Essentially, this box of 100-plus years treasure trove of papers was sitting in a corner, waiting to be re-discovered. As I can attest, touching and reading precious primary documents are a privilege and open a doorway that allows us to make a connection to a person or event.

According to both Tom and Chris, “writing was a fluke.” In exhibiting their postcard collection and research stories during a slideshow to a packed audience held in Empire in early 2000, a publisher approached Chris and Tom about writing a book. As Tom realized,



there were “not many books written on tourism in Michigan” at the time. When they submitted the first manuscript layout, the publisher claimed it was “the most organized manuscript ever.” This is not a surprise when considering Tom’s expertise as a vintage print creator, genealogist, and researcher along with Chris’ talents as a notecard designer, librarian, and researcher. Given the unexpected opportunity to explore their love of Michigan and use their research savviness, they have created a Michigan Tourism Canon of works to be treasured in their Vintage Views Series.

What future projects are on the docket for Chris and Tom? Chris expressed an obsession “with dance halls” and “tea houses” as well as other varied projects connected to tourism and up north Michigan ephemera.

As I savored my time with Chris and Tom during our Michigan tourism history master class, my head was spinning with ideas for my own rabbit holes to pursue. Their years of work are directly responsible for our understanding and connection to historical people, events, and locations throughout the Leelanau Peninsula and beyond. When you see them in the area, I encourage questions about their pursuits, as anyone will find that both Chris and Tom are very generous and patient with their time and sharing their knowledge. Finally, to all those ‘collectors’ who hold on to history, thank you.

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# Celebrating songs of Leelanau: André Villoch’s “Cedar”

From staff reports

Our story series celebrating songs inspired by Leelanau County and the Sleeping Bear Dunes continues with André Villoch’s “Cedar.”

“This song was written around 1996,” said Villoch. “I was in college at the time working summers as a dishwasher in the kitchen at a summer camp in Leelanau County. We had a cook’s assistant named Marcus who was quite adventurous—like a big brother who was great about encouraging us out of our comfort zones. A couple of us in the kitchen played guitar and without television or internet, we spent a lot of our evenings teaching each other songs outside our bunkhouse or down on the beach.

“Marcus was the only one of us who had a vehicle, an old Volkswagen bus with two 12v hairdryers for defrosting the wind shield. Marcus got wind of a regular open mic at the Cedar Tavern and convinced us to go down and join in one Tuesday in July. For the week leading up to that Tuesday I was the picture of procrastination, hence the chorus ‘I’ll get around to it...’ I had never played in front of an audience other than some gigs with my band in high school, for other high school students. Then one Tuesday night a half dozen of us piled into the VW bus and descended on the tavern. Marcus got us signed up with the guy running the show; the Leelanau godfather of folk: Patrick Niemisto.

“It was scary. most of us were minors drinking pitchers of Coke. The tavern staff was none too pleased that we took up a big table but didn’t make them much money. But we came back

every Tuesday after that and for the next few summers. Once they made us leave saying we were not old enough to be in there. But we came back the next week and eventually we found our footing and started to build friendships with the players in the area. The locals at the bar would sometimes turn around to face us when we started playing. They would sing along, even when they didn’t know the words.

“When word got back to the extremely conservative camp that we were moonlighting at the open mic in Cedar, efforts were made to keep us on camp, lest we be tempted by bad influences. One of the board members bought us a TV with a built-in VHS player hoping that would keep us on-site. But we had experienced a whole new world of Leelanau County—the incredible music scene.

“From then on the kitchen staff developed a reputation for being rebels, rule breakers and sometimes, outcasts. We loved it. It inspired the song. It’s about the life we were living during the week feeding the wealthy kids was supposed to be for college money. But a mutual love of playing and an adventurous spark led us to something greater that would change the course of my professional life and introduce me to musicians that I am proud to share the stage with to this day.

“I have lived my adult life in four states and played gigs in all of them. But Leelanau County has something special, thanks in no small part to Patrick Niemisto and that group of musicians and songwriters that gathered and grew out to the Cedar open mic nights. I am grateful Marcus was there to challenge

us to load up and head to the far way magical land of the Cedar Tavern. I am grateful Patrick was willing to give us some time on the mic, though I am sure we were sometimes terrible. It set me on a course to being a songwriter and a gigging musician, which I do to this day. If not for the trips to Cedar I may not have had the courage to start performing. I would probably be teaching English right now. I smile when I think of how many children over the years have been spared from my teaching style thanks to Patrick Niemisto, Marcus, and the open mic nights on Tuesdays at the Cedar tavern.”

“Cedar” appeared on the album Gum Wrapper Roses (2003 Gum Wrapper Songs ASCAP) and is available for download or streaming on all streaming services

*Previous installments in our Songs of Leelanau series featured: Chris Skelenger’s “Old Yellow Dog,” Patrick Niemisto’s “Sand” about the megastorm that hit Glen Arbor 10 years ago; Hazel Olberhelman’s “Leelanau Theme Song”; Ingemar Johansson and Song of the Lakes’ “Pearl of America”; Laura*



Photo by Chris Cosentino, Black River Photography

Hood’s “Eddy Up”; Les Dalglish’s “The Ways of Leelanau”; Jeff Maharry’s “Good Harbor Bay”; Seth Bernard’s instrumental ode to the Manitou Islands; Blake Elliott’s “Small Town,” and Louann Lechler’s “I’m Proud to Say I Live in Leelanau County.”



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TIGERS

continues from page 1

diverse restaurants, cosmopolitan gatherings and live music throughout the year.

During the summers of the 1990s, we would drive to Chicago and watch three to four Cubs and White Sox games over 72 hours—sometimes squeezing in a night game up the road in Milwaukee. Our excursions also included Shakespeare theater at Navy Pier, a performance of Cirque du Soleil, and late-night dinners in Greektown (Norm hitchhiked through the Greek isles in the '70s and picked up some of the language and customs, making him a lifelong Grecophile/Helenophile).

But baseball—the original American national pastime, this methodical, pastoral affair played with a sphere wound together with a leather cover hand-stitched in red thread—baseball formed the backbone of our father-son bond. If Telemachus had played a modern sport while seeking his father, the Greek classic *The Odyssey* would have been set on a baseball diamond.

Our family's baseball lineage stretched back to my great grandfather, Pete Brondyke, the child of Dutch immigrants and a hardscrabble farmer in New Era, Michigan, who shoveled coal during the Great Depression to make ends meet and feed his family. A devout Christian who worshipped every Sunday, Grandpa Brondyke also loved the American game. When he and his wife Hattie retired to a trailer park near an orange grove in Bradenton, Fla., my dad would visit them and watch spring training games.

On our drive down to the Motor City in September, dad remembered attending a Detroit-Cleveland game together with his grandfather and his mom in 1968, a few weeks before his 17th birthday. That contest featured a pitching matchup between Denny McClain—who would win 31 games and the Cy Young award as the Tigers won the World Series—and the great Cuban hurler Luis Tiant. Tiant won that game, 2-0. 1968 was called “the year of the pitcher,” in an era where hurlers finished their own games rather than yield to the bullpen.

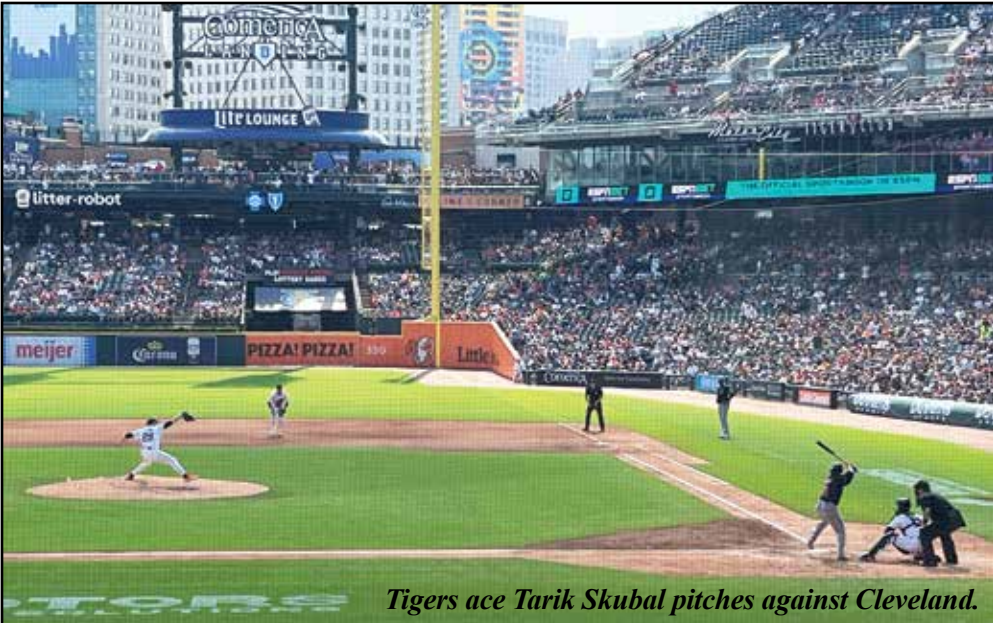
In 1989, dad took my sister and me to our first big-league games at Wrigley Field. On Julia's birthday, April 27, we watched the Cubs beat the defending World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers, 1-0, on a cold spring Chicago day with the wind swirling off nearby Lake Michigan. Rising phenom Greg Maddux beat last year's pitcher of the year Orel Hershiser and scored the game's only run.

We stayed that night downtown at the Allerton Hotel on Michigan Avenue. Ever outgoing, Norm saw Dodgers star, and former Tiger great, Kirk Gibson getting into a limousine across the street. “Hey Newberry!” he yelled to Gibbie, who he claims waved back (Gibson was rumored to have a hunting cabin near Newberry in the Upper Peninsula).

Good friends joined us on our 1990s summer baseball trips: Dave Early, who then worked at Lake Forest Academy north of Chicago, where we would crash in empty dorm rooms; Ray Nargis, and his sons Jason and Tim; Crispin Campbell and his daughters, Elara and Maya, who drove down to Chicago with us in Glen Arbor artist Suzanne Wilson's old white van.

One night in Milwaukee, we saw the visiting Tigers push a game into extra innings when Detroit's legendary shortstop Alan Trammell danced to his right side to backhand a ground ball and looped a throw to first base in time to beat the Brewers' batter with the bases loaded and two outs. The game went into 14 innings, the concession stands stopped serving beer, and we heard a Milwaukee fan who had moved down behind home plate audibly complain, “Hurry up and finish this game. I'm sobering up!”

The baseball experience was different then. Even Wrigley Field, the crowned jewel of old ballparks, now boasts a video monitor over the left field bleachers, restaurants, beer gardens, and a mall of shops inside the complex. Back in 1989, during our first family visit, Wrigley felt like a worn and cherished cathedral. Dingy and odorous in the concourses, but the sight of the ivy growing on the outfield walls, the hand-operated scoreboard above the bleachers, and the thrill of the green



Tigers ace Tarik Skubal pitches against Cleveland.

grass—these shaped the senses of an 11-year-old boy as much as a first kiss.

Dad's college friend Tom Martinsen from Milwaukee joined the three Wheelers for that April 1989 game at the Friendly Confiner. Back then, a simple McDonald's sat across the street from Wrigley. Martinsen went there to grab a burger after the game and noticed a payphone in the corner of the restaurant. When it rang, he answered it. The caller, whom Martinsen guessed had listened to the game on the radio, asked if the Cubs had won the 1-0 game on a legitimate double, or whether the Dodgers' outfielder had misplayed the ball. Martinsen thought about it and responded, “I would have scored it a double.”

“Great. Thanks,” the caller responded and hung up.

Martinsen concluded that the poor Cubs fan, stuck in an office, probably called that pay phone after every afternoon game, knowing that whoever answered was coming from the ballpark. Nowadays, the fan would have watched the game on his tablet or his phone from his cubicle.

At Comerica Park in Detroit last month, as we watched Tigers ace Tarik Skubal take the mound and try to salvage their season, we couldn't help but lament at how baseball has changed through the decades. The fans' experience now felt like a sensory assault: full of noise and flashing video screens, numbers and distractions—a gauntlet run through

a hyper-technological arcade of slot machines and virtual experiences. The scoreboard presentation seemed more geared toward an online audience with a lower attention span who are more attracted to football or NASCAR-style smash-mouth highlight reels. Ignoring the noise and concentrating on baseball's subtleties and strategy on the field required mental and emotional energy.

But the prose and plays of the grand old game would guide us through our crisis of faith. The foul ball couldn't have come at a better time.

The ball ricocheted off the outstretched bat of the Cleveland hitter, looped over the protective netting behind home plate, and fell into the hands of a middle-aged man wearing Detroit Tiger orange about 20 feet from us. If the great baseball announcer Ernie Harwell were still alive, he would have used his on-air creative license to invent a hometown for the fan. “A lucky man from Lake Leelanau caught that foul ball,” Ernie might have said.

“Give it to the kid. Give it to the kid!” persuasive shouts immediately rang out in the box seats all around us. The fan from Lake Leelanau abided by the baseball tradition of generosity and handed the ball to the kid holding a sign declaring that he had skipped school to celebrate his 7th birthday and watch Skubal pitch.

Baseball had attracted yet another follower.

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SCAN ME TO BOOK



# Nobody talks about bedbugs, but we should

By Kathleen Stocking  
Sun contributor

You won't get bedbugs from reading this. (You might get them from not reading this.)

Since we all grew up with the nursery rhyme, "Sleep tight. Don't let the bedbugs bite," and were told they didn't exist anymore, we thought bedbugs were mythical. What did a bedbug even look like? A mosquito? A beetle? And ant? No one knew because, pretty much, there weren't any.

A bedbug looks like a small reddish brown fighter jet, like the kind they have at the Cherry Festival, the Blue Angels, but smaller, like a sesame seed, with little vestigial wings. Yes, bedbugs could once fly, long ago when no human being would have been alive then to see them. Bedbugs were here before we were and, unnerving as the thought is, might be here after we're gone.

Bedbugs were all over Europe 400 years ago. The Europeans brought them to America. The bedbugs didn't spread that fast. There weren't any big cities. Bedbugs like cities.

And by the time we had big cities, we had DDT, Dichlorodiphenyl-trichloroethane. You may recall DDT. It's use began in the 1940s and was effective. It was used until the 1970s when people figured out that it caused birth defects. And not just in the bald

eagles, that fierce symbol of spirit and strength we like to see on our money, but all living creatures.

Home remedies for bedbugs, like putting mint oil in your mop bucket water, and putting lavender sachets in drawers seemed to work, or people thought so.

But travel increased the spread – check the seams of your luggage. And hotels have now started using bedbug resistant mattress covers. Bedbugs can hide in your clothing, your hair, your shoes. Basically anywhere.

A magnifying glass and high-powered flashlight are necessary to check small dark areas, like baseboards. Once bedbugs are established, and they multiply rapidly, they are very hard to get rid of and can hibernate without food for a year.

They cannot survive without you. So if your home is infested and you can leave for a year, they'll probably be dead by the time you get back, especially if there's a long winter with temps below 30. But who can afford to leave their home for a year? Most of us only have one. And even if you had many houses, your home could become reinfested. All it takes it one. Bedbugs are a problem that must be addressed in situ, for the most part, in the place your blood-filled body lives.

Bedbugs, as the name would imply, are in your bed. They like you sleeping. They are nocturnal. You cannot feel

them biting because they inject a tiny bit of anesthetic.

Most people do not know what bedbugs look like. They have never seen one. On the off chance they wake up in the middle of the night and see a bedbug, if they don't know what it is, they will kill it or brush it aside and forget about it.

This is where the problem starts. Bedbugs took the advice to "be fruitful and multiply" to heart many millions of years ago. Bedbugs breed. And they will breed in the seams of your mattresses, behind your baseboards, and in between the pages of your books.

Many people feel bedbugs, like anything unpleasant, are a taboo subject. But problems are not solved by not addressing them. And information helps us deal with fear of the unknown.

Heating the entire house to 118 degrees with a big machine is expensive—and it works. Sealing small things in plastic for three days works because bedbugs cannot live without oxygen. If you have one bedbug, you can probably deal with it with home remedies. If you have a massive infestation, because you didn't know you had them because you didn't know what they were, treating the problem will be expensive.

When the global bedbug infestation first started, and people were too confused or embarrassed to talk about it, there was little information. Thirty years ago, Wikipedia didn't have information on bedbugs. Of course, 30 years ago we didn't have Wikipedia.

Bedbugs, on the other hand, have always been with us.

## Northport Arts seeks mural designs

From staff reports

The Northport Arts Association invites artists and designers to submit original mural concepts for five tile installations, each to be prominently displayed in public buildings throughout the Village of Northport.

Submissions must be received by October 30. Submit designs to: Northport Arts Association, PO Box 262, Northport, MI 49670.

Suggested Themes are: The Marina, Christmas Cove, Peterson Park, the Grand Traverse Lighthouse, Woolsey Airport, Northport Village Scenes, or Leelanau Township's scenic landscapes (such as cherry orchards, farms, woodlands, and trillium).

Mural Dimensions should be approximately 130 glazed tiles, arranged to measure either 5 ft wide x 3 ft tall or 3 ft wide x 5 ft tall (horizontal or vertical orientation).

Mural installation locations include: Leelanau Township Office Entrance; Leelanau Township Library; Village of Northport Meeting Room; Northport Public School, and Northport Creek Golf Course

Supported by a \$10,000 SEED Grant from Traverse City Rotary Charities, this project aims to enrich public spaces, engage participants of all ages, and foster creative outreach in under-resourced areas. The grant also builds momentum for expanding the NAA's Clay Studio and broader programs.



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Jedidiah Spiers, Misty VanderMeulen and their fun-loving families.

**HABITAT**

continues from page 1

they are currently living in a two-bedroom rental home in Interlochen, using the unfinished basement as extra bedroom space. The have now been together for six years and are newly engaged.

Both work fulltime, which means they haven't spent as much time working on their home as they'd like. "We haven't been able to work on the house during the week. We have done team build on Saturdays to help paint, put in trees and plants," says Misty.

She says they are excited to have their own home. "We'll enjoy our brand-new house with brand new appliances. There's a warranty for a year," she says, the excitement obvious in her voice.

Misty says their new home is only a short drive to their workplaces, hers at Great Lakes Orthopedics and his at Empower Automotive. They are currently dealing with the road construction on US-31 in Interlochen.

For Khan and Razma Totakhil, dealing with road construction would be only a minor inconvenience. Their journey to their new home began more than 7,000 miles away. Khan worked with the U.S. military in Afghanistan, and when the Americans left in 2021, he was able to get a visa. He says the opportunity for a better life for his family was the overriding factor in leaving his home country.

He'd originally planned to relocate to the Dallas area, but one of the service members he'd encountered in the military was from this area and recommended it, saying it was a beautiful area and the people were welcoming.

So far, that's just what he and his family have encountered. Even though his one friend had gone back overseas, they opted to stay. "Their families were waiting for us, and it was like instant

family," Khan says.

While he had spent time in the United States previously while receiving training, everything about America was brand new for his wife and their five kids. "My family had never been outside Afghanistan," he says.

They faced a number of difficulties. "The food is different, the language," says Khan. They spoke no English when they arrived, and he says it was very hard on his wife. Their children adapted more quickly, attending Traverse City Area Public Schools. Their oldest daughter has since graduated and is attending Northwestern Michigan College and working at Munson; she hopes to attend medical school in the future.

While they worked on integrating into the community, their living situation has also been challenging. The family of seven is currently living in a two-bedroom rental apartment with one bathroom. "Finding a home is hard," says Khan. When they applied for and secured a Habitat home, they were happy and relieved. "We are excited."

The project dates back to when Habitat for Humanity—Grand Traverse Region began working with New Waves United Church of Christ. NWUCC wanted to provide home ownership for people who might not



Aerial view of Habitat's New Waves homes.

be able to afford to purchase or build through conventional means. The church received a land grant from the Michigan Conference of the United Church of Christ and donated six lots to Habitat.

"We broke ground on the first house in November 2023," says Tom Kachadurian, the director of marketing for Habitat for Humanity—Grand Traverse Region. The first Habitat New Waves homeowners closed on their affordable mortgages in 2024.

In 2024, Habitat purchased the additional seven lots from NWUCC, with 50 percent of the funding coming from the Leelanau County Land Bank Authority. Today there are 13 lots designated for homes on the 20-acre parcel at the northwest corner of Bugai Road and M-72, with nine acres reserved for trails, preserves and public open space. Six are completed, with seven under construction, including these two. The remaining five are all slated to be completed by sometime next year.

While all the homes are identical or mirror images of one another, with three bedrooms and one and a half bathrooms, the homeowners can put their own stamp on them in terms of décor and landscaping. The Totakhil home is the exception: Theirs is a four-bedroom, two-bath home to accommodate the size of their family.

"There's a lot of pride," says Kachadurian of all the homeowners.



Afghanistan native Khan Totakhil



The Totakhil family





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ODAWA

continues from page 1

is on GTB reservation land and the location of the band’s tribal headquarters.

Bailey and I pulled up a stool and joined Raphael at his large rectangular worktable. I listened as the two old friends caught up on the latest happenings in the tribe and their families, then turned to Raphael’s recent art projects. When we arrived, he was examining the feathers of a bald eagle killed by a vehicle strike the day before. Then he opened a small freezer to show me the eagle’s head, destined to crown a staff. He then retrieved the refrigerated body of a northern harrier, my favorite hawk species, spreading wide its dark brown-and-white-patterned primary wings for us to fully admire.

Meanwhile, a videotape of a pow-wow played on the TV above the doorway, with Raphael explaining the types of dances and the respective regalia designed for them. As we were leaving, I asked if I could return sometime for an interview with Raphael about his art. Humbled by my request, he agreed, unsure of why he was worthy of a story. The reasons were all around me.

It’s a sunny and warm late-August Saturday morning in Peshawbestown. I park along the circle in front of Raphael’s home. He’s standing outside, waiting for me. He greets me by saying, “Mino-gizheh. That’s Anishinaabemowin for ‘good morning.’” We shake hands and I follow him into the studio while repeating the unwieldy term to myself, hoping to imprint it in my faulty memory.

Raphael, 60, is a self-trained artist. His business has no online presence and comes by word of mouth, and there’s no shortage of it. Aside from his regalia-making reputation, his artistic versatility includes being skilled in acrylic painting and stone sculpting, notably working with limestone and alabaster. Among other Anishinaabe artists that influenced his painting style was the famed Norval Morrisseau, from Ontario, whom he knew. The stylistic likeness to Morrisseau’s vividly colored, surreal, mythologically themed artwork in Raphael’s paintings is readily apparent.

The Odawa artist’s studio is dominated by the worktable in the center of the room. To one side is a stack of freezer bags containing raptor feathers. Rolls of various tapes, Gorilla Glue and other adhesives, assorted spray cans, scissors, X-ACTO Knives, a TV controller, disposable lighters, eyeglasses, and a bottle of Vernor’s Ginger Ale are within easy reach. Raphael’s long salt-and-pepper hair is pulled in a tight ponytail, and his gray beard accents his black Kentucky Headhunters T-shirt. His tall, stocky frame gives the impression that he could easily pass for a construction worker, biker, and/or former bouncer. There will be no arm-wrestling challenge from me.

Hanging on a cabinet are several unfinished bustles. Animal parts



abound—feathers, bones, skulls, claws, porcupine quills—evidence of artful dissection. He points out two eagle heads mounted on short posts. Slate-and-bluish-black-banded Cooper’s hawk tail feathers lie on another table in an unfinished arrangement. As we talk, he reveals that “M-22 is my trapline.” I laugh initially, then quickly realize how much sense that makes. “Well, not officially, you know, but it really is.”

He doesn’t use songbird feathers in his regalia designs, but he does utilize the yellow-gold, black-tipped tail feathers of yellow-shafted northern flickers. “They’re medicine birds,” he explains. “They’re all over here. Once a year I get one on a roadkill. They’re really sought-after feathers.”

Raphael shows me eagle talons, which find a second life as necklaces, for example. “I have badger claws, wolverine claws,” he adds. Surprised, I ask where the wolverine claws came from. He jumps on my naivete, exclaiming, “From a wolverine!” We both crack up. (Although wolverines are found in the American Northwest and Canada, breeding wolverines have not been seen in Michigan in nearly 200 years.)

Friends and acquaintances will stop along M-22 to pick up raptor roadkill for Raphael. If the birds’ bodies haven’t been mangled, he can typically harvest feathers, talons, and heads to be repurposed for Native ceremonial use (eagle head staffs, for example, are in high demand). Per tribal requirements, Raphael always registers the dead raptors with the GTB’s Natural Resources Department. Later this evening, a contact will be bringing him two goshawks, and Raphael, being Odawa—historically known as traders—will barter for them.

During our conversation, Raphael produces the handsome skin of a bobcat, whose corpse was found on a roadside by a niece, and that of a red fox. The furs may well become key features of some fortunate dancers’ regalia. “The people that come to me know I get [the animals’ remains] in a good way,” he says. Through Raphael’s large, gifted hands, the roadkill

is transformed into a dignified afterlife purpose. “That’s respect, right?”

Whenever the time is right, Raphael will walk up to the field behind his home and return the unused raptor and mammal body parts to Mother Earth. The birds of prey feathers will be cast into the wind. Eventually, neighborhood children will come to him with their feathery finds, asking Uncle Fred, as he is known, to identify them. “And I’ll say, ‘Well that’s an eagle feather,’ and they’re just so amazed. Then I teach them about the feather, about

how the eagle is the highest-flying bird and can go up to the Creator, to Gitchi Manitou, the Great Mystery.”

Respect indeed.

Tim Mulherin is the author of This Magnetic North: Candid Conversations on a Changing Northern Michigan, published by Michigan State University Press. He is currently writing a book about wildlife in Michigan and Indiana.

Monday, October 13, is Indigenous People’s Day—which has historically been observed as Columbus Day.

Preserve hosts Page to Page: A Writing and Hiking Experience

From staff reports

Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear is offering the return of the program, “Port Oneida Path to Page” on Friday, Oct. 17, from 12-4 pm, for writers at any level, but especially for those interested in creating history-inspired pieces.

Participants will explore their creative muse hiking this fall through select farms, woods and fields of the lovely Port Oneida historic region with local poet and playwright Anne-Marie Oomen. With the beautiful surroundings and provided oral history of the farms as your inspiration, along with guidance and instruction from Oomen, you will have the opportunity to write and share some creative prose. The cost is \$100 per person and is limited to 15 people.

Oomen, who received the Michigan Author Award for 2024, is a poet, playwright, essayist and memoirist published throughout the country. She



has earned five Michigan Notable Book Awards and the AWP Sue Silverman Award for Creative Nonfiction for her memoir. She has taught Poetry

Workshops and Life Writing at the Solstice MFA at Lasell University and Interlochen College of Creative Arts. Her focus in recent years has been celebrating local land and water projects through writing. To register, visit Phsb.org/experience/programs/path-to-page.

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