

# THE ELBERTA ALERT <sup>\*free!</sup>

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A Community News Organ

Fri., Jan. 27, 2012



The Mayfair Tavern, shown here on January 24, may soon change hands, or at least one set of hands. PHOTO BY EMILY VOTRUBA

## Whither the Mayfair Tavern?

ITS NAME BESPEAKS TONY London shopping, swank nightlife, and high-end real estate (as well as the pagan rites of an earlier time), but as the new year dawned, Elberta's Mayfair Tavern seemed on the brink of sordid dissolution, as word spread that the building was in foreclosure. On January 18, Mayfair manager Tom Stoltmann was found chatting with the bailiff at the county government center, waiting an hour to see if anyone appeared with a bid higher than that of State Savings Bank: \$351,004.65 for the building and the business. The bank's check remained alone in the bailiff's folder.

In the meantime, negotiations had begun between Jim Goldman, major shareholder in Pea Soup's (the business arm of the concern) and Heather Hanley-Frary, the minor partner, to transfer ownership to Heather and some investors, a process Stoltmann said could take several months. "We would like to have things wrapped up by April," Stoltmann said. Hanley-Frary had no comment on the situation, but at the January 19 wine dinner she announced that the show would go on, somehow.

According to the county equalization office's website maps, the two lots and building that make up the property were purchased by Goldman's company Elberta Enterprises from Walter "Wally" Palmer in November of 2007 for \$370,000.

According to Stoltmann, the Mayfair has been profitable for the past few years and has a devoted following, especially for its wine dinner events. But Elberta Enterprises fell behind on its mortgage payments and the restaurant endured some utility shutoffs last year. The bank will assume ownership of the property on June 18 unless a deal is reached. "A lot can happen between now and then," Stoltmann said.

The Mayfair is not only a beloved watering hole but an informal Village museum. Stoltmann, a maritime historian whose grandfather was captain of the *City of Milwaukee*, has filled the space with artifacts from the car ferry days and before, many of which were once displayed in the Northwest Michigan Maritime Museum in Frankfort, founded by Jed Jaworski, Jack Gyr, and Bill Herd.

The Mayfair Tavern was opened by Charles W. Luxford in 1933, at the end of Prohibition, on the site of several previous drinking establishments he owned along with August Coddens, including the Alpha, a large two-story building they built, and the Brick tavern (made of brick) opened in 1897 and operated until 1909, when the county went dry. The Alpha was so named because it was the "first chance for a drink when entering town," which is still true of the Mayfair today, unless you take a package out of

## PUTNEY POSITS WORKER HOUSING FOR BAY VALLEY INN PROPERTY

AT THE TUESDAY, JANUARY 3, Planning Commission meeting, after the public hearing on the Master Plan, during which the discussion turned presciently to multifamily dwellings and the new mixed-use designation for the 4 acre lot at 1561 S. Scenic Highway, P&Z chairman Russ Mix brought out an application for a special use permit by Loy Putney, of Raymond Rd. Putney's stated intent was to put labor housing at 1561, the old Bay Valley Inn and former Elberta elementary school. No one had a copy of the current zoning map, and some confusion ensued. Discussion of the property was tabled till the February meeting. "We need to find out how other townships deal with migrant housing," said Mix.

At the January 16 council meeting, Putney expressed his interest in the property and said he had signed a purchase agreement with First Bank Mt. Pleasant, the current owner. He said he wanted to use the building for worker housing this season and intends to follow our zoning ordinance. The property is currently zoned commercial under the 2009 zoning law. A special use permit will be required, along with a detailed site plan as specified in the ordinance. There is no provision for worker/labor housing in the ordinance, and the property is not eligible

for planned unit development because it's under 5 acres.

At the council meeting Reg said, in reference to Putney's proposal, "It'll be a long, drawn-out process.... [Zoning administrator] Carl [Noffsinger] is going to make sure we proceed correctly. Council will have major input on this."

Reached January 25, Noffsinger said he had spoken with Putney and directed him to follow the procedure for submitting a site plan and special use application as outlined in the ordinance. Mr. Putney told the *Alert* he'd picked up a one-page form from the Village office that day. Exterior changes would be very minimal, but he intends to install functional windows and additional doors to some units to allow for adequate egress. He said kitchen facilities would be added, and updates would be made to plumbing. Putney expects to house up to 40 people in the building "from May through apples," including 8 to 10 children, who would attend some school in the fall. Two families might stay on through the winter. Asked whether he was concerned about asbestos in the building, Putney said he would be surprised if there were any, considering the building's recent use as a motel, but he would know soon. He said he intended to repair the roof, which is leaking in four places, and do everything necessary to bring the building up to code. At press time he was meeting with Lane to evaluate the plumbing. Putney said the families have their own transportation to work, and that if his petition is successful he will likely close down and sell his other worker housing in Bear Lake.

According to Treasurer Laura Manville, only a week ago the assessed value of the property was revised down by the state from \$165,000 to \$59,500, and the Village was required to send a tax refund of \$1,721.57 to First Bank. Furthermore, if Putney succeeds in his petition, tax assessor Marvin Blackford said that migrant worker housing is automatically assessed at about half the dollar square foot amount of regular housing.—Emily Votruba

"I've been driving by that place for years now. It's just sitting there empty. What would you like to see go in there?"  
—Loy Putney

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## Too Small for Our Britches

By Emily Votruba

ABOUT 20 MEMBERS of the public attended a hearing on the management of the new Elberta Dunes Natural Area before the regular council meeting. A Natural Resources Trust Fund grant allowed the Village to acquire the property. Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy did additional fundraising and grant writing and will continue to be involved. Sarah Lucas of NWMCoG has been leading the Dune Park Committee through the management plan process. The committee (Reg Manville, Ken Bonney, Art Melendez, Diane Jenks, and Bill O'Dwyer) welcomes more members; they meet this month (see Calendar).

The Village must now maintain the property. Volunteers are needed for improvements to the area, several of which were discussed at the hearing. Improvements to date include a mown parking area, some signage, a mown trail through the field, and some maintenance of one trail up to the ridge line. Critical Dune Act restrictions and imminent

erosion curb potential development of the site. Earth moving and most forms of construction are out. Trail access up and down from the beach is probably impossible. Several endangered species, including Pitcher's thistle, should be protected.

Discussion topics included reinforcing the trail at the ridge line; installing barriers and signage to prevent off-trail activity and promote safety; installing signage warning of bowhunting, which is legal on the property (use of firearms is illegal on all Village property); prevention of motor vehicle use on the property, which has been a problem for many years; linking the park with other Village assets, such as the Betsie Valley Trail via designated bike paths through the Village along Lincoln and through downtown; installing low-maintenance restrooms; discouraging the use of snowmobiles within the area; and adding more trails, such as one that would lead from the lookout north and down into Elephant Valley. It was suggested that users be warned about the poison ivy. Chris Sullivan of GTRLC said we could consider a stairway leading to a viewing platform at the top, as a way to cut down on erosive traffic and to improve access for those with physical limitations. Forestry management and the problem of dying beech trees on the property is beyond the committee's scope at

present. The committee will present its project plans for public review.

During the public comment period of the regular Council meeting, Josh Stoltz tendered his resignation from the Solstice Committee, citing greater work commitments in his new position with SEEDS. Stoltz has submitted his job description and a detailed list of tasks involved in Solstice. He thanked Linda Manville, Bill Soper, Connie Manke, and Josh Herren, and said he'll continue to help out. Reg and Linda thanked Josh for his huge contribution to the festival.

Linda said she hoped council would pay its own way to the \$30 Chamber of Commerce annual dinner. Sharyn said the Chamber had comped the Village for four tickets.

The budget report for December: Receipts, \$20,864.72. Expenses: Accounts payable, \$22,458.18. Payroll \$14,563.46. Parks/Rec, \$324.61. Total expenses: \$37,346.25.

Lights on the tree in the Waterfront Park were vandalized. The wires to the star Ken and Art made were broken. Ken Holmes said that's why we don't put lights in the "Penfold" [Marina] park anymore. Friends of Betsie Bay gave the Village a sign from the DNR warning boaters about unwitting transfer of invasive species. It will be installed in the Marina Park when the ground thaws. The water main leak down by the barbershop was fixed—an old pipe had burst.

BLUA has received no applications for the licensed fill-in worker job.

Reg said Park and Rec must abide by the state manual for all elected officials, must submit budgets for general Park and Rec activities, the Farmers Market, and Solstice to the Budget Committee, which will then present it to the full council

for approval. Art is getting bids to combine the websites into one Village website and to make the sites more user friendly. Art, Greg Jaris, Laura Manville, and Reg met to discuss past Solstice financing. Per state guidelines, written requests for membership on the Solstice Committee were accepted from Art Melendez, Josh Herren, Jennifer Wilkins, and Michele Canaert. Reg had not submitted his but intends to. As of this meeting no one from previous years' committees had signed up, but there's no deadline. Ken Holmes said he hoped the festival would make money for the Village this year, unlike in previous years. Reg said the festival was not part of the audit last year and it needed to be this year. Art gave a speech on the necessity of treating the festival as one would a business. He said the festival was going to take a lot of work and that the committee was flying by the seat of its pants.

Linda said Village budget meetings haven't begun. Reg said they would within the month.

Ken Holmes said internal conflicts within the fire department led Chief Eric Luxford to resign. Charlie Thompson will be interim chief. He has requested two assistant chiefs.

Ross said work on the Lifesaving Station doors is almost done. The water has been shut off in the building for the winter.

Council passed two resolutions to formally adopt the Master Plan as presented, with some minor additions, by the Planning Commission. Wording additions will allow for modifying large homes for multifamily use. Reg said volunteer help is hard to come by and thanked the Master Plan Committee. No other local government or person submitted comments on the plan. Sharyn will sign and file the attested copies of the plan.

The Employee Relations Committee will meet in February to discuss benefits. Last meeting's discussion of Reg's possible conflict of interest in serving on the Employee Relations and Budget Committees continued at length. Bill Soper, Linda Manville, and Diane Jenks all saw an inherent conflict of interest, but all said they trusted Reg wants what's best for the Village. Reg said everyone knew his situation when he ran for office, and he ran on a platform of improving employee relations, and that they have improved. The committees are advisory, and all recommendations must come before the full council anyway. Ken Bonney stated that he is the only real full-time Village employee and that Sharyn and Laura were elected. Reg said he had reduced wages and benefits already, contrary to his personal interest. Matt Stapleton remarked that the time to recuse oneself is during votes on budget and employee matters, and that that's what the "agenda conflict" item on the agenda is for. He also pointed out that there's room for another member on both committees. The discussion concluded with no vote.

Scott Gest wants to complete the demolition of the ferry aprons by summer. Reg asked about the permit process for the demolition. Scott said he is putting together a historical review for the Army Corps of Engineers, but that there's nothing historical left to be preserved. All the history of the operation talks about the ships, not the docks, he said. The demolition will be paid for with grant money. He said if the Village wants any part of the structure for salvage or display to please contact him. Material from the Koch boiler building and workshop is also available to the Village for scrap. Those buildings are from 1973.

The county has adopted a modified version of its Alternative Energy Resolution. Marcia Stobie said the resolution affirms each entity's right to implement zoning.

Phragmites eradication: A second treatment will be required, possibly by helicopter; the community will be informed well in advance. Mowing and/or a controlled burn of dead phragmites is necessary. Friends of Betsie Bay seeks old aerial photos to demonstrate how the weed has taken over. Ken Holmes said he has a photo showing nothing but water and mud between the railroad bridge and M-22.

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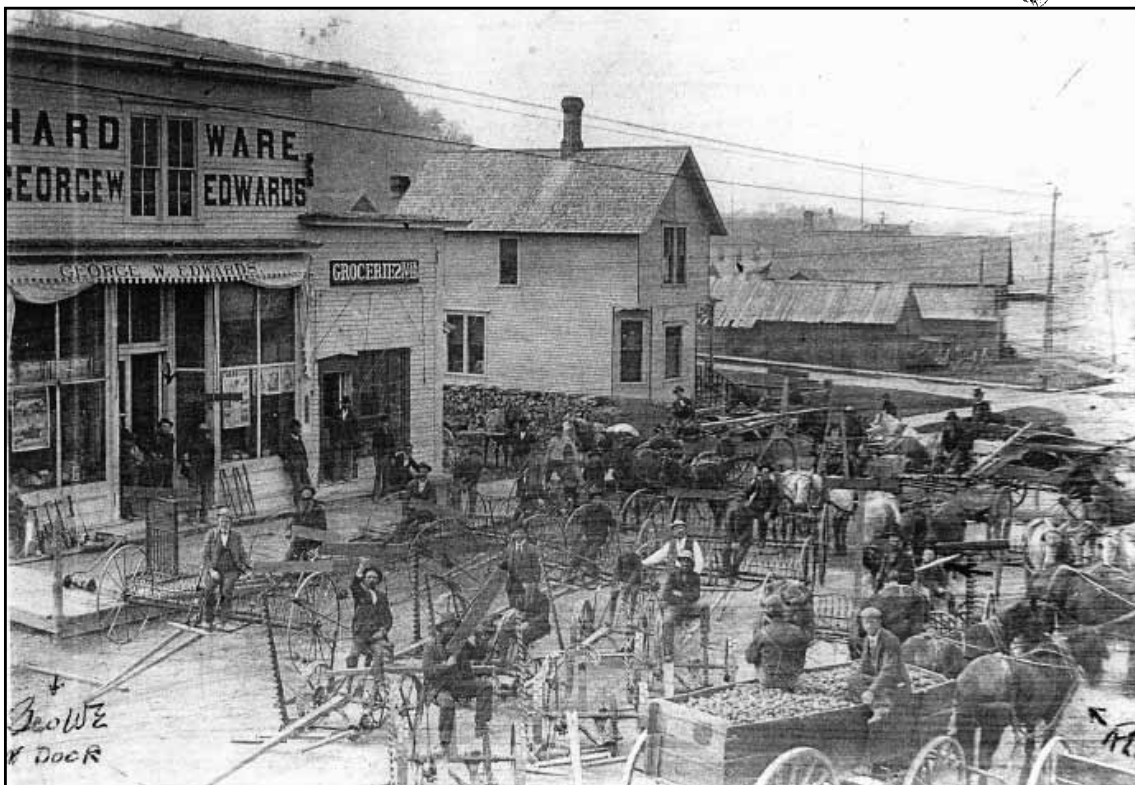
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## Remember When ... With Ken

★ Portrait by Art Melendez

The car ferries had been running for over a decade when this photo, rounded up by Ken Holmes, was taken, and South Frankfort was no one-horse town—we even had more than one "iron horse." It behooves us to inspect the merchandise...



The caption appended to this photo reads: "Plano farm machinery delivery day, 1903 or 1904." George W. Edwards stands in the doorway of his hardware store, which he passed on to his son Ray Charles Edwards. Ed Parker sits on a load of potatoes in the foreground. Does anyone know how the S in the Leonard's Groceries sign got reversed? The Penfold house (as it was known when I was growing up) still stands today; and wood from the railroad depot in the background still resides inside the structure of the Mayfair Tavern building. PHOTO COURTESY OF JEANNE EDWARDS

## A Dip into the Frozen(?) Deep

By Westley Allen

AS YOU KNOW, there has been a change in the weather lately. It certainly took a while for winter to arrive, but it finally did in the second week of January, after a brown Christmas (the least December snowfall ever recorded by the Gaylord weather center) and temps as high as the low 50s.

Now, where once a warm sweater would suffice on a midday stroll, a heavy jacket and hat are needed. Snowplows have sprung into action, and we see ducks standing in the Bay where they swam a couple of weeks ago. I have now meticulously cleaned my fall gear and put it away, and gotten out smaller and more compact versions. My waders are hung in a corner to be used next spring, and people's boats have been winterized to follow suit. Of the variety of hobbies the winter weather brings, I choose ice fishing.

Ice fishing allows anglers to fish areas not

easily accessible without a boat in the summer months. Now you can simply walk out on the ice. For some, the first time doing this is a nerve-racking experience. Many unsettling possibilities spring to mind. What if the ice is too thin? What if I fall through? What if I get trapped beneath the ice? These are all questions that may arise when the moment comes. Others see the ice as a new terrain full of adventures.

The initial fear is the hardest part. The other things, such as subzero temperatures, heat-robbing wind, small flurries of snow with the vengeance of a full-blown blizzard, are all minor in comparison. The memories that are made on the ice make the whole experience worth it. Whether it is the time that little Johnny slipped and broke his rear on the ice, or the secluded meetings with good friends, fried fish, and warm stogie, ice fishing is a time to not only catch fish but a time to make lifelong memories.

All this being said, ice fishing does have severe dangers. The ice may look thick, but it can be deceiving. Depending on snowfall and water currents, some places on the lake may be six inches thick while others may be only an inch. The water at the Beulah

end of Crystal Lake tends to freeze earlier because of the west and northwest prevailing winds blowing the cooler water toward shore, while the rest of the lake is still open water. Betsie Bay, according to local fisherman Jonathan Drury, requires at least a week of 20 degree temperatures to freeze.

If you have any concerns about the safety of the ice you have a few options. You can contact your local Coast Guard or DNR office; they make routine checks on the ice. Or you can walk out a few feet and test the ice with a spud bar or auger. If you can easily chisel through the ice, the ice is too thin. You can also take your auger and drill a hole so you can see the thickness of the ice. As a safety precaution, always bring ice picks. If you don't own ice picks and don't want to purchase some, bring two sharp screwdrivers with you. If you fall through the ice you can jam the picks into the unbroken ice around the hole to give you a sturdy support to pull yourself out. As a side note it does not help to bring the picks along but not have them when you need them. Always keep the picks around your neck or in an easily accessible pocket. Another precaution is to buy a well-made ice fishing suit. The one I own is

designed to float when submersed in water and is made by Arctic Armor. It consists of bibs and a jacket, both reasonably priced and well worth it. Traditional cold weather gear may be made with wool or goose down, both of which absorb water and sink. If you fell through the ice with these on, more than likely you would sink like a rock.

Popular ice fishing locations are Crystal Lake and Betsie Bay. People fish for lake trout, smelt, perch, burbot, and whitefish. The amount of pike in Betsie Bay is staggering. If you know where to go, it is almost impossible not to catch one. Perch can be a lot trickier. Without a fish finder they may be elusive. Don't get me wrong, both lakes create a challenge, but Betsie has steep dropoffs and weed lines. Most everything in either lake can be caught on a jig with some sort of live bait, such as minnows or waxworms.

Well, that should be enough info to get you through the "first ice" period of ice fishing this year. Who knows if there'll be a second ice? We can only hope so. Stay safe, stay warm, and catch fish!

Westley Allen is a junior at Benzie Central High School.

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# FEBRUARY

David McGuinness returned to Elberta from visiting his wife in Manistee; Ben Little and Lymann White went to Haley's to work in the woods; Frank Mead, Gus Bankston, A.D. Rust & Clif Keillor are courting in Elberta this week. All are married men, too. H.A. Lewis became Postmaster in Frankfort; Logs are still being hauled in Thompsonville for E. Bellows.—*The Elberta Alert*, February 2, 1912

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
1	LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PUBLIC MEETING	"Local Agriculture at Risk"; League of Women Voters Committee Report on yearlong study of agricultural migrant worker visas.	Leelanau County Govt. Center Community Room	12 noon
1-Feb. 29	FURNITURE & FIBER EXHIBITION	Elizabeth Lane Oliver Art Center presents more than 150 works by local, regional, and Ohio artists—furniture mostly from NMI, quilts and other fiber art by well-known Ohioans.	Old Coast Guard Station, Frankfort	Mon.-Fri. 10 am-5 pm; Sat. 10 am-2 pm
3	CABBAGE SHED SOCK HOP	Music from the '50s and '60s. Come early, get some grub and cut a rug!	198 Frankfort Ave. 231-352-9843	6 pm-9 pm
4, 11, 18, 25	INDOOR FARMERS' MARKET	Farmers and other vendors extend the growing season in the Betsie Bay Inn back room.	231 Main Street, Frankfort	9 am-1 pm
7	PARK AND REC MEETING	Regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission.	Village Community Bld., 401 First St.	7 pm (first Tuesdays)
	ELBERTA PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION	Regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Ken Holmes and Russ Mix will propose new lot sizes!	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (first Tuesdays)
9	BENZONIA ACADEMY LECTURE	Polly Pelizzari; "Women and Art: An Introduction to the History of Women Artists."	Benzie Area Historical Museum, 6941 Traverse Ave.	4 pm
11	MAYFAIR WINE DINNER	Enjoy a magnifique prix fixe spread with wine pairings for \$29.95 Call Heather at 231-360-8292 to reserve.	515 Frankfort Ave.	6:30 pm-9 pm
	MUSIC AT THE CABBAGE SHED	The Un-Valentine Show, with Jamie-Sue Seal	198 Frankfort Ave. 231-352-9843	8 pm
12	ELBERTA ALERT EDITORIAL MEETING	Now once a month! Come to the Library and hand in a story, submit a correction, make a suggestion, scoop the competition, or just shoot the shinola.	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	1 pm-2 pm (second Sundays)
13	DUNE PARK COMMITTEE MEETING	Elberta Dunes Natural Area Management Committee Meeting. Have your say on how we'll use our new land.	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	12 noon
13	BOOK DISCUSSION AT ST. PHILIP'S CHURCH	Book discussion facilitated by Elberta's own Christine Walkons, on Jim Wallis's <i>Rediscovering Values</i> . Bring a sack lunch.	785 Beulah Highway (US 31), Beulah	12 pm-1 pm
16	VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING	Regular meeting of the Village Board of Trustees. Agenda available at the Village Office.	Village Community Bld., 401 First St.	7 pm (third THursdays)
18	COMMUNITY DINNER AT ELBERTA'S BEST CHURCH	Free dinner and fellowship at Elberta United Methodist Church.	555 Lincoln Ave.	4 pm-6 pm (third Saturdays)
18-19	SHIVER BY THE RIVER	Events all day: winter parade, ice rescue demonstrations, an antique snowmobile display, horsedrawn carriage rides, ice shanty decorating, snowsculptures, and a ton of children's games.	Elberta/Frankfort	info at Chamber
21	REFLECTIONS BY THE BAY	Martin Lowenberg; "My Experiences as a Holocaust Survivor."	Benzie Shores Library, 630 Main St., FFort	7 pm
23	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE	Open meeting with Sheriff Rory Heckman to discuss county security issues. At the Benzie County Sheriff's Office	505 S. Michigan Ave., Beulah	6 pm
28	GILMORE TOWNSHIP MEETING	Regular meeting of the board of Gilmore Township.	Elberta Library, 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (second Tuesdays)

# FOGHORN • LOCAL ITEMS LOUD AND CLEAR



**Lucky 7 Open House at A Shear Class and Affordable Art, Feb. 7.** Roll the dice, get a seven, and win a 5-minute on-the-spot chair massage with Sue Oseland, a paraffin dip by Christa Luxford-Lundeen, and other prizes from Greg and Jinx Jenks. Treats to eat and drink and local artists repped by Greg will be on hand, and a good time will be had by all. —plus there's one big door prize. 7:03–9:30 pm, 703 Frankfort Ave.

**Old News** Scanned vintage back issues of the *Benzie Banner*, the *Benzonia Citizen*, and the *Benzie County Record-Patriot* are now available for viewing online at <http://benzieshore.sdlhost.com>. The few remaining old *Elberta Alerts* will be online soon—stay tuned!

**Alert editor and Foodstuffs columnist Katy (McConnell) den Heeten** was released from the hospital on January 25 and is recuperating at home in Mt. Pleasant. "I'm a very lucky woman to be surrounded by love and kindness from so many people. A little chemo and a goofy hat or two and I'll be all set," said Katy via text message.

**Festivals for the Rest of Y'all** Feb. 4 finds the Fire and Ice Festival in Arcadia, a benefit for the new Pleasant Valley Community Center on Glovers Lake Rd. The daylong event starts at 8 am with a pancake breakfast and includes a 5K run, chili cookoff, kids' games, frozen fish toss, cake walk, Ping Pong, Bingo, barbecue beef dinner, candlelit cross country skiing, and music and dancing into the night. Downtown Beulah and Benzonia hold their Winterfest on Feb. 11 from 9 am.

**Crime, Elberta-style** Shortly before Christmas a man in Elberta discovered that his bike had been stolen from behind the house where he was living, and another older bike had been left in its place. Apparently this was a thoughtful thief who did not want to leave his victim without transportation. The victim reported the theft to the sheriff, who said, "It looks like that thief decided to trade up!" The insurance company was notified in case the long arm of the law could not produce the perp and his booty. Time passed and one day in January the victim was walking along M-22 when he discovered his bike in a ditch along the side of the road. Everything was intact, including his helmet, except it was missing its \$2 headlight. It appeared the bike had been there

for some time, as the chain had begun to rust. So now our victim has two bikes, and he invites the person who committed the "crime" to come and reclaim his old bike—no questions asked. May crime "Elberta style" be the only kind we know in our fair village.—*Janet La Rue Buck*

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Primary Registration** The deadline to register to vote in the Presidential Primary (February 28) is January 30! Contact township clerk Sharyn Bower at 231-352-4901 between 5 pm and 8 pm, or register at the Secretary of State's office.

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donations are also gratefully accepted. All food collected in Benzie and northern Manistee County (BACN's service area) stays with BACN for distribution. A gift of \$100 cash buys 350 meals.

Each month BACN provides 20,000 pounds of food to area families who shop at its pantry; clothing for about 600 people; and help with home heating for 40 families.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Getting fixed when you're broke, update:** Benzie Animal Welfare League spokesperson Norma Awl confirms that on Feb. 25 from 10 am to noon at the Benzie Animal Shelter, coupons for dis-



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**ON THE RADAR: WORLD FRANKFORT PREMIERE of Rich Brauer's DOGMAN**  
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The showing benefited a new POMH dialysis unit; Greg Kindig, Jack Gyr; Jill Weide; Lonna Harrison; Amy Green; Paul Leon; Jed Jaworski, Annie Sinclair; Dana & Deborah Robinson; Meg & Jeff Louwsma; Emily Peer; Rich Brauer, Steve Cook; Meredith McNabb; Jenn Wilkins, Jon Drury; Marci & Blake Brooks; Dave Sosnoski, Heather Hanley-Frery; Garden co-owner John Vinkemulder. PHOTOS BY JENNIFER WILKINS AND EMILY VOTRUBA

**BACN Chases the Chill** A semitruck will be at the Shop & Save from 9 am to 7 pm on Friday and Saturday Feb. 3 and 4. On these days all those boxes you have seen and filled with nonperishable food and personal care items will be brought to the truck to see if BACN has met its goal of half a semi of food—about 2,000 cubic feet. You still have time to donate around town or straight into the truck, and cash

counts on feline spaying and neutering will be handed out. "Cats only, Benzie residents only, ID required." Check with your vet to make sure they'll honor the coupon. Northwoods Animal Hospital and Betsie River Veterinary Clinic are two who do.

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**No longer on the rocks, the Benzonia Ice Rink** has resumed operations again this year with help from a group of citi-

zen-organizers and fundraisers. Last year when Jack Rineer, who has created and maintained the rink largely solo and at his own expense for more than 25 years, announced that he was thinking of retiring, a chill went down the area's collective spine. "It's just the perfect place for an ice rink," said Tim Flynn, Elberta's postmaster and a Benzonia council member. "Unlike the old Frankfort location, it stays cold, and it's well lit and accessible." The rink serves about a thousand skaters a year, some from as far as TC. It's not all about spraying water: snow has to be packed down, leveled, and constantly monitored. Flynn said Rineer has been known to get up in the middle of the night or miss his kids' basketball games to take advantage of perfect ice-making conditions. This year Rineer is still doing most of the work, but with funds raised by the committee he's now able to pay a crew and cover his costs. Dennis Pace, of Scarborough Family Eyecare, is chair of the Friends of the Benzonia Ice Rink. He says the Village of Benzonia will donate \$2,000 a year for fuel, as it has done for the past several years. Last year the Village of Elberta Park and Rec contributed \$300; the Village of Beulah gave \$250 last year and this year; and Frankfort and Beulah Rotary also contribute. This year's goal of \$6,000 was met, "plus with the short season we'll save money for next year," said Pace. Donations can be made at benzoniaic-erink.org or by contacting Pace.

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**Charlie's Natural Food Market**, on Airport Rd. next to the fitness center, now accepts Bridge cards.

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**Other Elberta mischief...the Bread Fairy.** Emily Votruba, of Washington and Bigley, would like to know who keeps leaving half loaves of bread or

continues on page 5

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# Here Comes Trouble: Stories from My Life

A BOOK BY MICHAEL MOORE  
(GRAND CENTRAL PUBLISHING, SEPTEMBER 2011)

MICHAEL MOORE IS one of the most outspoken crusaders for human rights in our time. He is also a brilliant, witty storyteller, and his uncanny Forrest Gump-like ability to show up at key events of the latter half of the 20th century, some appearances obviously by design, others by pure chance, make this an important historical document. I challenge all of you to read it, no matter how you feel about this controversial filmmaker. Many have despised him for his forthright opinions and political views, and I too have

found good reason to disagree with him on several subjects, but anyone who cannot admire his compassion for his fellow man, his courage in sticking up, in the face of injustice, for unpopular beliefs, and his sharp intellect and “can do” attitude toward seemingly insurmountable obstacles, must truly have no heart.

He tells of growing up in an enlightened working-class family in Davison, near Flint, where his mother taught him to read at age four, in a home where intellectual pursuits and debate were strongly encouraged. He was born in 1955, a time when small-town values were still widespread, there was little crime, neighbors were friendly and helpful, and parents took time to instill values in their children. Many of us older Elbertians who grew up here can relate to this and we still feel fortunate to have had a similar experience, unlike many others in our nation, which now seems eager to stir up hate and

prejudice, and where a difference of opinion often results in extreme actions.

Michael Moore was once the youngest school board member in the United States, when he was a high school student. After high school he seemed destined for the Catholic priesthood, but his inquisitive mind and refusal to accept the answer “because that’s the way it is” caused expulsion from the seminary. His pacifist views were influenced by his father’s experiences in World War II and by the duplicitous behavior of some of our leaders during the Vietnam conflict. A beautiful African-American secondary school teacher, who respected his thoughtful, provocative curiosity, encouraged him to pursue his beliefs.

No matter how one may feel about Moore personally, his memoir is a tour de force and will change many preconceived ideas about this remarkable person. It is a passionate account of America from the

’50s through the ’80s by a brave, honest, moral man who has taken tremendous risks to try to right what he believes is wrong with the world. He has brought to life this period in our history and has written forcefully on serious subjects, as the much less controversial journalist Russell Baker did for the previous generation in *Growing Up*, the most enjoyable coming-of-age account I had read before this one.

A few years ago Moore decided to close his NYC office and move to Traverse City. One reason for this change of venue may have been the ostracism and barrage of threats after his Oscar acceptance speech in 2004. We in Northwest Michigan have been the beneficiaries, with his revival of the State Theater and the many other pluses he has brought to our area. Although he has always maintained his Michigan ties, his presence “back home” is a welcome one.—Janet La Rue Buck, Alert literary editor

## Letters...

### Biting the Hand That Feeds Us

To the Editors,

The anonymous article you published on October 7, 2011 [“Behind the Scenes: Dogman—the Movie”] was off, and at times flat-out flawed. I figured you might like to know that perhaps everything written should be fact-checked prior to printing.

1. Slamming the Benzonia Fire Department. Question: How the heck would someone uninvited, standing in the dark of the woods have any opinion as to whether the fire department was doing what was required or not? [“Anonymous” was actually part of the catering crew.—Eds.] Fact: The Benzonia Fire Department enthusiastically helped us rig and burn the prop truck. They handled it professionally and exactly as was required by the story. I was told it was also helpful for them to use this as a training exercise. This was a win-win for every-

body.

2. “Hollywood things.” Question: We live in Traverse City and have made films here for 34 years. We consider Michigan our base and run a happy and humane set. “NAZI on a headset”? Is that really appropriate? Fact: Our first assistant director Sheryl Hayward (from Traverse City) ran the set. Trying to wrangle 30 technicians and artists for one common goal is a challenge and may seem to the bystander to be a bit brash. In any case, she plays an important part in the organization and keeps us on schedule. Asking onlookers to clear the background is a common function and I guarantee that while watching a finished film, even your “Anonymous” writer friend would squawk if there was a scene where unexplained strangers with cigarettes in the woods were visible in the background, and wonder how that could possibly happen.

3. “Kens Towing raw deal.” Question:

Where did this info come from? Fact: As with all facets of this production, there was a signed agreement for the use of the tow truck and operator for the film. This ar-

## SUNSET

### We Will Miss...

#### ROBERT “BUTCH” MCPHERSON

A large gathering of family and friends attended the graveside committal service for Robert “Butch” McPherson at the Gilmore Township Cemetery on December 23, 2011. He passed away December 21.

Butch was born in Benzie County on May 5, 1940, and lived most of his life on Crapo Street in Elberta, in the home previously owned by his grandparents Frank and Sarah McPherson.

Butch will truly be missed by his surviving children: Brenda Foster, Carolyn McPherson, Mary Kalbach, and Ronald McPherson. He has numerous grandchildren, great-grandchildren and a large extended family. Butch was predeceased by his parents, Frank and Myrtle McPherson, his wife, Virginia, a daughter, Karen “Joyce” Page, and three sons, Robert “Bob” McPherson, Frank “Jim” McPherson, and Gary “Pork” McPherson.

Butch will be fondly remembered as a “Good Old Guy” by his friends, neighbors, and family.

angement was made cheerfully weeks before the actual shoot. The times were listed, and all was fine. After the scene was shot, and all was well, we decided to give them the title for the burned truck and they were able to scrap it for at least \$250. I know that was the value, since I did the same thing to the duplicate truck after we were finished with it. There was no raw deal here.

4. “The cop was played by the Swanders’ granddaughter.” Question: What planet is your writer on? Fact: The part of the DEPUTY was played by professional actress Stacie Hadgikosti from the Purple Rose Theater Company. Stacie received her Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Western Michigan University and her Master of Fine Arts in Acting from Purdue University.

asked if we could shoot there. The reaction was 100 percent positive. We paid lots of bills there, including roughly \$12,000 to area restaurants, including the Mayfair. All debts were settled, friends were made, and a fun film was the result. Why would anyone try to make it seem otherwise? I would strongly urge you to screen these types of “anonymous” writers, and at least check the facts. We’re all in this together. I look forward to reading your newspaper in the future and hope you have a chance to see DOGMAN at the Garden.

Rich Brauer

THE ALERT WELCOMES LETTERS FROM OUR READERS!  
Call or text 231-399-0098, send mail to Elberta Alert Letters, PO Box 357, Elberta, MI 49628, or write to [elberta.alert@gmail.com](mailto:elberta.alert@gmail.com), subject line “Letter to the Editor.” Letters may be edited for length. Profanity will be indicated but not repeated.

### FOGHORN, cont’d

rolls on the street in front of her house. Next time it happens, she’s going to add baloney.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Aubrey Ann Parker left January 27 to serve as a media correspondent in the Run Across Palestine fundraising event to promote fair-trade relationships with sustainable olive growers in the Holy Land. She and Randi Lyn Stoltz, who will participate in the daily runs, raised funds for their travel expenses with the

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# BLAST From the FUTURE!

Local history topics, and interviews by Elberta teens

## Love

By Merren Garber

I never imagined you'd be the one I'd fall for.

We are so different, Like polar opposites And yet we attract.

In other people's eyes it's merely a crush, but this feeling in my tummy tells me it's something different, something totally new. I think I'm falling in love with you.

Whenever you smile, I find myself smiling right along with you. To me your smile is contagious.

When it's time to say farewell, I count the minutes until I'm able to see your face once more.

X rays show my heart beats with yours. When I'm by your side I feel like the happiest girl in the world. You make my heart skip a beat whenever we kiss. I really do think I'm in love with you.

Happy Valentine's Day!

Alert editor Merren Garber is a freshman at Frankfort-Elberta High School. She turns 15 on February 14, 2012.



A gentle reminder from Mother Nature? PHOTO BY JENNIFER WILKINS

### FOGHORN, cont'd

help of many local musicians, businesses, and individuals, and through Kickstarter. Aubrey will provide daily coverage of the effort at [onthe-ground-global.org/projects/run-across-palestine](http://onthe-ground-global.org/projects/run-across-palestine).

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Unintended Consequences**, a first novel by Frankfort native son **Karl Manke**, son of **Aristine Manke**, was published on December 6, 2011, and is selling well on Amazon.com. "I'm hoping during my time they'll come out with a tape of it," said Aristine, who has macular degeneration. "But I've got people who will read it to me." Jan Buck reviews the book in the next issue of the *Alert*.

\*\*\*\*\*  
On Friday, January 13, **Greg Kindig of the Ant and the Grasshopper Farm** mentioned that the sap in some of his **sugar maple trees** was already on the rise. After our dry and warm-ish December, we'd just gotten our first real snow dump the day before. The *Alert* had a sense of foreboding. Is this a problem? we asked Greg. "Well, it means that the season will be spread out, which means the processing, which is usually done mostly in March, can't be done as efficiently or economically. As an organic grower, I am bound by my organic system plan, including a woodlot management plan that states how I'm going to preserve the health of my trees. Conventional farmers might choose to re-tap their trees as the initial taps run dry, but my management plan precludes me from doing that." Is an early sap run itself bad for the trees? "It is an additional stress, but maybe not

as bad as a lack of snow—less meltoff for the trees to drink in the spring. Syrup production is really hard work even under normal conditions. But it'll probably be fine. It's just me and the weather out here—we have to get along."

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Meg Louwsma** has resigned her post as Elberta's Farmers' Market manager to free up her schedule for full-time work and/or childcare. She hopes someone excellent will apply for the position, which she has held for about four years. The job currently pays \$80/week for 22 weeks during the season and \$10/week during the winter, and involves coordinating

vendor payments, attending the market, updating the website, publicizing the market in other venues, and preparing the budget. She'll be missed!

\*\*\*\*\*  
**One Too Many?** At the January township board meeting we learned that the Conundrum Café has applied for a tavern license. Alas, it seems Gilmore has only one license available, and the Village has hit its legal limit. The upshot, according to **Michele Cannaert**? For the Café to get a license, 1,128 new residents would have to move to the Village, or the Café would

have to move to the edge of town, within Gilmore. Did you know Gilmore is a dry township? We didn't either!

HAVE A NEWS ITEM YOU WANT BLASTED? Call or text 231-399-0098, send to Elberta Alert Foghorn, PO Box 357, Elberta, MI 49628, or write to [elberta.alert@gmail.com](mailto:elberta.alert@gmail.com), subject line "Foghorn."

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## THANK YOU!

By Sue Oseland, Advertising Sales

IT'S BEEN ALMOST A YEAR since our first issue. Can you believe it? We have striven to keep you informed of current happenings in the village and to remind you of its past. We hope to bring you more news, food for thought, and maybe a few surprises along the way again this year!

We did not have been able to begin (re)publishing the *Elberta Alert* without the financial support of our advertisers. I would like to thank all those businesses and individuals who took the risk and gave us the financial backing we needed for the first year. They include:

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This past year has been a real learning curve for all of us here at the paper. The first BIG lesson was the fact that we had not factored in growth in pages in our initial ad rates. We just really wanted to get those first four pages out to you! Because of that, we fell short (financially) a few times, and some personal money was spent to cover print costs for six pages. We've now set some new rates that cover (just barely) our new size. I will soon be contacting current advertisers for financial support of the paper for the 2012 publishing year. I hope you will once again consider advertising with the paper. You, our friends and neighbors, stepped right up to help us launch, and we hope to return the favor by bringing you a bit of business as our readership continues to grow. We now have 40 paid subscribers and have expanded our reach beyond the village proper—a circulation of 750. This year we'll also debut web advertising—more on that soon.

If you have a business and would like to advertise in the paper, please feel free to contact me. OR, if you know of any angels who want to support deeply local media, send them our way. I can be reached at 616-403-4971, or by email at [SueOseland@gmail.com](mailto:SueOseland@gmail.com)

Thank you again to all our *Alert* readers and advertisers. We truly cannot do this without YOU!

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